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Bureaucracy in the Twentieth Century

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Social Foundations of the Russian Bureaucracy  
in the Twentieth Century

Executive Summary\*

"Bureaucracy," "apparatus," "apparatchiki" and "praktiki"-- these are all terms which came to us directly from the Soviet system. They are also terms which are commonly used to describe phenomena which remain poorly understood and inadequately explored by Western scholars. The main purpose of the Conference on the Social Foundations of the Russian Bureaucracy, held at the University of Pennsylvania, January 29-30, 1983, was to further investigate the Soviet Russian bureaucracy-- its continuity and change, as well as to review current analytic methodology.

The conference was a two-day series of intensive "roundtable" discussions involving scholars from the United States, Canada, Western Europe and Israel. Discussion focused on both the state of the field of modern Soviet Russian history and the evolution of Soviet Russian bureaucracy. The conference participants did not exhaust these questions or reach any final conclusions. Their aim, rather, was to share research findings, raise new questions, challenge old assumptions and suggest new avenues of research in order to broaden their overall historical inquiry. Such inquiry may cause revision of some widely accepted views about the Soviet bureaucracy and its relations with the party and the citizens.

The broad theoretical problem that dominated the conference was the degree of continuity and change in the governmental structure after the revolution; in other words, the impact of the Russian bureaucratic structure and authoritarian tradition on the new Soviet regime. The bureaucratic structure after the revolution was partly built on the foundations, partly on the ruins of the imperial predecessor: old structures, habits, and practices coexisted with new institutions, styles and cadres. As time passed, both novelty and some older traits kept appearing and reappearing.

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\*Prepared by the staff of the National Council for Soviet and East European Research

The abstracts in the body of this Report all support the conclusions that both the tsarist and Soviet bureaucracies have been the focal point of politics, have often been the motive force of change, and have been both supportive of and threatening to their regimes. A few more general conclusions also emerge. The Russian bureaucracy in the twentieth century was at no time, in either the tsarist or Soviet periods, including latter day Stalinism, uniform or monolithic. The bureaucracy changed along with the society from which its members were drawn. Thus, its social basis continued to shift, its internal conflicts multiplied, and its relationship with the population remained complex and mutually interactive.

Below is further discussion of the conference themes which led to these general conclusions.

The 1917 Revolution was undoubtedly a major upheaval of the social foundations of all of Russian society, but it was among many factors contributing to the changes in the bureaucratic structure. The bureaucratic phenomenon, in Russia and elsewhere, is multidimensional and necessarily evolves with the rest of a society which is undergoing growth, urbanization and modernization. Therefore, many parallels can be found between the tsarist and Soviet bureaucracies.

One such parallel is the pivotal role of the bureaucracy. In the absence of any open public political participation or any intermediary private institutions, the tsarist bureaucracy became the focal point of politics. Under the Soviet regime too, the Communist Party must fulfill numerous tasks through the agency of the bureaucracy which brings it in touch with the rest of society. Thus, the Party-- which is in many ways a bureaucracy in itself-- does not exist as an autonomous organization sending directives down from above. Rather, the Party and the bureaucracy have a complex, inseparable relationship.

Both the tsarist and Soviet regimes were also dependent upon the bureaucracy as a source of technical knowledge which they did not share. This often made the bureaucracy a brake on the system, as well as a servant of it. While bureaucracy

is commonly, and correctly, associated with inertia, passive resistance, or routine, it has also been an active participant in defending its own interests, which often provided the motive force for social and economic change.

The educated specialists, however, under both the tsarist and Soviet regimes, frequently came into conflict with the more politically loyal elements of the bureaucracy, as well as with the regimes' leaders themselves. The increasingly professionalized nobility under the Tsar, the "bourgeois specialists" during the revolutionary period, and the educated "tekhniki" (versus the "praktiki"-- those with practical experience rather than professional education)-- all were often the source of bureaucratic infighting which was potentially threatening to the regime. Because the bureaucracy was, and is, the focal point of politics, political infighting took on a more serious and sharp character than the "competition" among bureaucratic agencies in western parliamentary regimes. The stakes were higher, the losers more severely punished by loss of jobs, or worse. The educated specialists also developed an internal cohesion and loyalty which made their social and political allegiance questionable.

This dependency on and suspicion of the bureaucracy often engendered a paranoia in the regimes and an urge to create as quickly as possible reliable, regime-oriented cadres. Tsarist attempts to construct a personal, charismatic basis for despotism and the Stalinist purges are but extreme examples of this phenomenon.

Stability of cadres in the bureaucracy, therefore, was a problem common to tsarist and Soviet Russia. The recent attempt of the Soviet government and party to guarantee the stability of cadres may be seen then not merely or perhaps even primarily as a reaction to the purges and Stalinism, but also as an attempt to reverse a century old problem of instability, conflict and anxiety within the bureaucracy.

On the other hand, in trying to ensure stability in the bureaucracy the regime has created another problem where consensus means stagnation. Thus, the regime faces a constant dilemma: the need for innovation and dynamic leadership in an authoritarian system is balanced by the need for reassurance, security and longevity among its officials.

Though there is much continuity in the structure, style and politics of the bureaucracy in tsarist and Soviet Russia, the main differences surround the Communist Party and its apparatus-- an institution that had no counterpart in the tsarist past. The Party has its own bureaucracy, but has trouble

defining itself as one. Are top Party leaders "bureaucrats" or politicians and leaders? Or are they "bureaucratic politicians?" Is the Party a "bureaucracy," or the employers of the bureaucrats?

In the course of Soviet history, the Party was at times extremely dynamic (the civil war, the 1930s), while at other times (notably in the late Stalinist period)-- it lost touch with its constituency, lost control, and practically stagnated. During the "great purges" and again during post-war Stalinism, although the Party was formally in power, it was actually suppressed, an autonomous ruling body which largely lost its power and ability to function as a party at all.

In addition, the Party often does produce very dynamic and capable leaders who attain national status. But the Party is also riven by personality conflicts, sectional interests, family circles, and professional rivalries. The "tekhniki" versus the "praktiki" clash has perhaps been even stronger in the Soviet period because of the Soviet policy of opening up positions of responsibility in party and government to people of humble origin. In this way the regime gained much support, but also a host of problems of the "class versus knowledge" type. Top political positions were often staffed by poorly educated members of the working-class or peasantry who lacked the necessary professional qualifications, as many of those with the proper expertise were considered politically and socially "alien."

The Party and its bureaucracies have survived several crises and overcome many problems of internal management and control. Some of the Party's organizational and political methods are well known: "aktivisty" (unpaid activists), party cells, all kinds of "transmission belts," the departments of the Central Committee, "tacit" propaganda (i.e., condoning or encouraging attitudes without formal approval), rewards of privilege and status, nomenclature, etc. Yet several fundamental questions still baffle the Soviet leadership: its impact on a changing society, its relations with the broader bureaucratic strata and the cultural and social intelligentsias, and the role of ideology.

Yet the Soviet Russian bureaucracy has survived all of the severe crises of the twentieth century, and it continues to survive. Perhaps it is this point that remains the most difficult to explain and understand. It should, however, counter any attempts to conclude that current economic, social or nationality problems will significantly destabilize the regime.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   | <u>Page</u> |
|---|-------------|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY   | i           |
| PANEL I: BUREAUCRACY AND TRADITION  | 1           |
| "Ceremonial and Authority 1881-1914: The Problem of<br>the Political Center"<br>Richard Wortman (Princeton)   | 2           |
| "Patronage and Professionalism: The Witte System"<br>Alfred J. Rieber (Pennsylvania)  | 3           |
| "Regular Police in Tsarist Russia: 1900-1914:<br>Neil Weissman (Dickinson)  | 4           |
| PANEL II: BUREAUCRACY AND THE NOBILITY  | 6           |
| " <u>Soslovie</u> or Class? Bureaucratic Reformers and<br>Provincial Mobility in Conflict, 1906-1098"<br>Francis Weislo (Columbia)                                    | 7           |
| "The Military Officer and the Nobility-- A<br>Statistical Examination"<br>Walter Pintner (Cornell)  | 11          |
| PANEL III: SOVIET BUREAUCRACY AT THE GRASSROOTS   | 13          |
| "Patterns of Party and State Office Holdings in the<br>Soviet Bureaucracy, 1929-1931"<br>J. Arch Getty (California/Riverside), William Chase<br>and Charles Wetherell | 14          |
| "Collective Farm Peasantry and Local Administration;<br>Peasant Letters of Complaint in Belyi Raion in 1937"<br>Roberta Manning (Boston College)                      | 16          |
| "Uneasy Alliance: Soviet Judiciary Apparatus and<br>Penal Policy in the 1930's"<br>Gabor T. Rittersporn   | 19          |

|  | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|
| PANEL IV: PARTY ORGANIZATION AS LOCAL GOVERNMENT: THE<br>CASE OF LENINGRAD   | 23          |
| "Bureaucracy and Revolution: The Lessons from Leningrad"<br>Mary McAuley (Essex)   | 24          |
| "The Leningrad Party Organisation, 1928-1934"<br>Peter Gooderham (Birmingham)  | 25          |
| "Leningrad, 1945-1953: The Rebirth of a City; the<br>Destruction of a Political Elite"<br>Blair A. Ruble (National Council, Washington)                                    | 27          |
| PANEL V: BUREAUCRATIC ETHOS IN SOVIET RUSSIA   | 29          |
| "Proletarianization, Political Control and the Soviet<br>State Administration in the 1920's: Their Impact on<br>Upward Social Mobility"<br>Don Karl Rowney (Bowling Green) | 30          |
| "Tenured Bureaucrats and Political Dictatorship"<br>Tim Dunmore (Essex)  | 32          |
| "Ordzhonikidze's Takeover of Vesenkha, 1930: A<br>Case Study in Soviet Bureaucratic Politics"<br>Sheila Fitzpatrick (Texas/Austin)   | 33          |

PANEL I: Bureaucracy and Tradition

Chair: William Rosenberg (Michigan)

Papers: Richard Wortman (Princeton), Ceremonial and Authority 1881-1914:

The Problem of Political Center

Alfred J. Rieber (Pennsylvania), Patronage and Professionalism:

The Witte System

Neil Weissman (Dickinson), Regular Police in Tsarist Russia:

1900-1914

Commentator: Nina Tumarkin (Wellesley), Bureaucrats and Symbolic Rituals:

The Commissariat of Enlightenment and the Lenin Cult



## Ceremonial and Authority 1881-1914: The Problem of Political Center

By Richard Wortman

This paper deals with the relationship of the symbolic authority of the tsar to the bureaucratic institutions of the imperial Russian state at the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Before the end of the nineteenth century, the symbolic political center of the Russian empire was St. Petersburg, the residence of the tsar and the court, the location of the social life of the elite. The ruler thus conferred a charismatic aura on the institutions of state located in the capital. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, this began to change. The assassination of Alexander II in Petersburg left a sense that Petersburg had been desecrated and that the sovereign was no longer safe in its precincts. Alexander III and Nicholas II showed increasing preferences for Moscow. While they avoided Petersburg as much as possible, they made frequent visits to Moscow, and displayed it as the center of the religious ceremonials of autocracy. They increasingly made it the symbol of a medieval, prebureaucratic heritage they sought to recall. This process accelerated after the revolution of 1905, spurred by Nicholas' antipathy to the Duma, which, in his mind, began to encompass the bureaucracy as well. By 1914, the symbolic political center of Russia no longer corresponded, in the minds of those close to the tsar, with the capital. The result was a marked divestiture of charisma from the capital. The tsar, favoring Moscow, visibly disassociated himself from the bureaucracy, whose seat was in Petersburg. A symbolic crisis ensued, contributing to the social and political crisis of pre-war Russia.

Abstract: Patronage and Professionalism

By A.J. Rieber

This paper seeks to define for the first time the administrative-bureaucratic system of Count Witte which accompanied his better known economic program for the development of Russia. Witte's political system was an attempt to resolve two outstanding contradictory issues in the institutional framework of the autocracy. He sought on the one hand to maintain a high level of efficiency in the Ministry of Finance and on the other to gain greater political control over all policies of government dealing with the economy. In order to carry out these two aims he combined modern elements of administration with the traditional. He selected his associates and subordinates from the highly skilled and well trained financial bureaucracy. But he also chose those men whom he could control through a clientel system.

The results of this skillful fusion of modern bureaucratic techniques and traditional personal relationships was a dominant position for Witte in the administration. He was able to expand the cadres of the ministry, establish new standards for its personnel and broaden its functions.

But in the long run Witte failed to overcome the contradictions within his own system. His reliance on a clientel network exposed him to attacks on non-professional grounds where he was most vulnerable. The conflict between professionalism and patronage lay at the very heart of the administrative paralysis of the old Regime. It was a contradiction which reappeared in a similar form in the early Soviet period and has left its mark down to the present.

## Regular Police in Tsarist Russia, 1900-1914

By Neil Weissman

Over the past two decades the Russian civil service has attracted increasingly more historical attention. Scholars have focused particularly on two subjects, the role of leading bureaucrats in reform attempts and the social profile of the civil service in terms of class, education and professional training. In both cases discussion has normally been limited to officialdom in the center of government. We know relatively little about civil servants on the opposite end of the bureaucratic hierarchy, in the provinces. This essay seeks to stimulate further work on the Russian bureaucracy "from the bottom up" through an examination of one branch of the local administrative apparatus, the tsarist regular police, at the beginning of the twentieth century.

By contemporary European standards the tsarist local police system was weakly developed. Staff complements were small and, with the exception of St. Petersburg, thinly dispersed. Largely as a result of poor salaries, police recruits lacked all but the most minimal qualifications for office, and they received little training after taking up their duties. Despite these deficiencies in the police system, law enforcement personnel were expected to perform a wide range of functions beyond the maintenance of order, such as tax collection or poor relief. These conditions gave rise to a distinctive pattern of police operations. The force was largely reactive in its approach to criminality and relied heavily on the populace (especially the peasantry) to patrol itself. Nevertheless, peace officers were typically arbitrary and coercive in dealings with the public. Inclinations

toward a capricious and corrupt style of operations were reinforced by the highly centralized organization of the police, which excluded the press and public from supervision over the force.

An investigation of the regular police force at the turn of the century suggests two points on tsarist local administration generally. First, in approaching bureaucracy in Russia, scholars have often started with concepts drawn from Western European, or more precisely Weberian models. Whatever the utility of the approach for understanding the functioning of the central organs of administration in Russia, it has little relevance for the local civil service where notions like specialization, professionalism or "bureaucratization" were very weakly developed. An understanding of Russian bureaucracy at the local level will require the development of models more closely attuned to the Russian historical experience. Secondly, historians have commented frequently on the fragility of social consensus in late Imperial Russia, on the depth of fragmentation along such lines as "state and society." Study of the tsarist police force indicates that one contributing factor to this fragmentation was the failure of the administrative apparatus to mediate constructively between government and populace.

PANEL II: Bureaucracy and the Nobility

Chair: Allen Wildman

Papers: Francis Weislo (Columbia), Soslovie or Class?

Bureaucratic Reformers and Provincial Mobility in  
Conflict, 1906-1908

Walter Pinter (Cornell), The Military Officer and the  
Nobility - A Statistical Examination

Commentators: Manfred Hagen (Nöttingen)

Leopold Haimson (Columbia)

Soslovie or Class? Bureaucratic Reformers and Provincial Nobility in  
Conflict, 1906-1908

By Francis W. Wcislo

Historians of the Russian imperial bureaucracy often regard those individuals who staffed the central government apparatus solely as administrators, at times even as extensions of the structures which they filled, subject to the institutional imperatives of hierarchical routine, managerial "problem-solving", and the hegemonic tendencies induced by tsarist state authority. While an important component in analyzing bureaucratic behavior, this perspective leaves largely unexamined the social and political attitudes historically present among Russian bureaucrats and the larger historical context in which these views were forged: the traditions of government experience in the critical decades after emancipation; the dilemmas of civil and national development during a period of rapid industrial growth; and the influence of a notably diverse, increasingly sophisticated spectrum of Russian public opinion.

Utilizing such an analytical framework, this paper examines proposals for a sweeping restructuring of local rural government, advanced in 1906-1908 by reformist bureaucratic elements under P.A. Stolypin, and the heated protest which they evoked among provincial gentry landowners. Even before the 1905 Revolution, some bureaucrats, most notably Sergei Witte, had argued that the autocracy was failing to accommodate its practices and institutions to the economically, socially diverse agrarian civil society which had been evolving since 1861. One inevitable outcome of these processes, as Stolypin himself stated during the events of 1905, was the

emergence of a national political opposition to autocratic rule. While the majority of bureaucrats never allowed that a national political life dictated constituent rights for Russian society, many like Stolypin did recognize that the survival of the old regime in post-revolutionary Russia required that the bureaucratic government assume a role of national political leadership, mobilizing behind an authoritative tsarist state the political support of a stable agrarian society. Both the "Stolypin" agrarian reform and even more the local institutional changes discussed here, designed to foster the transition to petty peasant proprietorship, demonstrated how imperative his government believed the task to be. Stolypin perceived the instability of a propertied society which rested upon an impoverished communal peasantry. Moreover, he understood the depths of the political crisis exposed by the peasant uprisings of 1905-1906; seemingly the country had revealed its dual nationhood: the old regime and propertied society; and the mass revolution which almost had toppled it.

The local reform program, as archival documents of the Ministry of Internal Affairs indicated, was intended to bridge this chasm. It proffered a unified system of all-soslovie (estate) territorial government, supervised by a hierarchy of state officials and premised upon the elimination of segregated (obosoblennyye) peasant administrative and judicial institutions. More importantly, it envisioned an expanded structure of local zemstvo self-administration, which not only would create a closer, more cooperative relationship between local bureaucratic and zemstvo institutions but also would expand popular and especially peasant participation in local political life.

A critical, underlying assumption of this program, however, was the conviction that provincial gentry landowners (dvoriane), historically the first service estate of the empire, were prepared to assume the role which they had claimed in the 1905 Revolution. In the government's view, they could be economic and political leaders, together with the bureaucracy, of a rural society upholding the values of law and private property. Yet, the subsequent legislative history of the local reforms, in which not one proposal ever became law, revealed how seriously the government had overestimated the gentry. Many provincial nobles, disillusioned by peasant rebellion, would countenance neither Stolypin's vision of a future Russian nation nor the role in it which he had delineated for them.

The major confrontation, reviewed at length in this paper, occurred at the 1908 sessions of the Council on Local Economy, the so-called Pre-Duma. Three conclusions can be drawn from the proceedings. First, most gentry representatives present now recognized the irreconcilable social antagonism which afflicted their relationships with the local peasantry, precluding the possibility that they would accept the government's plans for an expanded popular role in local self-administration. Second, while perceiving hostility below, this realization did not translate itself into a willingness to accept other non-gentry propertied elements, a growing phenomenon in the countryside, into a local political structure based upon property and individual merit. Rather, it induced a defensist reaction against alien (chuzoi) outsiders--merchants, peasant landowners, bureaucrats, parvenues-- and an insistent reiteration of a particularistic rural culture where nobiliar traditions of hereditary landownership and state service in the name of the peasants



ascribed unique status to men of gentry heritage. Finally, threatened from below and outside, they insisted that only this hermetic rural culture, evolved from historic bonds between nobility and peasantry dating back to Muscovy, guaranteed a still valid social foundation for the autocracy. Indeed, gentry spokesmen throughout the Stolypin years seized every opportunity to denounce and effectively neutralize a bureaucracy which in fact was trying to adapt the old regime to a secular, civil society of property, but which in their eyes was abandoning the ascriptive social structure upon which the autocracy had long rested. They delineated a firm line separating two distinct worlds: on the one hand, an autocrat and a countryside dominated by a declining provincial gentry; on the other, a repudiated reformist bureaucracy which traditional Russia preferred to ignore.

The Military Officer and the Nobility-- A Statistical Examination

By Walter M. Pintner

The discussion focuses on the impact of military service on the nobility as a social group and presents the following conclusions:

- 1) At the beginning of the twentieth century 9.8 percent of the hereditary nobility were in military service as officers (excluding the nine Western provinces, Poland, the Baltic provinces, and Finland). A larger percentage, 13.9 percent, were in civil service. Although the proportion seems low it is not greatly lower than that typical of the previous 100 or more years.
- 2) Data on the other occupations of the nobility are poor but it is clear that only a small proportion had sufficient land to be full-time proprietors. Fragmentary data suggest that the free professions (outside of state service) account for a very small proportion. The most striking trend is thus a shift from military to civil service in the course of the nineteenth century, largely due to the growth of the Civil Service.
- 3) Data on the size of landed property held by officers are also limited. However what data are available strongly suggest that although three fourths of high ranking officers were hereditary nobles by birth, only a small proportion had substantial landed property. The data do not permit an estimate of the proportion of the large landholders who were in military service.
- 4) Specialized technical education for officers (in the artillery and engineering schools) seems to have been as common for nobles as for non-nobles. The data, however, do not permit the isolation of landed and non-landed segments to the graduates of these schools.

5) The most elite segment of the officer corps, the graduates of the General Staff Academy (Genshtabistsy) were a true elite of merit, 48 percent noble in 1913, but all got there via tough competitive examinations, a situation that never existed in the Civil service.

6) In terms of national representation, the Russian orthodox (53 percent of the nobility) and the Germans (2 percent of the nobility) were overrepresented in the officer corps and the Poles (27 percent of the nobility) sharply underrepresented. At higher rank levels the overrepresentation of Germans increases as does the underrepresentation of Poles.

7) The above statistical data, when combined with other material may support the thesis that Russia in the last decades of the old regime was becoming increasingly less militaristic.

PANEL III: Soviet Bureaucracy at the Grassroots

Chair: Ben Ekloff (Indiana)

Papers: J. Arch Getty (California/Riverside), Patterns of Party and State

Office Holdings in the Soviet Bureaucracy, 1929-1931

Roberta Manning (Boston College), Collective Farm Peasantry

and Local Administration; Peasant Letters of Complaint

in Belyi raion in 1937

Gabor T. Rittersporn (C.N.R.S. Paris), Uneasy Alliance: Soviet

Judiciary Apparatus and Penal Policy in the 1930's

Commentators: Dorothy Atkinson (AAASS)

Richard Stites (Georgetown)

Patterns of Party and State Officeholding In the Soviet Bureaucracy, 1929-1931

By J. Arch Getty, William Chase, and Charles Wetherell

The purpose of this paper is to examine some of the quantitative dimensions of office-holding in the Soviet bureaucracy during the turbulent years of the first Five-Year Plan. At the same time, the paper seeks to demonstrate a method: quantitative evaluation of data contained in city directories and particularly in Vsya Moskva. The paper is based on an aggregate analysis of office-holding information on 3,203 office-holders (who held 3,710 positions) listed in the directories in the period 1929-1931.

The paper's conclusions can be summarized as follows:

1. Multiple office-holding was not the rule in the bureaucracy in these years and seems to have existed only among top leaders.
2. There was little persistence of office-holding between 1929 and 1931. Only 20% of the entire sample held high office in both years. Only about 40% of the top-level office-holders in 1931 had held top positions in 1929.
3. Personnel turnover in all agencies was very high from 1929 to 1931, and approached 95% in some agencies. On the average, turnover was 75% for state agencies and 50% for party organizations.
4. Bureaucratic family circles, as measured by the number of persons who moved from agency to agency with key leaders, were fairly rare, and their size quite small.

Promotions of persons from 1929 to 1931 reflected the importance of two key strata. Oblast' secretaries and members of the Vesenkha presidium enjoyed better than average promotion possibilities. The data suggest that

members of these two groups were favored in promotion over others and that these two agencies were becoming more significant.

The paper's conclusions were tentative and their validity depends on further research, but the exercise sought to demonstrate the utility of quantitative aggregate research using available sources.

The Collective Farm Peasantry and the Local Administration: Peasant  
Letters of Complaint in Belyi Raion (Smolensk Oblast) in 1937

By Roberta T. Manning

Students of Soviet politics in the Stalin era have generally directed their attention towards the central government, concentrating ever more heavily upon the personal role of Joseph Stalin to the neglect of other aspects of the Soviet political system. This paper is part of a continuing effort to remedy this situation by exploring the political processes at the local level, especially the interrelationship between the Communist Party and the collective farm peasantry who provided the majority of the Soviet population well into the post World War II era. The author hopes eventually to compare the Soviet political system of the late thirties to that which prevailed immediately before the Revolution which she studied in her book, The Crisis of the Old Order in Russia.

To obtain a detailed view of local politics, the paper concentrates on one rural raion in Smolensk oblast in 1937, a year noted for both the bumper agricultural harvest of the first half of the twentieth century and the extension of the Great Purges to the local Party apparatus in the second half of this year. Beginning with a detailed socio-political analysis of the raion Communist party organization in this year, it concludes that the local party of that era consisted overwhelmingly of men of peasant and working class origins (who provided 61.1% and 31.8% of party members respectively). Party members of the late thirties were also substantially younger, less politically experienced and less well educated than the men who governed at a similar level under the last tsar. Eighty percent of local party members in Belyi raion were under forty years of

age; almost 70% had joined the party after Stalin's rise to power in 1928; and only 7.1% possessed more than three years of schooling. With forty seven members and fifty six candidate members to govern a rural populace of approximately 70,000 persons, the party could staff only a fraction-- perhaps no more than a quarter-- of the positions of authority in the countryside. Its inadequate manpower, compounded by its low educational skills, rendered the Party in many aspects significantly administratively weaker than its tsarist predecessor. Even the ratio of police to population appears to have been much lower than the levels that prevailed at the end of the Old Regime (much less the significantly higher levels of the Western European democracies); and the functioning of the collective farms was at best only sporadically monitored. Consequently Fainsod's characterization of the Soviet system of the late thirties as "inefficient totalitarianism" must be questioned, while the common picture that continues to appear in Western scholarly literature of a totally controlled society bears no relation whatsoever to the empirical realities of the times.

Furthermore a systematic quantitative analysis of the Party's handling of peasant letters of complaint against local officials reveals the Party to be far more concerned with and responsive to public opinion than Western scholars have hitherto assumed. Two thirds of citizen complaints registered in Belyi raion in 1937 were resolved in favor of the complainant and against the officials, usually Party members, against whom the complaint was directed. Moreover, the impact of the Great Purges on the Party's relationship with the population may not have been as negative as we have generally assumed. After the Purge began to strike the raion Party apparatus, the



local party organization became significantly more responsive to citizen complaints in that the time required to handle complaints was substantially reduced while the likelihood that complaints would be resolved in the complainant's rehalf increased notably. In any case, systematic analysis of the letters of complaint in the Smolensk Archive promises to cast new light on local society at the end of the 1930s and the unstudied relationship between political authorities and ordinary citizens, revealing a more responsive government than Fainsod's earlier unsystematic (and non quantitative) analysis of these same letters.

This initial study-- part of a larger project-- indicates that empirical, systematic research on the 1930s on topics outside the limited range hitherto explored by Western scholars is likely to alter drastically our image of the Soviet political system and political process of the prewar era, indicating that much of what we take to be "mature Stalinism" was actually a product of World War II and the ensuing Cold War. This paper also indicates that modern quantitative techniques render many underutilized sources at our disposal in the West far more valuable than they have been up until now. Certainly the thirties must be studied in more depth than they have been hitherto since the source problem is no longer an excuse to avoid serious research, given the large number of readily available materials still to be thoroughly explored. Such studies can contribute to the revitalization of Soviet studies in this country, by providing the much needed in-depth knowledge of the Soviet past (which we still lack), without which we can not hope to understand the Soviet present.

Uneasy Alliance: Soviet Judiciary Apparatus and Penal Policy in the 1930's

By Gabor Tamas Rittersporn

The importance of disciplinary and penal sanctions in every walk of life in the USSR of the 1930s warrants a study of the corps of officials whose duty it was to administer these sanctions whose omnipresence can give us an understanding of the main features of other categories of officials involved in their implementation. In the absence of reliable data on procuracy and court personnel of this period, it is the widely documented working of the organs they staffed that can define judicial functionaries as a social group.

It is a picture of a corps of officials remarkably integrated into the apparatus of the Party-state that emerges from a study of this kind. Far from constituting an independent body, contributing to a system of checks and balances, this corps is part and parcel of the ensemble of the regime's institutions, so that its competences and responsibilities are practically merged with those of the apparatus's other groups of cadres. For this reason its members can be charged with and taken to task for carrying or not carrying out assignments exceeding the usual attributions of judicial organs and they are inclined to support their fellow officials in other institutions if needed, even at the expense of the fundamental objectives of the penal policy. But there, equally, lies the reason of their propensity to commit excesses and spread terror among their colleagues, when they are collectively arraigned for having tolerated the abuses of the apparatus. Nevertheless, as representatives of the interests of the

Party-state, the judiciary officials are inevitably committed to its policy of confrontation with the working masses and thus their basic solidarity lies with the rest of officialdom.

Coinciding with wholesale collectivization and crash industrialization, the rapid broadening of the penal system's field of action was an integral part of the regime's frontal attack on independent peasantry and undisciplined workers. In many respects, penal measures had to remedy the deficiencies of work incentives and poor organization and, in general, the failings of economic and motivational means of social control at the disposal of the system. The seriousness of these deficiencies made punitive actions practically ubiquitous, while the pervasiveness and the stop-gap character of such measures was not only instrumental in their application tending to become inflated and uncontrollable, but also implied the risk of applying penal sanctions instead of developing other instruments of control.

Being an all-purpose substitute for inefficient social integration, the penal pressure could not be regulated through precise legal definitions or strict procedural norms. Exact application of firmly codified rules would have made it impossible to suppress every phenomena the regime considered harmful and could even have tended to make the judiciary take an independent stance via-a-vis the political aims of the Party-state, even though it was obvious that the absence of such regulations facilitated abuse by officials.

There is nothing to substantiate the claim that it was the rationally goal-oriented and strictly regulated activity of a corps of competent officials which constituted the foundations of the Soviet judicial apparatus of the 1930s. Far from resulting merely from their low educational

level, the errors and excesses of the penal system's cadres were equally a measure of the uncertainty of the criteria according to which their work tended to be judged and of the unforeseeable consequences of their decisions. Given the lack of firmly established and explicitly formulated professional rules to follow in their practice or the calculable effects of their initiatives, it appears somewhat questionable whether they may be termed a bureaucracy in the modern sense of the word. All the more so since it was not through the competent implementation of firmly established professional norms that Soviet cadres could influence policy-making, as a "true bureaucracy" would, but thanks to the lack of any such norm and, in many respects, thanks to their very incompetence. The impossibility of founding the operations of the apparatus on codified rules increased the political importance of office holders and the requirement to control them. whilst the ill-defined character of the criteria serving to evaluate their reliability and the value of their work was bound to enlarge their scope for manoeuvres. In these conditions (and in view of the widespread use of penal measures) the attributions of the judiciary were inevitably sweeping and resembled very much on those of dignitaries in pre-modern times.

The need to obviate the extreme weakness of the system's economic and motivational means of social integration by generalized recourse to disciplinary and penal sanctions against ordinary working people as well as against their superiors, and the ensuing difficulties to establish a stable code of conduct for officialdom could not have radically dissimilar effects on different branches of the Party and state apparatus. Thus it seems a reasonable assumption that the corps of economic managers and

engineering personnel, the rural cadres or even the Party apparatchiki were not much more responsive to industrial or agricultural policy-making and to the Party's "general line" than the judiciary officials were to penal policy. It would seem difficult to avoid the conclusion that Soviet officialdom of the 1930s had not gone much farther than the first steps in a long evolution towards becoming a modern bureaucracy.

PANEL IV: Party Organization as Local Government: The Case of Leningrad

Chair: Alexander Rabinowitch (Indiana)

Papers: Mary McAuley (Essex), Bureaucracy and Revolution: The Lessons  
from Leningrad

Peter Gooderham (Birmingham), The Leningrad Party Organization,  
1928-1934

Blair A. Ruble (National Council, Washington), Leningrad, 1945-1953:  
The Rebirth of a City; the Destruction of a Political Elite

Commentators: Timothy Colton (Kennan Institute)

Reginald Zelnik (California/Berkeley)

## Bureaucracy and Revolution: the Lesson from Leningrad

By Mary McAuley

St. Petersburg, center of the Tsarist government, was renowned for its bureaucracy. In 1918 the new Bolshevik government, one of whose aims was to abolish paid officialdom and hence bureaucracy, moved to Moscow, leaving the new Petrograd Labour Commune to run a new type of city government. By 1927 all recognised that 'bureaucracy' was still there. This paper attempts to identify the size, scope, and composition of this 'new' bureaucracy-- both party and soviet-- at two different points in time: in 1920 civil-war Petrograd and in Kirov's city of 1927 at the end of NEP. We ask whether social origin of officials seems to affect bureaucratic behaviour, or whether it is the structures themselves which produce the 'bureaucrats'. And by choosing two very different periods we can ask how the social environment affects behaviour. As a subtheme, we are interested in the carry-over of the old Tsarist civil-service into the Soviet bureaucracy and the extent to which the revolution was unable or unwilling to destroy the old government machine.

Rather surprisingly, it is in civil-war Petrograd that we find bureaucracy rampant and the major occupation in a dying city. In 1927 it is less pervasive but firmly there: a political bureaucracy of the old underground activists and aspiring worker activists, and a soviet bureaucracy with close ties to the still extant professional classes. Although there has been sweeping personnel turnover in city departments since 1914, the old professional classes are still well represented among administrative grades. However, we argue, it is the structures-- not the social origins of the occupants-- that are the more important in perpetuating bureaucracy.

## The Leningrad Party Organisation, 1928-1934

By Peter Gooderham

The importance of the administrative or bureaucratic stratum in the Soviet Union is reflected in the central place it occupies in all analyses of the Stalinist political system. Further, it is commonly agreed that a crucial factor in Stalin's rise to power was his dominance of the party apparatus, and that from the beginning of the first five-year plan, as a result of the rapid and extensive process of state-directed economic and social change, the size and role of the party apparatus increased enormously.

The paper sets out to test the validity of this portrayal of the party apparatus by examining a crucially important regional party organisation, and tracks its development from the onset of the massive industrialisation drive through the period of rapid social and economic transformation in the early 1930s. The importance of adopting such a regional approach to the question of the party bureaucracy at this time is highlighted by a comparison of the size and functions of urban Leningrad's apparatus with that of a rural region such as Smolensk. Clearly, both in terms of social characteristics and career background, the party "machine" was far from the uniform monolith traditionally depicted.

As well as identifying changes in the make up of the regional level bureaucracy in these years, the paper also seeks to point out that the party apparatchiki now operated under a new set of pressures which were the result both of the decision to industrialise and of the increasing desire of the centre to monitor, check and control the performance of its regional



cadres. Industrialisation demanded the acquisition of specialised technical skills by bureaucrats, and also allowed a new generation of educated younger party activists to graduate into administrative posts within industrial enterprises. And the paper shows that in the centre's desire to ensure the fulfillment of directives by its regional satraps it came up against opposition from entrenched interests. Both of these phenomena would have serious repercussions for the Soviet Union later in the decade.

Leningrad, 1945-1953: The Rebirth of a City; the Destruction of a Political Elite

By Blair A. Ruble

The 1940s were a difficult decade for the city of Leningrad. A 900-day long blockade by German and Finnish forces during the Second World War destroyed the social and political fabric of the Pre-War city. Following the war, a new population moved into the city from the countryside and the Leningrad Communist Party was reconstituted by members who had not belonged to the Party when the War began. Finally, the purges of the Leningrad Affair consumed a local political elite which had emerged under Kirov's sponsorship during the late 1920s and early 1930s. This paper examines each of these processes, any one of which would have fundamentally altered the character of Post-War Leningrad.

In January, 1944, the German army relinquished its 28 month long stranglehold over a devastated city. Unfortunately the social composition of the city's post-war population can not be identified with any certainty as nearly 1.4 million pre-war residents are unaccounted for by the official statistics. Nonetheless, that data which are available suggest that much of the city's Post-War population was drawn from rural areas rather than among returning war-time evacuees.

Changes within the structure of the Leningrad Communist Party and the city's governing elite were, if anything, even more dramatic than those which were taking place within the population at large. The membership of the Leningrad Party was reduced in relation to the national Party. Finally, the purges of the Leningrad Affair dramatically altered the composition of

local political institutions. For example, only one of the nineteen men who held Leningrad's six top political posts between May, 1945 and March, 1953-- Frol Kozlov-- remained active in Leningrad politics after 1953. Some 2,000 Party officials and 1,500 trade union, Komsomol, and municipal officials were apparently purged during this same period (only four of the 208 deputies to the Leningrad Regional Soviet were reelected in 1950).

The Leningrad Affair marks a watershed in the city's political history. An era which began when Kirov came to Leningrad was brought to an all-too-abrupt conclusion. The city would emerge once again as a powerful industrial and an important scientific center. Politically, however, its significance remained diminished into the 1980s. Leningrad-- once a rival to Moscow in political, economic and cultural affairs-- became an important but essentially provincial center.

PANEL V: Bureaucratic Ethos in Soviet Russia

Chair: Kendall Bailes (California/Irvine)

Papers: Don Karl Rowney (Bowling Green), Proletarianization, Political

Control and the Soviet State Administration in the 1920's

Tim Dunmore (Essex), Tenured Bureaucrats and Resistance to

Political Dictatorship

Sheila Fitzpatrick (Texas/Austin), Ordzhonikidze's Takeover of

Vesenkha, 1930: A Case Study of Soviet Bureaucratic Politics

Commentators: William Chase (Pittsburgh)

Manfred Spath (Munster)

Proletarianization, Political Control and the Soviet State Administration  
in the 1920s: Their Impact on Upward Social Mobility

By Don Karl Rowney

The purpose of this study is to formulate some conclusions about change in the personnel of the Soviet civil administration during the decade following the Revolution of 1917. These changes are treated as the product of interaction among objectives of the political elite on one hand and the ambitions of traditionally underprivileged social classes on the other.

The study identifies what seems to have been the objectives at which political leadership aimed so far as post-Revolutionary restructuring of state administration was concerned. Similarly, there is discussion of the pattern of growth and development that certain segments of the civil administrative apparatus-- i.e. the non-military domestic commissariats, the Council of Peoples Commissars, and the Central Committee of the Communist Party-- underwent.

Using the available organizational and career data, the study outlines specific features of the development of the administrative apparatus and its personnel during the 1920s and discusses the implications of this development for the problem of upward social mobility.

The study finds that upward social mobility among workers and peasants was closely associated with membership in the Communist Party in urban industrial areas and with participation in the civil, or soviet, administration in rural areas. This circumstance represented a substantial departure from pre-1917 conditions under which these social classes were largely excluded from participation in administrative agencies.

With respect to the question of political control the study concludes that the social mobility that actually occurred seems not to have been a product of conscious or direct political policy: the announced policy of "proletarianization" was continually frustrated by mobility out of the working class. On the contrary, worker and peasant upward mobility were a reflection of demands for the fruits of revolutionary victory by social classes that were previously excluded from elite and sub-elite social status. The policy of worker/peasant education, announced at the end of the twenties, should be seen as a Party effort to respond to the fait accompli of worker/peasant presence in the civil administration and in industrial and agricultural management at least as much as an effort to stimulate further worker upward mobility. These conclusions should cause us to rethink both the nature and extent of control by the central government and the Central Committee as well as to reassess the problem of practical political control over large bureaucracies.

## Tenured Bureaucrats and Political Dictatorship

By Dr. Tim Dunmore

This paper is the product of many years research into the Soviet bureaucracy in the last eight years of Stalin's life from 1945 to 1953. Ever from the materials available in the official Soviet press it is clear that the senior officials of the government ministries had an enormous impact on policy. Although they were consulted before policy was made, the ministries' main impact was on the implementation of the Politburo's plans and decrees. They systematically diverted resources away from assigned priorities in the consumer goods sector and the eastern economic regions towards more favoured and quicker-yielding projects in the heavy industrial sectors and the Central and North-West of the country.

Stalin's Politburo was powerless to correct this distortion. To do so they would have had to remove huge numbers of bureaucrats for the ministries. If they had done this then the economy would have virtually ground to a halt (as it did in 1938 after the purges). Most of the top ministerial officials of 1950 had long experience of the work of their ministries. They had the contracts, the specialist expertise and the personnel resources to prevent any other organisation (such as the Party secretariat or the Police) effectively checking up on them and so bringing them to heel.

This paper highlights the authority of the State bureaucracy after the war. It shows how the machine that Stalin had basically created during the first five year plan period had fifteen years later moved out of his control. The Politburo could enforce only one priority for a limited period of time; it could not enforce all or even most of its priorities most of the time in the industrial sphere.

Ordzhonikidze's Takeover of Vesenkha, 1930: A Case Study in Soviet  
Bureaucratic Politics

By Sheila Fitzpatrick

This paper is a study of Soviet bureaucratic politics based partly on Soviet archival sources. I stress the sources because it is comparatively rare that we have this kind of detailed, inside information on Soviet bureaucratic behavior-- past or present-- available. It has also in the past been rare for either Western or Soviet scholars of Soviet political history to pay much attention to bureaucratic interest groups and conflicts. This has surely contributed to a rather schematic, over-simplified view of Soviet political processes in the Stalin period that is often found in scholarly and popular analyses.

In the bureaucratic-political episode described in this paper, the Supreme Council of the National Economy (Vesenkha) came under persistent, sustained criticism from the state inspection-and-control agency (Rabkrin) headed by Sergo Ordzhonikidze in 1929-30. Among other sticks that Ordzhonikidze used to beat Vesenkha was the dubious loyalty of the "bourgeois specialists"-- non-Communist economists and engineers, many of them prominent in their particular industries before the Revolution-- who had been hired by the Council as experts, consultants and even administrators in considerable numbers during the 1920s. Ordzhonikidze's criticisms, particularly his dramatic circulation of extracts from OGPU interrogations of arrested specialists at the XVI Party Congress in June 1930, were very damaging to Vesenkha and its leading Communists, headed by Kuibyshev. In November 1930, Ordzhonikidze was appointed chairman of Vesenkha, replacing



Kuibyshev. Once he had the job, he adopted many of the policies-- including protection of non-Communist specialists-- for which, as head of Rabkrin, he had castigated his predecessor.

Two main points are made in conclusion to the paper. First, the behavior of Communists heading Soviet bureaucracies in the early Stalin period shows many similarities to the bureaucratic behavior familiar to us in non-Communist systems. This point is worth making only because it is so often overlooked by scholars. An example of such generic "bureaucratic" behavior is Ordzhonikidze's rapid assimilation of the policies, norms and values associated specifically with Vesenkha after he was appointed to head that institution.

Second, there are obviously modes of behavior peculiar to the Soviet bureaucracy (or the Soviet bureaucracy in Stalin's time); and these should be of special interest to us. The main example of specifically Soviet bureaucratic behavior described in this paper is Ordzhonikidze's use of the "OGPU card"-- arguments stressing internal security, together with data obtained directly from the OGPU-- in his struggle with a competing bureaucracy and its leadership. The "OGPU card" may often have been used in bureaucratic conflicts in Stalin's time, but it is in the nature of published sources to conceal such incidents. This is (to my knowledge) the first such case to be discussed in the literature.