TITLE: The Worker and the Soviet System
       A Literary Study
       The Nineteen Sixties and Seventies

AUTHOR: Vera S. Dunham

CONTRACTOR: The Trustees of Columbia University
             in the City of New York

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Robert L. Bellknap

COUNCIL CONTRACT NUMBER: 620-3

The work leading to this report was supported in whole or in
part from funds provided by the National Council for Soviet
and East European Research.
An analysis of contemporary Soviet gosizdat (state-published) literature reveals that the industrial worker has growing self-awareness in a society becoming increasingly conscious of the advantages of social mobility, education, and consumer goods. This embourgeoisement of the working class is occurring in an increasingly pluralistic and divided society, in which workers are often confronted with low wages; poor food, deficient housing and other facilities, and coarse treatment by managers at their places of work. The ills of factory life are exacerbated by the absence of a grievance procedure and the manager's incorrect use of bonus money and other reward incentives.

"The Worker and the Soviet System" is part of an extended study of the image of the worker and the nature of the thematic cluster around the worker in gosizdat literature, which supplements an earlier investigation of the literary characterization of the worker in the Stalinist period. It attempts a socio-logical analysis based on the premise that fiction is never divorced from politics in officially sanctioned Soviet literature. In social, economic, and political terms the industrial workers make up the very core of Soviet society and are essentially the only "class" in that society that continues to provide legitimiza-tion for the regime. Thus, their function is both traditional and mandatory, and even canonized, although a healthier realism is more evident of late. Professor Dunham makes the point that, whereas the peasants have not for many years given the system serious trouble, and while the regime has proven well-equipped to contain dissent among the intelligensia, the increasingly restive self-consciousness of workers, and of younger workers in particular, could well pose an insurmountable problem for the elite in power, whose credibility depends on the continuing loyalty of the working class. The question arises of the extent to which the regime will permit the workers to test the system's capacity to absorb their middle-class aspirations and demands as a price for loyalty. On that score, the de-heroization of the worker evident in recent gosizdat fiction suggests the gravity of the regime's ambivalence toward the very group of citizens it earlier glorified to support its ideology.


*Prepared by the staff of the National Council.
Soviet society has clearly become both pluralistic and divisive. Reflected in the fiction tolerated at the moment are indications of tensions between stagnation and dynamism; social immobility and mobility; parochialism and centralization; provincialism and metropolitanism; internal colonialism and growing embourgeoisement; Soviet chauvinism and Russian apartheid of the non-Russian nationalities. Though the theme of the worker cannot be neatly extracted from the body of gosizdat literature, the mosaic of adjoining topics and issues points to this divisiveness in the Soviet society. The image of the worker emerges with problematical proximity to the images of the manager, the professional, and the intellectual, and reflects polar forces of association and dissociation, with alienation in the background.

Professor Dunham relies mainly on the uniquely Soviet genre known as the production novel for it is these novels that the regime celebrates by awards of its most treasured literary prizes. The plots are about industrial production with emphasis on the collective, and the treatment typically glorifies a cohesive, stubborn, ideologically-alert working class family out of which the super-hero emerges. More prominently than in earlier periods, however, recent production novels address human relationships and frictions within the industrial plant, with oversimplified images of good and bad management and related interpersonal strife predominant. Typical for all recent production fiction is the close interplay of several themes: the power of management, good or bad, over the worker; the resources for self-protection available to him; and the changing self-conception of the working class. Social strife appears ubiquitous and surfaces across the social structure whenever the theme of class consciousness is brought up in fiction of this kind. Tension is palpable in the very texture of production literature between glorification of the worker and disdain for him. The latter grows out of the socially abrasive divisiveness which is unsuccessfully veiled in this officially approved fiction.

Perhaps the most important finding and conclusion of this report is that the workers' values recorded indirectly in literature have been permitted to shift. Semi-officially and, perhaps even officially, a vital debate has been opened. The emphasis is changing from traditionally canonized idealism to consumerism. This phenomenon of the worker's embourgeoisement is real, serious, and spreading. It tends to be presented as generational change, together with an awkward rationalization for the value of multiple and contradictory gratifications. It constitutes a shift from obsolete class-determined self-sacrifice toward some modicum of private values. Put succinctly,
it is the radical difference between an individual's giving and his taking, and represents a fundamental break in the ideological orientation of Soviet society. All of the good literature written by the liberal wing of the literati is devoted stubbornly and assiduously to the search of self. This is crucially important in a society which insists that its fiction report on Soviet citizens and teach the Soviet reader.

One does not need to read novels to know that labor turnover is a nagging, serious, and as yet insoluble problem in Soviet industry. Sociological studies of the problem are typically drawn upon by writers, citing worker dissatisfaction with wages, housing, and coarse, unjust treatment by managers as causes. It is the latter cause that commonly forms half the leitmotif of evil versus good management in the fiction, but curiously ignores the function of the trade union organization in the resolution of crucial conflicts between managers and workers. The very language of power illuminates the abrasive stratification in Soviet society and its growing divisiveness, and reveals the blatant economic power of the bosses. Their arbitrary latitude to bestow or deprive the worker of the all-important bonus money, without which sheer survival becomes problematic.

The most interesting revelation about arbitrary and unequivocally harsh treatment is the consistent absence of any mention of any formal, institutionalized process by which the embittered workers could or should grieve. It would appear that the worker's only recourse for grievance lies in his courage to complain directly to the Party Secretary of the city committee. What comes through eloquently in this officially sanctioned fiction is the writer's deeper, psychological awareness of the extensive damage to the aggrieved worker's, and his family's, sense of worth, and of the fact that ultimately it is industry and society that pays the heaviest cost in labor turnover and inefficient production. The punitive use of the bonus system is fiction's favorite instrument to demonstrate the weakness and extreme vulnerability of the worker.

At the same time there are signs that, on the one hand, the worker is becoming more self-assertive, and on the other, that various levels of the Party organization are beginning to respond to his demand for more say in his destiny, even if only in the safe realm of fiction. The truth behind the fiction appears to be that a real struggle for and against the rights of the worker is taking place. Protest by workers is triadically rooted in the Bolshevik tradition, the rapid modernization of industry, and paradoxically in the already obsolete and stagnant features of the Soviet industrial economy.
A secondary significant theme emerging in gosizdat fiction is the crippling, systematically absurd, and corrupting practice prevalent in determining the scale of remuneration, reward, and incentive for the skilled or specialized worker, against which the conscientious industrial manager is to struggle.

There has also been a discernable shift in the Party's control of culture, art, and literature. The didactic function of the officially-safe writer has moved in the last decade to a more critical one. The first timid shift away from didacticism and glorification of the proletarian toward cognitive exploration—or realism—preceded Stalin's death and has been gaining strength since. With this revision has come a distinct tone of melancholy. The liberal writers have begun to focus in a compassionate manner on the individual rather than the collective. They depict with remarkable openness moods bordering on despair, bitterness, and loneliness, and they describe abject poverty which the regime has been unable to wipe out. It is the young person who appears more and more frequently to be struggling with devastating emptiness, a particularly prevalent condition among young workers. The less liberal writers remain faithful to the collective but undertake nonetheless to disclose the harsh inequities in the economic and social tensions of the society.

Whereas the orthodox critics are upset with this increasingly alarming permissiveness, the censors do not stop the disclosures and indictments, because they are told not to. This means that revelatory criticism of systemic shortcomings is not only tolerated but invited from above. Though the worker has emerged as a more literate, more skilled consumer causing shifts in Soviet ideology, what remains unchanged is the fierce, all-absorbing existential need of the regime to perpetuate itself. What has changed are the means considered appropriate for that purpose. This is seen in the paradox that the new worker must better himself and his life style, but he must be prevented from becoming a greedy, middleclass philistine. The fairly open criticism by liberal writers indicates that there is a great deal of wheeling and dealing going on which is indispensable to the system's maintenance. It is a phenomenon that creates divisiveness between groups and sub-groups of the citizenry but concludes alliances between the ruling class and the aspiring upwardly mobile class of young workers.

The system's strength today grows, perhaps, directly out of the circumstance that it no longer fears itself. It fears only a counter-system. Therefore, the system separates criticism from dissent and dissent from opposition. The first is an in-system phenomenon; the third operates outside the system and is, therefore, considered lethal. Dissent swings in between.
The polarization between tolerance toward in-system criticism and even its sponsorship, and the ruthless persecution of opposition explains something about the current stage of the system's development. It helps to understand the tremendous evidence in contemporary fiction about the system's ills, both chronic and acute. More importantly, it confirms the urgency of the central inquiry of this study: is it conceivable that the Soviet industrial worker might organize his discontent?

To be sure, the regime's violent phobia against organized dissent stands as warning that gosizdat fiction will not exactly display the worker's urge for self-rule as a main theme. Further study will continue to explore the fragments of indirect evidence of turbulence as the industrial labor, which sooner or later as in any industrial society, will join the middle class in appreciable numbers. In the event, however, that all things remaining equal (i.e., the Soviet economy does not collapse and other variables remain under control) there is no reason to believe that the skilled industrial worker, while gaining more and more social and economic space, should at any time or in any way prefer strife, sabotage, or confrontation to his own embourgeoisement. The social reality, as reflected in contemporary gosizdat literature, would seem to encourage his aspirations to provide for himself and family in terms of status and material benefits; he is beginning to come of age as a consumer in a society that emphasizes social mobility, education, and the advent of the "Scientific-Technological Revolution."

The crucial change to watch is the growth, or the closing of the gap, between the skilled and the unskilled industrial worker. It is likely that it will increase. The documented fiction does not really depict the degree of poverty which the marginal unskilled worker endures. Adverse circumstances, which induced the narrowing of the gap between the skilled and unskilled, might stimulate genuine solidarity and move the entire labor force to politicize its discontent.
THE WORKER AND THE SOVIET SYSTEM

A LITERARY STUDY

The Nineteen Sixties and Seventies
The literary narrative constitutes an irreplaceable source of knowledge about mass political orientations because of its timely reaction to changes in political attitudes and also, because it has traditionally had a particularly important function within the Soviet society.

Victor Zaslavsky

"The Rebirth of the Stalinist Cult in the U.S.S.R.", Telos No. 40, Summer 1979, p.6
I wish to express my gratitude to Professor Robert L. Belknap for the spiritual and material help I received this academic year at the Russian Institute of Columbia University. His concern and support made me feel very much at home at the Institute.

Ms. Marjean Elong was extremely gracious in her assistance to me. My thanks to her.

I also wish to express my appreciation to Ms. Natalie Lusin for her competent and imaginative help in gathering some materials.

Lastly, without the generous help of my friends Elizabeth and Terry Thompson of Washington, D.C. who not only found but xeroxed a veritable mountain of pages in the Library of Congress all through this year, I would have been stuck. I may dedicate the book to them.

It goes without saying that whatever I have so far accomplished in this study, however much work still lies ahead, would have been impossible without the grant from the Earhart Foundation. To its President, Mr. Richard A. Ware, goes my deep gratitude.

I thank the National Council for Soviet and East European Research for its support.

Vera S. Dunham

December 27, 1979
Table of Contents

I. Introductory Notes: 3-7

II. Mammoth Production Novels And Their Human Yield: 8-44

III. Selected and Annotated Bibliography: 45-58

IV. Tentative Summary: 59-67

REPORT: WHAT TO DO NEXT? 1-11
...most frequently, man resembles himself.

Alexander Kron

Alarmingly, Soviet society has long since become not only pluralistic but torn. It is caught up in something resembling a class struggle, wedged between dynamism and stagnation; social mobility and social predestination; centralization and parochialism; metropolitanism and provincialism; overall embourgeoisement that pulls people up and internal colonialism that pushes people down; unifying chauvinism in the improbable all-Soviet recension and the imprudently convincing apartheid, deeply divisive, of the non-Russian nationalities.1

The poor are very poor and the rich are rich. The emphasis on tension in this brief introduction is not colored by a predilection for binary contrasts or paradoxality as such but denotes something like despair over the growing complexities in the Soviet splintered social structure and our limited capacity - from long distance - to find its meaning for the Soviet citizen. Who fears what over there today? For himself? For his children? What does the worker want?

Introductory notes, alas, tend to turn pompous. They are riddled with clichés. And the combat against clichés becomes itself a cliché of the worst kind because especially smug. So, I really do not know how to say the following
without being offensive to myself in the first place. In the scholarly deci-
phering of social issues in the Soviet Union today, oversimplification is as
dangerous as it was in the Cold War period. One may ask here, of course, in
what period was it not dangerous? Secondly, if sovietology means making pre-
dictions (of which one might well be increasingly wary), those based on clichés
are worthless. But, then, how can one tell a cliché from a generalization?
Short of capitulation, however, how can one proceed without the latter?

Is it possible to define the Soviet "working class"? Is it, whatever else
it may be, a real class? To what an extent does it show cohesiveness? To what
extent is it divided and divisive within itself?

In this introductory spot, these questions are neither rhetorical nor, on
the other hand, epistemologically sober and practical. They are, in a sense,
poetic and incantational as they warn the analyst of how all the tensions just
mentioned come to bear on a study of the worker and his penumbral future.

To grasp the lateral and vertical tensions in Soviet society, the overlapp-
ing conflicts at once, in one fell swoop as it were, is absolutely impossible.
And yet nothing short of just that will do for the effort to understand any major
problem, let alone the covert one of the regime's long standing ambivalence and
indebtedness toward the growing ranks of the industrial workers.

One large predicament should, perhaps, be added here to all the others.
Nothing, not one single thing pertaining to social change can be any longer con-
sidered special to the Soviet Union. Yet, at the same time, everything is spe-
cial and unique. The impenetrable confusion between the universal and the partic-
cular is one of the consequences of modernization.

With some of the dark thoughts out of the way, at least for the moment, the
statement is offered below of the main purpose of this inquiry.

Modernization has overtaken Soviet society a long time ago. Lenin and Stalin had seen to it, each in his own inimitable way. Synonymous in part with industrialization, modernization has engendered the growth of a large industrial labor force. How effective the overall effort has been for the good of the majority cannot readily be assessed one way or another without a close look at the state of Soviet economy in general and at the growth of industry and industrial production in particular. Western social scientists have been looking. Very closely. The number of studies on the Soviet industrial economy is by now staggering. However, something or somebody else needs to be looked at closely as well: the industrial worker himself.

Who is he?
Who is she?

What image of himself does he uphold?

How does he fare in the industrial and alleged post-industrial phases of the Soviet national development?

What does the ubiquitous Scientific Technical Revolution, redundantly celebrated, do to him, for him, against him?

These are the questions that stand as prime objectives of this study.

How to go about it? Answer: by using plays, novels, and poems as source material. WITHOUT WORRY AND WITHOUT APOLOGY.

The decision to go about this research in just this way may strike economists, political scientists, and historians as curious. Let them be so stricken. The use of Soviet fiction for the investigation of social dynamics and change no longer requires humble pleading for acceptance. It has proven to be a rich source of social information.
To conclude these introductory explanations, two further caveats might be in order.

First, the theme of the worker cannot - and must not - be cut with a butcher's knife and neatly excised out of the body of Soviet current literature which deals very much and at the same time very little with the worker. This is to say that the worker appears on uncountable pages but that meaningful and penetrating information is scanty. Adjoining topics, themes, and issues cling to the theme of the worker, crucial to this investigation. The image of the worker is likely to be smothered. Sometimes, this is just as well. A partial view of a certain phenomenon in Soviet fiction or a side glance thrown at it can be more revealing than "confrontation". The interplay of hint and inference still determines the deciphering of officially published literature. In other words, it is necessary to deal with partial, inadvertent, refracted evidence much of the time.

Secondly, whether in isolation or in concert and interwovenness with other themes, the theme of the worker points to the divisiveness in that society. Divisiveness, dissociation, alienation, indeed, are among the key concerns of this study and the effort is made to document the abrasive, sometimes hostile, attitudes of citizens toward each other. How does the worker fare in regard to the most significant change in Soviet society since Stalin's death, namely the new dynamics of forces of association on one hand and those of dissociation on the other? Concern with such a vast and evasive subject and the gathering of germane illustrative materials signify that a study of the Soviet worker in recent fiction cannot avoid the centrifugal pull, of larger issues, i.e. the examination of the themes adjoining that of the worker. The topical proximity of the images of citizens belonging to other social groups, such as management, the professional
world, the world of the intelligentsia creates contrapuntal balances in the examined fiction itself and sheds as much light on the image of the worker in a novel as such a fictional image, in turn, illuminates, presumably, that of the real worker.

1/
Mammoth Production Novels and Their Human Yield

1. One Writer

There is no point in reporting on the image of the industrial (or any other) worker as well as on the larger theme of the nature of industrial (or any other) work, the way all these themes are presented in recent Soviet literature, without turning first to the novels ( alas, exceedingly long) by Vladimir Fodorovich Popov. (Nor are those by Mikhail Kolesnikov, Vadim Kozhevnikov or Yurii Skop appreciably shorter).

Why?

There are many reasons for it, the most curious, perhaps, being that nobody, but nobody has as much as heard of this author outside of the Soviet Union and that the likelihood is minimal that anybody in the Western world will hear of this septagenarian in the foreseeable future. Hence, not one word of his has been translated. From a purely literary point of view such disregard or oblivion is not altogether tragic since Vladimir Popov is neither a Chekhov nor a Kataev nor, least of all, a Voinovich. In fact, some of his output tends to be a crashing bore. Yet, I feel that I received this grant in substantial part to read the long-winded, unyielding, unwieldy, and overpopulated "epic" novels of just this writer and his equally as loquacious kin. (There are other such writers, indeed, and they will be brought into focus later on).

One might, once more, ask why? The answer here is simple. Popov’s mammoth novels are published by Profizdat, a publishing house attached to the VSNPPS (All-Union Trade Union Council) which, in turn, maintains as its showpiece a special department under the imprint Biblioteka Rabochevo Romana, a crucial three word cluster which is not easily translatable, yet revealing
unequivocally enough that this series of books is devoted to the worker and his glorification.

For just such glorification in one of his huge tales—*Oretesh v boyu* (You'll Gain It Through Battle), he received a high prize, to say the least, in an All-Union competition, - no less than the First Prize for "the best work about the working class, honoring the centenary of Lenin's birth". It was presented on All-Union television as serialized tele-drama. You can't go any higher than that, all the more significantly - and as I go along I will have to repeat this again and again - since the famous *rabochaya tema*, the theme of the worker (translatable or not) has been proclaimed in the past, in the present, and shall undoubtedly continue to be proclaimed the main and most important theme of Soviet literature. That's canon. Writers are begged, cajoled, brow-beaten to contribute to it. Yet, as basso ostentuto, there is heard the lament of critics about the meager results. The large volume of the output per se does not seem to satisfy. But the establishment cheers Popov on and that's why we must deal with him.

He was born in 1907 in Kharkov. He is a worker himself, having started out as a founder in a metallurgical plant in the south of Russia. From 1929 he worked in several metallurgical industries in the Far East, ending up in the Don Basin. In 1938 he graduated from the Donetsk Industrial Institute (by correspondence) and became an engineer. As such, he was evacuated during the World War with his plant to the Urals. And that's how fame came to him. He was awarded the Stalin prize for his novel *Stal i shlak* (Steel and Slag) of 1948, dealing with the problems of evacuation of heavy industry under the catastrophic war circumstances. The heroic role attributed to the Party at the time secured him a place among safe and trusted writers. For our research, Popov's stalinist
linkage is important. It discloses constant elements in the orthodox official approach to the worker in Soviet society. His second most famous novel Zakipela stal of 1955 (Steel Begins to Flow) deals with the problems of early postwar transition and adjustments in industry.

The wording of official homage paid to Popov holds a bundle of widely used - and, therefore, instructive - cliches:

His creative biography has to a large extent determined his working biography. He went through all the steps of the production ladder from an unskilled worker [chernorabochii] to the head [nachalnik] of a blast furnace shop [martenovskii tsekh]. He finished the evening faculty of the Donetz Polytechnical Institute having defended his dissertation for the diploma of a metallurgical engineer.

V. Popov has devoted near to twenty years to working in the metallurgical industry and it is now twenty five years that he creates artistic works about the people of this heroic and romantic profession. There rise from his pages workers, engineers, Party workers, scientists with all the specificity and complexity of their interrelations which emerge when people struggle not only for that which is new in technology but in human souls as well.

That's just it. Popov is a hybrid and he writes about hybrids, albeit "romantic" ones. The stress is on struggle and on a great deal of newly extremely fashionable intermeshed and intertwined ambiguities and complexities. Moreover, the words in the exact sequence "... people struggle not only for that which is new in technology but in human souls as well" have massively invaded that which the contemporary crowd of Soviet literati love to call the literary process, the complex and highly controlled communications between the writer, the critic, and the reader.

2. The Product: The Production Novel

As the best possible example of a novel dealing with workers, we shall here take a look - in depth, as the expression goes - at Popov's And You Call It Doldrums of 1974 even. it must be granted that the title sounds unpromising.
This mammoth novel, part of a more mammoth diptych, does not really deal in a central way with the worker. None do. In its thematic thrust and narrative structure, it is what's known as a proizvodstvennyi roman or production novel. This genre – and it is one – is not, God knows, Popov's invention nor that of his nor of this current period. It has a long history. Here as elsewhere it becomes clear that nothing Soviet can possibly be discussed in medias res. The crossing of the synchronic and diachronic coordinates seems a pressing requirement. I will have to repeat this also as we progress.

Although Popov is considered one of the few masters of fiction about the working class, he has never treated the theme of the industrial worker as such but has turned to this celebrated hybrid species known as proizvodstvennyi roman, it too defying exact translation as already suggested, and being, rather, an industrial novel or the novel about industrial production with an emphasis on the collective, the main intent of which, qua uniquely Soviet literary creation, is to encapsulate the worker, almost smothering him, in a far larger social milieu than his own class or cast cocoon.

It might be helpful to take a detour right here and cite a brief history and evaluation of the very concept "production novel" and of its clearly stalinist formative period. The citation comes from an important book on the worker in Soviet society by an interesting literary critic, Yurii Borisovich Kuzmenko, an opinionated man who, it has been thought, might well have been close to the workers' opposition in the penumbral heights of political power, an opposition to which, it has been said, Alexander Shelepin himself was not unsympathetic, a tentative thrust of pro-worker sentiment subsequently totally crushed. Kuzmenko's voice at any rate happens to sound its own distinctive way in the massive chorus of writers' and critics' opinions and hosannas about the
glorious achievements of the theme of workers in recent and current Soviet literature ... in curious, one might add, contradiction to their own laments that such achievements are nowhere as yet in sight. (As of old, just such lapsus in logic signals to outside analysts that the theme under examination - in our case, the worker - is a central theme, indeed, for Soviet internal concern.)

The concept of the "production novel" was put forward by critics in the nineteen thirties when books were published, one after another, such as Gidrotsentral [Hydrocentral] by M. Shaginyan, Sot' by L. Leonov, Vremya vpered! by V. Kataev, Den vtoroi [The Second Day] by I. Ehrenburg, Bolshevik konveier [The Big Conveyor] by Ya. Ilin, Ya liubliu [I Love] by A. Avdeenko and others. At first, this concept held no judgmental meaning. It merely helped critics to establish a thematic classification of literary works. It served to denote an entire series of books which described the creation of a new, socialist industry.

By the middle of the nineteen fifties, the term "production novel" gained among critics a firmly established pejorative meaning. The term was connected with that which at the time writers were trying to overcome. The polemic became sharp and at times it was directed against the writers' own books. The target was oversimplification in the representation of reality; the predetermination of conclusions; the cut and dry manner of characterization; situations and conflicts turned into clichés. All these failures in the literature of the proceeding years were associated voluntarily or involuntarily with the theme of production, of labor, a theme which had dominated over everything else for a long time. Some people seemed to think that the withdrawal from plant shops will offer in and by itself a solution for these pressing problems and will permit writers to get rid of some obsolete artistic devices and traditions which were obstructing a new development. Nor did literary criticism help in the correct understanding of the nature of the problem. It simply "wrote off for a loss" the early postwar production novel having failed to comprehend its essence and to separate the production theme itself from the unnecessary deposits accompanying it. 5/

Clearly, a champion of the production theme such as Kuzmenko, with "proletarian" overtones almost audible in his argument, wishes to purify the subject and to free it of that he calls a conglomerate of "unnecessary deposits".
Now, what's a "deposit" to one type of critic may not be "deposit" to another type. Meanwhile, the production novel seems to grow both in size and complexity, continuing to smother the worker. One can perceive the smothering process by carefully reading between the lines of cliches that officially promote Popov's mammoths as well as those of several other prominent "production" writers, Popov's literary kin.

The pathos of Popov's novels is not in the personal relations but in the broad display of the struggle of the people for technological progress, for the new man.

How does Popov do that? How does he achieve "the broad display" of his characters' noble struggle for lofty collective goals? Here is how:

V. Popov managed to build his plot and to tie the knots of the conflict in such a way that the dramatis personae, be it the plant manager, the head of the shop, a young worker, the secretary of the city committee of the Party, the director of the planning institute, the journalist engaged in writing the history of the plant, and so forth -- all of them find their own place. It is impossible to do without them either in the stubborn struggle against pollution of the atmosphere through industrial waste or in the difficult days when there hovers over the plant the threat of failure in completing the plan.

These production conflicts are extremely important. They reflect the dialectics of the scientific-technological revolution and at the same time they tightly touch upon the moral problem. This author carefully examines the process of human growth on the part of the leader of an enterprise as well as that of the worker.6/

That's how he does it. Crowd the novel with all sorts of folks and tie them up in production problems. You have it made.

3. The Synopsis

Be patient. It certainly is easier for you to read the summary here submitted than to plow through the six hundred pages of this Russian paradigmatic text. (I spend stoically monastic hours translating it for you).
In And You Call It Doldrums of 1974 action takes place in a huge metal-
lurgical plant located in the South, probably in the Donetzk region. The sea,
at any rate, is close by. It is a bad habit of many establishment writers to
be vague about the geographic location of their tales.

The main heroic thrust of this tale is represented by the Rudaev family.

In the honored tradition, dating back to nineteenth century populism as
well as liberalism and vigorously implemented by Maxim Gorky, of glorifying
the industrial worker by glorifying a cohesive, stubborn, ideologically alert
working class family, - nay, an entire multi-generational tribe - out of which
the super-hero emerges, two eloquent and basic myths are co-joined as it were:
hereditary pride and the sanctity of the family nexus. 7/

The patriarch of the Rudaev family is Serafim Gavrilovich, an old steel
worker. He loves his profession. He is proud of it and considers it the core
of his life. His oldest son Boris follows in his father's footsteps and works
in the same plant as chief melter. He, too, loves his work and treats it with
a great sense of responsibility. Both are highly qualified on the job and pos-
sess all the standard personal characteristics mandatory for perfect communists.
The youngest son, Yurii, upon return from military service does not intend to
work in the plant (a telling detail). But his father and brother convince him
that he should. He does. It takes him only a little while to become a skilled
worker and to manifest serious interest in his new specialty. The daughter,
Natasha, is a doctor in the plant's own medical services department. The fam-
ily is united in its extreme devotion to the plant.

No conflicts? Yes, conflicts.

Soon enough, workaday production problems surface and, more importantly,
frictions with some leading figures in the plant. Both Rudaevs, oldest son
and father, had experienced in the past already severe clashes with the boss of the shop, Grebenshchikov, an able person, indeed, but a nasty one, alas. It is he who sets the plot in motion. Grebenshchikov treats the entire Rudaev family with disdain and lets them feel his hostility at every possible opportunity.

Qua negative character, this Grebenshchikov, even if depicted in a somewhat more sophisticated and shaded manner than in the days of classical stalinist socialist realism, has a foil as this classical stylization requires. That foil is the plant manager, no less. His name is Zbandut and he is a splendid fellow. He manages the affairs of production as fairly and competently as those that one might call human affairs. He stays in constant touch with the collective and treats people with real sensitivity. He is intelligent, erudite, a man of broad vision. He knows how to solve swiftly and adroitly all manners of conflict, thereby constantly attempting to protect the victim.

Now, what's the source of perennial production problems? The greatest difficulty this good manager confronts is in the effort to sustain a steady, even, harmonious rhythm in the work of the various shops. The main link in the chain of aggregate units is, of course, the blast furnace shop. Zbandut watches over it like a hawk not only as plant manager but as a specialist in blast furnaces.

Suddenly, disaster hits. Wow! One unpredicted and unpredictable night, an enormous explosion shakes everything in sight. This major accident occurs because of one blast furnace night shift worker. After two sleepless nights, he had asked the boss of the shop to relieve him of the third night shift. The boss refuses. Disaster results.

The weight of responsibility falls heavily on Zbandut. He agonizes.
Investigative commissions crawl underfoot. Repair in more sense than one is difficult. The worst is that prison sentence threatens the derelict worker. But, lo and behold, Zbandut manages to protect him ... quod erat demonstrandum. Only a reprimand and demotion on the job are imposed in the end on the culprit. So far so good.

Another trouble of an equally serious and disruptive nature is in store. Out of the blue, without any warning whatsoever, the ministry — and it is always the mysteriously appropriate and all-powerful ministry — orders Zbandut to take off at once, within one day, as consultant and troubleshooter to India (!). This saddens everybody a great deal except, of course, one person. The evil Grebenshchikov finds it difficult to conceal his triumphant joy for it is he who is summoned forthwith to replace Zbandut as the director of the plant.

On the surface, thereafter, but only on the surface, all seems well and the plan is fulfilled. But under the surface, it's another story. Tensions mount. The new boss is tough and nasty. He has pity for no one. He cares only for the plan and his own rapid career. His handling of both workers and of the ITR — well-entrenched acronym for the engineering technical personnel — is downright gross and insulting. He mocks and degrades people. But he also knows how to threaten and bribe. He even manages to entrap an innocent intellectual type to ghost-write a scientific dissertation for him for the sake of a higher degree in engineering. That's savoir faire(!) and also, of course, a criminal act.

For a while no one in his entourage seems to be able to think straight under the assault of Grebenshchikov's mockery and scolding which he dishes out for no apparent reason at all. When there is, however, a semblance of reason, he turns ruthless. Here is an example. Evgenii Senin is a wonderful person and a good worker, the best foreman in his shop. His parents are members of
the intelligentsia. His mother, in fact, is a ballerina. He himself, of course, is a zealous night course student. He is gentle and conscientious. Once, due to sudden personal and family troubles that make him tired and depressed, he permits an accident to occur that, in turn, causes several hours of work stoppage. Without batting an eye, Grebenshchikov fires him on the spot. This harsh measure upsets the collective greatly, especially since the contrast of the shelter and protection Zbandut had offered the blast furnace worker responsible for the explosion has been well remembered by everybody.

As for us, let us remember that workers seem to need a great deal of protection from their bosses.

The hatred against Grebenshchikov grows and he himself turns, under its impact, more cunning, commencing to spice his career ambitions with calculated favors here and there, trying to disorient his enemies. But this cuts not much ice with his oppressed underlings. It is meanwhile astonishing, if compared with production fiction of high stalinism, how ineffective the good and, in fact, near perfect party officials are in discouraging Grebenshchikov from damaging the collective. He, by the way, treats party officials with the same sarcasm as he treats anyone else.

The dramatic resolution is near. The author engages a veritable deus ex machina. Some members of the collective have been so demoralized by the villain in command that Rudaev senior, risking quite a bit, goes to the party to denounce him. The party, at long last, listens and acts. It does so not by confronting the villain but behind his back. And the measure is effective. In the middle of an operative meeting that Grebenshchikov holds with his underlings, the door opens and ... Zbandut enters with suitcase as well as beguiling smile. It so happens that in response to the imploration of the collective, the
party now has acted swiftly to retrieve Zhandut from India and to return him to his old directorial seat. To the incontrollable jubilation of the collective and to its loud and literal applause, Grebenshchikov is forthwith ousted. The love feast prevails. It is interesting that the tale concludes without a clue as to the villain's subsequent destiny. Happy, happy, end. End of synopsis.

Can I give you an assurance that after plowing through Popov's oeuvre or through that, equally and overwhelmingly voluminous, by Kolesnikov, Kuvaev, Kashtanov etc. etc. etc., as well as through the sizable body of "production" plays by playwrights such as Dvoretzky, Bondarenko, Gelman and others, one has amply been offered a view of the industrial worker at work and at leisure? No, not amply. Nor, in fact, a view. But insight. Yes, insight. An illustration will be now given of the shreds and fragments of cogent information — and it can be claimed that this information is unique — that these curious source materials, such as Popov's production novels, yield. Some aspects of the destiny of workers as a class can, in all likelihood, not be gathered elsewhere.

4. Bits and Pieces and Clues

I have chosen for an exercise in microscopy — in order to demonstrate how one still can gather information in unlikely Soviet places — a boring book. On purpose. There are compelling and talented writers who write about the worker. And we shall turn to them in this study in due time. But their distance from the propagated values by the establishment is considerable. Therefore, it is necessary, I think, to start out with the kind of huge novel about workers the regime celebrates by awarding it top prizes. The book is boring primarily because it is typical in its theme and its orthodox rightmindedness and didacticism. It is especially valuable as a source because of the remnants of socialist realism in it; of information due to oversimplification; of the black and
white line-up of good and bad management. Just this conflict is what we are searching for as the foundation of this study. We do so in curious concert with the Soviet literary establishment. It places the theme or cluster of themes which embrace managerial problems and related interpersonal strife at the top of its desiderata and tries, by all means available, to engage compliant writers to compose their tales accordingly. The so-called Scientific Technical Revolution is favored above everything else. And it is to be portrayed, discussed, and - if possible - glorified in "production" literature. The latter, as already repeatedly stated here, does not focus on the worker. But nolens volens the worker is an indispensible figure in the production team. By refraction, indirection, and by sheer topical necessity, information dropped about him here and there is available. In addition, this information holds special meaning for even if furtive, it seems more spontaneous, more casual, more true to life than had the establishmentarian writers, the production specialists, been concentrating on the worker primarily. The inevitability of information on the worker trickling out of huge novels and three-act laborious production plays of the recent decade is implicit in the pious remark by Zbandut whom we have gotten to know as a super-positive manager: "The plant's production consists not only of tons of metal but of human beings." (p.192) You can say that again.

What is going to be shown here right now is the close interplay of two, three themes, typical for all of the recent production fiction: the power of management, good or bad, over the worker and the resources for self-protection available to him; the fascinating background theme of the shifting self-conception of the worker which shows several categories of change, among them the fluctuation between self-conscious self-denigration - at times phoney, at times woeful - and outbursts of traditional worship of the worker, a sui generis self-incarnation.
We shall start with just this last polarization - self-hate and self-love - keeping in mind that all the illustrations are selected to build a bridge between cant, still flooding gosizdat fiction, alas, and bits and pieces of what one may think is a refraction of truth. The prime purpose of this study is to ferret out some knowledge about the real circumstances and conditions of everyday life of Soviet workers from the still heavily coded imprints they leave in ideologically correct tales.

Divisiveness. This notion deserves a great deal of attention in the study of Soviet society today. It is, indeed, shameful to be glib about it. But to avert a long detour here, let it be stated, even if glibly, that social strife seems ubiquitous and surfaces across the social structure whenever the theme of class consciousness is brought up in fiction of any kind. In regard to our main theme, tension is palpable in the very texture of production fiction between the glorification of the worker and disdain for him. The latter grows out of the social abrasive divisiveness which is but unsuccessfully covered up in officially approved fiction.

A lady doctor, the admirable elder's - Rudaev's - daughter, in fact, is being wooed by a worker who is energetic, ambitious, and has reasons to believe that he will soon get the job of a foreman, thereby leaving "simple workerdom" behind:

"By the way, I am surprised that you are not embarrassed to show yourself on the street with me, - he uttered with ingratiating humility. - You are a doctor, higher education, the intelligentsia. And me? A simple worker ... "

The doctor does not approve of such phoney meekness at all:

"Fine, I hate when people play coyly with the term "simple worker". The worker is crushed by those who wish to justify their own ignorance. You, first of all, are not a simple worker. You are, after all, a technician. Secondly, you are not ignorant."
Such an accolade cheers the young man. He perseveres with his intensive
courtship and plunges into further personal and daring exploration:

"I am speaking not without evidence, Natasha. Lately, one can observe in our life ... well, something that one might call stratified attraction. A general's daughter looks around for a mate from her own sphere, a darling son of a professor looks for a young girl possessing renowned parents." (pp.231-232)

Next, however, I offer stratification a' rebours, a curious ladder standing upside down. The younger, and less perfect, son of the absolutely perfect proletarian patriarch, Serafim Rudaev, meditates about his older brother who is an engineer. He also tries to come to terms with his father's stubborn allegiance to the worker's caste and cause.

Yuri considered his brother simply a brother and saw no special merit in the fact that he was an engineer. Their father managed to imbue him with the notion that the leading person in the plant is the worker. All the others were merely an appendix to him.

This alternative view of social stratification is all the more interesting since in the informal popular awareness in the Soviet Union today, the notion is widespread that there is nothing, but nothing more depressing, unpromising, unrewarding, and gray than the dreary profession of engineers. From such a vantage point, the father's championship of the worker's supremacy is not all that unreasonable.

Whether Serafim Gavrilovich, the father, was really convinced of it or was rather pursuing some sort of his own educational purposes, Yuri did not at that time understand. Nor did he really think about it. But having taken his father's word for it, his attitude toward engineers became haughty and he started to consider all those who were aspiring toward higher education as seekers of an easy life. This view was confirmed by newspapers and radio. When did they trumpet about every single day? About founders, forgers, rollers. They did that less frequently about metal workers, turners, fitters and only once in a while they came down to the engineers. But nevermind
engineers. The minute a celebrated founder became a foreman, his glory went lost in the sand immediately. And at the time that he was promoted to the position of assistant shop manager, he was altogether forgotten. (pp. 65-66)

So much for the media and their values, allegedly. Assuming that glory in some way still attaches to the worker not only in the official mythology spun about and around him, what are his own self-conception, commitments and values? It is, so far, perhaps the most important finding and conclusion of this study that these values, as they stand recorded in a refracted way in literature and serve educational purposes in the broadest possible sense, have been permitted to shift. Semi-officially and, perhaps, even officially a vital debate has been opened. The emphasis, indeed, is changing and hints of it are strewn about every literary genre. It is the shift, very broadly speaking, from traditionally canonized idealism to consumerism. The latter is, of course, a tricky proposition. There is another way of putting it. The phenomenon of the worker's embourgeoisement is real, serious, and spreading. In fact, a major chapter of this study will deal with it, based on fictional materials available in the seventies. Meanwhile, let us turn to a moment in the text under our microscope right now when the worker's shifting values are presented under the angle of a generational change, with an awkward rationalization for the value of multiple and contradictory gratifications.

The conversation we are about to eavesdrop on rings both true and false at the same time. Such duplicity marks the very essence of orthodox production literature for it touches on real problems and avoids some of them at the same time. Fortunately, truth and falsehood are both informative. This particular true-false conversation would fit well into the department in The New Yorker magazine that used to be called "conversation we doubt has ever taken place".
The positive proletarian patriarch loudly meditates in the presence of his sons whom we know: Boris-the-engineer, a true believer cloned after the father, and the younger son Yurii, not quite shaped yet and thereby extremely useful for our intelligence work. For he is the spokesman, if not altogether articulate, of the shifting self-conception and aspirations of workers. The lofty paternal sermons are addressed to him.

To his trusted son the father says:

"Don't you think, Boris, that very frequently in our country exaggeration and extremism [krašnosti] get the better of us ... For years on end the emphasis was on consciousness, on self-sacrifice. But these days all of a sudden, they have switched to the monetary advantage. The rouble, the rouble, here, there, everywhere ... the only motor power available."

The model son endeavors to clarify the wisdom above which wouldn't off hand seem to be in need of an exegesis. But he clarifies just the same.

"You think that the turning of the rouble into a fetish generates base instincts ... This is wrong. Money pushes you forward like any other good thing and one shouldn't kill the monetary interest."

This pragmatic admonition, signalling the shift toward the good life of which we speak, induces the father to reiterate at once the nobly obsolete class-determined self-conception:

"As for me, I didn't bend my back for an extra kopeck. I struggled for a well-earned spot in the ranks. I used to come up to the board where everybody's work was tabulated and I looked to see in what vehicle as it were I found myself enthroned - in an airplane or in a steam-engine. I have never chanced to sit on a turtle, fortunately." (p. 159)

Some tension is clearly revealed here between the instrumental and material gratifications. The adroit and experienced author presents this, of course, in sladkopis, a wonderful recent neologism meaning sweet-script.
What effect does the clash and the possible pious and practical blending of values have on the younger son who matters greatly for this study for the obvious reason of the study's potential for prediction?

The more he watched his father, the more he became imbued with respect for the purity and the loftiness of his efforts. The philistine calculation was absolutely foreign to him, the fear to give more than it was required, the fear of being overly zealous. Even now when in essence he carried no responsibilities any longer and could lead a free life, he was still concerned about everybody as always, wanted to know everything, and did not permit himself to put the burden aside. He could have easily simplified his life. He could have lived on his pension when he had turned fifty. That was the regulation for workers in blast furnace shops. He could have done anything he wanted to do just as many of his contemporaries chose. But no, nothing doing. And to him, his son Yurii, he prophesied: "Time will come". Perhaps. Even love for a girl rarely comes from the first glance. One's got to examine each other, get to know each other. And just the same he felt no desire to become like his father. He considered it preternatural to turn away from earthly pleasures. One's got to live more for oneself or, at any rate, also for oneself. (p.161)

The last sentence needs underscoring. "One's got to live more for oneself or, at any rate, also for oneself." It is paradigmatic. In fact, it stands as motto over the most important poems, plays, and tales written in the Soviet Union in the last two decades. All of the good literature written by the liberal wing of the literati is devoted stubbornly and assiduously to the search of self. What is curious here is that the call for some modicum of private values frequently sneaks into production fiction these days, albeit in the just mentioned manner of sweet-script.

This is a good spot to communicate, for a fleeting moment, with my reader about the nature of the source materials in this study and about the structures of an analytical approach to them. We are dealing with fictional characters not with people. We are not making live surveys. But we do have documentation on hand, documentation of a special kind. Its function is two-fold.
Therein lies its unique and rich worth. It teaches the Soviet reader and it reports on Soviet citizens. Therefore, like in this case under our investigative microscope right now, the extremely important issue of shifting incentives for the labor force is reflected in production novels in a politicized manner, charged with both tasks: clarification and obfuscating manipulation. It is interesting to note the ambiguous and ambivalent gloss that just in case, one might say, the author inserts into the debate about rewards between two generations of workers. For precaution and balance, criticism of young workers is put into the mouth of another character in this densely populated novel, a perfectly good engineer, who meditates on the occasional recklessness of the new generation:

"Conscientiousness among the young, it so happens, is not too well developed. It comes later and in various ways. Some are moved by vanity when colleagues overtake them on the job. Some have to take care of their new responsibilities for their young families which, whether they want it or not, demand from them a secure job and decent, stable earnings. Innate conscientiousness, however, is, unfortunately, found rarely. As a rule, it is the result of education. For these days many parents are inclined to bring up their children like this: "We had to kill ourselves working. So now, dear little son, watch out so that you don't overwork, so that you don't strain yourself!" (p.250)

The scolding of parents for spoiling their children because they themselves had had a hard life is a constant theme in Soviet pedagogy and fiction since the nineteen thirties.11/

A commodious production novel may well be boring but it is like a blotter in that it absorbs a plethora of issues and themes. I could have chosen a similar fat volume by Kolesnikov, Kashtanov, Antropov, Kuvaev, Pritula, Skop and by quite a number of others (and that even without dipping into the variants by
writers of the brotherly nationalities) to demonstrate the polyphonic fusion of typical production themes and problems. I have picked this one because in it the theme of the power of management over the workers surfaces in a forceful manner and becomes a focal point for all the other production issues and conflicts.

Labor turnover is a nagging, serious, and as yet insoluble problem in Soviet industry. One does not need to read novels to know that. But a novel is a good informant on the prevalent reasons why workers quit.

A foreman reports on the results of a sociological study in a plant with a large labor turnover:

"In the tabulation of a number of reasons for which workers quit their job, the coarseness and injustice of managers is listed in the third spot, right after dissatisfaction with wages and with housing." (p. 313)

Coarseness, to put it mildly, and arbitrariness of those who have power over the worker, and happen to be evil, projected against the paternalistic benevolence of those managers who are models of virtue, forms the leit-motif in this and other production sagas. Either version of management, the bad and the good, seems to be entirely unburdened by and disengaged from anyone or anything connected with the trade union organization. In fact, there isn't even mention of the trade union input in the resolution of crucial conflicts between management and workers in all of the thousand pages of the Popov dyptich.

Much shouting is heard throughout the production sagas. As a rule, the bosses snout a lot and there seems to be nobody around to stop them, least of all trade union officials, as already suggested. When, however, somebody as ambitious and effective as Grebenshikov, exalted as almighty director, sees fit to explain his prerogatives in two staccato sentences, these sentences, just about to be presented here in context, can be considered a real find. I, for one,
think it worthwhile to have combed through this long book if I managed alone
to excise two brief sentences of rationalization for the pulling of rank. The
very language of power, informally condensed into two three words, illuminates
for a moment the abrasive stratification in Soviet society and its growing, rather
than diminishing, divisiveness. (This will stand as the substantive predic-
tion in the conclusion of this study).

The party secretary attached to the plant, a good guy -- a very good guy,
came to think of it --, summons Grebenshchikov at last to his office. It is
important to keep in mind that each holds power similar to that of the other.
They are equals in terms of the hierarchical stratification. All of a sudden,
the good party man screams at the brutal director and denigrates him in violent
tones. He does this, of course, to demonstrate to the latter how it feels when
he shouts at his underlings and mocks them. Needless to say, the villain is out-
graged and shouts back louder than he was shouted at:

"You know nothing of subordination, comrade secretary! The
person who is placed on top [vyshestoyashchii] has the right
to speak with his subordinates any way he sees fit! You
and I, however, are two angles of one and the same tri-
gle! . . ." (p.342)

The message couldn't be clearer: press down on the subservient folks as hard as
you wish if you are lucky enough to be on top and don't touch equals.

The newly encouraged depiction of complex human interrelations aside, what
is surprising in Popov's tale is the candor with which the pure and simple econ-
omic power of the bosses is revealed. Its latitude and arbitrariness seem re-
markable. Grebenshchikov, at will, either bestows the goodies -- seemingly
without consultation or clearance -- on some and punishes others by depriving
them of bonus money, the famous premiya, a normal, built-in portion of any
worker's yearly pay without which sheer survival becomes problematic. The main
trouble with this is the fact that it is not the individual but collective or cor-
porate remuneration, set up this way for nothing short of diabolical reasons.12/

Obviously convinced of his own power prerogatives, Grebenshchikov does
both good and bad with panache. While still only the head of the blast furnace
shop, he takes note of the special difficulties the assistant shop managers had
to endure.

But since they ... were in a disadvantaged position — terri-
ble work load, few rights, and also rather inadequate wages —
Grebenshchikov decided to raise their wages to the maximum
in order to give them compensation for moral damages. This
good deed was met with enthusiasm and at once enhanced the
working mood. (p.23)

The tone of the narrative here seems to describe something like a "good deed"
of some lord of the manor as he bestows benefaction on the simple folk in his lati-
fundium.

But now comes the contrasting action: "politics of the knout" as the author
calls it. (p.94) Here is how bonuses are punitively taken away. Grebenshchikov
perfects a simple and effective system by inscribing certain marks on the list of
workers eligible for a bonus. That list

was speckled with deductions. Rudaev was deprived of half
of his bonus; Shevlyakov, whose shop showed the best results,
was deprived of forty percent. And so it went from the top
of the list to the bottom. The arithmetic turned out to be
elementary. The grade of 3 signified a deduction of 3 per-
cent; the grade of 2 meant a five percent deduction; the grade
of 1 meant 10 percent. Zero denoted zero bonus. The boss of
the slabbing shop was honored by that grade not so much because
of his work but because of the obstinacy of his character and
his inclination to argue during reports. (p.394)

Such arbitrary and unequivocally harsh treatment embitters all the subordinates
without exception. And, perhaps, the most interesting revelation in the text
itself is the consistent absence of any mention, any hint of any natural or formal and institutionalized process by means of which the grieved workers could or should grieve.

Yet, grievance at long last comes about but in the form of invidual hu-bris. It takes, seemingly, quixotic courage to stand up for the workers. And it is, of course, Rudaev senior, qua vox populi, who takes off to complain to the party secretary of the city committee. His opening gambit is a rhetorical question but one that is greatly to the point:

"This is what I would like you to tell me, comrade secretary of the city party committee ... If you were to be maligned every day and skinned alive once a month, could you work well?" (p.389)

In his own mind, he keeps a clear picture of what he means by injustice, by the "politics of the knout" and its effect, for instance, on the family of a victim. Thereby, he foresees the inevitable chain reaction down the plant's hierarchical layers. He starts with empathy for a shop manager, unfairly deprived of his bonus. What will the poor man do?

Enraged, he will chew out the foreman; that one will, in turn, chew out the brigade leader; and the last one will chew out the worker. The waves of discontent will roll on from one to the other like circles on a body of water. They will reach the families. In what shape will the shop manager shuffle back home? Maybe he will take out his rage on his wife. And it can't be assumed that she won't take it out on him. When she will find out about the hole in their budget, she'll really let him have it. She will say to him - you spend day and night in the shop and they skin you alive ... Some wives count pennies and at the same time watch whether their husbands are treated properly at work. There is no pride more proud than woman's pride. You can't take that away from the overall picture. (p.388)

While standing up for the aggrieved, Rudaev also suggests that injustice not only embitters the workers but chases them away from the plant and that soon this large metallurgical enterprise will lose its best technicians. His
courage escalates and he accuses the party officials of blindness, no less, and of perilous neglect of the welfare of the plant in favor of their all absorbing interest in the city. (p.390) This is quite an accusation and it activates the party to press Grebenshchikov with his politics of the knout against the wall. The villain's last stance does not help him at all but makes the arbitrary nature of power with which the industrial bosses are encharged extremely vivid: "Every leader has two means of coercion at his disposal. It is either the moral or the material means. If growling is ineffective, one must bite". (p.394)

In the reading of Soviet fiction for the purpose of ferreting out information on social change, oversimplification is more seductive than in the handling of the allegedly solid and quantifiable source materials such as the Soviet statistical economic year books, for instance. The picking out of bits and pieces in a novel is not a random activity but the first step toward interpretation. The latter is synonymous with emphasis. The fishing out of several passages related to the punitive use of the bonus system demonstrates the weakness of the worker and his extreme vulnerability. But this is one side, one dimension of the problem. In institutions as complex and ossified as the Soviet there are other sides and dimensions. Rudaev, the heroic old class-conscious worker did effectively protest; the collective did join him in facilitating the return of the good manager; the party did act. In fact, there are a few, even if very few, passages in this tame, dreary, and safe novel that indicate when and how workers can make an impact on what's going on and are encouraged to do so. Here is such an occasion which demonstrates many things of diverse nature such as that, once more, our source materials are not records of real life but of mythologized and refracted images of life. It also demonstrates that, significantly enough, in the
more and more exploratory and still essentially didactic world of official
Soviet fiction, something like a real struggle for and against the rights of
workers happens to be going on. So here is the context embracing the last
fragment with which this section will be closed.

The planning institute for construction, attached to the plant, has
goofed to put it plainly. It designed a faulty and dangerous ventilation sys-
tem in a new smelting shop. The workers are angry. But some, the older men,
are less angry than others. The point is that these regular workers -- the
term is kadrovye rabochie -- have learned to endure the worst. "They had exper-
ienced far worse working conditions than these and considered them tolerable".
So it takes Rudaev's nudging them a lot before they speak out in a mass meeting.
When they do, however, recriminations surface loud and clear. The author finds
the release salutory:

It was good that the wave of protest came from the workers.
Their demands, independent of overall tactical and politi-
cal considerations, could not be left unanswered.

There is, thus, some clout here, both old and new, a part of it rooted in the
bolshevik tradition and another part growing out of the rapid modernization of
industry and, perhaps, the third and most paradoxical part growing out of the
already obsolete and stagnant features of the Soviet industrial economy.

Even a curious species among workers has something to say. The recently
emerging strong theme of the difference, in more sense than one, between older
and young workers might be noted here. It is one dynamic difference to which a
major chapter in this study is later dedicated.

Here is one of those people who challenges the pedantry of
bureaucrats. His beard is unkempt, his hair falls all over
his neck, his shirt is of bright magenta color and covered
with bouquets of flowers. He demands that the designers be
prosecuted in criminal court for sabotage. No more no less ...
The appeal of this long-haired individual could have sounded ominous had he not been all overgrown with hair. For if the truth were known, the appearance of a hippy in the workers' milieu [v rabochei srede] did not enjoy popularity. Hippies were laughed at and sometimes they were openly mocked. (p.146)

Yet, Zbandut, the perfectly good manager of the plant, is greatly pleased with the above protestor, and that not without a small touch of hypocrisy. The manager knew that he did not have to record and transmit the "ironic smiles" the workers present at the meeting threw at the young hippy speaker. What was important to the manager is that which he himself swiftly figured out: he "could make politics" out of this youngster's angry and aggressive speech. He was ready to advertise the long-haired youngster as the best of them all: the model working man - a rabochii chelovek.

4. A Dividend of Consequence

I have saved one fragment for the end. It speaks of systemic absurdity which ought to be emphasized here not for smug gloating over Soviet mishaps and difficulties but for the sake of a constant reminder that whatever interpretation or prediction is made about Soviet culture today, it is to be projected - JUST AS ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD - against the cancer of inexplicable absurdity.

If the damage, as we have seen, induced by a ruthless and arbitrary boss, such as Grebenshchikov, is bad enough, it must be considered together with that other damage perpetrated just as inevitably by the very system's inertia. The frequent systemic state of paralysis induces a great deal of melancholy among industrial lieutenants. Here are the impotent thoughts of the director responsible for the planning institute which did the construction of the smelting plant no good. In fact, it had let poisonous gases loose. He makes a pertinent
distinction between designers who came, one way or another, from the shop, hav- 
ing worked on the production line and those who came from schools without having worked in the factory. He respects the former and suggests that they will not build a sled inside the hut which it is impossible to drag out the door nor will they push and pull a cow on top of the roof with the purpose of feeding her hay there. The workers of his institute happened to do this all the time.

That's for one thing. In addition, there is nothing he can do about the utmost ineptitude of the whole outfit because of the entrenched and insuperable systemic arterio-sclerosis, compounded by latent corruption. He is extremely clear about that.

The staff was hired before he had taken over. It was formed the way layers of soil stack up under the influence of time. The former institute director could not resist the insistence of various influential fathers and the implorations of friends. He hired lots of employees not in the least according to the indicators of their ability or competence.

Now, the new director inherits this legacy lock, stock, and barrel. Understandably, he is obsessed with the desire to fire "a good third" of the crowd of designers. But it can't be done.

For there is no such article in labor legislation in which the permission is granted to fire people for lack of ability. For absenteeism - yes, for drinking - yes. But worthlessness is invulnerable. More than that, it is securely protected by law.

Paralyzed and frustrated, he angrily examines and reexamines the principle of remuneration, incentives, and rewards. He is stuck with it. We are stuck with that system too because it, too, emerges of late as a major theme in production fiction. And the system, as adapted to the planning institute, is so blatantly absurd that Kafka himself would gaze upon it incredulously. The unit of remuneration for everybody across the professional scale is a drawing sheet.
How good it is and what is its provenience does not matter. Despite endless discussion of the inequity of this stupid principle, imaginative and expert designers earn less than copyists. Thereby, time and again on the institute's honor board, "it is the copy girls who shine in their glory for overfulfillment of the norm".

Even worse, among the designers themselves, an able one who managed to solve a knotty problem . . . delivers as a rule two blue-print sheets per week while the girl next to him, most mediocre but aggressive and one who has gotten the knack for quick stereotyped work, bangs out ten sheets during the same period. When time will come to distribute vouchers for vacation centers, she will be the first recipient. And she will be the first to be given an apartment as well.

So there he paces, the conscientious industrial manager, up and down his balcony, during a sleepless night, in communion with the moon and in search of an answer for a big question.

So how should the creative minds be stimulated? Whose duty is it to encourage the designers? Should the planning institute do it? It has no funds for such a category of expenses. The client [zakazchik]? He has no legal base to do so. And so these questions hang in the air for years on end. (pp.131-132)

As they so hang over the skilled worker or specialist in Soviet society, they not only evoke a faintly mirrored recollection of "fair employment practices", "seniority rights", and "affirmative action" gone stale, but they lead us astray. Or to the point. Or both. It depends on the value attached to a broadly woven background tapestry for the documentation amassed in a study such as this one.

It seems to be necessary in this very spot, whether breaking the context, held so far together by centripetal analysis, or not to raise a question which
should have served as introduction sine qua non for this entire study. Why
Does Popov or other writers kindred to him, the safe production writers, in-
sert, even if briefly, a revelation of grotesque mismanagement of manpower, labor,
and productivity? Why have safe writers occasionally turned into muckrakers?
Within the existing domain of controls, such venturing cannot be due only to
their own desire to disclose the shortcomings and inequities of the Soviet system.
They are invited to criticise. Who invites them and why?

6. The Changing Function of Literature

This is a study of Soviet literature. There is no way of getting around it.
Whatever its extra-literary purpose, which happens to be an inquiry into the chang-
ing attitudes of that society toward the worker as well as into the changing atti-
tudes of the worker toward the world around him, this is a literary study. Should
one wish to find a more commodious roof for this effort, one might call it sociology
of literature. Whatever roof, foundation, and superstructure, - the materials are
tales, not life.

The relationship between literature and society has been, of course, through
the modern centuries in Russia, including the Soviet period, much akin to that in
other western societies. But not quite. It has been always marked by special
closeness, intensity, triumph, and tragedy. There is another way of putting it.
For a long time now, social forces in Russia have made either heroes or victims
out of writers or both at the same time. This alone speaks of the evolving com-
plexity, power and impotence of literature as a social institution. And since that
institution and its functions are far from static, even in dreary and repressive
periods, one must acknowledge the existence of a turbulent phenomenon, known as
the literary process. It is an ongoing conversation between literature and soc-

-35-
discussants are made to whisper. (In my book on the last period of stalinism, I have called the social space of gosizdat fiction the only open town hall in that society). Official men of letters today are downright enamoured of the very concept of the literary process (having, of course, invented the term) and they use it a great deal. Their fascination with the dynamics of ordering literature and delivering it make them tackle time and again the problem of correct periodization of Soviet literature around the big issues imposed by the regime. It is a big job and politically not altogether safe. Anyway, one of the important entries in the long awaited canonical ninth volume of the Kratkaya Literaturnaya Entsiklopediya, 1978, is entitled just that - "The Literary Process" - and holds in condensation a wealth of information on the official expectations as to the obedient writers' current tasks.

By implication and even less tacitly, all the official Novikovs - the caretakers of proper literature - testify that party controls over culture, art, and literature have in no way been abrogated. They have, however, been modified, becoming thereby more flexible. There occur, of course, spasms, after-thoughts, cancellations of permissive measures. Waves of new repressions come rolling regularly. But if compared with the period of high stalinism, literature has become more free. The reasons for the change are clear in some sense. But, then, in some other sense, they remain complex, puzzling, and penumbral. And it is only cautiously and tentatively that an explanation will be attempted here for the astonishing fact that not only do servile orthodox writers come up with disclosures of malfunction in Soviet society but that, when seen as a whole, current literature is deeply and eloquently permeated with melancholy. Liberal writers depict openly moods bordering on despair among citizens, hatred, loneliness, death,
and at times even abject poverty, the most daring of revelations, one might surmise.

To get closer to the very possibility of speculating about why literature, remaining political and politicised as an institution, has been permitted to reveal some dark features of Soviet life, one has to take a deep breath for a long and meandering background thought. The immediate task on hand is to demonstrate, somehow or other, that the function of Soviet literature as institution itself has been slowly changing. So, let's take that deep breath.

If literature, let us say in the Western world, has had and still has to perform three basic functions - first, the didactic with the author's charge to teach the reader while preaching unto him; the cognitive with the author's intention to explore reality for the reader or with him; and thirdly the aesthetic with the author's innermost desire to delight, enrapture, startle, or even terrify the reader with the intrinsic values and qualities of the literary work itself - then, if all this is true, certain generalizations can be attempted.

The forces that had stimulated the literary expression in 1917, in the revolutionary period and long thereafter had promulgated and championed the didactic function. Literature was to indoctrinate the populace in the values of the regime with the glorification of revolutionary public values obliterating private values all over the place; with the upward and onward marches of the proletarian masses; with collective hymns; with self-sacrificial saintly heroes carrying the red flag into the lethal and victorious battle. There is no need to describe the party spirit of that period further. To make the Bolshevik catechism palatable to the mass consumer, elements of cognition and aestheticism were admixed with it.
In due time, the two revolutions and even the construction periods had receded into history. So did the Second World War. (In every possible context, however, the throbbing and anguished memory of the war still holds the people together). So did, in a much more perilous, unsettling, and provisional manner, some of the more nightmarish aspects of Stalin's rule.

Way back then, at the time of Stalin's several funerals, the blend of the functions of literature was altered. The first timid shift away from didacticism and toward cognitive exploration - or realism - preceded Stalin's death and has been gaining strength ever since. This means above all that the flagrant, vulgar, bucolic, politicized prevarication and beautification of reality — the infamous lakirovka or "gloss and polish" under the theoretical framework of socialist realism — has been revised and removed as the sole purpose of literature. With this revision there issued a great deal of melancholy and suffering. The liberal writers began to focus in a stubborn and compassionate manner on the individual, and not on the collective, to explore his sense of self under the newly permissible microscope. And it is the young person who appears more and more frequently struggling with the dreaded pustota or emptiness, devastating emptiness. It is, it might be noted, a prevalent condition for the young worker. The not so liberal writer such as our Vladimir Popov remains faithful to the collective but undertakes just the same to disclose some pretty harsh inequities in the economic and social conflicts of the country. To be sure, the old-fashioned orthodox critics are upset by all this, quod erat demonstrandum.

Why has all this revelation become possible? Why is all the outpouring of melancholy and of all the dislike of citizens for each other not been stopped by censorship?
The answer to the second question is simple. Censorship in all its re-
censions does not stop the various waves of disclosures and indictments of non-
and malfeasance because it is told not to. This means that revelatory criticism
of the many systemic shortcomings is not only tolerated but invited from above.

Why? Well, that's the first question and I don't know of any that is more tough.
For, as one might well keep repeating, neither our indifference nor our concern
make current Soviet reality simple. At times it even seems that the more we know
it, the less we understand.

Much has not changed since Stalin's reign. Much has changed. What remains
unchanged is the fierce, all-absorbing, existential need of the regime to perpetu-
ate itself. What has changed are the means considered for that purpose. A sub-
stantial part of the populace is being pulled up on the social mobility escalator.

One of the big questions is whether the steady growth of the working class can be
thought of as an ascent up the social scale for the young workers. Whether this
study can come up with an unequivocal answer to that or not, one of its main con-
cerns is just this question. Meantime, while some of the Soviet citizenry, in
sharply and abrasively divided groups and subgroups, pushes up the steps somehow
or other -- and so much of gosizdat literature pictures that upward social thrust
which in itself represents the very viability of the system --, alliances of var-
ious kinds are being concluded between the ruling class and those who hold tight to
the escalator. There is a lot of dealing and wheeling going on, an activity in-
dispensable to the system's maintenance. Incredible as it may sound on first
sound, the maintenance of the system is now equally predicated on criticism, in
fact, on fairly open and thorough criticism. This does not mean that the core
area of Soviet society's formative, as well as ossified, principles and myths
do not remain untouchable, unspeakable, totally tabooed. But away from the core,
the mix of what can and can't be examined and criticized is by no means frozen. Curiously, a certain kind of cover-up might be considered as reprehensible and perilous as a certain kind of disclosure.

This brings one to another point. The system's strength today grows, perhaps, directly out of the circumstance that it no longer fears itself. It fears only a counter-system. If for the sake of clarity, somewhat pedantic at this point, one should distinguish between the system and the regime, the latter fears one thing but fears it with might and main, totally and absolutely and paranoically. (It has always done so but now more than ever). Organization produces these mortal chills, i.e., an organized counter-system or counter-force or organized opposition plain and simple.

Therefore, forcefully and categorically, the system separates criticism from dissent and dissent from opposition. The first is an in-system phenomenon. The third operates outside the system and is, therefore, considered lethal. The one in-between, the second, one might say, swings. The polarization between tolerance toward in-system criticism and even sponsorship thereof and, as of old, the ruthless persecution of opposition explains something about the current stage of the system's development. And it is not insignificant. Beyond that, it does two things for the topical needs of this study. It helps to understand the recent large amassment of evidence in fiction about the system's ills, both chronic and acute. Secondly, it confirms the urgency of the central inquiry of this study: is it in any way conceivable that the Soviet industrial worker might organize his discontent? At the same time, the regime's violent phobia against organized dissent stands as warning that gosizdat fiction will not exactly display the worker's urge for self-rule as a topical center-piece and that we will have to go on
picking up bits and pieces of indirect evidence. Such shredded evidence, to
boot, tends to be multi-directional. But these are the rules and the risks.
Now back to the salt mine.
The semantic trouble - not only symbolizing but enacting one of the key challenges and problems of this research - attaches to the word rabochii qua qualitative adjective because it embraces an ambiguity. The three word cluster can be rendered as "The Library of Novels About Workers" (clumsy, yet pretty accurate) or "The Library of Novels About the Work of Workers" or "The Library of Industrial Novels" or "The Library of Production Novels". Moreover, these are not the only possibilities.

"Production ladder" seems a narrower notion than the Russian "proizvodstvennaya lestnitsa" which approaches the proportions of something like an "all-industrial structure". I harp on the semantic discrepancies not out of sheer pedantry but, rather, because ambiguities of current sovietese do two things. They cover up some problems and they help propel some ideological platitudes. Thus, anything and everything concerning the worker is both covered up and uncovered all the time. I will harp on this paradox as we go along.

Boris Kostyukovsky, "Afterword" to V. Popov's I eto nazyvaetsya budni (And You Call It Doldrums), Moscow, 1974, p.491.

The mysterious "preceding" years alluded to by Kuzmenko here are obviously those of the late stalinist era.


The joining of values and myths was performed masterfully in regard to the blend required in the late stalinist period by Vsevolod Kochetov in his impeccable stalinist novel Zhurbiny (The Zhurbin Family) of 1952 which brought him loud acclaim and generated a widely celebrated film Bolshaya semya (The Big Family). Much in Popov's fiction of the nineteen seventies is still reminiscent of Kochetov despite Kuzmenko's hopes mentioned in this chapter.
8/ This happens in the first novel of this formidable diptych, the celebrated Obretesh v boyu (You'll Gain It Through Battle) of 1972.

9/ He does, mirabile dictu, use the appropriate sociological expression here: posloinoe tyagotenie which is both amusing, as no doubt intended by the author, and indicative of a certain popularity of sociological surveys and texts.

10/ Here as elsewhere when an explanation seems necessary as to how fiction is deciphered in this study, I must refer to an exhaustive treatment of this methodology in Part I, chpt. 2 of my book In Stalin's Time: Middle class Values in Soviet Fiction, Cambridge University Press, 1976 and 1979.

11/ The most famous of Soviet pedagogues, Anton Makarenko, 1888-1939, launched the criticism of middleclass parents for the corrosive pampering of their offspring in his Kniga dlya roditeloi (Book for Parents) of 1937.

12/ It is my conviction that post-graduate courses must be taught in order to facilitate the understanding of the Soviet industrial premium system. Its internal mechanisms of control and incentive are intricate. Whatever else they do, they facilitate the identification of scapegoats for the outpouring of the group's frustration. Working Soviet citizens are greatly preoccupied with the problem and equity of bonuses. The film so titled - Premiya - held the public entranced for several years. The hero in it turns the premium down - because undeserved (!) - for himself and his team. The tale on which the scenario was based represents one of the key items in the pool of source materials I have chosen and assembled for this study. Meanwhile, the classic scholarly volumes on Soviet wages are Janet Chapman's Real Wages in Soviet Russia, Cambridge, Mass., 1963 and her Wage Variation in Soviet Industry: The Impact of the 1956 - 60 Wage Reform, Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1970. Her illuminating contribution "Recent Trends in the Soviet Industrial Wage Structure" in industrial Labor in the U.S.S.R., edited by A. Kahan and B.A. Ruble, Pergamon Press, 1979 must also be added here.
The entry is divided into two parts. The first, signed by V.E. Khalisov is a historical survey of "the historical existence of literature, its function and evolution" (no less). The second part, holding clues on the official position on many issues we are exploring in this study, is called "The Literary Process of the 'Sixties and 'Seventies". It is signed by Vassilii Vassilievich Novikov, born in 1916, not to be confused with a multitude of other Novikovs. This one is an orthodox literary scholar of stalinoid proclivity whose right-think influence seems to be growing. The author of monographs on Chekhov and Gorky and specialist in disquisitions on the dogma of partiinost and narodnost, he holds, ominously enough, since 1948 the chair of theory of literature in the Academy of Social Sciences attached to the Central Committee of the Party. His relevant work for our purposes bears the intranslatable title Geroicheskomu vremeni - geroicheskoe iskusstvo, 1964, the gist of which is "let's have heroes for our heroic times!" Novikov writes on production fiction. We shan't be able to avoid quoting him in the future and might mention in this spot his article "Geroi i trud" (The Hero and Labor), Novyi Mir, No.6, 1977, a broadly gauged piece on managerial problems in production fiction where the writers of mammoths we are looking at such as Popov and Kolesnikov are praised. Good for them.

I. Production Novels (the "mammoths")

The least readable Soviet genre, alas, is the novel in general and the production novel in particular which, among other defects, tends to grow to an unduly large size. An occasionally courageous Soviet literary critic agrees that something is wrong with these books:

It is paradoxical but among books about the working class, which are awaited with the same hope by the readers as by the critics, one chances in the last years more and more upon books which resemble each other. These books seem to be prepared according to the laws of a simplistic literary scheme.

You can say that again. Nevertheless, the production novel, faute de mieux, is the foundation of this study. I shall line up here only those that can be considered really useful.

1. So, Mikhail Kolesnikov, born in 1918, a cadre or professional military man for 26 years and a prolific writer, is responsible — among many other volumes we are not going to go into here — for a huge sequel involving an honest to goodness smith (kuznets), humble but stubborn, named Altunin who climbs from a simple laborer all the way up to a deputy minister. Now, that's climbing. Yes, sir.

As already suggested there are echoes and contrasts with Popov's epic. What matters most is that the villains are much alike. Even their names sound similar.

Geography matters less. This time the long saga transpires very far north where —
Altunin undertakes to laboriously fight for the cause of creating frost-resistant devices to build bigger and better excavators. The Altunin story takes many pages to tell. But then he goes far.

Izotopy dlia Altunina (Isotopes for Altunin), Moscow, 1974

Altunin prinimayet reshenie (Altunin Makes A Decision), Znamya, Nos. 1 & 2, 1976

Shkola ministrov (Training for Ministers), Znamya, Nos. 10 & 11, 1977

2. Boring, extremely boring, but important because it invites comparison with Popov's and Kolesnikov's novels and also because therein is to be found a flashback opening up a revelatory perspective, is Sergei Boldyrev's (born in 1910) novel Shest dni (Six Days), Moscow 1977. It's about metal workers again. The author revisits places and people whom he wrote about twenty years earlier in a proper stalinist-molded novel of 1953, Reshayushchie gody (Decisive Years). Within the narrow confines of a right-think sweet-script, the changing direction of the new novel toward the newly required and expected complications is noteworthy in itself and in comparison with the other mammoth complications.

3. Another big-big production novel is Ilya Shtemler's Obychnyi mesyats (An Ordinary Month). This time it is also a machine building plant, engaged in manufacturing instruments. Of a diversified nature. There are lots and lots of production problems. Father and son, as center-story, have problems with each other. They are both workers if mechanics are workers. Perhaps, they are.

4. A prolific young writer, Yurii Skop, after a number of well-received novellas, has delivered himself of a big novel Tekhnika (Technology), Novyi mir, Nos. 2 & 3, 1977. The book deals with manufacturers and even ordinary workers. Of course, there are things to report...
the book is full of "news of fresh disasters".

5. I would like to mention three readable books of this kind. Oleg Kuvaev was born in 1934 and died in 1975. It is a loss for Russian literature. He was talented. A geologist by training, he wrote about explorers and the Far North. In his best known work Territoriya (Territory) of 1974, action takes place on the shores of the Arctic Ocean where search for gold goes on. Workers make their appearance, indeed, and conflicts are many. The hero, Ilya Chinkov, is characterized as strong-willed and interesting. The historical background offered by the author is also interesting. Anything in the large books written about the Far North tends to be more interesting than the innards of the mammoth production books taking up residence in normal climes.

6. A. Kashtanov's Zavodskii raion (Factory District), Novyi Mir, Nos. 7 & 8, 1973 is a novella. It is really a povest, a term I find untranslatable but close enough to novella to avoid a long disquisition here. A novella or povest is, as a rule, readable, unlike a huge novel. This one has a double theme and a double focus: workers on one hand and scientists and professionals on the other. So, naturally for a novella it's crowded. But just because of the two worlds depicted, the story is informative on divisiveness and especially on the alienation of some workers from the intelligentsia. The story also shows a woman worker advancing rather rapidly with all the special problems that that entails.

7. So far my favorite tale of this kind is Vil Lipatov's (a major prose writer) Skazanie o direktore Pronchatove (The Tale About Director Pronchatov). Even the setting is a relief after so many blast furnaces: the lumber industry. The hero, extremely busy, wears two hats. He is both manager and chief engineer. This long tale is part of Lipatov's collection entitled Perevonskii detektiv
There are others, many many of them (and many many more are rapidly being written): M. Bubennov's *Stremnina* (The Rapids), Yu. Avdeenko's *Dikii khmel* (Wild Hops), A. Krivonosov's *Pozhivem - uvidim* (Let's Live and See), K. Logunov's *Odezherzhite* (The Obsessed), V. Krasilshchikov's *Vechnyi ogon* (Eternal Fire) ... etc.

II. The Plays

Drama is surely an effective literary genre in the Soviet Union more than elsewhere, perhaps, for the system to communicate "artistically" with the citizenry. Drama helps to establish at once as it were an intensive relationship with the mass spectator. The bridge is a real one, given the people's love for the theater or any other spectacle. But falsehood and hypocrisy, too, show more readily in a play than in the other literary genres. One holds a book in one's hands and one can put it easily away. For a while. To gain distance. It is not so easy to walk out of a theater. Anyhow, ... "production" plays alone deserve a detailed and thorough study. For this brief bibliographical note only those plays are picked out which were staged in the best theaters, were a great success, and kept the public enthralled. (How enthralled the worker was to whom all these plays in some way or another are dedicated is another matter.)

1. For perspective and background, there is no other way but to start with Aleksandr Volodin's (born in 1919) *Fabrichnaya devchonka* (common and colloquial as the second word in the title is, it is hard to translate which is a pity because the very flavor of it is part of the play: Factory Girl or Factory Gal), *Teatr*, 9, 1956. The play created a sensation. It serves the purposes of this study by providing a truly revelatory flashback. It is not so
much class hostility that stand out as honest to goodness class differences, involving conflicts among peers - young workers - around a real proletarian young girl, a textile worker, with her own values, her courage to be herself, to behave accordingly and to stand up against hypocrisy and slander.

To get on with this task of a core bibliography, I have omitted mention so far of literary criticism. I make an exception in this case to point out a controversial item: E. Surkov's review of this play "Zhenka Shulzhenko, ee druzya i nedrugi" (Zhenka Shulzhenko, Her Friends and Enemies), Znamya 3, 1958.

2. The scenario of a widely accepted and widely discussed film Premiya (Bonus) of 1975, which received the highest film prize, i.e., the State Prize of 1976, is based on a play by Aleksander Gelman (born 1933 and starting out as a metal worker) called Protkol ochkovo zasedaniya (The Minutes of a Meeting), Teatr No.2, 1976

Once more breaking the self-imposed rule, an article in Pravda should be mentioned by one G. Kapralov, "Vse nachalos s Premii" (Everything Started With the Bonus), Pravda, July 6, 1975

The film and the play both seem to have, indeed, touched a live nerve in Soviet daily travails. As a play, it was staged in many theaters. As a film, it was the talk of the town. The talk still lingers on, quite loudly. What was all the fuss about? An extremely positive and noble foreman refuses to accept the bonus for his team, including himself, of course, because he finds it ... undeserved. That's what! And that's veritable hubris!

Two plays echo each other closely in that as main theme they both glorify and implicitly at the same time criticize (not too much) the newly stylish unheroic and ice cold hero, the new industrial "business man". The plays stirred
up quite a commotion. Each had stimulated a large scale conference involving authors, spectators, actors, and directors and published in Teatr, of course, the leading theatrical journal. The plays are

3/ Ignatii Dvoretsky, Chelovek so storony (The Outsider), Teatr, no.10, 1972 and

4. Gennady Bokarev, Stalevary (Steel Founders), Teatr, No.4, 1973

The name of the film based on Bokarev's play is Samyi zharkii mesiats (The Hottest Month).

The heroes of both these pieces are, in a way, quite peculiar because both ruthless, if for a good cause, and cold. But they are good organizers and show insight into the famous NTR, the scientific technological revolution, with its demands and "problematics". The worker does not come off well under the circumstances.

Just two more plays:


The playwright is closely associated with the Sovremennik theater in Moscow where this play was very successfully performed. For a change, automobile production is involved, with metal both hot and cold, and with a plot that rather curiously remains hanging in the air with all sorts of folks monitoring each other's values and integrity and creating conflicts all over the place.

6. With all the love and care for the theater and with all the regime's constant awareness of the theater's political usefulness, the drama was maimed by stalinism more severely than, perhaps, any other genre. This is understandable and paradoxical at the same time. One might even say that drama has not yet recovered from the special pressures of the stalinist period. But there are, if
very few, talented playwrights. Among them is Viktor Rozov whose comedy, not all that funny, is called Situatsiya (The Situation), Teatr No.5, 1975. The work offers a plethora of rich detail relevant to and revealing of the process of the worker's deproletarianization, a concept that approaches the hybrid worker's middleclass culture with which this study is deeply concerned. Tellingly, the play involves young people, young workers, climbing up in search of status.

III. The Tales (A Goldmine)

I relish this part of the bibliographical report which largely concerns povesti or novellas and regret only the stringency of the selection of its items for the time being. It would be appropriate to call this section "A Goldmine". Each piece here mentioned yields insight and important information.

1. As background piece, anchoring the historical perspective firmly, Lev Ovalov's novella Boltovnya (Chatter), Oktiabr, Nos. 4 & 5, 1929 is not only striking in itself but downright indispensable. It's quite a find and I owe it to Edward J. Brown. It had been a forgotten work. The author, born in 1905, was 4/ the saying goes "unlawfully repressed" from 1941 to 1956 in a concentration camp, a very telling biographical "detail" and a voucher for the fact that he had, indeed, written about a worker. The story is first person chatter. An older typographical worker engages in meditation. It is all here assembled in a convincing bundle of themes: pride of a worker, stubbornness, hostility toward the party (!). It also offers an illustration for a statement about lingering matters made much later by Boris Weissner:

Metal workers who currently number 9.3 million men, have both the strongest feeling of class consciousness among Soviet workers and the finest link to the revolutionary and trade union tradition.

Traditionally, typographers were also among the militants before and quite some time after the revolution.
2. If one keeps in mind the theme of pride as an expressed desire to safeguard one's own integrity, the tale by Vladimir Voinovich (yes, the Voinovich) Khochu byt chestnym (I Want to be Honest), Novyi mir, No.2.1963 is revealing. It is the story of an honest building construction foreman. The hero Samokhin is all the more impressive because he works in one of the most corrupt industries, veritably riddled with slip-shod workmanship, theft, and bribery. This interesting novella amply presages Gelman's famous Premiya (Bonus). This foreman also refuses, absolutely refuses to proclaim a new building as finished because he is ashamed of the poor quality of work and of cheating that goes on all around him. Thereby he loses that famous bonus for himself and others.

How much more a talented and woeful short tale can communicate about ordinary hardships, conflicts, and dreams than an overstuffed and overcrowded mammoth novel! The counter-theme to that of the defense of a working man's honor is a recently repetitive theme that fascinates everybody and brings discomfort to some. It is the matter of obmeshchanianie of the worker, the monumental theme of the worker's embourgeoisement. I am hard put to establish a preference between the tales that enlighten one more than many others on just this widely spreading issue. Let the stories line up without being ranked.

3. Evgenii Gushchin's (a young writer's) novella (povest) Po skhodnoi tsene (At Reduced Price), Nash Sovremennik No.8, 1975 is a goldmine all by itself. The tale is rich and painful. The characterization of the skilled worker Semion Tabakaev is gripping as he gradually loses respect for himself, imbued with regret and melancholy over his yielding to acquisitiveness and greed. The very process of embourgeoisement stands out in sharp relief as well as the woeful isolation of
the sinning hero. The sense of self of a worker is damaged in and by the atmosphere of the hybrid new culture of the worker's "middloclassdom". It's a great story of compromise, stupidity, hostility and melancholy.

4. Georgii Vladimov's (the brilliant author of Ruslan and a courageous man, indeed) novella Bolshaya ruda (The Big Ore), Moscow, 1971 is a superb tale in itself and for the core task of this study. It's a tragic tale about an honest to goodness young worker, an itinerant chauffeur. His needs and values are unfolded with the controlled mastery of the realist tradition; his nesting desires and his restlessness; his need to settle and his need to wander. It's a beautiful story of a strong individuality, of poverty, of alcoholism, of peregrinations, and of a cock-eyed love.

5. Among the talented playwrights there certainly belongs Mikhail Roshchin. He writes prose fiction too. His novella Moi uchitel Grisha Panin (My Teacher Grisha Panin) in his collection of stories entitled 24 Dnia v raiu (24 Days in Paradise), Moscow, 1971 is thematically close to items 3 and 4 and shows the reaction to and gnawing and inarticulate disillusionment in a very young worker, a teen-age apprentice, with the relentless acquisiveness of his mentor in the plant whom he was eager to greatly admire. The uninspired and uninspiring values and the constrained horizon of a hard-working worker, not in any way terribly discontent, is the concern of this tale.

6. The restiveness and lostness of a young metal worker (welder) are subtly presented as those of a problematic character. The author is the young and prolific Yurii Antropov. The story is Pered snevom (Before the Snow), Molodaya Gvardiya, No.6, 1975 (the author clearly is an eager beaver who has already written a mammoth novel that I don't even want to mention here).
7. Into this series of informative, true-ringing tales about young workers there clearly belongs one about a young girl, being apprenticed to work with a calculating machine in a payroll office of a huge plant. The author is the young Leningrad writer Alla Drabkina. The story is Okhtinskii most (Okhtin Bridge). It is to be found in the collection Daleko ot aprelia (It's a Long Time to April), Leningrad, 1971. It is all here en racourci: deproletarianization, deheroization (I apologize for the big words), lower class self-consciousness, embourgeoisement, hunting after husbands, unhappy love, divisiveness, seeking status, and being put down for being a worker ... a rich, quiet and perceptive tale.

8. One other novella about a woman worker by a woman is Irina Velembovskaya's Sladkaya zhenshchina (A Sweet Woman) (the lady works in a pastry factory, hence the nicely ambiguous title since she is not sweet at all herself), Znamya, No.3, 1973, out of which a film was made in 1977. It too is a sad and somewhat harsh story of love and life gone wrong because of the value preferences and flagrant meshchanstvo of the heroine who quite clearly is a negative heroine. The author this time takes a strong stand against the embourgeoisement of the worker. We take a stand to cheer the story because of the richly detailed deployment of middleclass values.

   Two more stories about young workers, what they are, and what they search for.

9. A. Chernousov, Praktikant (Field Worker), Sibirskie ogni, No.1, 1973 ... with accidents, shtumovshchina (shock work), crises galore in a Siberian machine building enterprise. As already insisted upon, anything in or about Siberia is interesting.
10. So is the collection of mini-stories, only in size, by one of my favorite writers, involving young construction workers. The author is Anatolii Pristavkin. The work is called Zapiski moego sovremennika (Notes of My Contemporary) in the author's collection Sibirskie povesti (Siberian Tales), Novosibirsk, 1961.

11. I shall now point, without turning loquacious and agitated, to a work of art, to real literature, to a story which is one of the cornerstones of this study. The fact that it is beautifully written aside, it is a shame that Vitalii Semin is not known outside of the Soviet Union. Alas, he recently died in Rostov-na-Donu where he had always lived. He was born there in 1927. His novella Semero v odnom dome (Seven in One House), Novyi mir, No.6, 1965 had created quite a controversy. Nevermind. It is for us an early major piece on the culture of the okraina, the rim of the city, neither city nor country (nor anything like an American suburb) out of which the new-old worker's culture grows. Moreover, the fascinating central character, and this time real heroine, is an aging worker called Mulya (Mom), a sister to Solzhenitsyn's unforgettable Matrena, THE ONLY TYPE IN ALL SOVIET LITERATURE THAT SUCCEES AS HERO or heroine. There seem to be no male heroes about of any kind. Mulya is a factory worker employed in a leather processing plant. She is the same at work and at home—holding everybody in her world together. This story is, perhaps, the most significant find for this study.

12. This is number twelve and the twelfth hour for this essay. It is hard to bid farewell without mentioning just one sam and tam published item, meaning one that could not have passed censorship. It greatly helps the understanding of the problem of alcoholism, the problem of the worker, industrial worker or any other worker, and, perhaps, the only passionate avocation that gives the Soviet
worker's culture both its shape and contents. Veniamin Erofeev Moskva-Potushki (suburban train from Moscow to Potushki), Paris: V'CA, 1976. Even if adjectives stumble over each other, the only way to describe this journey into the shaky and wondrously ornate psyche of a chronic drunk is to say that the author brilliantly discloses the baroque, bizarre, grotesque and funny-tragic inner world of an intelligent-rabochii en rapid route to skid row and destruction.

IV. The Ancestors

As a minimum number of ancestors of the recent production novel, six books should be mentioned among those where it all started, namely, postwar conflicts. There are many more. But these suffice to stake one corner of our tent for the time being, without comment: Vladimir Dudintsev, Ne khlebom edinyi, (Not by Bread Alone), 1956 Vera Panova, Kruzhilikha (The Plant Kruzhilikha), 1947 Vsevolod Kochetov, Zhurbiny (The Family Zhurbin), 1952 Galina Nikolaeva, Bitva v puti (The Struggle on a Journey), 1957 Vadim Kozhevnikov, Znakomtes, Baluev (Meet Baluev), 1960 Daniil Granin, Idu na grozu (Into the Storm), 1962

V. Literary Critics

This essay does not include references to nationality writers who write about their own workers. I am not sure at all of that area. Nor does this essay include relevant books by Western scholars for the simple reason that I had no time to study them. Just the opposite reason forces me to quit here, because of pressure of time, even a tentative discussion of literary criticism germane to the theme and image of the worker. There is simply too much of it not only in Soviet journals but in my files.
I would like to point out only that Alexander Yanov's "Rabochaya tema: Sotsiologicheskie zametki o literaturnoi kritike" (The Workers' Theme: Sociological Remarks About Literary Criticism), Novyi mir, No.3, 1971 was an early inspiration to me; that the symposium Rabochii klass i literatura (The Working Class and Literature), Druzhba narodov, No.3, 1970 is a large item without which one cannot proceed in the study of the worker; and that two books, even if exasperating at times, must be tackled: A. Geideko, Rabochii v sovremennoi literaturu (The Worker in Contemporary Literature), Moscow, 1972 and Yu. Kuzmenko, Mera istiny (A Measure of Truth), Moscow, 1971.

other than that

I am convinced that there are several thousand graphomaniacs who write literary criticism in the Soviet Union. I know now who among them specializes in writing about workers and about literature about workers. They must be watched and read. I have made an alphabetic choice among them of no more than a devil's dozen: B. Anashenkov, L. Arninsky, G. Brovman, V. Geideko, G. Gots, G. Koiranskaya, Yu. Kuzmenko, N. Mashovets, V. Novikov, D. Tevekelyan, S. Rassadin, M. Sinelnikov and, of course, Feliks Kuznetsov out of the alphabetic order for good reason. He is rapidly assuming a very powerful position in the official literary world.
1/ D. Tevekelyan "A Novel on the Theme of Workers", Novyi mir, No.9, 1971, p.259 (Roman na rabochuyu temu).

2/ It was staged in Leningrad and in Moscow (in the prestigious Moscow Art Theater) under the title Zasedanie partkoma (A Party Committee Meeting).

3/ I have discussed these plays and the discussions in "The Waning Theme of the Worker as Hero in Recent Soviet Literature", Industrial Labor in the U.S.S.R., edited by A. Kahan and B.A. Ruble, Pergamon Press, 1979


5/ Boris Haissner, editor (and author of the contribution from which the quotation is taken), Social Change in the Soviet Union: Russia's Path Toward an Industrial Society, University of Notre Dame Press, 1972, p.94
Tentative Summary

There are two kinds of pianists: explorers and oracles. Those who explore - or read - as they play, imbue thereby the final chords with suspense. On the other hand, those who firmly project the finale from the very first note on, make declarations. The effectiveness of either stylization can be debated. The choice of stylization or of the principle for the deployment of materials in a pilot study such as this revolves around the matter of connecting the hypothesis with evidence and validation and, further, of apportioning the space and order for each.

The choice here is to state some conclusions in an oracular manner. They are, of course, subject to revision. In addition, they are offered with the knowledge that some propositions cannot in any way be validated - at least not with the materials here examined - and must remain hypothetical.

I assume that the person who reads and evaluates this report is familiar with the wording of the proposal for this study and with the contents of my reports of May 5 and July 23, 1979.

In drastic oversimplification, it might be said that the informed yet speculative premises of this study are as follows:

1. In recent and current plays, novels, tales it is hard to find the worker presented as a hero. This is a sharp contrast with earlier Soviet periods. Such deheroization, although not restricted to workers alone, is not an accident
(nothing in Soviet literature ever is) and therefore it is incumbent to look for a cause.

2. Well, literature published by thegosizdat deals with the manifestation of a phenomenon more readily than with causation. In this case, orthodox literary criticism has sounded in the last ten to fifteen years such loud and incessant alarm about just this trend toward the deheroization of the worker that the whole issue becomes hopelessly obfuscated and will have to hover in hypothetical limbo, as just suggested.

3. The industrial worker's deheroization and altogether removal from the center of the literary stage indicates, despite the penumbral nature of the matter, a bigger and more penumbral issue behind it: the regime's ambivalence toward the worker and more: some spasms of anxiety about the worker as a class. This explains the continued glorification of the worker, somewhat disembodied and unplugged, on top of the depletion of his heretofore model-making self-sacrificial virtues in the stories themselves. Ambiguity reigns.

4. There is nothing penumbral about this fourth premise. It is clear, firm, unequivocal. If there is anything the regime is paranoid about, it is the possibility of self-rulled and self-willed organization of some citizens, especially the worker who can, indeed, bring the country down or up.
5. If Soviet society is a class society - and it's hard to see what else it by now could well be - , there is but little doubt that neither the peasant nor the intelligentsia nor the middleclass has ever made serious trouble. Is the industrial worker capable thereof?

6. Obviously, the above number five is the key question of this study, if it's not to disappoint those who expect predictability and prediction. Divisiveness and cliquishness are tearing and pulling at the Soviet social fabric. Fiction reflects this openly and emphatically. But cliquishness is not solidarity. The process of human association requires a different glue for the one as over the other. Cliquishness is inner-directed as it were; and centripetally pragmatic and profitable; solidarity, if it means anything, is outer-directed and thereby politicalized. In the Soviet context, it is dangerous because quixotic. If solidarity per se is not yet organization, the latter is built on the former, a condition sine qua non. Is any sizable group among the masses in the Soviet Union capable of spiritual and political solidarity? The unquestionable, is quarrelsome, solidarity of the dissident intelligentsia numerically not strong enough to signify a significant answer germane to 290 million people. Yet why can the superb resilience of the dissident intelligentsia not relevant. This, then, is a question of scale.
But dismissing it would make further research of any kind about the worker stupid. Let us not forget that the Russian worker in the past has shown a great capacity to nurture solidarity. That's how, after all, the revolution was both made and later endured.

7. Mine is not a statistical study. Nor is it an economic one. Nor political in a narrow sense. It is a social study. Nor am I too sure of the nature and feasibility of a checking and validating procedure. Nevertheless, the materials I have been working with—and, if you wish, the tea-leaf reading method used—suggests very strongly that Soviet society is sundered into two parts below the ruling group and the ruling class, if there is such a thing, and the several élites. It is split between the poor and the mobile. The poor don't seem to move. Nowhere. Nor do they seem to be willfully annihilated. They could have been. They seem to be a motley conclave: the unemployed among the seasonal workers; delinquents among the young or young pilgrims in search of a counterculture; the unemployable; the aging war widows of whom there are still some around; the drunks; the lingering remnants of terror and war; the lost and the forgotten even among the young. And there are other more seamy inhabitants of the Second Circle. Poverty seems at a standstill. Its victims, as just suggested, do not seem
to move. This impression, however, is not final as nothing at this stage of this study is. This mute social margin of the poor requires a penetrating and stubborn examination. And although prose writers and poets have commenced to show poverty, even abject poverty at times, instead of having it tabooed for so long altogether, they do not approach it centrally as yet. So, the question remains as to whether there is a linkage, a connection, a passage way of some sort between the poverty and the mobility zones. Before any large scale predictions are possible, the question must at least be raised as to whether a bitter kind of equity will be restored by levelling the core of that society, cutting everybody to size as it were by devaluating the ruble, for instance, or whether by prudent, costly, and effective means the bottom poor will be propelled to enter the moving zone. (We must not forget here or anywhere else that there still is that third Soviet world which de profundis continues to underpin Soviet society and without the study of which the study of the superstructure as it were makes no sense. The world of incarceration and of violence, the Gulag, is there. The topic remains taboo for literature, God knows, and ignorance of it remains the corporate shame of the Western world.) Now, where is the worker and his future in relationship to the demarcation border between the social zones of stagnation
and of mobility? Clearly, alas, if one fails to define
the worker as a distinct and sui-generis socio-economic
category, one cannot begin to answer this question with
any kind of viable precision. Nevertheless, massive
reading of novels, inhabited by a multitude and variety
of images of workers points to the following conclusion:

As long as a significant number and variety of peo-
ple is drawn from below into the industrial working force
and, just as importantly, as long as the escalator of in-
centives, rewards, and status keeps moving, even if slowly
(but without offensive stoppage or absurdity or mockery
of the young through phoney competition), the possibility
of the worker organizing against the system is minimal,
not to say negligible.

Also, from the point of view of the rulers, an attrac-
tive option may open up. The very perusal of it is riddled
with ifs. Nevertheless, if top leadership should be rejuv-
enated; if long-term human planning should win as over the
preference for short-term policies; if the indisputable fact
that the majority of workers today does not strain itself,
to say the least, on the job will be faced squarely as an
urgent problem; if the escalator will continue moving ef-
effectively enough to pull up people from the bottom and
create a large enough new caste of top-dog workers, of
rabochie-intelligency who might harmoniously join with
intelligently-rational in closed and self-conscious ranks; if a shift in special and not exactly overtly advertised alliances with various conclaves, casts, groups and what have you be possibly contemplated by the ruling elite ... then, this ruling elite might, once more, review its "indebtedness" to bureaucratic parasitism and consider making a significant investment in an instrumentally and economically viable concordat with the new hybrid to whom we have been pointing, - the upgraded worker. In accordance with this possible shift, the most interesting transaction to watch will be an attempt to really upgrade the honor of work as creativity in order to intercept the top-dog worker from being seduced into the bureaucratic apparatus. In addition, somebody along the line will have to receive permission to take risks.

From the point of view of social change, all this speculation is predicated on the fact that the middle class itself is expanding due to the depletion of the rural population in favor of industrial labor which sooner or later as anywhere else in industrial societies, will join the middle class in appreciable numbers.

This is a "soft" long term view. It has been suggested by the massive literary documentation underlying this study, (not deployed in this untimely report). Obviously, such in a sense homogenous Soviet documentation in and by itself.
tends to point cumulatively to a somewhat idyllic view of the future. In the event, however, that, as the saying goes, all other things remain equal, i.e., the Soviet economy does not collapse and other unfathomable intervening variables remain under control, there is no reason to believe that the skilled industrial worker, while gaining more and more social and economic space, should at any time and in any way prefer strife, sabotage, confrontation to his own embourgeoisement.

The crucial change to watch with the eye of a hawk is the growth or the closing of the gap between the skilled and the unskilled industrial worker.

A smooth increment of middleclass ranks will enlarge the gap between industrial labor's haves and have-nots. Discontent is on the bottom, down there with poverty. The tales that form our documentation do not much depict the degree of poverty which the marginal unskilled worker endures. But hints are many and enlightening. The need is great. Adverse circumstances, which will induce the narrowing of the gap between the skilled and unskilled, might stimulate genuine solidarity and entice the entire labor force to thereby politicize its discontent.

But whatever the possibility of projecting, predicting, speculating from our vantage point, the real value of this study as I intend to stick with it to its completion, is in the fragments of insight one hopes to gain about the life
of Soviet workers \textit{per se}, no matter how cryptic at times and how "refracted" the documentation one finds in literature may be. No further surcharge should be placed, no further dividend expected.
1. Novels, plays, pieces of literary criticism, not only those assembled, listed, and described here but others as well, if not too many, must urgently continue to be explored and combed through with care for meaningful detail in the manner of the sample of analysis of production fiction, submitted in this first brief and partial pilot version of the study. More of the same is required as first step. I, for one, am hungry and anxious to go on. Very importantly, all the major themes, overlapping with and adjoining the theme of industrial labor must be brought out and interpreted to create a broad thematic framework.

2. Before any prediction of political nature can safely be made, the focus of further exploration should now be prudently selected on the basis of some working conclusions that have emerged at the end of the first phase of this study.

No Soviet matter pertaining to social change can be tackled in medias res. Least of all should the urgent need for a historical perspective be minimized. After months of intensive reading about workers in literature, it is my conclusion that the laborious piecing together of fragments of germane information and the interpretation of the resulting patterns and mosaics makes no sense without reference to the historical background. The study of the Soviet worker is impossible without it.

In addition to what might be called the above diachronic dimension, there is that other one, the synchronic. By this I mean that the Russian industrial
worker is not the only miner, steel-worker, machinist who presses for the fulfillment of his special aspirations. There are the Uzbeks, the Lithuanians, the Armenians and scores and scores of others, who are skilled and unskilled industrial workers either left to dwell in their native habitats or enticed to settle elsewhere. Lithuanian, Latvian, Uzbek, Kirghiz writers write many novels and many workers inhabit them. And here is the dilemma. In view of spectacular demographic shifts toward depriving the Russian nationality of its numerical superiority - and even without this contingency - a study of the Soviet labor force cannot be limited only to Russians. Yet, it is equally as impossible not to limit such a study by a prudent selection of paradigmatic comparative materials. In other words, the problem of diversification of issues examined along the lines of various nationalities must be dealt with. But it also must be reduced to manageable proportions. This study must not turn encyclopaedic. And if curtailment is to be considered, of the two, the historical dimension is the more precious.

3. The matter of nomenclature involving the worker, formal as well as informal, and identification of the people to be studied is cumbersome and uncomfortable. Although I did not think so in the very beginning of this undertaking, I feel strongly now - probably because of over-reading - that it is not quite clear, considering the Soviet context and Soviet shifting moods, what the term rabochii means. The core is unequivocal, the periphery not. I also know now that it's no relief if the same difficulty exists in another social system; that the puzzling task of identifying an existentially portentous category such as "the industrial worker" goes beyond semantic quibbling; that at the same time everybody knows darn well what is meant by the word worker and that just such conjecture, seemingly sound, is no relief either in view of Soviet complexities;
that the problem is circular and turns on itself in the manner of a twisted garden hose; that the designations rabotnik, rabochii, cherno-rabochii, razno-rabochii, kadrovik, trudyashchiisya, rabochii-intelligent, intelligent-rabochii and a plethora of others are confusing because they are both unstable and formulaic; that they are frequently laudatory or denigrating, i.e., judgmental terms rather than terms of classification or job description; and that the abundance of nomenclature merely points to the huge gap within the zone of industrial labor between the top dog and the "black worker" or cherno-rabochii. To repeat, the term worker, if unqualified, is fairly inoperable precisely because of stratification and diversity. As the labor force will grow through the nineteen eighties, stratification will only slice the labor zone more deeply, the distance between top and bottom will widen and grow also, and official language swirling around these matters is likely to sound in the near future even less clear than now.

Some large demographic and economic shifts are irreversible even in the Soviet Union or, rather, especially there. The village is dying and will continue to die. "Young peasant" will be a contradiction in terms if it is not that already. There will be more workers in the next census and more in the next after that. Therefore, certain statements frequently made are void of meaning at best and reckless at worst. They are statements, for example, such as "the Soviet worker is badly off". A generalization of this kind makes no sense even in view of poverty which fiction no longer hides. Which worker? Where? When? For comparison with what?

Consider the weight of just one datum in regard to the alleged economic hardship of the worker. Hardship simply cannot be claimed across the board. Here is an illustration of why it is impossible. It has happened, demonstrably, that
engineers from the lower strata of their own professional cohort have been found to hide or disregard their status and specialized training in favor of a better paying job as foremen. In many instances, they don't even have to hide this kind of surprisingly profitable decision. Or can't. This is where the semantic conundrum comes in with the subtle difference between intelligent-rabochii and rabochii-intelligent. Conversely, this is also where laments are heard about the squandering of education (rastrata obrazovaniya). At the expense of the government. Does fiction disclose this anomaly, not altogether insignificant or healthy? Yes, it does. In fact, the pursuit of this particularly perverse problem has surfaced in literary debates, underscoring once more the all-around informative nature of the literary townhall.

So, in the line-up of tasks necessary to complete a large-scale and exhaustive study of the Soviet worker, the subject of the worker and education looms large. For this alone, major categories of industrial labor have to be identified, as to roots, training, and mobility, and examined ad seriatim. An overall view of the impact of education on the industrial worker requires initial small embroidery. The assessment, in turn, of the industrial worker's political potentialities can least of all float about in disembodied generalities. It too needs a great deal of preparatory small investigative embroidery.

4. Comparative inquiries will be helpful. Of what kind? Two kinds seem presently most germane to the delineation of the nature and borders of the newly evolving hybrid working class culture: the vertical and the horizontal as it were. Their object should be the assessment of the worker's in-class loyalties. Are they complex and multi-directional or narrowly parochial? Before speculating about that, one ought to search for information on the attitude, for instance,
of the unskilled workers to the specialists as well as the other way around. This would be the purpose of a vertical comparison. Equally, as important is the exploration of lateral, horizontal connections. For instance, what is the attitude of workers employed in the central sector of heavy industry to those in peripheral areas of the economy such as services. In other words is there a sharing of values between metal and machine workers on one hand and truckers, bakers, fishermen on the other? From the feel of this issue I managed so far to gather, it is a fascinating one. In addition, whether seen as vertical or horizontal linkage, the comparison of the attitudes of young industrial workers, with those who could be their fathers especially in the traditionally proudly self-conscious labor milieu such as that of metal workers or typographers, is obviously a crucial one. And it holds surprises. So does the vast, very vast area of interrelationships, cross currents, conflicts, and mutual support between men and women in the working force. I apologize for this statement. It sounds offensively trite to even mention that this is an important area of research. (Fortunately, very good work by Gail Lapidus and Michael Sacks, just to mention these two scholars, has been done in this area by sociologists.)

5. The nationalities problem impinges with stress and pressure on the final research design of this study. It is not altogether crazy to suggest that fifteen separate studies of images of workers, each extracted from the literature of each Soviet republic be considered. The most crucial comparisons already at this present moment are cross-ethnic and cross-cultural. It is easy to predict that from the job of weaving doilies, by hand or by machine, to the tooling up for precision instrumentation of ICBM's the differences across the borders of the nationalities will grow and the psycho-socio-economic (cultural, in other words) portraits of the labor force in each republic will significantly help to predict just about
everything one wishes to predict about the internal affairs of the Soviet Union.
If nobody else, the researcher of production novels, labor songs, and love poems
must, one way or another, take up residence in Tashkent, Samarkand, and Tartu.
The underlying reason for such projected compulsion is, of course, the fact
that Russians are becoming a minority.

6. In this spot I wish to make the most important recommendation for ef-
effective continuation of this research. This recommendation is addressed to my-
self and, I hope, to others. It results from a discovery, meaningful and excit-
ing to me, - perhaps, even sad - made in advancing through long and boring books.
Curiously enough, the discovery was not surprising. The internal evidence for the
matter on hand should have been, and was, expected. What turned out to be surpris-
ing, however, was the very weight of the evidence. Once more, I don't mean to be
dramatic. The crux of the matter is that the culture of the industrial worker as
it has been known, accepted, and glorified has dwindled, if it has not disappeared.
In Russia, perhaps, it was never really there on any large and lasting scale. May-
be the Revolution had undertaken way back when to create and nurture a ghost. I
really don't quite believe this. What I believe is that the legacy of the culture
of the industrial worker is just that - a legacy; that it requires thorough exami-
nation; that, therefore, the historical dimension of a study such as this is a
necessity; that without the essential historical aspect, the interesting, impor-
tant, and growing tension between young and old workers can neither be analyzed
nor interpreted.

What do I mean by culture? It is meant here in the American sens e:
mores and values, political and social; style of life and class conscious ness;
the willingness to say neither combatively nor apologetically:" I am a worker".
Period.
Today's workers are yesterday's peasants. That's for one thing. Secondly, industry grows adjacent to the large cities, on their peripheries. Industry certainly does not mushroom next to the revered theaters, hospitals, bookstores in the center of the city. And on the rim of the city (one hesitates to call it suburb), in the area of the transformed no man's land, there grows a world - one does not know as yet whose world - which harbors the new and the old in a curiously disharmonious but not unhopeful blend, - the new values and aspirations and the old beliefs, habits, and ways. Yesterday's peasants working now in industrial plants are the creators and carriers of this composite or hybrid culture. It is but very little known to the outside world. But Soviet writers, especially those forming the liberal wing of the literati especially in the last decade, have devoted a growing number of fascinating tales to this evolving social change. The commodious mold for this culture is Soviet meshchanstvo, the resilient Soviet petty bourgeoisie. Its place is the urban periphery, the furthest reaches of which, in addition to all sorts of fusions, attracts not one but two waves of settlers coming from opposite directions. The average urban professional craves nothing more than a small dacha of his own in a cozy pinegrove. With the wheels of the private Volga cars rolling for many more folks than heretofore, the dream becomes reality for some, preferably for those with connections in the second economy. The lucky ones stroyatsya - a wonderfully intranslatable term for "they plunge into the difficult and exhilarating venture of building an individual dacha, winterized if possible". Thereby two waves of settlers from opposite directions, the city dwellers fleeing the city's bad housing and village inhabitants drawn toward the vicinity of the city in pursuit of industrial wages, accommodate to each other as best they can.
7. The rhythm of Soviet social change, its very timing, may in the end turn out to be an important theme, the examination of which this study stimulates and requires to continue. Of all the points made here, one ought to be, perhaps, most concerned about this one. The tying and untying of human bonds is the foremost force propelling social change in every society. These ties, indeed, are tied and untied, strengthened and loosened through crises, catastrophes, wars, revolutions, massive breakthroughs in technology. Such massive events are either disruptive or make people close ranks. Classes, castes, groups, sub-groups, even cliques associate and dissociate.

One might safely suggest that it is the holding-together, agglutinating forces in Soviet society that came to the fore in the long transition period between stalinism to post-stalinism. When atomization of the citizenry subsided, when it became possible for more and more people to die in bed, when fear relented, dissociation which had resulted from stalinist pressures, gave way to a modicum of lateral association in the citizenry. Solidarity, at least among some groups of the intelligentsia, was reborn like a phoenix out of the ashes of Stalin's reign. And group cohesiveness, especially in the form of cliquishness, had again become strong. And it is precisely the manner and modality of association that requires exploration and study. Fortunately, freed to a certain extent of its earlier dogmatic and ideological tasks, current liberal literature describes the human condition in a more cognitive, compassionate, and relaxed manner. It has thereby become richly informative on love and hate, personal loyalty and bondage, status needs and social connections.

As far as the working class is concerned, one must learn more about the initiation and implementation of solidarity, about the very processes of association. Theory might help here. Is the flow of loyalty vertical more than
it is horizontal? Is it, in other words, more institutional in nature, or is it determined more laterally by class adherence? It is, of course, both. But the proportion and emphasis is of importance. Thus, is the vertical-within-each-institution solidarity more important than the one that might be described as horizontal, holding tight across institutional lines? I do not know. But find out one must if only to find out that the answer from the source materials used in this study is inconclusive.

It might well be argued, without contradiction with everything above, that stalinism had effected a certain homogeneity of the population living in freedom, let alone of that in the realms of Gulag. Fear had helped that special homogeneity to come about. Homogeneity is not association. It is a different category of human linkage. Stalin dreaded the association of his citizens among themselves. In a way, Brezhnev's dread of organization grows out of the legacy of Stalin's paranoid fear of association.

The fact, however, that association was considered subversive for a long time does not mean that it did not, subversively indeed, exist. After Stalin's death, it came out of the closet. The permission granted for citizens to agglomerate in some way or fashion characterizes the Zeitgeist of post-stalinism more than anything else. On the top of the Soviet social structure, massive wheeling and dealing goes on and flourishes, the favorite activity of a cohesive in-group.

The fascinating feature of post-stalinist power of association, however, is the fact that it is a Janus-faced phenomenon. If nothing else, dialectics will remain when the world goes under.

The very process of association engenders various manifestations, activities, and attitudes such as conniving through a network or gang, the
second economy, cliquishness, constant lobbying, snobbishness, hostility, divisiveness up and down the social scale. Rudeness of the citizenry to each other is rampant. The worker fears the foreman and distrusts the chief engineer; the professor, to no good end at all, despises the person whom he himself greatly resembles and whom he denigrates for being an uncouth lower middle-class philistine; the staunch commuter and government employee shudders at the sight of a hippy. The peasant trusts no one. Nor does the party secretary.

Take one step further. It will help to join together the two or three main points of this disquieting disquisition on the divisive versus the agglutinatant forces in Soviet life.

If the workers as a class are too divided, too disjointed within their pluralistic entity because, paradoxically, its several horizontal layers are effectively cohesive in and by themselves, then, the regime has nothing much to fear for a long time to come. The worker will fail to organize across his own in-class divisiveness. This thought seems applicable across the entire social structure. The more citizens associate on one level in order to dissociate on another, the safer the regime.

All this, however, has to be watched and checked out. For, who knows ...

***************

After-thoughts belong among footnotes. This one better stay upstairs. The emphasis on divisive and disruptive manifestations in Soviet society today does not mean that the forces of compassion, of brotherhood, of true solidarity, of all those human corporate values that traditionally mark the age-old Russian drive toward populism have vanished. Nor should their vitality and