MANAGER AND PRIMARY PARTY
ORGANIZATION SECRETARY:
THE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY
WITHIN THE SOVIET ENTERPRISE

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INTRODUCTION

According to official Soviet data for 1982, there were more than forty-nine thousand primary party organizations (PPOs) in industrial enterprises (with more than 5 million party members), some thirty-one thousand PPOs in the construction industry (with more than 1.2 million party members), and around twenty-nine thousand PPOs in the transportation and communications networks (also with about 1.2 million members). In other words, there were in 1982 over one-hundred and nine thousand positions of PPO secretary in the Soviet economy alone. The role, responsibilities and power of the individuals who serve as PPO secretary have been a matter of scholarly interest for years, and for good reason. It is here that the soviet Communist Party and industrial management come into intimate contact. The question is: Who dominates whom? Also important is the question of how enterprise "turf" is divided up between them.

I propose to address these questions by considering first the literature that has been created in the West as well as Soviet official descriptions of the functions of the PPO secretary. Subsequently, I utilize information gathered from recent emigrants from the Soviet Union, emigrants who had
intimate knowledge of enterprise-party relations. As will be seen, the pre-eminent power and authority of the enterprise manager is unambiguous in informant reports.

A methodological note has been appended to this essay in which three types of data collection (in-depth interviews, round table discussions, and structural questionnaires) and sources of bias are discussed.

SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

Western literature on the functions and the position of the primary party organization secretary in industry

In Management of the Industrial Firm in the USSR, published in 1954, David Granick points out that:

Through its position above and apart from any other organization in the country, the party is expected to be able to combat special organizational interests. While primary party bodies may well identify themselves with the particular interests of their own plant or other economic organization, the danger of this happening is lessened by their being subordinate to regional committees.¹

Elsewhere in the same work he says that "the party unit within the plant is in theory the spokesman of the national Communist Party interests, and the sworn enemy of any director who tries to set himself up as an independent power."² Granick cites the
documents of the XVIII party congress (1939) to the effect that the primary party organizations (PPOs) have been given "the right of supervision over the work of the administration(s)." He concludes that "this right of supervision has led to the practice of treating functionaries of the primary party unit as important members of the management." For example, "when plant managements have been unable to procure needed supplies, the plants' party units have not infrequently used their authority to get them through party channels." Granick defines the function of the primary party organization as "primarily a mobilizing force and one which tries to link together the goals of management and workers. As such, its effectiveness is seen as depending upon the degree to which it rests on a mass basis."

In speaking of PPO secretaries, "the key figures in the party units," Granick distinguishes between two types of secretaries,

either they may act as capable organizers of party mass work, in which case they are centers around which participation can develop, or they operate as officials who make decisions and issue orders on their own responsibility with at best purely formal approval by party meetings.

And later on, he continues,

Soviet theory clearly prefers the first type of secretary and organizer . . . which type of party
leader—the organizer or the official—has been more
typical, I cannot say. The party secretary who
considers himself primarily an official clearly cannot
be successful as an effective organizer. On the other
hand, it is an easier role to play and one in which a
modicum of efficiency can probably not be easily
obtained. Doubtless, both types have existed
everywhere. 8

Granick examines party control over the economic enterprise
in general terms without ever clearly demarcating the primary
party organization and the local party committees. He has this
to say, for example, about the Soviet director: "From the point
of view of practical independence in making concrete decisions,
the Soviet director may be conceived of as an entrepreneur. But
the director's entrepreneurial activity is restricted to one
field—that of developing better methods for carrying out the
existing party line." 9

In The Red Executive, Granick once again dealt with the
various levels of the party hierarchy as one: "The plant party
committees, the city committees, the regional committees: all
are potent bodies, and their full-time secretaries are powerful
men." 13 And again he emphasized that "one of their major
functions is that of supervising industry: of seeing that all
goes smoothly in the shop, the plant, the entire industrial
regional administration." 14 At the same time he cites an example
in which, having intervened in the struggles between the powerful and influential secretary of a primary party organization and the director, "the regional committee of the party 'helped' the factory party secretary to see that he could--and had better--get along with the director." He draws a parallel "between management and strong stockholding groups in the American corporation, and between management and strong party groups in Soviet industry" and comes to the following conclusion:

The party committees are there to protect the interests of the 'stockholders,' and they themselves are judged by their success in this regard. In fact, the party committees are extremely active in their 'protection of the stockholding interest,' far more than is the case of their counterparts in American business. With the duty and obligation of 'supervision' over industrial management, they have in fact injected themselves deep into the management function.

This view has been widely accepted as accurate by Western specialists on Soviet management.

Joseph Berliner's book Factory and Manager in the USSR (1957) is based, as is well known, on interviews with Soviet refugees following World War II. In discussing the figure of the PPO secretary, Berliner underlines the duality of the position. On the one hand, he is supposed to "train communists in the spirit of truthfulness, honesty, and strict observance of the
interests of the party and state. On the other hand, the main
criterion of the performance of the party secretary in the eyes
of his party superiors is the successful performance of the
enterprise.¹⁷ He points out that, "in the case of the control
officials on the managerial staff, there is no single 'typical'
relationship between party secretary and director. At one
extreme are cases in which Secretary Golovkin of the party
committee of the chief administration stamps as O.K. any anti-
party action of his boss."¹⁸ Berliner gives detailed
descriptions of situations in which the secretary demonstrates
primary loyalty to the enterprise: "Self-interest and various
inducements, supplemented by fairly close working relations with
management, create a predisposition for the party secretary to
identify with the firm—to think of it as 'we.'"¹⁹ He quotes one
of his informants: "Comparing the party secretary with the
director in this respect, I would not say that there is much
difference between them."²⁰ And he notes later on that:

From plant patriotism, a concept which enjoys official
sanction, it is not a great step to the 'family
circle,' that set of relationships which is of such
great value in facilitating the successful performance
of the enterprise . . . . There are many more or less
lawful ways in which the party secretary can aid the
enterprise in its problems of procurement or
production. He can use party contacts for facilitating
the quest for materials.\textsuperscript{21}

Berliner singles out one circumstance which was ignored by other researchers:

The pressures on the party secretary to fall in with management are supported by more positive inducements. Although full-time party officials in economic organizations are paid from party funds, and are indeed forbidden to receive pay from their enterprises, they are apparently strongly tempted by the abundant premiums which their managerial colleagues can earn every month.\textsuperscript{22}

This concerns specifically the full-time secretary, or what is called the \textit{osvobozhdennyi} or "liberated" secretary. "Liberated" means having been relieved of all non-party work at the enterprise. As for the "non-liberated" secretary, his public work is renumerated differently. Berliner cites an example of how this is handled at times. "Thus, in the Kalinin Artificial Fiber Combine, management arranged for four shop party secretaries to draw pay under fictional occupational titles."\textsuperscript{23}

Berliner quotes one of his informants on the subject of the influence exerted by the PPO secretary: "... no rule can be established about his influence. This depends upon his personal qualities. His influence increases with his technical competence."\textsuperscript{24} Berliner looks into the problem of the dual loyalty of the PPO secretary--to the party and to the enterprise:
"When the party secretary falls into the web of mutual involvement with the plant management, he violates all the rules of party discipline . . . . When the plant secretary worries about the party, it is not the central committee he has in mind but his immediate boss, the local (county, district, or city) party committee and its secretary.²⁵

Berliner has, therefore, clearly documented the basic duality of the PPO secretary's position.

A great deal of attention is accorded to the primary party organization by Jerry Hough in *The Soviet Prefects: the Local Party Organs in Industrial Decision-Making*, for he focuses generally on the problems of achieving party control over industry rather than on the performance of the industry itself, as was the case with Berliner. In particular, Hough provides a more detailed description of the figure of the secretary of the PPO. In discussing his functions, Hough writes:

The secretary of the primary party organization is assigned a diversity of roles, and his relationship to the chief administrator of an enterprise or institution varies considerably from one role to another. A number of his responsibilities engender little conflict with the chief administrator, but rather create a situation in which he can be viewed as 'only the assistant of the [economic] leaders'.²⁶
Further specifying his functions, Hough presents the following list: "ideological work among the labor force and . . . supervising the trade union and the 'public' institutions designed to maintain order (the comrade courts, the people's guards, and the house committees)", functions about which "the manager may be quite enthusiastic" for the help of the party secretary.\(^{27}\) On the other hand, Hough emphasizes that:

If the party organization is located within a plant, a construction site, or a design bureau, it is assigned the so-called pravo kontrolia, the right to check on the substance of managerial decisions. It is quite clear that the pravo kontrolia can involve the party organization deeply in decision-making and in conflicts with the plant director. . . . Consequently, the phrase "pravo kontrolia" conveys the impression of a primary party organization checking, verifying, inspecting the work of the manager and enforcing his adherence to laws and plans established elsewhere.\(^{28}\) Hough cites the following extract from an article in the magazine Partiinaia zhizn', which, in my view, perfectly illustrates the absurdity of Marxist-Leninist dialectics:

The factory director makes a mistake if he thinks that only higher-standing party and economic organs can obligate him [to take actions] . . . . But it would be incorrect [for the PPO] to abuse its authority by
addressing the director in such categorical phraseology as "to obligate," "to propose," "to demand." 29

While noting that the "contradiction among many of these statements seems blatant indeed," Hough, however, comes to the conclusion that "even on this point Soviet administrative theory is actually not so ambiguous as appears on the surface." 30 And further on: "If one examines closely two contradictory statements about the primary party organizations, it is often found that one statement refers to the powers and functions of the party organization as a whole, whereas the other actually describes the powers and functions of the secretary alone." 31 Referring to the Soviet party literature, Hough says: "When Zhdanov denies that the primary party organization is to provide leadership to the management, when Partiinaia zhizn' states that it would be improper for the primary party organization to use the words 'obligate' and 'demand' in its decision, they are thinking primarily of the party secretary." 32 In discussing the influence exerted by the PPO secretary on the decision-making process at the enterprise, Hough says that: "the major decisions are made--or formalized--at a meeting of the plant's 'board of directors' [by this Hough means "the top management officials," who are "the most important members of that party committee] it does not necessarily mean that the party secretary has had any real impact on the decisions." 33

Referring to an interview he conducted in the USSR, Hough
writes that "all Soviet officials interviewed in 1958 and 1962 agreed that both in theory and in practice . . . the secretary cannot (without the support of higher officials) force the managers to accept his opinion on policy questions. Those interviewed stated that the decision of a meeting of the primary party organization or its bureau usually does not bind the manager unless he has concurred in this decision." 34

Like Berliner before him, Hough points out that the secretary is ineligible for premiums "from the part-time director," yet he fails to observe the difference between the full-time, liberated secretary and the non-liberated secretary. Above all, Hough focuses on the relations between the secretary and the director, an issue of the division of power, rather than on the issue of the division of functions and responsibilities. In concluding the chapter, "Edinonachalie and the Primary Party Organization," he testifies: "Yet, managerial officials interviewed in the Soviet Union . . . insist that the party secretary is usually consulted regularly and that normally the manager and the secretary are able to find a 'common language' without referring questions upward." 35

In discussing the relations between the director and the secretary in Managerial Power in the Soviet Union, Vladimir Andrle states that: "most of the available evidence indicates that the relations between plant directors and plant party secretaries are quite amiable." 36 And elsewhere: "The evidence
suggests that plant party secretaries tend to behave like loyal junior colleagues of the directors.\textsuperscript{37}

Comparing the analyses by Granick, Berliner, Hough and Andrle, one gets the impression that the influence and the power of the primary party organization secretary has been gradually waning from the 1930s through early 1970s. In his work \textit{Soviet Trade Unions}, Blair Ruble offers the following model of the relations among PPO, trade union and management with a "triangle."\textsuperscript{38}
According to Ruble, "the dynamics of these triangular relationships vary from enterprise to enterprise. In one plant, party and union may join together to make sure that management lives up to the letter of safety regulations; at another, party and management officials may take steps to overfulfill productions quotas regardless of the human cost." In contrast to Andrle, Ruble holds that "a board interpretation of the right of control—a process made possible by a singular lack of precise rules and regulations concerning such questions—frequently leads to conflict between party organizations and managers."

Soviet literature on the functions and the position of the primary party organization secretary

The Soviet literature on this subject may be divided into three streams: (1) political literature; (2) literature on the management of an enterprise; and (3) the press (mass media).

The single greatest source of political literature is the party materials: protocols of congresses, documents from plenary sessions of the CPSU Central Committee, and resolutions of the CPSU Central Committee.

From 1971 to 1980 the CPSU Central Committee adopted seven resolutions on the work of PPOs. Generalizing their content, the functions of these organizations include the following:

* supervision of primary party organizations (at large enterprises) and party groups;
* supervision of trade union, Komsomol, and other public organizations;
* political work;
* educational work and the resolution of problems of the social development of the enterprise;
* strengthening work discipline;
* work with personnel, in particular the struggle against fluctuations in the labor force;
* implementation of progressive methods;
* organization of socialist competition;
* implementation of accountability--khozraschet;
* improvement at the technological level;
* improvement in the quality of output;
* acceleration of the pace of construction, and so forth.

The CPSU Central resolution on measures of improvement of party-political work in the railway transportation network (4 March 1980) states:

It cannot be accepted as normal that many . . . primary party organizations have become less demanding of the managing and engineer-technical personnel in the areas of education of the workers, organization of socialist competition, implementation of progressive methods and support for innovative endeavors, creation of normal working and everyday living conditions, as well as maintaining the work and production discipline,
struggling against fluctuations in the labor force, and so forth. 42

As may be seen, the resolution instructs the PPOs to demand from managers everything that the CPSU Central Committee's own resolutions, 1971 to 1980, had defined as the responsibility of the party organizations. An analysis of the 1980 resolution also demonstrates the tightening of party control over the enterprises by the local party committees.

For the purposes of further strengthening the party supervision of the work of the transportation system, transportation and communications departments and sectors will be created in the central committees of the union republic Communist parties, and in territory and province party committees... there will be instituted an additional staff of instructors and deputy department directors. 43

Formally speaking, the party organization has the right to control the activity of the administration. The first provision for the right of control was recorded in the code adopted by the XVIII party congress in 1939. However, not all party organizations received the right to control at the XVIII congress. It was not until 1971 that the XXIV party congress put an end to the division of party organizations between those possessing the right to control and those without it.

The CPSU Central Committee resolution (1981), "On the work
of the primary party organizations of the industrial enterprises of the city of Voronezh in the realization of control over the work of the administration," singles out for criticism the fact that the primary party organization secretaries had covered up the wastefulness and direct abuses of power on the part of the directors of their enterprises, as well as the fact that these negative phenomena had not been exposed on the initiative of the primary party organizations. In other works, the PPO secretaries in Voronezh enterprises had failed to carry out their direct functions and responsibilities.

Soviet official books and articles on party work are, for the most part, devoted to an analysis of primary sources and provide statistical data on party work and specific examples from the life of party organizations as well. Typifying them in this respect are the works of N. A. Petrovichev. With good reason Blair Ruble called Petrovichev's 1976 *Partiinoe stroitel'stvo* "a textbook for party activists." Let me cite some of Petrovichev's statements from his more recent, 1982 volume: "The party organizations approach control not as inspectors, but rather as organizers and educators." And further, "In controlling the activity of the administration, the party organization does not violate the principle of one-man management ... but in fact enhances the authority of the manager through the strengthening of discipline and order." The party organizations and their secretaries are called upon to
utilize better and more fully the right to control: "Whether it is a matter of personnel questions, fulfillment of economic plans, or improvement in the working and everyday life conditions of the people, the party organization must demonstrate its principledness, not allow itself to be led, and lay down the party line firmly when the administration is out of line." Properly managed, party control over the activity of the administration does not in the least imply a replacement of the economic management or undermining of the principle of one-man management. "The party organizations and their leaders possess no administrative rights within the enterprises . . . ." It may be said that the political literature is, for the most part, dedicated to specifying what the primary party and its secretary must do, while dealing very sparingly with what actually goes on in practice.

The character of many Soviet works on management is not theoretical but quite specific, constituting a generalization of the accumulated experience of the management of a Soviet enterprise. I turned to these works in the hope of finding an answer to the questions: Just what is it that the primary party organization secretary actually does?, and How closely does that correspond to what he is supposed to do?

In Upravlenie sotsialisticheskimi predpriyatiyami (1979), Abel Aganbegian cites a table that presents a generalized picture of the elaboration of the plan of social development of an
enterprise, indicating which service arms of the enterprise preoccupy themselves with which areas.50

What stands out especially in the table is the party committee's non-participation in the elaboration of the plan of social development, which, as we know, is supposed to be one of its immediate functions. We know also that the party organization is supposed to improve work with personnel and to combat fluctuations in the labor force. Aganbegian cites an example of a successful study of fluctuations in the labor force and the successful struggle carried on against it at the Altai Tractor Factory and other enterprises of the city of Rubtsovsk.51 At the same time he notes that this was conducted on the initiative of the CPSU city committee and factory directors. There is no mention of party organization secretaries.

The year 1977 saw the publication of Organizatsii upravleniia krupnym promyshiennym kompleksom, which was edited by the well-known management expert B. Mil'ner. It summarized the experience of the construction of the KamAZ (Kamsk Automotive Factory) administration, and in 1984, the magazine Eko published an article by A. Zaitsev, head of the sociological research department of KamAZ.52 Both of these publications deal with specific subjects in detail, but neither even mentions the activity of the PPO. Ironically, however, the secretary of the party organization is listed among the authors of the book.

A sociological study designed to clarify the opinion of the
experts on the subject of "how to improve the performance of the enterprise" was conducted at 43 industrial enterprises in the city of Saratov. According to the enterprise's engineers, the study showed that production work depended on the administration (51.6%), the experts themselves (32.8%), and public organizations (6%). The 6% includes not only the primary party organization, but also, as we know, the trade union, the Komsomol, the NTO (scientific-technical society), the ongoing production conference, and so forth. I have examined dozens of Soviet books and hundreds of articles on problems of Soviet management and can say that works that describe the actual working experience at the enterprise level give the scantiest of mention to the activity of PPOs and their secretaries. The implication is clear. Involvement of the PPO secretary in economic decision making has been widely exaggerated. The reform movement is unlikely to alter the significance of the PPO secretary.

The majority of Soviet authors of current books on management became prominent in the late 1950s through the early 1960s, riding the crest of the wave of struggle for reform: Gvishiani, Popov, Slezinger, Mil'ner, Aganbegian, Zaslavskaiia, Afanas'ev, and others. Hough has pointed out that the year 1965 was "a year in which the Soviet press was stressing the dangers of excessive party involvement in administrative matters." We now know that the year 1965 represented the peak of the Liberman-Kosygin reforms. It seems to me that every time there is a new
call for reform, a similar situation results. Significantly, for example, Gorbachev is today declaring that party workers should not replace managers.55

It would be possible to demonstrate (a subject in its own right) that the authors mentioned above, plus others working in the same direction, have been "smuggling" their ideas into management throughout the entire Brezhnev era. Thus it is today, in a pre-reform period, they find themselves leading the ideological struggle for the restructuring of Soviet management-party relations.

THE SECRETARY OF THE PARTY BUREAU/COMMITTEE

On the structure of primary party organizations

The purpose of this section is to utilize interviews with recent emigrants to define the role, powers and road to success of enterprise party secretaries. Three kinds of party positions may be found in Soviet enterprises: (1) party bureau secretary, (2) party committee secretary, and (3) party organizer of the central committee of the CPSU. In the vast majority of enterprises, party work is conducted by a party bureau secretary who at the same time occupies some other official (non-party) position in the enterprise and is therefore considered a regular employee. He is called a "part-time" party secretary. Party work at larger and more important enterprises is headed by a party committee secretary. He too is elected by communists at
the enterprise, but he is considered formally an employee of the
district party committee. A party organizer of the central
committee of the CPSU is frequently appointed to the country's
major and most important enterprises. Formally, the person is a
staff member of the CC CPSU apparatus.

Informant #24, who in more than 25 years had worked his way
up from shop manager to deputy director of administration at a
major munitions plant, explained that:

Instead of a party bureau we had a party committee with
all the rights of a party committee . . . . We had a
full-time party committee secretary because, even
though the factory was not gigantic in size [employing
only around 4 thousand people], it was a very important
one; it was working for the defense industry, and we
had around 600-700 communists at the plant.

Informant #133, who headed a number of some of the most
important construction projects nationwide for over 20 years,
reported:

The party organization at all of the major construction
projects is headed by a party organizer of the CC CPSU
. . . . We had a party committee consisting of 6
people, headed by a party organizer of the CC CPSU.
Members of the party committee and secretaries of party
organizations of the [construction--L. Kh.] administration and separate collectives of the
construction project were all elective, whereas the party organizer was nominated by the CC CPSU.

A few words are necessary at this point about the particular features of the party structure of construction organizations. According to the system of administrative hierarchy, a construction administration may be compared to a factory shop. A factory with all of its shops is located in one place, whereas construction administrations encompass several locations in cities and regions. Through the mid-1970s each trust and each construction administration subordinate to a trust had its own party organization, which was subordinate to the local regional party committee according to the principle of territorial hierarchy. The party organization secretaries, both for the construction administrations as well as for the trust, had part-time status. Thus, the party hierarchy did not coincide with the administrative hierarchy.

In the second half of the 1970s, the structure began to undergo changes. Informant #38, who worked for over 20 years as head of the department of labor and wages of a construction trust, related how all the party organizations of the administrations of his trust were merged with the trust's party organization. A new general party committee was created, headed now by a full-time secretary. This even prompted a special resolution by the CC CPSU, "On the work of the party organizations of the Gorky Automotive Plant under conditions of
On the financial situation of the primary party organization secretary

A party bureau secretary receives his salary from the enterprise. After being elected to this party position he (formally) retains his regular job. He also, therefore, continues to receive his salary and remains eligible for performance premiums at the enterprise. Informant #8, with over 20 years of experience as chief engineer of a huge industrial trust, believed that:

As a rule, the part-time secretary held a sinecure position, well-paying and hassle-free. Take, for example, a job like chief of the department of civil defense. He got his premiums, all right. As a full-time secretary, however, he would not have received premiums where I worked.

A party committee secretary and a party organizer of the CC CPSU draw their salaries from the party funds at the regional party committee. Formally, they are not supposed to receive premiums paid by the enterprise. Evidently, this was established in order to minimize dependency of the party organization secretary on the director. But, in reality, things just do not work out that way.

Informant #43, who worked as chief accountant of a major
lathe-building factory for over 20 years, reported:

The party committee secretary at their plant grovelled for quite a while, begging the director to pay him his premiums. The regional party committee sent a special letter which described his merits, asking that he be paid premiums, as sort of an exception. Some of the inspectors who visited the plant pointed out that it is illegal to pay premiums to a person who is drawing his salary elsewhere. But since it was a party bureau secretary and not, let us say, a chief of security of the plant, plus the fact of the letter from the regional party committee, the inspectors never mentioned this point in their reviews.

In comparing the incomes of the plant managers, he came up with the following figures:

- **director of the plant**: 800 rubles per month (of which salary is 400)
- **chief engineer**: 600 rubles per month (of which salary is 300)
- **chief accountant**: 600 rubles per month (of which salary is 200)
- **party bureau secretary**: 400 rubles per month (of which salary is 200)

Here is a dialogue taken from an interview with informant #133:

Q: Did you have a full-time secretary?
A: Yes, I did.
Q: Who paid his salary?
A: The regional party committee.
Q: What about the premiums?
A: He got his premiums from me.
Q: But that's against the law. If he isn't listed in your salary records, you're not supposed to pay him premiums.
A: I paid premiums to all of them. I didn't do it personally, I wrote it [money for a secretary's premium--L. Kh.] off to the regional party committee, and the committee was the one that paid him.
Informant #24, confirming the above, said:
Our full-time secretaries received their salaries from the regional party committee. As for premiums, I'm under the impression that they were transferred from the factory to the regional party committee. Thus, formally, they received their premiums form the regional party committee, but the money was put up by the factory.

Thus, my informants testify to the fact that both part-time and full-time primary party organization secretaries fell into de facto financial dependence on those who distributed the premiums at the enterprise, that is, above all, on the enterprise director.
On the functions, responsibility, and authority of the primary party organization secretary at the enterprise

The questionnaire that I designed for managers contains several questions on this issue. I will cite some of the results of the survey of respondents on the division of responsibility and authority within an enterprise (at which the respondent had to have worked for no less than 5 years). My respondents consisted of representatives of the upper and middle echelon of managers of Soviet enterprises. The following marginals are based upon 125 respondents.

Party organization secretaries participated primarily in the organization of demonstrations, collective sorties to harvest potatoes, vegetable storehouses, and other public activity of the sort:

* 69.6% said that secretaries actually personally participated in this kind of work;
* 74.4% said that they bore a formal responsibility for such activities;
* 47.2% said that the "final decision" was up to the secretary.

On participation in the distribution of premiums:

* 41% said that secretaries actually personally participated in this kind of work;
* 45% said that they bore a formal responsibility for such activities;
* 0% said that the "final decision" was up to the secretary.

On participation in the distribution of housing:
* 46% said that secretaries actually personally participated in this kind of work;
* 43% said that they bore a formal responsibility for such activities;
* 2.4% said that the "final decision" was up to the secretary.

On participation in the distribution of passes to summer pioneer camps, rest homes, and sanitariums:
* 26% said that secretaries actually personally participated in this kind of work;
* 31% said that they bore a formal responsibility for such activities;
* 8% said that the "final decision" was up to the secretary.

On management of personnel within the enterprise, that is, promotion, demotion, dismissal:
* 12% said that secretaries actually personally participated in this kind of work;
* 10% said that they bore a formal responsibility for such activities;
* 0.8% said that the "final decision" was up to the secretary.
On construction of housing, children's institutions, and sports facilities:
* 2.4% said that secretaries actually personally participated in this kind of work;
* 4% said that they bore a formal responsibility for such activities;
* 0.8% said that the "final decision" was up to the secretary.

It may be concluded from the respondents' replies that the party organization secretaries had absolutely nothing to do with the hiring of manpower, the implementation of new technology, supplies, sales, or capital construction. Only 3% of the respondents said that PPO secretaries participated in final decision-making regarding the implementation of new technology.

It must be noted that in replying to the question "Who had the authority for making the final decision?", many respondents "wrote [in the authority of --L. Kh.] the director, with consent of the primary party organization." This is corroborated by informant #24: "The party committee secretary's signature is required on such documents as orders on distribution of premiums, allocations of housing, and so forth." In response to the above-mentioned question on authority, over 95% of the respondents referred to the director (manager of the enterprise) on all 11 aspects of the management activity listed on page 14 of the questionnaire. It is of interest that the distribution of
responses of employees of large enterprises (employing over a thousand people) turned out essentially the same as that for the employees of mid-size and minor enterprises.

On page 1 and 2 of the questionnaire the respondents were asked, "What have you (as well as your immediate superior) had to do that, in your opinion, was not part of your (your superior's) responsibility?" Some 21 of 125 respondents said that they had to fulfill the functions of social organizations, to be specific, they had to "conduct political work," "oversee the education of the workers," and "mount a struggle" for discipline, as well as against "absenteeism and alcoholism." One respondent wrote: "After all, it's the responsibility of the party and the trade unions." Most of these 21 respondents were immediate production-line foremen and shop managers.

My informants represent the upper echelons of the managers of Soviet enterprises. While disagreeing on many issues, they were surprisingly unanimous in their evaluation of the PPO secretary as usually technically incompetent about production matters and routinely subordinate to the enterprise director. Informant #115, who had worked for more than 25 years at a military auto-repair plant (10 years as chief of the technical-production department and 15 years as chief engineer), had this to say:

The party committee secretary doesn't handle either machinery, technology, or personnel problems. He is a
blank. He could be an absolutely illiterate, technically incompetent man.

Q: How often does that happen?
A: Are you kidding! It happens all the time!
Q: Did you have a competent one?
A: No way. He was absolutely incompetent. He just kept his eyes on what went on. And everything that the director decided upon along with the chief engineer was passed on to the party organization, and he controlled the party organizations of the shops.

Informant #3, who worked for about 10 years as deputy chief of the supply department of an aviation factory and for over 15 years as chief economist of a construction administration, pointed out that: "And yet, at the same time, the party committee secretary at our factory completely danced to the tune of the director . . . . He helped the director our; they worked together, but the decisions were up to the director." In the construction trust in which the informant worked later on, the party bureau secretary had part-time duties and combined them with his main work, that of chief of the personnel department. At the same time he completely obeyed all directives of the manager.

Informant #38 claimed: "The party bureau secretary at our trust was a retired military man who worked as chief of the personnel department, knew absolutely nothing about the
construction business, and never interfered in matters of production."

Informant #43 asserted that their party bureau secretary exerted no influence and no real power at the factory. Moreover, in the opinion of #43, he could not possibly have played any role, for he was ignorant of the affairs of the factory.

Informant #133 related that:

At meetings I always said, "We are ever making great strides thanks to the tireless concern of our secretary" (of the party committee).

Q: But really, did you ever get any help from him?
A: God forbid. You can't let him interfere in your work.

Q: Was your party organizer a construction man?
A: No, he wasn't. But that doesn't mean anything. What kind of people are they? One day he's collecting dues (first Komsomol, then party), then, the moment he's through with college, he's the secretary of a party organization at a construction project; first a little one, then a bigger and bigger one. So, call him a construction man if you will, but realistically he hasn't got any experience. . . . He's got power but he doesn't know how to use it, because he is surrounded by people who know what they are doing and he is completely out of it.
And again, later:

He helped me out from time to time . . . . I would give him instructions: call here and there, find out what's going on, go to the regional party committee, throw your weight around a little. I worked with another party organizer (we were also on excellent terms with each other) who learned the construction business at our project and went on to become deputy construction minister of the Ukraine.

Informant #115 said: "Of course the director is afraid of the party organization secretary, after all, their principal occupation is denunciations and innuendo."

Informant #24 was of another opinion:

Oh, for God's sake! A true director of a factory fears no one in his factory. And that means that the director of our factory feared neither the party committee secretary, nor the chairman of the factory trade union committee, nor the military representative.

Respondent #133 said that the regional party committees do not welcome the party organizer's complaints when lodged against a director who is fulfilling the plan. Now if the regional committee decides that the director has overstayed his welcome, then the secretary comes in handy, for he can always "add some compromising materials."

Informant #115:
The mutual relations with the party bureau? If everything is going all right at the factory, then there's no problem. But should the party bureau begin 'summit' examinations of hot issues, as when the party bureau examines the case of the director, that's no longer work, it's airing dirty laundry. The regional party committee intervenes in such cases. But usually, if the enterprise is doing well, there is none of this pettiness.

Informant #133:
Everyone was getting in the way, and that goes for both the party committee secretary and the trade union committee chairman. But smart, resourceful people (managers--L.Kh.) kept their jobs for many years because they shied away from conflict situations. I always tried to arrange things so that they'd have their piece of the pie and the power that goes with it. The regional committee secretary calls for me and asks, "so how are you two getting along at work? Is everything all right?" I say, "Yes, everything's fine." He's all right.

This same informant tells us about his relationship with a party organizer of the CC CPSU:

Q: Are you saying that he doesn't depend on you at all?
A: No, sure he depends on me. If he's got brains, he'll depend on me. A smart person must avoid conflict situations. Even if you're right, still you just chop yourself off at the knees 25% (i.e., ruined your professional life--L.Kh.). People up on top don't like conflict situations. A man who stirs up conflicts is sure to be removed.

Q: Even if he is right?
A: Yes, even if he's right . . . . A couple of times my party organizer cut me off in mid-sentence in front of others, and I realized that I've got to do something about it. I told him: "We've got to put up with each other. Let's decide once and for all, do we want to put up with each other? I can't stand the fact that you're always interrupting me to explain to me that above me there is the party. But the day I get my Hero of Socialist Labor award I'll say, "Give half of this star to him, my party organizer." If you want, go on and build things and I'll stand next to you. Can you build anything? If not, then be quiet.

Q: And what was your relationship with the party organizer like after this conversation?
A: Perfect. We became friends. I never allowed myself to get him in any trouble. He suited me fine. If I needed his help, he'd help me.
Q: Give me an example of a conflict which you were able to avoid.

A: Everything depends on who your superior is. I was a manager of a mid-level construction project. We had a part-time party bureau secretary, who was also chief of the supply department. He began to gather malcontents around himself. "The boss thinks he is a big deal, forgot to say hello to someone," that sort of thing. And he really got to me. So I went to the regional party committee, to my superiors, and I asked them to get rid of him. And they got rid of him. Why? Because they couldn't afford to get rid of me. They needed me more. That was the only reason and I knew it. He was of no consequence to them and they had no choice.

Consider this from an interview with Informant #8:

The manager will take the party organization secretary into account unless he's a fool. The party organization secretary will never ever openly attack the administration. That's a laugh.

Q: Can't he just go to the regional party committee and tell them that the manager is doing something wrong?

A: He can. But not to discuss technical aspects. He can say that the wrong person was allocated an
apartment. that the manager drinks on occasion, that he's a "womanizer", and so forth. But if the organization is fulfilling its plan, the secretary may be told at the regional party committee, "Why spoil your relationship with the manager? You've got to work together with him and help him fulfill the plan. That's the most important thing of all."

Informant #125, who worked for around 20 years as chief engineer of a geophysical trust, asserted:

We elected our own party organization secretary at our trust, instead of having one sent to us from the regional party committee.

Q: What role did he play at your workplace?
A: It all depends on the particular person. Realistically speaking, the party organization secretary is usually chosen by the director. Then he calls in his assistants, suggesting that they discuss the choices, and normally he gets his way. No one actually even argues with him because it is primarily the director who will have to work with him. Then the choice is confirmed by the regional party committee. The general meeting elects the party organization bureau, and finally it is the bureau that elects the secretary. Where some particular matter is concerned, for example in the distribution of housing (a key
issue!), the director can pretend to go along with him and take him into account. In the end it is still the director who decides everything, because the party organization secretary is dependent on the director.

Informant #38:

In our construction trust we had a part-time party secretary. Then, in 1978, the party organizations of the construction administrations and of the trust were merged into one, and he became a full-time secretary. Then another man was sent in from the outside to replace him, needless to say, in accordance with the manager of the trust.

Informant #8:

After all, if the party organization secretary, even a part-time one, is denied a premium, he can't very well go and complain about the director to the regional party committee. All these relationships are based on things unspoken.

Informant #24 tells that:

In my career at the factory (i.e., 20 years) we went through three party organization secretaries. The first two were retired military men (a colonel and a lieutenant-colonel). Both felt completely out of place at the factory. One of them hanged himself. (The informant attributed the suicide to a mental breakdown.
of a man who understood the life around him much too well for a party committee secretary.)

Q: What effect did he have on what was going on at the factory?

A: None at all. He never entered into any confrontations with the director. The next party committee secretary, a retired colonel, was a complete non-entity and, as a matter of fact, died just a year after assuming his position. Then it was decided that someone must be found from within the factory. The director of the factory appointed--I repeat, appointed—a woman who worked at our factory. Naturally, everyone voted for her, it's always done. She was not a particularly bright woman. Before that she worked as a technologist, then became chief of a sector, and then became active in the factory's trade union committee. The director decided that she was the most convenient choice, for she would never interfere or get in anyone's way. Well, within a couple of years she began to get "ornery". Once, in my presence, while the director and I were discussing the implementation of our new management system, she began to make fun of the whole thing, saying that it was useless, a waste of money and so on. And the director told her rather sharply, "Natasha, do you remember what Taras Bul'ba
told his son Andrei? 'I brought you into this world, and it is mine to put an end to you.' Remember that once and for all - I don't like the way you've been behaving lately." And she became her old self and never again tried to influence anything or interfere in anything except her party work.

The opinions of these informants are corroborated by examples from the Soviet press. In a letter to the newspaper Pravda (5 Oct. 1987), an author writes about various shortcomings and flagrant theft, commenting that, "the party organization looks the other way, as if it were in a detective film - watching but not interfering."

In the article "Postoronnii" (Pravda, 5 July 1987), a newspaper correspondent asks the factory's party committee secretary why he did not want to talk to him in front of the director of the factory. "And who am I?", answered the party secretary. "Just a part-time secretary. Just another shop manager. So, the director comes back to his chair, and who'll have mercy on me then?"

According to the information provided by some informants, part-time secretaries often worked as chiefs of the personnel department at the time, and, as a rule, they were retired military or KGB officers.

Informant #117, who worked for over 30 years as chief accountant and chief economist at a large machine-building
Factory and at an industrial plant:

Recently, our secretary was on part-time duty. He was the deputy chief of the personnel department. This position is always occupied by the deputy chief of the personnel department. Most of the time he has also previously served in the KGB. Our secretary was a liberal man who liked the Soviet regime as much as I did. Moreover, he was a former regional party committee secretary. Rumors had it that he got burned when it was discovered that he was connected with the Banderites during the war.

Informant #115:

Now, in cases where a factory doesn't have a nomenklatura full-time party supervisor, the position is occupied specifically by the chief of the personnel department. He obeys the director on all issues, and he has his own, you know, party affairs and party superiors of his own.

Informant #106 had worked for 15 years as shop manager at machine-building plants, and for 10 years as chief of the department of labor and wages at a small local-industry factory. According to him:

Usually, the way things worked out, they weren't always professional . . . . But as for party organization secretaries at the factories at which I worked (large
machine-building plants), they weren't in charge. No, they were definitely not running things.

Again, Informant #106:

The party bureau, all it did was pump up extra pressure. When the secretary passed by, the workers would say, "Shh, the godfather is coming." And that says it all. "Godfather" is a prison camp expression (denoting a KGB worker in a camp--L.Khn) that has entered the working man's vocabulary.

The road to power

Informant #3 relates the following story:

Party committee secretaries would often leave our factory for the post of regional party committee secretary. And still, even when one became a regional party secretary, he was still no match for the figure cut by our director, a delegate to every party congress and a deputy of the USSR Supreme Soviet. Therefore, the party committee secretary knew that his whole career depended on our director; if they get along, he'll go up and move right along in his party career; otherwise, his career is shot. In order to make a career the party committee secretary must consciously please the director in everything he does . . . .

Naturally, our director was a smart guy and, in
"pushing" this man to the regional party committee and then to the city party committee, realized that some day he may become a power to contend with in his own right. He was on the best of terms with the secretary and never humiliated him, even consulting with him in public, although everyone knew full well just who was making all the decisions.

An examination of the biographies of some 100 leaders of the Soviet Union—ministers, first secretaries of province party committees, secretaries of the central committees of union republic parties, secretaries of the CC CPSU, and members of the Politburo, reveals that 19 people moved to a position in the leadership from the post of chief engineer, 22 people were ex-directors, and 18 were ex-party committee secretaries. Included among these primary party organization secretaries are the powerful leaders of yesterday, Grishin and Romanov, political corpses today, who, incidentally, were the last non-college-educated members to sit on the Politburo. The Politburo in mid-1988 included three one-time primary party organization secretaries—Vorotnikov, Chebrikov, and Shcherbitskii. It may be just a coincidence, but Grishin and Romanov were the first victims of the "restructuring", while Vorotnikov, Chebrikov, and Shcherbitskii are listed among Gorbachev's chief opponents by many Kremlinologists.
CONCLUSION

Thus, the results of the questionnaire and of in-depth interviews both corroborate the conclusion that the influence and power of a primary party organization secretary are hardly comparable to the influence and power wielded by the manager of an enterprise, and that, consequently, the primary party organization secretary is in no position to exercise real control over the work of the enterprise manager. Informants attribute this fact to two primary factors: 1) the primary party organization secretary, whether full-time or part-time, is dependent for his income on the manager of the enterprise; and 2) the primary party organization secretary is not, as a rule, an expert and is therefore not versed in the production problems of the enterprise.

The main responsibilities of the primary party organization secretary are: 1) social work, which includes party work; and 2) participation in the distribution of social privileges. Even in this case, however, the PPO secretary's influence is limited by the head of the enterprise. The secretary of the party committee of a large enterprise has certain political potential and one can rise from it to the very top of the Soviet political hierarchy, if one plays his cards rights.

Thus, informants and respondents agree that the influence of the primary party organization secretary is incomparably less than the influence of the manager of the enterprise. The
influence of the primary party organization secretary is based upon decisions of party committees--from local to the central committee. In spite of this, or maybe because of it, we have much proof that the Communist Party gives itself more power than the laws it creates. The influence of the primary party organization secretary is, therefore, greater than the influence of, say, the chairman of the union committee. The party secretary, like the trade union chairman, plays a specific role only with respect to non-production problems. The main figure who makes final decisions concerning the enterprise, production as well as non-production, is the director. One may well say that Blair Ruble's triangle is, in fact, such that two angles are completely subordinated to the main angel--the director. The famous triangle is not equilateral; each of the angles is different from the others.
METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

This report will present a few of the results of interviews with recent Soviet emigrants that were conducted by me on a number of topics regarding Soviet enterprise operations and performance. I utilized the following three methods in obtaining information from Soviet emigrants: in-depth interviews, round-table discussions, and structured questionnaires.

In-depth interviews

As I see it, the method of in-depth interviews with experts in the given narrow fields is invaluable, especially in studying problems on which there are clearly not enough sources. The method becomes of great value when used in verifying a number of problems previously studied using this same method. Such situations give one the opportunity to compare our past knowledge on the subject and check whether any changes have taken place since, and if they have, to ascertain their nature. By the past, I am referring to the Harvard study, and, in particular, to the work of Professor Joseph Berliner.

In choosing the respondents I utilized the method of "snowballing." My choice of this method was motivated primarily by my intention to use my connections in the emigre communities across the USA, connections which resulted from my participation
in the well known studies by G. Grossman, V. Treml, and by B. Madison using emigrant sources.

Briefly on the merits of this approach:

1) it provides an opportunity to obtain complete and truthful information about the professional past of the informants from their friends and acquaintances;

2) an acquaintanceship struck up through common friends helps to create an informal atmosphere during the interview and is conductive to greater frankness on the part of the respondents; the fact that I have contacted people who have already expressed their consent to be interviewed by me to one of my acquaintances.

The biggest drawback of the approach lies in the fact that a great deal of time is spent on non-relevant, polite conversations.

I have conducted interviews on the problems of planning, on the problems of formal and informal functions of the Soviet manager, as well as on the problem of distribution of responsibility in the management of an enterprise.

The method of round-table discussion

I chose twelve persons from Moscow and Kiev from among those of my respondents who had already gone through in-depth interviews. Among the advantages of the round-table discussion approach I would include the following:
1) in the discussions that arise people are forced to defend their points of view, and they end up disclosing even more new facts;

2) one gets a chance to verify the information received from these same respondents during the in-depth interview. (In my estimation, the results of the round-table discussion demonstrated the high quality of the information related by our respondents. Also, since the onset of the era of glasnost', the validity of their information has been reconfirmed by the Soviet press, day in and day out);

3) the discussion pits against each other persons who once occupied a wide range of positions in the management hierarchy of the Soviet industry. One is treated to a variety of perspectives on the same events from representatives of different levels of the hierarchy. For example, there arose a discussion of the stability of the position of a nomenklatura worker, and the only true representative of the hierarchy differed in his views from all the rest of the participants;

4) there is no need for time-consuming searches and evaluations of the competency of a prospective respondent.

Among the drawbacks of this method are the need for a great deal of organizational work as well as its costliness.

The questionnaire approach

In conducting surveys on the topics of "formal and informal
functions of the Soviet manager" and "distribution of responsibility in the management of an enterprise." I relied on a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was oriented toward high- and mid-level managers of Soviet enterprises.

The questionnaire draws not only upon the personal experience of the respondent, but also upon his or her knowledge of the behavior of superiors and colleagues, which greatly expands the scope of the information obtained. The way I see it, "second-hand" information is extremely important in the study of Soviet society because that society is still rather inaccessible. Since all of the managers of an enterprise are bound together by mutual interest in the fulfillment of the plan, I believe that indirect information on the work of a manager obtained as a result of a survey of subordinates or colleagues is sufficiently credible to use.

The interviewers were themselves Soviet emigres, good acquaintances of mine, who live in various cities across the USA and who have had substantial experience in work of this sort in this country. They used the method of snowballing in the search and selection of subjects for the survey. To date, 125 such questionnaires have been completed. Unfortunately, for technical reasons, the data contained in this mass of questionnaires have not been fully processed, and in this report I am able to use only the information from one page of the questionnaire.
The problem of bias

I agree with Professor James Millar that "there seems to have been little concern about problems of representational bias in one-on-one conversations with emigrants or in small-scale interview projects on selected topics."¹ It is common knowledge that there was a high percentage of Jews among managers of Soviet industry in the 1950's through the 1970's, especially in the construction industry. I believe that our respondents provide an adequate representation of the various branches of industry in the Soviet Union.

Where the issue of the role of the party in the management of the Soviet economy is concerned, it is my belief that our respondents also reflect an outlook which is representative of the Soviet management in general. To a certain extent, bias was indeed manifested by the fact that some of my respondents passionately defended the superiority of a capitalist economy over a socialist one.

Of special interest is the correlation of the attitudes towards the Soviet system expressed by the subjects of the Harvard study and those of our respondents. An example is the dim view of "Moscow bureaucrats and incompetent party leaders who are forever poking their noses into what is none of their business."² Today, a similar opinion is shared by many of my respondents.

As for the problem of interviewer bias in my study, the main
question, as Millar has put it, is analogous to whether "blacks can interview whites successfully or vice versa," Can a Soviet Jewish emigrant successfully interview another emigrant like himself? I do not perceive any special problem in this, but then, perhaps that is the proof of my own bias.


NOTES


18 Berliner (1957), p. 265 (which cites a Societ newspaper story).

19 Berliner (1957), p. 266.

20 Berliner (1957), p. 266.

21 Berliner (1957), p. 266.

22 Berliner (1957), p. 266.

23 Berliner (1957), p. 266.


37 Andrle (1976), p. 41.


44 Partiinaia zhizn', no. 9 (May, 1981), p. 3.


*Bor'ba kommunisticheskoi partii za rezhim ekonomii i ratsionalizatsiiu obshchestvennogo proizvodstva i upravleniia. 1917-1983 gg.*, Iaroslavl', 1985.


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Ekonomicheskaia gazeta
Известия
Известия Сибирского отделения Академии Наук СССР (серия "Економика и прикладная социология")
Коммунист
Партийная жизнь
Правда
Социалистичская промышленность
Социологические исследования
Советские профсоюзы