NON-COMMUNIST HANDS: BOURGEOIS SPECIALISTS
IN SOVIET RUSSIA, 1917-1927

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ABSTRACT

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Prior to 1917, classical Marxist thought had assumed that socialism would be built on the material basis of the bourgeois revolution of modernization, and that the progressive simplification of tasks and dissolution of the antithesis between mental and manual labour would ultimately eliminate the need for specialists. The extraordinary historical circumstances under which the Bolsheviks came to power in October 1917 forced them to revise radically many of their former assumptions: socialism would be achieved by means of industrialization and to this end the services of specialists were essential. Not only were there not enough qualified specialists, the great majority of them were either actively or passively hostile to the Bolsheviks - hence the sociologically-misleading epithet "bourgeois specialist." Regardless of ideological differences, Lenin was determined to secure the services of essential experts without whom...
socialism could not be built and to this end he insisted that specialists be treated not as class enemies but as useful collaborators, that they be accorded an honoured position in the socialist order, and provided with appropriate material and moral benefits. An entire series of decrees, laws, and resolutions were passed to implement this Leninist policy. It must be noted, however, that policy on specialists followed rather than determined the course of events during the period under study.

The result was tremendous controversy, as Left critics within the Party feared capitalist-restorationist tendencies while rank-and-file workers frankly resented the privileges and high salaries of the specialists, especially after the introduction of one-man management in 1920. Such protest found its most eloquent and forceful expression in the 1920-1921 Workers' Opposition movement; its crudest expression took the form of "spetsya-baiting" which remained a serious problem throughout the 1920's. Despite all efforts, critics were generally unable to effect any fundamental policy change prior to 1928.

Historical circumstances forced a stark choice on the specialists: work for the Soviet power or emigrate. At the same time, their professional and patriotic values impelled them toward conscientious collaboration and many
believed that by their efforts they could mitigate the alleged excesses of the regime. The fact that the Soviet power was prepared to undertake ambitious and large-scale projects made many specialists actually enthusiastic, leading to increasing identification with the goals of the regime.

Whatever concessions were made to the specialists — and these were not inconsiderable — they were made on terms laid down unilaterally by the Party. The specialists possessed no independent position of strength from which to negotiate and Lenin's 1922 question "who controls whom" was taken quite seriously by his successors. Above all, no ideological concessions were made and specialists were never allowed to become an autonomous force.
What about writers of history? Do all their labours
Bring them a bigger return, or merely consume
More midnight oil? With unrestricted licence
They pile up their thousand pages - and an enormous -
Stationery bill: the vast extent of the theme,
Plus their professional conscience, makes this inevitable.
But what will the harvest yield, what fruit will all your
grubbing
Bring you? Does any historian pull down a newsreader's
wage?

Juvenal, *Satire 7*
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very pleased to express my sincere appreciation for the assistance, advice and support received while preparing this dissertation. First and foremost, I must thank my advisor, Professor Irving H. Smith, who suggested my subject and was constantly available to render judicious criticism and advice. Above all, his passionate commitment to the study of history was a constant inspiration in times of academic depression. I am similarly grateful to the other members of my programme committee, Professors John F. Laffey, George Rudé, and Martin Singer, whose rigorous insistence on high standards of historical scholarship saved me from any number of historian's fallacies. Of course, I bear full responsibility for the conclusions of this study.

The Inter-Library Loan Department of the Concordia University Libraries was especially helpful in procuring essential materials. I must acknowledge a special debt of gratitude to the Slavic Reference Service of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and above all to Ms. Mary Stuart, who hunted down all kinds of esoterica with deadly accuracy and unfailing patience.

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My family and friends have given me unstinting
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bourgeois specialists.
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INTRODUCTION

The decade following the October Revolution witnessed the emergence and development of an ambivalent relationship between the Soviet regime and the so-called "bourgeois specialists", i.e., non-Bolshevik intellectual workers who had received their education and entered their professions prior to the revolution, members of the generations born before 1890.¹ This study will focus on two major aspects of their relationship: the efforts of the Communist Party to hammer out and implement a practical policy that would enable the Soviet authorities to make the most effective use of the knowledge and experience of the old specialists; and the attitude of the regime and the spetsy toward each other, how each understood or misunderstood the other according to the particular historical circumstances.²

Because of the extraordinary conditions under which the Bolsheviks were obliged to build socialism, the question of the bourgeois specialists became especially acute for as Lenin never tired of reminding his audience there could be no real progress toward socialism unless the knowledge and experience of the old experts were employed to the utmost by

¹The military specialists and the cultural-artistic intelligentsia have been arbitrarily excluded since each group merits its own study.

²The term "regime" should not be understood in the narrow sense of Party and state organs; it is intended to include other Soviet institutions such as economic organizations, trade unions, and the press.
the Soviet power. Important as this question appeared to
Lenin and his contemporaries, scholars outside the Soviet
Union have not given it the attention it deserves. Granted,
the recent works of Jeremy R. Azrael, Kendall E. Bailes, and
E.H. Carr have all included a single chapter on the specialists.¹ Each scholar provides a number of valuable insights,
but none makes any pretense to a comprehensive treatment of
the subject; for Azrael and Carr, specialists are but one
component of greater themes and concerns while Bailes con-
siders them simply as a necessary preliminary to his funda-
mental interest, the emergence of the Stalinist technological
intelligentsia.

In the Soviet Union, the bourgeois specialists have
found their historian in S.F. Fediukhin, who in 1960 wrote
a short monograph of some ninety pages entitled Privlechenie
burzhuaznoi technicheskoi intelligentsii k sotsialisticheskому
stroitel'ству v SSSR (The Recruitment of the Bourgeois
Technical Intelligentsia for Socialist Construction in the
USSR). By 1965, the monograph had become a full-scale
study, Sovetskaia vlast' i burzhuaznye spetsialisty (Soviet

¹ Jeremy R. Azrael, Managerial Power and Soviet Politics
(Cambridge, Mass., 1966), pp. 28-64; Kendall E. Bailes,
Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin (Princeton,
Power and Bourgeois Specialists). In 1972, there appeared his Velikii Oktiabr' i intelligentsiia (Great October and the Intelligentsia), essentially a bloated version of Sovetskaia vlast' that provides no new conclusions.

Fediukin clearly appreciates the significance of his subject for an understanding of Soviet history of the 1920's and his works are essential reading for any student of the period. On the other hand, he has scarcely pronounced the last word on the subject and it would be difficult indeed to defend his work as the standard against which all other scholarship must be measured. His obsession with demonstrating the historical correctness of the Leninist line on specialists leads him to adopt a distinctly teleological approach, virtually divorcing Lenin's ideas from their historical roots, from the struggle and contradictions of the first years of the Soviet republic. Other than to castigate the foolishly misguided or patently wicked opponents of Lenin, be they the Workers' Opposition or the Trotskyites, little indication is given that the whole issue of a policy toward bourgeois specialists provoked furious controversies within and without the Party. For that matter, Fediukin refuses to give a fair hearing to Lenin's critics for his analyses of their views border on caricature. While he is careful to consult the archives of his choice, he entirely
ignores non-Soviet scholarship on the 1920's and all émigré literature except for міграційное, and even his use of published Soviet source materials is, to say the least, selective.

In some respects, Fediukin is supine; his 1965 condemnation of the "sickly suspicion of I.V. Stalin toward the whole intelligentsia" (Sovetskaia vlast', p. 243) was replaced in 1972 by a mild criticism of the "cult of the personality of I.V. Stalin" (Velikii Oktiabr, p. 454). Despite an interval of almost half a century, he cannot resist constantly reproaching the old specialists for every manner of ideological sin arising from their alleged class origins, chief of which were lack of confidence in the promised new order and "faintheartedness." The opinions of the old specialists are given short shrift, unless they are of the "How I learned to overcome my faintheartedness and collaborate conscientiously with the Soviet power" variety.

In a word, there exists very considerable latitude for a study of the bourgeois specialists based on a wide range of sources which grounds Lenin's thought in its concrete and changing historical context, considers the ideas of the other Bolshevik leaders and of the specialists themselves, and analyzes the evolution of an official policy toward the specialists and in particular the very bitter controversies that consequently arose. Such are the broad
objectives of this study, which proposes a more balanced and critical analysis than that offered by Fediukin.
CHAPTER I
BEFORE OCTOBER

A study of the bourgeois specialists in Soviet Russia during the decade following the October Revolution must necessarily begin by identifying the members of this group. Such an apparently straightforward exercise becomes considerably more complicated upon closer scrutiny. First of all, the term "bourgeois specialists" is nothing if not sociologically misleading, for it was coined by Bolshevik leaders in the heat of the post-October weeks to describe and condemn those intellectual workers who passively or actively opposed the Soviet power. Regardless of its accuracy, this appellation remained in use throughout the 1920's to designate the non-Party professional and intellectual workers who had received their education under the old regime, and in one form or another, it persisted until the 1936 Stalin Constitution proclaimed the equality of all Soviet citizens whatever their alleged class origin.¹ Thus according to the terminology of the 1920's, I.P. Bardin, son of a peasant, V.N. Ipat'ev, son of an architect, and P.N. Pototskii, a prince-turned engineer who received

¹Sheila Fitzpatrick, Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union 1921-1934 (Cambridge, England, 1979), p. 235. From this time onwards, specialists were neither "bourgeois" nor "Red" but instead "Soviet".
the Order of Lenin, were all equally "bourgeois specialists."

A second difficulty arises from the fact that the bourgeois specialists were originally part of the educated minority of the Russian Empire, which leads directly to the question of their relationship with the intelligentsia. While this is scantly the place to dissect the whole problem of the Russian intelligentsia, at least one aspect of the question does merit some further consideration. In the thirty years that preceded the October Revolution, the forces of modernization - above all, industrialization, the spread of education, increased activity on the part of government and public bodies - brought about a fundamental change in the composition and status of the intelligentsia. Quite simply, the "critically-thinking individuals" who had traditionally constituted the intelligentsia began to find themselves increasingly in a minority among growing numbers of educated people who were more dedicated to paid professional careers than to critical thought. David Joravsky's description of professional cadres in the 1930's summarizes aptly a process which had already been taking place well before 1917:

The word "intelligentsia" has undergone a basic change of meaning, which undoubtedly corresponds to a change in social reality.
From a relatively small group of disaffected intellectuals the intelligentsia has been transformed into an enormous mass of professionals and white-collar workers. From autonomous critics of the existing system, seeking an integral understanding of the universe and of human destiny as the first step to reform or revolution, the intelligentsia has been transformed into a class of obedient servants of the existing system performing specialized mental labor for specified rates of pay.¹

This brief explanation of the changing nature of the intelligentsia is essential to avoid a certain amount of confusion, for the Party leadership employed the term almost indiscriminately after 1917, using it to designate not only the traditional cultural intelligentsia but also non-Bolshevik ideologues and the new categories of professional and intellectual workers, also known as "bourgeois specialists."² At the same time, the term "semi-intelligentsia" (poluintelligentsiia) became current to designate those individuals who had received sufficient education to perform basic administrative, clerical, and technical jobs — persons whom Trotsky would characterize as "technicians


²This term is also incredibly elastic. Depending upon the particular circumstances, it may designate only technicians and engineers or its application may be extended to embrace the entire professional intelligentsia. Unless otherwise specified, this study employs it in the wide sense.
without ideas." As late as 1939, the Eighteenth Party Congress would proclaim the achievement of a new "Soviet intelligentsia."¹ In a word, the term "intelligentsia" had become stretched to embrace a group for wider and much more complex than its original constituents - repentant noblemen, raznochintsy, and emancipated Jews.

These difficulties duly noted, the original question remains: from what pool of talent in pre-revolutionary Russia did the Soviet power draw the experts who became known as the bourgeois specialists? Since military specialists and the purely literary-artistic intelligentsia have already been arbitrarily excluded from this study, there remain the "free professions" (in particular, medicine and law), scientists and mathematicians, engineers and technicians, managers, directors, and responsible employees of private enterprise, teachers and professors, responsible employees in state and public institutions, and the great mass of the semi-intelligentsia. Some idea of their numbers may be derived from the returns of the 1897 census, the only undertaking of its kind before the Revolution. The Soviet historian L.K. Erman has abstracted from the census the relevant figures for the intelligentsia whom he defines as mental workers in general, although he does

¹Fitzpatrick, p. 239.
maintain a distinction between the professional and the semi-intelligentsia.\textsuperscript{1} The statistics that follow are derived and adapted from Erman's analysis of the 1897 data. The first set are for the intelligentsia engaged in production:\textsuperscript{2}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engineers and technicians with diplomas (tekhnologi)</td>
<td>4006</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station-masters, traffic managers, and other-responsible railway employees</td>
<td>15038</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>15244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-collar employees of railway and steamship companies (excluding clerks and conductors)</td>
<td>6762</td>
<td>1178</td>
<td>7940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal-telegraph employees of the higher categories</td>
<td>12749</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>12827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telegraph-operators, telephone operators, and postal clerks</td>
<td>25730</td>
<td>2374</td>
<td>28104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinarians</td>
<td>2897</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>57182</td>
<td>3845</td>
<td>61027</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next category comprises workers in education:\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1}L.K. Erman, "Sostav intelligentsii v Rossii v kontse XIX i nachale XX v.," Istoriiia SSSR, no. 1 (1963), pp. 161-162.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 163. No explanation is given for including veterinarians under this heading.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., p. 165.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State School Teachers</td>
<td>50560</td>
<td>28922</td>
<td>79482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office employees of educational institutions</td>
<td>1614</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private teachers</td>
<td>47598</td>
<td>20575</td>
<td>68173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors and governesses</td>
<td>1674</td>
<td>9314</td>
<td>10988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other officials of educational institutions</td>
<td>2196</td>
<td>2193</td>
<td>4389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers of arts and crafts</td>
<td>3471</td>
<td>4394</td>
<td>7865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50886</td>
<td>30220</td>
<td>172842</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Medical personnel were classified under the following headings:¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physicians and medical students</td>
<td>13162</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>13770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army and navy doctors</td>
<td>1256</td>
<td></td>
<td>1256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentists</td>
<td>3186</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>1846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Licenced) Midwives and lower medical personnel</td>
<td></td>
<td>9778</td>
<td>9778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apothecaries and pharmacists</td>
<td>8478</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>8723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Assistants (Fel'dshery)</td>
<td>28289</td>
<td>2670</td>
<td>30959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>54371</td>
<td>13891</td>
<td>68262</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State employees constituted one of the largest groups of the professional and semi-intelligentsia:²

¹Ibid.  ²Ibid., p. 166.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officials in administrative,</td>
<td>53096</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>53096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>judicial, and other offices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected employees of</td>
<td>5625</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zemstvo, municipal, and gentry institutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor employees in the offices</td>
<td>44461</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>46453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of administrative and judicial departments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor employees in zemstvo, municipal, and gentry institutions</td>
<td>45299</td>
<td>872</td>
<td>46171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>148501</td>
<td>2844</td>
<td>151345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employees of private business constituted the single largest sector:¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employees of private persons</td>
<td>125450</td>
<td>4023</td>
<td>128473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(managers, secretaries, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators in industrial and commercial enterprises</td>
<td>54096</td>
<td>4961</td>
<td>59057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees of banks and insurance institutions</td>
<td>16373</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>17093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>194919</td>
<td>9704</td>
<td>204623</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By way of contrast, the legal profession was the smallest:²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers and notaries</td>
<td>8931</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons working for lawyers and notaries</td>
<td>3243</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>3542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12174</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>12473</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.
These figures yield an aggregate total of 670572 persons out of a total population of some 125 million. To this number must be added 3296 persons (3012 male, 284 female) in "learned and literary occupations", i.e. university professors, professional writers, and journalists.¹

Inasmuch as these figures antedate the Revolution by twenty years, they should be used with some caution. Not only must allowances be made for the usual factors of death, retirement, and recruitment of new personnel, the very fact of Russia's modernization served to increase disproportionately certain occupations. An excellent example is afforded by the engineering profession. The 1897 census recorded 4010 individuals, but a significant number of these were foreigners resident in Russia; by 1915, this number had increased to some 16 400 individuals among whom the proportion of foreigners had certainly decreased.² During the same period, the number of students in higher technical education

¹Ibid., p. 165.

had increased from 7534 to 24807.¹ In a similar fashion, the number of physicians increased from 13770 in 1897 to 21747 in 1971 and the number of state school teachers of all kinds increased from 91736 to 153360 individuals during the same period.² By 1917, there were probably 250 000 state school teachers, making them probably the largest single group of the professional intelligentsia.³

Since the old specialists would later be reproached because of their alleged bourgeois origins, a note on the social origins of student in higher educational institutions is clearly in order. University students were officially classified according to the following legal estate categories:⁴

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Estate</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1914</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gentry and officials</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchants and honoured citizens</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meshchanstvo</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peasants</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²Erman, p. 169.
⁴Hans, p. 239.
In 1914, a similar analysis of the legal class origin of the student body of the five technical institutes under the Ministry of Public Instruction revealed the following results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Estate</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gentry and officials</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchants and honoured citizens</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meshchans'vo</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peasants</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While these figures represent the student body as a whole and provide no indication of what class of students followed what course of studies, they do support the conclusion that the term "bourgeois specialist" is more useful as a kind of political label than as a sociologically-accurate designation of class or family origins.

The majority of the professional and semi-intellectuals were employed not by private enterprise but rather directly by the state and its agencies (state enterprises, railways, schools, etc.) or by public organizations such as the zemstva, which were the largest single employers of medical personnel. For some, this offered considerable advantages.

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1Ibid., p. 240:
University teachers, for example, were enrolled on the table of ranks and granted privileges accorded to members of the bureaucracy. Both the university charters of 1863 and 1884 provided that a rector of a university occupy the fourth highest rank (which automatically conferred hereditary nobility), ordinary professors the fifth rank, extraordinary professors the sixth, docents the seventh, and lecturers the eighth.\(^1\) Consider the case of Lenin's father, Il'ia Nikolaevich Ul'ianov, who rose from meshchanin status to become director of the elementary school system of the Simbirsk guberniya, thereby achieving the rank of Actual State Councillor which conferred hereditary nobility upon its holder.\(^2\)

It is no exaggeration to say that the engineering profession in Russia was the creation of the state, dating back to the establishment in 1773 of the Corps of Mining Engineers to manage state mines and metallurgical plants. In the nineteenth century, new cadres of engineers and technicians were trained at higher technical institutes created by the state for the express purpose of providing

\(^{1}\)James C. McClelland, *Autocrats and Academics* (Chicago, 1979), p. 64.

it with essential personnel. Graduate engineers could expect to enter government service with a rank that conferred the status of "honoured citizen" upon those who did not already possess it.¹ Even the development of large-scale private industry in the second half of the nineteenth century did not diminish the role of the state as a major employer of technical personnel; indeed, two contemporary historians insist that any study of Russian engineers before 1917 must distinguish carefully between ministerial engineers and those employed by private enterprise.² At the same time, it must be remembered that only a minority of persons employed by the state and its organizations had access to these particular advantages, the enjoyment of which could be diminished by factors ranging from bureaucratism to political repression.

Since the second quarter of the eighteenth century, Russian learned societies had devoted themselves to what may be termed the discovery and publication of pure knowledge. In the second half of the nineteenth century, their efforts


were supplemented by the emergence of professional associations concerned not only with knowledge but also with its practical application as well as the professional status of the bearers of that knowledge. As early as 1863, the Moscow Law Society was formed and rapidly became a centre for the discussion of political and social ideas, while the Pirogov Medical Society was formed in 1881 as an all-Russian professional society for doctors.¹ Most active of all were the technical intelligentsia, who as early as 1866 founded the Russian Technical Society which had as one of its aims the bringing together in closer co-operation science, technology, industry, and government.² Within the next forty years, the technological intelligentsia proceeded to form professional associations according to their particular area of specialization:³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Initial Membership</th>
<th>Membership in 1914</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian Technical Society (1866)</td>
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²Bailes, p. 38. ³Ibid., p. 43.
Through their conferences and publications, these new associations strove to create a professional consciousness among their members. In the opinion of Manfred Spath, these associations did more than occupy themselves with purely professional questions; rather, by virtue of their analysis of concrete problems, they transcended mere professionalism to lay bare the relationship between technological innovation and political decisions, the dependence of the former upon the latter. Unlike the idealistic and generalized approach of the old cultural intelligentsia, the new technical intelligentsia brought to the analysis of problems a concrete and professionally-oriented approach.¹

Professionalism implies the commitment to a system of values based on, but not limited to, the systematic acquisition and practical application of an organized body of knowledge. This in turn raises the question of determining the values held by the professional intelligentsia. Since this study intends to concentrate on the relationship between specialists and the state, a review of their political attitudes rather than their entire world-view is entirely appropriate.

Can any valid generalizations be made about the

¹Spath, pp. 312-313.
political values of a diverse group of professionals of heterogeneous social origin employed largely by the autocratic state and its agencies or by capitalist enterprise? Under such circumstances, any number of contradictions were possible: if radical students accused professors of not supporting political demonstrations lest they jeopardize their official rank, then industrialists feared that Russian (as opposed to foreign) engineers were infected with the revolutionary values of the intelligentsia.¹ Neither characterization is entirely a caricature. Many professors were conservative or simply took no interest in social or political issues and very few sympathized actively with revolutionary political movements. On the other hand, the forebodings of the industrialists were not entirely unwarranted, for it appears that not a few technical students were actively involved in radical movements in general and revolutionary Marxism in particular. Certainly the systematic and scientific aspects of Marxist thought were most attractive.² For example, Leonid Krasin and his fellow students at the St. Petersburg Technical Institute in the late 1880's used to debate with the university students the primacy of economic

¹McClelland, p. 65; Spath, p. 311.
study over sociology and deplore how the Tsarist government
held back Russia's economic development; at the same time,
their involvement with the world of industry also led to
closer and more frequent contacts with workers and ultimately workers' circles. Eventually, Krasin and a number of
his fellow students including G.M. Krzhizhanovskii formed
one of the first Marxist circles in the capital.\(^1\) In a
similar fashion, the Marxist "Union of Struggle for the
Emancipation of the Working Class" found supporters from
among medical students and forestry students, as well as
mechanical and mining engineers.\(^2\) Not all of those students
outgrew their youthful radicalism, for when the Bolsheviks
came to power in 1917, they included in their ranks such
engineers as L.B. Krasin, G.M. Krzhizhanovskii, R.E. Klassen,
Lev. Ia. Karpov, and the physician N.A. Semashko who became
the first Commissar of Health.\(^3\)

Whatever support students in the higher technical

\(^1\)Arthur P. Mendel. *Dilemmas of Progress in Tsarist
opinion, Krasin's memoirs reveal the essential role played
by the technologists in the founding of the Russian Social
Democratic Workers' Party (p. 291, note 87).


\(^3\)It is tempting to add to this list the name of
barrister V.I. Ul'ianov; for a variety of reasons, however,
he found little time to practice his profession.
and professional schools may have given revolutionary Marxism prior to 1917, only a very small minority of professionals were active Bolsheviks at the time of the October Revolution.¹ Not only did the great number of the professional intelligentsia avoid revolutionary politics, a good many avoided any kind of political commitment in general. Such an attitude was fostered in particular by the great scientist Dmitri I. Mendeleev (1834-1907), who devoted the last decades of his life developing his ideas on a wide range of subjects of philosophical and public interest. Convinced that the wealth and welfare of Russia could be raised by the application of scientific methods to industry and agriculture, in tandem with a government policy of protection and encouragement, he urged intellectuals to give up "politics-mongering" (politikanstvo) in favour of concrete practical work in the realms of science and technology. Progress depended not on forms of government, which were relatively unimportant, but rather on the willingness and commitment of scientific-minded individuals to work selflessly for the public good, i.e., in economically-constructive ways, "making use of existing opportunities." Mendeleev

¹Krasin, for example, gave up revolutionary activity from 1908 until after the February Revolution for a career as business manager for the Russian Branch of Siemens-Schückert.
named his philosophy realism or gradualism in contradistinction to what he regarded as the alternative systems of idealism or materialism.\(^1\)

This philosophy would have distinct attractions for the technical intelligentsia, whose scientific-technical training set them apart from the traditions of the old cultural intelligentsia or members of the "free professions." Inasmuch as their skills were especially in demand, they would have little difficulty finding jobs in the private or public sector of the existing system, i.e., "making use of existing opportunities." Since the very nature of their work was far less political than that of other professions, e.g., lawyers or zemstvo doctors, they could practice their professions with rather few external restraints. Persons who found rewards and opportunities within the existing system were not likely to turn to radical politics. Indeed, J.R. Azrael contends that Mendeleev's doctrine provided a useful rationale for the technical intelligentsia to accept the rewards available under the tsarist order, regardless of their personal feelings about the system, while S.V. Utechin states flatly that "the democratic idea was never

particularly attractive to the technical intelligentsia.\textsuperscript{1}

Ironically, this doctrine of the primacy of professionalism over politics would be of tremendous benefit to the Bolsheviks after October as thousands of apolitical specialists, convinced that politics had nothing to do with them, were prepared to enter Soviet service for the good of Russia. As the scientist V.N. Ipat'ev put it, "In the Tsarist regime it had been no different: many government people who did not sympathize with the autocracy still did good work for it."\textsuperscript{2}

Despite the attractions and very real rewards of careerism, not all professionals were anxious to avoid public life. Regardless of the protestations of radical students, Russian universities and professors in the four decades prior to the Revolution became involved in politics if for no other reason than the provisions of the 1884 university charter. If this statute admitted university teachers to the prerogatives of the Table of Ranks, so also did it uncompromisingly deny academic freedom and the

\textsuperscript{1}Azrael, p. 36; Utechin, "Bolsheviks", p. 127.

\textsuperscript{2}V.N. Ipatieff [English spelling ], The Life of a Chemist (Stanford, 1946), p. 311. Utechin (Russian Political Thought, p. 184) claims that this apolitical professionalism represented the view of the majority of the bourgeois specialists on the eve of the Revolution.
autonomy of the university.¹ The reaction of the professoriate was divided, some arguing that the pursuit of knowledge had no necessary connection with political activism (which by no means implied a vote of confidence for autocracy) while others contended that while knowledge ought to stand above petty partisan interests, it could not be divorced from the fundamental concerns of public life.² Under such circumstances, the fight for academic freedom and university autonomy could not be separated from broader social and political issues.

As noted above, few of the professoriate were committed actively to political radicalism, but government heavy-handedness in academic affairs along with the emerging crisis of the early twentieth century forced a number of professors to commit themselves publicly to a political stance opposed to that of the government. In January 1905, the St. Petersburg professors published the "Note of 342," so

² McClelland, pp. 68-70. McClelland employs the Russian word nauka, the meaning of which corresponds more closely to the German term Wissenschaft, i.e., knowledge intellectually verified and systematically ordered, than to the literal English translation science with its popular connotations of the study of mathematics and natural phenomena.
designated because of its 342 academic signatories.¹

Briefly, the "Note" argued that the struggle for academic freedom and professional autonomy could not be separated from the urgent need to reform the autocratic political and social structure of Russia:

Science can develop only when it is free, when it is protected from external interference, and when it is unhindered in its efforts to illuminate every aspect of human existence.... The tragic state of our educational system does not permit us to remain on the sidelines. It compels us to express our profound conviction that academic freedom is incompatible with the existing system of government in Russia. The present situation cannot be remedied by partial reforms but only by a fundamental transformation of the existing system.... Only a full guarantee of personal and social liberties will assure academic freedom — the essential condition for true education.²

Within a month, almost two thousand academics had appended their signatures to the "Note", indicating the extent to which its principles had been endorsed by the academic community as a whole in that year of crisis.

Indeed, the pressure of the momentous events of 1905 impelled the professional and semi-professional intelligentsia along the path of political activism as they formed

¹McClelland, p. 71; Vucinich, p. 482. The "Note" was largely the work of V.I. Vernadskii, one of the founders of modern geochemistry and father of the historian George Vernadsky.

²Vucinich, p. 483.
unions to struggle for change. Early in the year, the newly-formed All-Russian Union of Engineers and Technicians passed resolutions demanding the granting of civil liberties and the establishment of constitutional, representative government.\(^1\) At the same time, Professor L.I. Lutugin of the St. Petersburg Mining Institute and the geochemist V.I. Vernadskii founded the Academic Union on the basis of the principles of the latter's "Note", while physicians simultaneously created the Union of Medical Personnel.\(^2\) The establishment of unions of the professional and semi-intelligentsia proceeded apace throughout the early months of the year. By May, there had come into existence unions of agronomists and statisticians; pharmaceutical assistants; clerks and book-keepers; journalists and writers; government, municipal, and zemstvo employees; teachers; veterinary surgeons; zemstvo activists; and railway workers and employees. Along with the Union of Equal Rights for Jews, these thirteen unions organized a central Union of Unions under the chairmanship of P.N. Miliukov, professor of history and activist in the Union of Liberation.\(^3\) Setting


\(^2\)Ibid., p. 235-236.

\(^3\)Ibid., pp. 245-249.
constitutional reform as its first priority, the Union of Unions played a major role in the October general strike.\(^1\) Even the Menshevik leader Fedor Dan acknowledged the vital part played by the professional intelligentsia in those days:

The liberal and democratic intelligentsia played a very important part in the October movement.... The rapid and decisive success was to a considerable extent caused by the participation of that part of the intelligentsia which performs organizing functions in a capitalist economy and state activities and, owing to its social position, can act as a link between the movement of the masses and that of the propertied upper classes.\(^2\)

While the professional intelligentsia was willing to exert considerable pressure on the autocracy for political and social reform, the greater part was not prepared to engage in frankly revolutionary activity. For this majority, the October political strike was a watershed as their fear of open class warfare and of the emergence of a Pugachevshchina in the countryside impelled them to accept the October Manifesto as the first step in the fulfillment of their political demands. Unions of the professional intelligentsia gradually fell into desuetude, not to be revived until 1917.

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 263.

as their former members occupied themselves with their careers, Duma politics, or the zemstvo movement.¹

Perhaps the majority of the professional intelligentsia had opted for "small deeds" instead of "senseless dreams" but it would be wrong to dismiss them all as apolitical careerists. Many had been influenced in one way or another by some form of liberal-democratic ideas, and in 1905 they had attempted to change the Russian political system by non-revolutionary means. Moreover, they remained an important source of support for the Kadet Party in the decade before the Revolution, and as will be shown in subsequent chapters, the Kadet connections of the old specialists would be a constant source of irritation for Lenin. And in spite of such setbacks as the "Tsar's revenge" of 1907 and Education Minister L.N. Kasso's renewed campaign against academic freedom in 1911, there remained those such as Vernadskii who were convinced that the growth of scientific thought would necessarily bring about the increased democratization of social relations and political

¹It must be remembered that these "unions" were formed primarily to agitate for political reform rather than work for conventional "trade-union" goals (Galai, p. 248). Exceptions to this generalization are provided by the teachers' union, which endured in various forms until 1909 and possibly the engineers' union. Significantly, these were the first two unions of the professional intelligentsia to be revived in 1917.
processes.¹

If many members of the professional intelligentsia had been disappointed in their hopes to liberalize the regime, then others may have found consolation in the fact that the industrial development of Russia was making their services all the more indispensable. This was not simply the consequence of the great boom of the 1890's but may be attributed as well to the emergence in the early twentieth century of the idea of a planned national economy.² Interestingly enough, the principal advocates of such a scheme were not government bureaucrats but rather private businessmen.

In 1906, the Congresses of Representatives of Industry and Trade (known more commonly as the Association of Industry and Trade) was founded to serve as the representative and defender of large-scale industrial interests before the government and the press. The Association never saw itself as a narrow pressure group, for it always insisted that 'the ultimate goals of industrial activity were to

¹ McClelland, pp. 88-90; Vucinich, pp. 479-481.

² The idea of a planned economy was not unique to Russia but was to be found in virtually all industrial states. For a useful summary, see W.H.G. Ashley, The Rise of the Technocrats: A Social History (London, 1965).
advance the public welfare and national "independence."

On the eve of the World War, it seized upon the idea of economic planning, which had already been advocated by various private individuals and groups, as a means of achieving its long-term goals. Co-operation between private industry and government was the foundation of planning, for the Association believed that it was the primary responsibility of the government to initiate and draw up a "business-like" economic programme based on the principles of "economic calculation"; such a plan should embrace all areas of economic activity including finance and education and make projections for up to fifteen years. Responsibility for executing the plan should devolve largely upon private industry, which the government should assist with appropriate measures. The Association was not the only group calling upon the government to undertake large-scale projects involving considerable planning, for in 1912 the Eighth All-Russian Congress of Electrical Engineers called for the electrification of the entire country by the construction

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2Ibid., pp. 206-211.
of a system of large-scale power stations. In a word, capitalist employers of specialists regarded planning not as a manifestation of state socialism, which they loathed, but rather as a means of achieving economic rationality and of increasing the influence of industrialists in the life of the nation.

War forced the Russian government to take the first steps toward planning for by early 1915 it was painfully obvious that the national economy was utterly incapable of sustaining the military effort. In May 1915, the Ninth Congress of the Association recommended that district committees be established by all trade organizations to adapt existing factories to manufacture the essentials required by the armed forces and to co-ordinate all business activities accordingly. To this end, a Central War Industries Committee was established in Petrograd and by the end of 1915 war industries committees had been established in twenty-eight provinces and seventy-four cities. Working in co-ordination with the government's Special Council for Defence, the Committees established what amounted to a control economy in the industrial sector. To implement its


\[2\] S.O. Zagorsky, *State Control of Industry in Russia during the War* (New Haven, 1928), pp. 84-90.
goals, the Committee engaged the services of large numbers of specialists in various fields, who thereby acquired considerable authority and influence.¹

One of the specialists hired as a consultant for planning the fuel supply was V.I. Grinevetskii, professor of heat engineering at the Moscow Institute of Technology. His work convinced him more than ever of the need to plan the national economy, and as early as 1915 he had called upon Russia's engineering and scientific professional associations (government bureaucrats were incompetent and businessmen too self-interested) to prepare a national economic plan. In early 1918, he himself drew up the first long-term economic plan for Russia entitled The Post-War Outlook for Russian Industry. It was intended for a democratic capitalist rather than a socialist Russia for he was an inveterate foe of Bolshevism. Grinevetskii died of typhoid fever in 1919, but his book continued to attract considerable attention from Bolshevik and non-Bolshevik alike.² According to the Soviet historian E.B. Genkina, his ideas served as a basic model for the bourgeois specialists

¹Ibid., pp. 97-106; Bailes, pp. 42-43; Green, pp. 325-338.

²Smolinsky, pp. 100-101.
employed by Gosplan in the 1920's.¹

Another consequence of the war was to force the Russian Academy of Sciences to forgo its traditional concentration on "pure science" and theoretical research and turn its attention to the problems of applied science. As early as 1911, Vernadskii and the physicist P.N. Lebedev had criticized the neglect of applied science and had called for the creation of a series of specialized research centres. No permanent results followed from this appeal until the war brutally demonstrated the extent to which Russian industry was dependent on foreign technology. Under the leadership of Vernadskii, the Academy established in 1915 the Commission for the Study of the Natural Productive Forces of Russia (KEPS), the purpose of which was to mobilize science behind the war effort. While much of its initial work involved providing practical technological aid for essential industries, the Commission also drew up a series of large-scale inter-disciplinary research projects for the long-term peaceful development of Russia's natural resources. Despite the fact that the Commission received no budget from the state and was therefore carried by the Academy, some 139 prominent

specialists were working for it by 1917. Regardless of the short-sightedness or incompetence of the government or the self-interest of industry, the fact remained that the war had led to a new awareness of the necessity of planning and applied research, for which the specialist was a prerequisite.

Bolsheviks had paid rather little attention to the question of specialists prior to 1917. Not only were they occupied with far more basic issues, the literature of Marxian socialism devoted rather little attention to the subject. Lenin himself admitted as much in a speech delivered in May 1918 when he declared that he could not recall the opinion of a single prominent socialist on the question. Azrael contends that the Marxian classics provide "the outlines of a reasonably coherent management doctrine", but what might appear clear to a modern scholar blessed with half a century of hindsight may well have been less obvious to Lenin's generation. Certainly Lenin's genuine bewilderment along with Azrael's own careful qualification lend credence to the latter contention.

One reason for the absence of any detailed discussion of specialists may lie in Marx's belief that the economic and organizational accomplishments of the bourgeois order, what Robert C. Tucker has called the "bourgeois revolution of modernization," would provide the material foundation for the introduction of socialism. The aim of socialism was not to continue this modernization or introduce radical technological change but rather to master, humanize, and redirect the productive powers created under capitalism. ¹ Marx expressed this idea most succinctly in his 1853 New York Daily Tribune article on the impact of British imperialism in India:

> When a great social revolution shall have mastered the results of the bourgeois epoch, the market of the world and the modern powers of production, and subjected them to the common control of the most advanced peoples, then only will human progress cease to resemble that hideous pagan idol, who would not drink the nectar but from the skulls of the slain.²

Under socialism, the function of the specialist would disappear entirely. In his 1845-46 German Ideology, he wrote:

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In communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can be accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner... without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd, or critic.  

This same idea was reflected almost eighty years later in Bukharin and Preobrazhenskii's ABC of Communism, written in 1920 as a popularization of the 1919 Party Programme:

Under communism, people receive a many-sided culture, and find themselves at home in various branches of production: today I work in an administrative capacity, I reckon up how many felt boots or how many French rolls must be produced in the following months; tomorrow I shall be working in a soap-factory, next month perhaps in a steam-laundry, and the month after in an electric power station. This will be possible when all the members of society have been suitably educated.²

In a word, the question of the specialist belonged more to capitalist than communist society. Indeed, Marx appears to have regarded specialists as part of the

¹Ibid., p. 160. His 1875 Critique of the Gotha Program argued that one of the characteristics of advanced communism was the disappearance of "the antithesis between mental and physical labour." (Ibid., p. 531.)

proletariat, for despite the fact that they performed mental labour for a salary, they were nevertheless producers of surplus value and hence exploited. Class consciousness might be slow in coming but as capitalism developed they would become aware of their identity as members of the proletariat and welcome the socialist revolution as in their class interests.  

Marx was not so simplistic as to assume that the services of specialists could be dispensed with in the first stages of socialism, for in the third volume of Capital he insisted that "all labour in which many individuals co-operate necessarily requires a commanding will to co-ordinate and unify the process." But this "commanding will" need not be that of capital. Engels argued even more bluntly that large-scale production created its own logic of authority and that a future social order could hope only to "restrict authority solely to the limits within which the conditions of production render it inevitable."  

Specialists may not have been a problem to the Marxists, but other European revolutionaries remained distinctly suspicious of them. An immediate source of such

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3 Tucker, Marx-Engels, p. 732.
distrust may be traced to the St.-Simonian idea of socialism brought about and sustained by a technocratic elite.¹

Anarchists in particular were hostile to St.-Simonianism. Mikhail Bakunin, Marx's rival for leadership in the First International, regularly accused his opponent of appropriating for his system the most authoritarian features of the St.-Simonians. According to Bakunin, "the would-be people's state will be nothing else but a despotic rule over the toiling masses by a new, numerically small aristocracy of genuine or sham scientists" and Marx proposed to place the working masses "under the command of state engineers, who will constitute a new privileged scientific-political estate."²

Probably the most sustained attack against specialists before 1917 was mounted by the Polish anarchist Jan Waclaw Machajski (1866-1926).³ Profoundly influenced by Bakunin, Machajski became convinced that socialism, and in particular its Marxian expression, was not truly the ideology


²Leopold Labedz, "The Structure of the Soviet Intelligentsia", in Pipes, p. 79; Paul Avrich, "What is 'Makhaevism'?," Soviet Studies 17 (July 1965): 68.

³The most complete discussion of Machajski's life and thought is provided by Marshall Sharon Shatz, "Jan Waclaw Machajski and 'Makhaevshchina', 1866-1926: Anti-intellectualism and the Russian Intelligentsia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1968).
of the proletariat but rather of the rising professional intelligentsia whose property lay in their monopoly of specialized knowledge:

A larger and larger part of bourgeois society receives the funds for its parasitical existence as an intelligentsia, an army of intellectual workers which does not personally possess the means of production but continually increases and multiplies its income, which it obtains as the hereditary owner of all knowledge, culture, and civilization.¹

As such, the real objective of socialism was not to emancipate the workers but to bring to power the new professional intelligentsia that alone possessed the specialized knowledge - itself property and hence the product of exploitation - essential to manage a complex industrial economy. While their intentions toward the workers may have been of the best, they nonetheless aspired to become the new ruling class that would above all maintain its monopoly of knowledge and not "socialize" it.

Machajski provoked considerable discussion within various groups of Russian radicals in the early twentieth century. Suspicion of intellectuals was already a permanent feature of the Russian labour movement, and while Machajski had no monopoly of anti-intellectualism, his ideas served to systematize and legitimize existing resentments.²

¹Ibid., p. 35. ²Ibid., pp. 146-147.
According to S.V. Utechin, they influenced a large section of the Bolshevik party after 1917 and provided the basis for spetsky-baiting from above and below.\(^1\)

Even Engels had reservations about the specialists. In his *Peasant War in Germany*, he had written:

> The worst thing that can befall the leader of an extreme party is to be compelled to take over a government in an epoch when the government is not yet ripe for the domination of the class which he represents and for the realization of the measures which that domination would imply.... He is compelled to represent not his party or his class, but the class for whom conditions are ripe for domination. In the interest of the movement itself, he is compelled to defend the interests of an alien class, and to feed his own class with phrases and promises, with the assertion that the interests of that alien class are their own interests.\(^2\)

By 1891, Engels was starting to fear that the alienation of the professionals from capitalist society would take a very long time and that in the meantime they were becoming firmly attached to it. In a letter to August Bebel, he speculated that "if, as the result of a war, we come to power before we are prepared for it, the technicians will be our chief enemies; they will deceive and betray us

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\(^1\)Utechin, "Bolsheviks", p. 122.

to the best of their abilities.¹ Never one to underestimate the importance of professionals for sustaining socialist production, was he predicting that a future socialist regime could very well be caught in precisely the same trap vis-a-vis technical specialists that he described in his Peasant War?

Lenin had not considered in detail the question of specialists until the composition of State and Revolution in 1916-1917 obliged him to approach it as part of his analysis of the early stages of socialism. Working from the assumption that the fundamental economic and organizational tasks of advanced industrial society would be resolved under the bourgeois order, he argued that the victorious proletariat would "organise large-scale production on the basis of what capitalism has already created."² Capitalism had not only greatly simplified the administrative functions of modern industrial society, it had also created the preconditions that would enable all to participate in the administration of the socialist state:

Given these economic preconditions, it is quite possible, after the overthrow of the capitalists and the bureaucrats, to replace them in the control over production and distribution, in the work of keeping account of labour and products, by the armed workers,

¹Azrael, p. 25. ²Lenin, CW 25: 426.
by the whole of the armed population.
(The question of control and accounting
should not be confused with the question
of the scientifically trained staff of
engineers, agronomists, and so on. These
gentlemen are working today in obedience
to the wishes of the capitalists and will
work even better tomorrow in obedience
to the wishes of the armed workers.)

Administrative functions having been simplified
by capitalism to a matter of accounting and control which
could be performed by any literate person, "modestly paid"
specialists and former state officials would be instructed
to carry out the more complex tasks until such time as
these had been simplified to a point that all could perform
them.

This same theme was re-iterated in a pamphlet
written on the very eve of the October Revolution, "Can the
Bolsheviks Retain State Power." Again, the proletarian
state would use the organizational forms and methods de-
veloped under capitalism for socialist ends:

The proletarian state will say: we need good
organizers of banking and the amalgamation
of enterprises (in this matter the capitalists
have more experience, and it is easier to
work with experienced people), and we need far,
far more engineers, agronomists, technicians
and scientifically trained specialists of
every kind than were needed before. We shall
give all these specialists work to which they
are accustomed and which they can cope with;
in all probability we shall introduce complete
wage equality only gradually and shall pay

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\(^1\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 473.}\)
these specialists higher salaries during the transition period. We shall place them, however, under comprehensive workers' control... We shall not invent the organisational form of the work, but take it ready-made from capitalism... ¹

While this passage indicates that Lenin had begun to concern himself more immediately with the performance of specialized tasks and the persons capable of discharging them than he had in State and Revolution, he had not forgotten his original concern with the simplification of such functions:

When the proletariat is victorious it will do the following, it will set economists, engineers, agronomists, to work under the control of the workers' organization on drawing up a "plan", on verifying it, on devising labour-saving methods of centralisation, on the devising the simplest, cheapest, most convenient measures and methods of control. For this we will pay the economists, statisticians and technicians good money... but we shall not give them anything to eat if they do not perform this work conscientiously and entirely in the interests of the working people. ²

Lenin's analysis of the position of specialists before October yields two essential points: specialists would work for the victorious proletariat not only from force but also from self-interest and the socialist order would simplify economic and administrative tasks so that the need for a separate stratum of specialists would gradually

¹Idem, CW 26: 110. ²Ibid., p. 118.
wither away. One disconcerting fact nevertheless remained. Despite the confident assumption that the specialists would work better for the proletariat than the capitalists, the Bolsheviks had succeeded in attracting remarkably few of them into their ranks, and their reaction to October would seem to vindicate Engels's pessimism rather than Lenin's optimism.
CHAPTER II
CONFLICT AND ACCOMODATION

On 26 May 1918, the First All-Russian Congress of Councils of the National Economy met in Moscow. Planned as a kind of economic parliament, the Congress attempted to work towards a resolution of the six-month controversy about the organization of industry. Its main resolution called for the nationalization of the most important branches of industry (metal-working, machine-building, chemical, oil, and textile industries were specified), and recommended that such nationalization be carried out either by VSNKh or by SNK at the instance of VSNKh. In the opinion of E. H. Carr, this resolution made possible for the first time a concerted Soviet industrial policy, although the shortage of resources and qualified personnel would hamper effective implementation of appropriate measures.¹

This lack of trained specialists was a major theme of Lenin's opening speech to the Congress. Although he argued that the recruiting of specialists was one of the secondary tasks of VSNKh, he reminded his audience that

with the help of bourgeois experts who have been trained in bourgeois society, who know no other conditions, who cannot conceive of any other social system. Hence, even in cases when the experts are absolutely sincere and loyal to their work they are filled with thousands of bourgeois prejudices, they are connected by thousands of ties, imperceptible to themselves, with bourgeois society... 1

The Soviet power had no choice in this matter but to experiment and correct its own mistakes, for

...I cannot recall the work of a single socialist or the opinion of a single prominent socialist on future socialist society which pointed to this concrete practical difficulty that would confront the working class when it took power, when it set itself the task of turning the sum total of the very rich, historically inevitable, and necessary for us store of culture and knowledge and technique accumulated by capitalism from an instrument of capitalism into an instrument of socialism. 2

Lenin's blunt admission that the socialist reorganization of industry would require the services of bourgeois experts was a clear indication of the need to work out an official policy that would induce non-Communist specialists to collaborate conscientiously with the Soviet power in achieving its economic goals. More significantly, the author of State and Revolution was suggesting that the


2Ibid. Few historians have emphasized the uniqueness of the problem faced by the Soviet government at this time. One exception, in an otherwise mediocre article, is V.P. Tochenai, "V.I. Lenin ob intelligentsii v perekhodnyi period ot kapitalizma k sotsializmu," Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta, no.2 (1970), p. 46.
entire matter of employing specialists was far more difficult than it had appeared to him less than a year ago.

Fundamental to the problem was the reaction of the specialists to the October Revolution, as opposed to the collapse of the Tsarist regime in February. Western and Soviet historians are generally agreed that far from supporting the Bolsheviks in their plans for the socialist transformation of Russia, the majority of specialists was distinctly hostile to the new revolutionary government, or at least dismayed or confused by the downfall of the Provisional Government. Jeremy R. Azrael states flatly that "the vast majority of engineers and industrial specialists was squarely behind the Provisional Government and strongly opposed to the October coup", while Kendall E. Bailes suggests that "most[technical]specialists disagreed with the Bolshevik seizure of power" and Charles Bettelheim maintains that the hostility of technicians, specialists, and engineers toward the Soviet power was as marked as any other element of the petty-bourgeoisie.\footnote{Jeremy R. Azrael, Managerial Power and Soviet Politics (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), p. 28; Kendall E. Bailes Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin (Princeton, 1978), p. 44; Charles Bettelheim, Les luttes de classes en URSS: première période 1917-1923 (Paris, 1974), p. 142.}
Inasmuch as the majority of the old specialists did not understand the significance of October, the pro-Soviet specialists were indeed a distinct minority.\(^1\)

Contemporary memoir literature tends to corroborate the generally unfavourable attitudes of many specialists. Timber expert Simon Liberman declared that "throughout the period of 1917 my attitude toward Lenin and his party remained negative."\(^2\) Major-general Vladimir N. Ipat'ev, who worked for the Chemical Committee of the Chief Artillery Administration and was also a member of the prestigious Academy of Sciences, recalled that "most of the staff of the Chemical Committee were opposed to the Bolshevik Revolution."\(^3\) Neither the industrial manager and financial expert M. J. Larsons nor professor of engineering Stephen Timoshenko made any secret of his general disagreement with the political philosophy and policies of the new regime.\(^4\) Certainly there were individual specialists such as the biochemist A. N. Bakh

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\(^1\) S. A. Fediukin, Sovetskaia vlast' i burzhuaznye spetsialisty (Moscow, 1965), pp. 18-26; Idem, Velikii Oktjabr' i intelligentsiia (Moscow, 1972), pp. 34-40.

\(^2\) Simon Liberman, Building Lenin's Russia (Chicago, 1945), p. 4.

\(^3\) Vladimir N. Ipatieff[English spelling,] The Life of a Chemist (Stanford, 1946), p. 259.

and the eminent botanist K.A. Timiriazev who supported 
the Bolshevik government, but they for the most part re-
mained a minority among their colleagues.¹

A direct consequence of the specialists' hostility 
was their participation in organized campaigns of boycott 
or "sabotage" against the Soviet regime.² Methods of 
protest ranged from deliberate absenteeism from work, the 
passing of anti-Bolshevik resolutions by their associations, 
refusal to obey orders and instructions issued by the 
revolutionary government, ostracism of colleagues who agreed 
to collaborate to outright strikes and acts of sabotage.
Opposition began directly after the new regime's assumption 
of power. John Reed recorded how Trotsky was locked out by 
the employees of the ministry of foreign affairs, who sub-
sequently resigned when the doors were forced. Aleksandr 
Shliapnikov was refused any co-operation by the employees 
of the ministry of labour while Alexandra Kollontai was 
welcomed with a strike by all but forty of the employees of

¹Feduiukin, Velikii Oktiabr', pp. 34-37. On 
27 April 1920, Lenin wrote to Timiriazev, "I was simply 
delighted to read your remarks against the bourgeoisie 
and for Soviet power" (Lenin, CW 35:445). The Soviet 
editors of Lenin hail Timiriazev as "the first eminent 
scientist to welcome the October Socialist Revolution" 
(Ibid., p. 615).

²Azrael, p. 29. These actions were to earn for 
the specialists the sociologically-misleading sobriquet 
"bourgeois".
the old ministry of state relief. Employees of the Credit Chancery destroyed documents of Russia's financial relations with foreign countries.¹

These initial and often spontaneous reactions on the part of government employees who had the most direct contact with the new authority soon gave way to more serious and sustained forms of opposition in which civil servants and professional organizations alike participated. Civil servants and employees of various government ministries, employees of the State and private banks, postal and telegraph workers, municipal and law court employees, teachers and medical personnel staged a series of strikes, work stoppages, or protest actions. Professional associations such as the Pirogov Society of Doctors passed resolutions condemning the Bolshevik "seizure" of power, as did a general meeting of Moscow physicians.² Directors and management personnel in private industry, many of whom were engineers, refused to carry out the directions of the Soviet government, especially the decree instituting workers' control.³

²Fediukin, Velikii Oktiabr', pp. 42-44.
³Paul H. Avrich, "The Bolshevik Revolution and Workers' Control in Russian Industry," Slavic Review 23
Three of the concerted strike actions were of particular importance: civil servants, bank employees, and school teachers. Rather few of the responsible civil servants were friendly to the Bolsheviks, and soon after October there emerged in Petrograd the "Union of Unions of Employees of State Institutions", the purpose of which was to organize and co-ordinate the disruption and cessation of work in government ministries and departments. Its efforts created considerable frustration for the inexperienced commissars, of whom many had hoped that their enthusiasm for building socialism would be contagious. Aleksandra Kollontai, for example, was soon obliged to write to the Military-Revolutionary Committee requesting it to place under arrest the members of the strike committee of the chinoviki of the ministry of state relief.  

In his report to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee  


2Ibid., p. 80. Kollontai was denied co-operation by everyone from the dvornik who refused to admit her to the treasurer who would not hand over the keys to the safe. See Barbara Evans Clements, Bolshevik Feminist: The Life of Aleksandra Kollontai (Bloomington, 1979), pp. 124-126.
of Soviets on 8 November 1917 (OS), A.V. Lunacharskii complained that the officials of the ministry of education had gone on strike, and that employees and members of the State Education Committee were sabotaging its work; moreover, "those more likely to collaborate with us are not the democratic intellectuals, who look upon the insurrection as a military conspiracy, but the unprincipled functionaries." ¹

At the same session, Aleksandr Shliapnikov reported that all the senior officials of the ministry of labour had gone on strike and A.S. Iakubov subsequently announced that the officials of the supply ministry would not recognize the new government.² Even employees of the former Holy Synod demonstrated against the Bolsheviks and for the Constituent Assembly, while the quasi-public "All-Russian Food[Supply] Congress," whose members included the economists V.G. Groman and M.V. Kondrat'ev, refused all further co-operation until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly.³

Equally serious was the strike of employees of the State Bank and the various private banks. M. Philips Price, correspondant for the Manchester Guardian, wrote


²Ibid., pp. 106, 111.

³Golinkov, pp. 81-82.
that the private banks had placed millions of paper rubles at the disposal of a "Committee for the Defence of the Country and of Freedom", which in turn had advanced a month's salary to all public servants who would boycott the Soviet regime.\(^1\) In his brief account of the activities of the VChK during the civil war, M. Ia. Latsis contended that the central administration of the All-Russian Union of Employees of Credit Institutions was able to draw upon the resources of at least nine private banks to create a fund of over one million rubles to finance sabotage on the part of employees of various financial institutions.\(^2\) On 14 December 1917 (OS), G. Ia. Sokol'nikov reported in the course of the VTsIK debates on the proposed nationalization of the banks that "the State Bank is passing money through the private banks to subsidize [the bank employees] in their sabotage."\(^3\) Although these charges have been recently questioned by


\(^2\)M. Ia. Latsis, *Dva gody bor'by na vnutrennem fronte* (Moscow, 1920), pp. 11-13. Latsis claimed that the essential liaison person was N.N. Kutler, industrialist and member of the finance industries of both the Tsarist and Provisional governments. Kutler was subsequently employed by the Soviets and was appointed to the board of Gosbank in 1922!

\(^3\)Keep, p. 206.
John L.H. Keep, and despite the fact that SNK had established effective control over the operations of the State Bank by 17 November 1917 after another three-day strike by its employees, the Soviet leadership remained convinced that the banks were the nerve centre of the civil servants' opposition.

The resentment of the public school teachers towards October was especially disappointing, for cultural workers such as Lunacharskii and Nadezhda K. Krupskaia were counting upon them to provide a vital link between the Party and the masses. Despite numerous efforts on the part of the Bolsheviks, extremely few converts had been found among the teachers; if anything, their largest association, the All-Russian Teachers' Union (VUS) whose 75,000 members accounted for thirty percent of the country's schoolteachers, was strongly influenced by Social-Revolutionary ideas. After October, the VUS leadership called a general strike against the Bolsheviks.

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1 Ibid., pp. 318-319.

to coincide with the civil servants’ strike of 14 November 1917 (OS); in Petrograd, the teachers' strike lasted until 6 January 1918, i.e., until the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, while the Moscow teachers stayed out until 11 March 1918.\(^1\) The teachers' mood was clearly expressed by a resolution of the Petrograd branch of VUS:

> The Russian teachers cannot be quiet and cannot calmly do their educational duty. In subordination and slavery before the illegitimate authority, we would be able to bring up only slaves. Down with the Council of Peoples' Commissars! Long live the Constituent Assembly.\(^2\)

The teachers' opposition remained a rather large thorn in the side of the Bolsheviks. Lunacharskii recalled that:

> In Petersburg, the teachers and physicians did not even side with the sabotage of the officials; in Moscow, as is well known, monstrous sabotage of the schools by the teachers and of hospitals by the physicians took place.\(^3\)

In November 1918, Krupskaya recalled that

> ...in Moscow, the teachers sabotaged for several months. There where studies should have taken place, schools were converted into centres of antisoviet propaganda.\(^4\)

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3. Ibid., p. 185.
4. Izvestiia, 10 November 1918.
Regardless of the indignation of the Bolshevik leadership, VUS had far less power than was attributed to it by its critics, for not only did its membership comprise only some thirty percent of the teachers of Russia, but its strike actions were confined largely to Petrograd, Moscow, and a handful of other cities.¹

Despite all the sound and fury of the Bolsheviks and the strikers, it would be a mistake to assume that all specialists were prepared to engage in active forms of protest, for many individuals and groups believed that the very gravity of Russia's situation demanded that all qualified persons remain at their post. Employees of the ministry of defence continued to work, as Ipat'yev recorded:

I was asked to call a meeting to discuss the possibility of calling a demonstration strike against Bolshevism, similar to those in other government offices. After full discussion, I spoke against the plan. The Chemical Committee, I argued, was composed of army men who had no right to stop their work in wartime. The government in power should be obeyed, and all responsibility for any action taken devolved on that government. I suppose that most of the staff disagreed with me, but my firm attitude and authority were too much for them to oppose. Our work went on, without a day lost....²

In a similar vein, Larsons recalled:


²Ipatieff, p. 259.
From the very outset of the November revolution, in spite of my political opinions differing from those of the new Government, I was a decided opponent of a sabotage of officials...[which] I considered not only as purposeless and inadequate as a means of opposing the new Government but as being utterly pernicious both to the industry of the country and the strikers themselves.¹

Larsons subsequently offered his services as a mediator between the striking bank employees and the government to N.N. Krestinskii, whom he had known since their days together at law school, which offer Krestinskii was pleased to accept!

Scientific specialists and professors for the most part rejected strikes and overt sabotage. In her study of the formation of the Soviet scientific intelligentsia, V.A. Ul'ianovskaia claims that despite their reservations about the Bolsheviks, the majority of the scientific intelligentsia remained at their posts after October. If anything, they were more hostile to the Bolsheviks after the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk treaty, largely because of a false sense of patriotism and lack of understanding of the real idea of a socialist revolution.²

While the majority of the members of the Academy of

¹Larsons, p. 18.

Sciences was overwhelmingly opposed to the Soviet government (the Physics-Mathematics Section actually debated whether to recognize it), they refrained from passing anti-Bolshevik resolutions or advocating direct political confrontation.¹

Professors at Moscow University fought a campaign to maintain their university as a centre of anti-communist enlightenment. Bolshevik sympathizers were ostracized by their colleagues, who encouraged students to boycott their lectures and even removed the chalk from their lecture rooms and their classes from the timetable.² Irritating as these petty persecutions could be, they can scarcely be compared to full-scale sabotage or strikes and the professors' very opposition to the Bolsheviks made them all the more determined to carry on their work.³


²Fitzpatrick, p. 73

³Soviet historians soundly condemn the alleged sabotage of the professors after October, but are distinctly reluctant to enter into specifics other than a general opposition to Bolshevism and more particular opposition to such proposed reforms as the rabfaky, abolition of degrees, policies of open admission, etc. See in particular E.M. Brusnikin, "Iz istorii bor'by Kommunisticheskoi partii za vuzovskuiu intelligentsiui v 1917-1922 gг., "Voprosy istorii KPSS, no. 8 (1972), pp. 83-84 and V.V. Ukraintsev, KPSS-organizator revolutsionnogo preobrazovaniia vysshei shkoly (Moscow, 1963), pp. 20-26, 41-48. Of course one man's sabotage is another man's opposition - consider Bettleheim's "sabotage par passivité" (p. 149).
The attitudes of the engineers was somewhat more complex than of the academicians and professors. A number of government engineers had participated in the civil servants' strike, and a January 1918 meeting of the Moscow branch of the All-Russian Union of Engineers urged that members withdraw their services from plants where workers' organs had taken on the functions of engineers.¹ On the other hand, a meeting of engineers in Petrograd in December 1917 had declared that sabotage for engineers was inadmissible and exhorted the delegates to assist in the rehabilitation of the national economy.² For the metallurgical engineer I.P. Bardin, the problem was less one of politics than of devotion to profession and country. It was the duty of Russian engineers to help develop industry and technology under the new circumstances because "the new power needed metal, cast-iron, steel."³ It has been argued, however, that Russian engineers were in fact incapable of any significant concerted political action for reasons ranging from "professional neutrality" to tumult in the factories which intimidated them and undermined

¹Bailes, pp. 20-22.

²Pediukin, Velikii Oktiabr', p. 40.

³I.P. Bardin, Zhizn' inzhenera (Moscow, 1938), pp. 53, 57.
their authority.\textsuperscript{1} For individuals, the typical form of protest appeared to be either absenteeism or an unwillingness to co-operate with the new authorities.\textsuperscript{2}

Certainly there were specialists who soon accepted the verdict of October and were prepared to collaborate conscientiously with the Soviet power in its plans for the socialist transformation of Russia, but they remained a distinct minority within their professions, and even the most optimistic of the Soviet historians admit that in the post-October months the great majority of the professional intelligentsia were either hostile or neutral toward the government and that the line between hostility and neutrality was scarcely hard-and-fast.

In the post-October months, specialists and Bolsheviks regarded each other with mutual suspicion and frequently open antagonism. If the specialists considered the Bolshevik seizure of power as illegitimate and their programme an extremist betrayal of the values of 1917, then the Bolsheviks were disappointed at the initial refusal of the majority of the specialists to rally to the


\textsuperscript{2}Price, pp. 208-209.
socialist reconstruction of the land and bitterly angry at their strikes, boycotts, and other forms of protest. In an atmosphere of mutual recrimination, co-operation between the two sides was nothing if not problematical. If Trotsky could charge on 19 December 1917 (OS) that "in every sphere a thin stratum of intellectuals has betrayed the people that nourished it... and has devoted all its knowledge and will power to the task of disorganizing and destroying the country," then A. Gurovich, a former financial specialist from the Union of Municipalities who subsequently worked for VSNKh could claim that accusations of sabotage were in reality an excuse for administrative incompetence since "...the Bolshevik power, thanks to its administrative optimism, very easily and comfortably ascribed [problems] to the fact of sabotage." ¹

This mutual suspicion was exacerbated by forces beyond the control of either side. The breakdown of traditional restraints and sanctions of authority in 1917 provided a superb opportunity for the masses to vent their resentment against the educated and privileged elements

¹Keep, p. 235; A. Gurovich, "Vysshii sovet narodnogo khoziaistva," Arkhiv Russkoi revoliutsii, no. 6 (1922), pp. 304-305.
of the old society. Perhaps the most succinct analysis of this phenomenon was provided by A.A. Heller, who in 1921 spent three months in Soviet Russia as a representative of a group of Russian-Americans who wished to return to participate in socialist construction. Briefly, he argued that "technicians as a class were made to feel the weight of the fierce popular resentment against the whole capitalist system."¹ Not only technicians, but the entire educated stratum of Russia society was blamed for the centuries-old accumulation of oppression and injustice. Recalling his student days in 1917, the historian G.A. Pushkarev noted that "at that crazy time a hat on a lady's head or a pair of eyeglasses on the nose of a man were regarded as indications of belonging to the hated class of the burzhui."² Similarly, the memoirist Konstantin Paustovsky described how his sister dared not wear her glasses because "everybody treated people in glasses suspiciously in those violent times."³ At factories and at work sites, engineers and managers considered themselves

fortunate if angry workers only trundled them away in wheelbarrows to the jeers of a crowd, for many of their colleagues were insulted, harassed, assaulted, and even murdered by resentful workers.\(^1\) Thus intimidated, specialists tended to blame the Bolsheviks for popular violence and their general attitude was quite simply to avoid any contact with Soviet institutions.\(^2\)

The initial Bolshevik response to these events can best be described as the classical combination of the carrot and the stick. According to the Old Bolshevik P.O. Koz'min, Lenin told him immediately after the Party had assumed power, "Get engineers, comrade Koz'min, drag them off to Smol'nyi. Without engineers, without specialists, we'll be lost."\(^3\) On a more formal note, Lenin told the Petrograd Soviet on 4 November 1917 (OS) that:

> We need engineers for production and we value their labour highly. We shall be glad to pay them. We do not intend, at the moment, to deprive them of their privileged position.

\(^1\)John L.H. Keep, *The Russian Revolution* (New York, 1976), pp. 76-77. Workers at one plant threatened to put an engineer into a sack and beat him unless he acceded immediately to their wage demands!

\(^2\)Fitzpatrick, pp. 68-69.

\(^3\)Khasanov, p. 8.
We value everyone who is willing to work... and we shall try to help them to fit into the new pattern.¹

In a similar vein, the decree of 7 November 1917 (OS) creating the Commissariat of Education confidently assumed the co-operation of specialists in education with the regime.² Lunacharskii published on 15 November 1917 (OS) an appeal to the intelligentsia to help the Revolution and promised that the government would encourage and support all those who would agree to co-operate.³ This was essentially the same position laid down by Lenin in "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?", and it is not unreasonable to believe that the Bolsheviks' pre-October conviction that they could govern Russia was based partly on the assumption that they could retain the services of the necessary specialists.

On the other hand, the Soviet government did not hesitate to employ the stick. Most serious was the strike of the officials and employees of the State Bank and of the private banks. On 30 October 1917 (OS), SNK passed a resolution ordering all banks to open by the next day and resume normal business under threat of the arrest of all

¹Lenin, SW 26:294.
²Kerim-Markus, pp. 124-126.
³Pediukin, Velikii Oktiabr', p. 53; Graham, p. 29.
directors and administrative staff for non-compliance.\textsuperscript{1} One week later, the Military-Revolutionary Committee condemned the strikes of the state and municipal employees, as well as similar actions on the part of workers in banks, railways, and postal-telegraph services, and threatened to confiscate the property of those members of the "wealthy class" who were found guilty of fomenting these disruptions. All workers were ordered to return to their jobs.\textsuperscript{2} In a speech to the Moscow Soviet, the young party activist G.A. Usievich (1890-1918) vigorously expounded the position of his government:

I must declare that the banks and the bank employees are boycotting us, as are all the other intelligentsia and bourgeoisie, but we are not stopping at anything to force them to work.\textsuperscript{3}

On 8 November 1917 (OS), VTsIK passed a resolution calling upon SNK to take immediately "the most energetic measures to liquidate this sabotage by counter-revolutionaries in the State Bank."\textsuperscript{4} When this resolution failed to produce the desired results, SNK ordered the recalcitrant

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1}Dekrety Sovetskoi vlasti, 9 vols. (Moscow, 1957-), 1 (1957): 30-31.
  \item \textsuperscript{2}Iz istorii VChK 1917-1921 gg. Sbornik dokumentov (Moscow, 1958), pp. 36-37.
  \item \textsuperscript{3}Ibid., p. 45.
  \item \textsuperscript{4}DSV 1 (1957): 57.
\end{itemize}
officials to be arrested. Resistance nevertheless proved stubborn, for a month later, SNK decreed "the most energetic revolutionary measures" against the sabotage of employees of administrative institutions.

A direct consequence of the need for "energetic revolutionary measures" was the creation on 7 December 1917 (OS) of the VChK - the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for the Struggle with Counter-Revolution and Sabotage. Its first action was to arrest the central committee of the "Union of Unions of Employees of State Institutions", which had directed the strike of the Petrograd civil servants. The strike committee of the Moscow municipal workers suffered the same fate. In these instances, the VChK did no more than follow the precedent set by the Petrograd Revolutionary Tribunal, which on 28 November 1917 (OS) had arrested the striking officials of the old ministry of internal affairs. The VChK devoted considerable energy to the struggle against opponents of Soviet laws and institutions, with the result that Lenin was able to admit by April 1918 that the sabotage was

1Ibid., p. 540.
2VChK, p. 72
3Ibid., pp. 78-79.
indeed overcome.¹ Not all the credit can be given to the VChK for in the opinion of M. Philips Price, the VTsIK decree of 14 December 1917 (OS) to nationalize the banks "effectively broke the open sabotage of the technical staffs."²

Less drastic action was required to end the VUS strikes. Since late November 1917, the Bolsheviks had effectively controlled the state treasury and had not paid the striking teachers, and inasmuch as the teachers were among the poorest paid state employees who depended on the regularity of their meagre salaries to survive, the Soviet power had from the outset a powerful advantage. While Bolshevik control of the State and former private banks proved crucial in crushing the unionized teachers, the latter's devotion to duty to the school, the children, and education in general also undermined the effectiveness of their strike.³ In a word, professionalism won out over politics.

A somewhat unexpected source of help for the Soviet government came from the Russian Jews, millions

¹Golinkov, pp. 84, 89-95.
³Hayashida, pp. 231-256.
of whom had welcomed 1917 as liberation. Fearful of a restoration of the old order, large numbers of Jews offered their services as "Soviet employees" to the new regime.¹ Lenin subsequently declared that the loyal Jewish intelligentsia had neutralized the boycott of the Soviet power by the Russian intelligentsia, for they had "sabotaged the saboteurs"² At the same time, many young Jews stepped forward to join the ranks of the VChK, which by early 1918 had virtually liquidated the absenteeism and insubordination among the specialists.³

Although the Soviet government had won the first round, the fact remained that the great majority of the specialists was by no means convinced of either the political legitimacy of the Bolsheviks (especially in light of the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly) or of the viability of their programme. On the other hand, the Bolsheviks had no compelling reason to have confidence in the political reliability or loyalty of the specialists, much less their zeal for socialist construction. But

³Ibid., p. 117; Azrael, p. 29.
until such time as an entire generation of Red specialists could be produced, the Bolsheviks had no choice but to make use of the personnel available, a situation further complicated by the fact that a substantial number of specialists were employed in private industry and hence less susceptible to government control. Given these conditions, it was incumbent upon the government to create such structures as would enable it to make the most effective use of the knowledge and experience of the specialists.

During the first half of 1918, the basic framework for the employment of the specialists was provided by Lenin's idea of "state capitalism." Briefly, Lenin believed that a complete transition from capitalism to socialism would require at least a full generation, if not longer. While it was necessary to seize certain key economic positions to consolidate the political power that had already been won and to pass legislation to assure a measure of control over industry ("control from above and from below") and to prevent economic disintegration and a possible "strike of capital", no sweeping measures of confiscation or nationalization were immediately proposed.¹

¹The two basic decrees to institute control...
by shortcuts was not yet envisioned, and the capture and use of the capitalist apparatus was seen as a necessary step in the logical progression from commodity capitalism through state capitalism in the age of imperialism to the introduction of socialism. Under the present circumstances, the most progressive forces in Russia were those which possessed "organizational capacity on the scale of millions" and the knowledge and ability to account for and distribute goods and services on the scale of the national economy. Since only capitalists and their organizers were capable of discharging such tasks, it was therefore necessary for the Soviet regime to collaborate with the forces of capital. Owners would be left in possession and management of their enterprises which would be subject to general state supervision and direction, workers' control in factories should stop short of becoming actual workers' management, and the state should proceed with the trustification of the economy, using and extending the economic controls and procedures developed by state-monopoly capitalism.¹ Such a transition from above and below were the creation of VSNKh and the establishment of workers' control. See DSV 1 (1957): 83-85 and 172-174.

¹V.I. Lenin, *State and Revolution*, CW 25; "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?", CW 26; "Left-Wing Childishness and Petty-Bourgeois Mentality", CW 27. For a general discussion of "state capitalism", see
programme would provide a rationale for securing and maintaining the essential services of specialists, and paying appropriately high salaries for their work.¹

More than any other Bolshevik leader, Lenin understood the necessity of drawing upon the knowledge and experience of the non-Bolshevik specialists to carry out the policies and projects of the Soviet regime. While recruiting specialists was not one of the fundamental difficulties facing the new government, Lenin did agree in May 1918 that it was one of the most important of the secondary issues and in his writings between 1917 and 1923 a considerable amount of attention is devoted to the question.² Not only did he consider it essential to develop the appropriate institutional structures to make use of the specialists, he was also impelled to provide a necessary theoretical rationale, to harmonize his policies with his understanding of Marxism in the context


¹Billik, pp. 135-138; Buchanan, p. 82.

²In the period 1917-1923, over 120 distinct references to specialists may be found in his Collected Works.
of post-October Russia. In the process, he was obliged to overcome opposition from within the Party as well as from among the masses, and at the same time to convince the specialists to collaborate conscientiously with his government.

One of the earliest initiatives taken by the Soviet power to recruit specialists may be found in the decree of 2(15) December 1917 which created VSNKh. Mandated to organize the national economy and the state finances, work out plans for the regulation of economic life, and co-ordinate and unify the activity of control and regional regulating institutions, VSNKh was to include in its membership "experts [svedushchie litsa] invited with consultative voice," i.e., without the right to vote.\(^1\) This principle of consultation with experts had been implicit in the 14(27) November 1917 decree on workers' control, which had called for representatives from the All-Russian Union of Engineers and Technicians to sit on the newly-formed All-Russian Council of Workers' Control.\(^2\) It was further endorsed by instructions published in Izvestia on 13 December 1917 (OS) suggesting that control-distributive commissions

\(^1\)DSV 1 (1957):172-174.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 83.
of individual trade unions and local workers' control
councils establish committees of statisticians, engineers,
economists, etc., to assist them in their work. Consulta-
tion was subsequently facilitated by a SNK resolution of
31 January (13 February) 1918 which was drafted by Lenin:

The Council of People's Commissars resolved
that no negotiations are to be carried on with
saboteurs.
The respective People's Commissariats may
employ, as individuals, such saboteurs whose
services are considered essential for the
various departments provided that they fully
submit to Soviet power and support it.

The brevity of this resolution suggests that the onus
was upon the particular commissariat to determine the
political reliability of potential employees.

Early in 1918, the Soviet government realized
that it was necessary to do more than acknowledge formally
the need to consult with specialists on an ad hoc basis.

On 4 January 1918 (OS), Leonid B. Krasin proposed to the
presidium of VSNKh the creation of a special technical
committee consisting of economists and engineers. His
suggestion was acted upon, for there emerged on 28
February 1918 (OS) the first consultative organ of VSNKh
- the Central Council of Experts. Its mandate was defined

1 Izvestiia, 13 December 1917.
broadly as the uniting of the technical and scientific expertise of Russia for the resolution of economic tasks; more specifically, the Council was required to investigate existing conditions in industry, work out measures for the state direction and planning of the national economy, and develop programmes to raise the productivity of individual branches of industry. At the same time, the Council was to direct the activities of regional councils of experts, which were to include worker representatives as well as scientific-technical personnel. Drawing upon experts from some sixty scientific-technical institutions and organizations, the Council served throughout 1918 as a kind of a "brain trust" for VSNKh, lending its expertise to the various departments and glavki, carrying out specific research projects, and inspecting laboratories and institutions. In October 1918, it was placed under the jurisdiction of the recently-formed Scientific-Technical Department of VSNKh and ultimately absorbed by that Department in the summer of 1919.1

In a decree of 3 March 1918, VSNKh officially assigned to specialists a distinct role in industrial

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administration. Each glavk was to appoint to every enterprise belonging to the industry under its care a commission to act as government representative, and two directors, one administrative and the other technical. While the administrative director was subject to the decisions of an economic administrative council comprised of representatives of workers, employers, and technical personnel of the enterprise, as well as of the trade unions and local soviet organ, the technical administrator could be overruled only by the government commissioner or by the "central direction" of the particular industry.¹ The position of the specialists was subsequently enhanced by a resolution of the RKP(b) Control Committee plenum of 31 March 1918 which declared that:

It is necessary to attract to work knowledgeable, experienced, business-like people. The sabotage of the intellectual circles has been overcome; the technicians are coming over to us; it is necessary to make use of them. In the initial period of victory, we did not attract; we could not attract technicians. Now the position has changed; in this sense, we are experiencing a new course.²

Several examples may serve to demonstrate the


²This document has been cited from a secondary source by Fediukin, Sovetskaia vlast', p. 97.
involvement of specialists in industrial administration. At the famous Putilov Works, administrative authority was vested in a special board (direktsiia) of workers and technical specialists, while a soviet of ten persons representing the workers, white-collar employees, and technical personnel became responsible for the administration of the Lessner Works. In Ural factories, one-third of the membership of the administrative "working soviets" was composed of technical and white-collar personnel.¹

Further encouragement was offered to the specialists by V.D. Bonch-Bruevich in an appeal for conscientious collaboration published in Izvestiia on 20 April 1918:

I am a supporter of the most wide and thorough employment of all the technical forces of the state.... Every Intelligent worker knows that without scientific-technical forces, without engineers, nothing can be done. Every day there comes in to us an entire series of applications from plants, factories, mines, etc. demanding that engineers be sent... For persons of knowledge and experience, a wide field of activity is opening up.²


²Izvestiia, 20 April 1918. Bonch-Bruevich added that engineers were especially necessary to convert factories from wartime to peacetime production. For the decree of 9(22) December 1917 demobilizing industry, see DSV 1 (1957): 196-198.
As if to corroborate Bonch-Bruevich, the Control Committee of the All-Russian Union of Metal-Workers had passed on 25 March 1918 a resolution calling for "the greatest possible increase of technical-instructorial cadres in industry" while the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions had resolved on 3 April 1918:

As one of the means of improving productive work, unions and factory-workshop committees are required to pay the most serious attention to the strengthening of the staff of technical personnel and the apportionment of instructional cadres from the ranks of the most technically-trained and disciplined workers.¹

Thus in an atmosphere of guarded optimism, which assumed the "demobilization" of industry i.e., its conversion from a wartime to a peacetime basis and the cooperation of the overthrown capitalists, the Soviet government took its first initiatives to secure the services of the specialists.²

Equally important was the development of a working relationship with the Academy of Sciences. Certainly the Academy had been less than enthusiastic about October and its report for the year 1917 was hostile toward the new government and pessimistic about the future.² Seven years

¹"Profsoiuzy v bor'be za povyshennie proizvoditel'nosti truda v gody grazhdanskoj voiny", Krasnyi arkhiv, no. 96 (1939), pp. 97, 83.
²Graham, p. 27.
later in the course of the celebration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the Academy, Lunacharskii was to recall how the Academy had greeted the February Revolution as "its own", but regarded the "new revolution as an unexpected and absurd occurence."1 Yet as early as 24 January (6 February) 1918, an extraordinary general meeting of the Academy heard permanent secretary S.F. Olenburg report on his meeting with a Narkompros representative to discuss the possible collaboration of the Academy in various state projects. It was agreed that each question be considered individually in terms of its scientific nature and of the resources of the Academy.2 Within two days, L.G. Shapiro of the Scientific Department of Narkompros sent to Olenburg a list of proposals for collaboration between the Soviet state and the Academy, which included the mobilization of Russia's scientific forces by a special commission of the Academy, the registration and classification of scientific personnel and organizations, the continuation of the investigation of Russia's natural and productive forces already begun


by the KEPS during the world war, and the creation of special commissions of enquiry into particular problems of industry and agriculture. Ol'denburg consequently created a special committee to consider Shapiro's proposals, and this committee's report was approved by an extraordinary meeting of the Academy on 20 February 1918 (08). The text of the resolution noted the practical work carried out by the Academy to strengthen the national economy, offered general co-operation without a commitment to any particular project suggested by the Soviet government, and declared that "the Academy is always ready, at the demand of life and the state, to undertake feasible scientific and theoretical investigation of particular problems put forward by the needs of state development." In a personal letter to vice-president A.I. Stebut of the Moscow Agricultural Society, Ol'denburg informed him of the Academy's decision and further declared that "the Academy considers that it does not have the right to refuse the fulfilment of tasks for the benefit of the state." 

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 104-105.  \(^2\)Ibid., p. 107.

\(^3\)Ibid. In a note that was not part of the resolution, A.E. Fersman, secretary of KEPS, expressed reservation about the feasibility of research on particular industrial problems, which he considered outside the scope of the Academy.
Encouraged by the Academy's resolution, Lunacharskii moved quickly to enlist its co-operation in the task of reconstructing the national economy. In a letter of 5 March 1918 addressed to its president A.P. Karpinskii, he noted that although the Academy was the greatest representative of pure theoretical science in Russia, so also had it engaged in practical research to bolster the economy in wartime, and concluded that

...in the difficult conditions of our times, perhaps only the lofty authority of the Academy of Sciences, with its tradition of pure, independent science, would succeed in overcoming all difficulties, to group around this great scientific task the scholarly forces of the land.

In his reply, Karpinskii began by deploring the current anti-intellectualism which regarded "specialization as an anti-democratic privilege." Furthermore:

That profoundly false understanding of qualified work as privileged, undemocratic work, of which I already spoke, has lain as a difficult border between the masses and intellectual and scientific workers. It is urgent and pressing therefore for all those who consider pernicious this attitude toward scientific workers to struggle with it and to create for Russian science more normal conditions of existence.

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1Ibid., pp. 109-112.

2Ibid., pp. 113-114. The belief that specialized knowledge is inherently undemocratic may be traced at least as far back as the French Revolution. Consider the famous comment of the Revolutionary Tribunal after the sentencing to death of Lavoisier - "La République n'a pas besoin de
Refusing to go into broad generalizations about the Academy's future under Soviet power, he suggested rather that it undertake a series of concrete projects and annexed to his letter a memorandum signed by Ol'denburg listing a number of such areas of work. Essentially Ol'denburg proposed a continuation of the type of activities first undertaken by the KEPS: the registration and defence of scientific workers and work, research into problems of agriculture, statistical and cartographical surveys, mining and metallurgical research, investigation of energy sources. While Ol'denburg reiterated the Academy's primary commitment to scientific thought, he also stressed that it was prepared to work to augment the wealth of the nation and admitted that it could not exclude from the scope of its activities "questions of a technical-economic character."² At the same time as this correspondence was taking place, the VSNKh journal Narodnoe khoziaistvo brought the issue into the open:

The revolution will not be able to realize the task of the organization of the economic life of the country if it does not find itself fully armed with knowledge, knowledge, and again

savants". The same point was made formally by the revolutionary Philippe Buonarroti (1761-1837) in his Babeuf's Conspiracy for Equality (London, 1836), p. 211.

²Ibid., pp. 115-121.
knowledge. But for this the most intensive mobilization of science is necessary, an intense collective investigation of the realities and conditions of impending construction.¹

By early April 1918, Lunacharskii and Oldenburg had worked out a modus vivendi: the Academy would "give academic service to the Soviet power by means of research into the natural wealth of the country" while the Soviet government would "recognize on principle the necessity of financing such work." At the same time, the Academy was instructed to pay special attention to "the solution of the problems of the correct distribution of industry in the country and the most rational use of its economic strength."² Reviewing these delicate and protracted negotiations from the perspective of 1925, Lunacharskii wrote:

What could we ask of the Academy? That it suddenly, all in a big crowd, transform itself in a Communist conference that it suddenly cross itself in a Marxist fashion, putting its hand on Capital, swearing that it's orthodox Bolshevik?... Everyone knows that a sincere conversion of this type could not be.³

If the Soviet government had to work hard at

¹Bastrakova, p. 68.

²Izvestiia, 5 April 1918. The formal SNK resolution is reproduced in Organizatsiia nauki, pp. 124-125.

³Lunacharskii, p. 109.
securing the active collaboration of specialists, so also was it obliged to persuade the working masses of the necessity of the services of the very people who had been the target of so much popular resentment. To this end, a major initiative was taken by Trotsky in a forceful speech entitled "Work, Discipline, Order" delivered to the Moscow Municipal Conference of the RKP(b) on 27 March 1918. In the course of his speech, Trotsky did not fail to excoriate those collaborators of the overthrown bourgeoisie who had engaged in sabotage during the post-October weeks - "civil service and technical personnel, all the educated and semi-educated intelligentsia who serve [d] bourgeois society as an agency of technical management." Their identification with the old order led to "sabotage, desertion, disorganization of all governmental and many public and private institutions on the part of their management, technical, and administrative personnel". The Soviet power would not countenance such actions and "the resistance of all these technical, administrative, and civil-service elements was overcome."

Now that Soviet power was established on a firm basis[1]

...the struggle with sabotage must express itself in the form of converting, where it is necessary,

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former saboteurs into employees and technical
directors in the service of the new regime.
If we do not grapple with this, if we do not
attract all the forces necessary to us and
enlist them in Soviet service, then our struggle
of yesterday with sabotage, a military-
revolutionary struggle, would be absolutely
condemned as utterly vain and useless. Just
as in dead machines, so also in these technicians,
engineers, doctors, teachers, former officers
is invested the peoples' national capital,
which we are obliged to exploit....

Trotsky went on to insist that the collegial
principle was no substitute for technical expertise:

Elected boards [kollegia] consisting of the
best representatives of the working class, but
not equipped with the necessary technical
knowledge, cannot replace one expert who has
passed through a special school and who knows
how to carry out given technical work....

Under such circumstances, the working class,
"in a healthy and necessary act of self-limitation",
must when necessary "give way to a technical specialist,
on whom a great measure of responsibility must be laid
and who must be kept under political control."

Not only were specialists to be given genuine
responsibility, they should be granted what amounted to
a bill of rights:

But simultaneously, it is necessary to allow
the specialist freedom to act, without inhibiting
creativity, because no specialist, however able,
talented in his field, can work when subordinated
in his specialty to an elected board of persons
who do not know this field. Political, collegial,
and Soviet control must be introduced everywhere
and anywhere, but for the executive functions, it
is necessary to appoint specialist-technicians, put them in responsible positions and impose responsibility on them.

Those who questioned the political wisdom of appointing non-Communist specialists to responsible posts were rebuked for their short-sightedness and "profound mistrust toward the Soviet regime":

Those who think that the enlisting of former saboteurs for technically specialized posts threatens the very foundations of the Soviet regime do not realize that it is not through some engineer or former general that the Soviet regime may stumble... but it may stumble through its own incapacity to grapple with creative, organizational tasks.

Inasmuch as it was impossible to recruit immediately new specialists from among the masses, it was essential for the Soviet power to draw from old institutions all that was valuable and use it for the new tasks at hand:

The enlisting of scientific specialists is for us just as essential as the administration of the resources of production and transport and all the general wealth of the land. To repeat, we must, and in addition we must immediately bring under our control all the technical specialists we possess, and introduce in practice for them compulsory labour, while at the same time leaving for them a wide field of activity, [while ] maintaining our political control.1

Despite Trotsky's forceful eloquence, the employment of non-Communist specialists in responsible positions

1Ibid., pp. 162-164. The same passages were quoted verbatim in Trotsky's 1920 polemic with Karl Kautsky, Terrorism and Communism.
was subjected to some intense criticism by Communists and non-Communists alike.

In March 1918, an anonymous VSNKh official stated that it was "treason to the workers" to leave a bourgeois engineer in charge of a factory.¹ Within the ranks of the RKP(b), a group of dissenters calling themselves Left Communists had emerged early in 1918 to oppose Lenin's peace negotiations with Imperial Germany.² Denouncing the Brest-Litovsk treaty as a "surrender to German imperialism", the Left Communists demanded at the Seventh Party Congress (6-8 March 1918) that the treaty be rejected and urged instead a revolutionary war of resistance against the advancing German armies. When Lenin succeeded in persuading the Congress to ratify the treaty, the Left Communists moved to attack his economic policies, especially state capitalism. In the pages of their journal Kommunist, they advocated the rapid nationalization of all remaining private business and industry and the democratization of industry through the strengthening and extension of workers' control. No

¹Carr, 2:186.

²Among the most prominent Left Communists were N.I. Bukharin, G.I. Lomov, V.V. Osinskii, G.L. Piatakov, Karl Radek, and V.M. Smirnov.
concessions were to be made to Russian or foreign capital- 
tists and the trend toward "bureaucratic centralism" 
was to be reversed. If anything, Lenin's false notion 
of state capitalism was, in V.V. Osinskii's opinion, 
highly dangerous to "the construction of proletarian 
society by the class creativity of the workers themselves."¹

By mid-April 1918, the Left Communists had prepared 
their formal counter-blast to Lenin - Theses on the 
Present Moment - which was both a justification of their 
stand on the Brest-Litovsk question and a criticism of 
Lenin's economic policies. One of their concerns was the 
movement to restore industrial discipline, which involved 
curtailing the activities of factory committees, strengthen-
ing the authority of managers in state enterprises, and 
retaining and rewarding the services of bourgeois special-
ists. While the Left was not necessarily opposed to the 
employment of bourgeois specialists per se, they feared 
for the safety of industrial democracy:

The management of enterprises should be handed 
over to united collegia of workers and technical 
personnel and placed under the control and

¹For general accounts of the Left Communists, see 
Stephen F. Cohen, Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution 
(New York, 1973), pp. 60-78; Robert V. Daniels, The 
Conscience of the Revolution (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), 
pp. 70-87; Leonard Schapiro, The Origin of the Communist 
Autocracy (New York, 1955), pp. 130-146.
leadership of local Soviets of the people's economy. The entire economic life should be subordinated to the organizing influence of these Soviets which are to be elected by workers...including the unions of the technical personnel and other unions....

On the other hand, specialists were not to be coddled, for "labour duty for qualified specialists and the intelligentsia must be introduced." Not all Left Communists supported a hard line on specialists; Bukharin saw no fundamental principle involved and declared that on this issue, he was "further to the right than Lenin."

Criticism of the employment of specialists was not confined to the Communist Party opposition. At the Fourth Session of the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, the Left Social-Revolutionary V.A. Karelin characterized Lenin's employment of specialists as a "coalition with the bourgeoisie." Fierce opposition came from the anarcho-syndicalists. Inspired by the ideas of Jan Waclaw Machajski (1866-1926) who argued that socialism was the class ideology of intellectuals whose

1Bunyan and Fisher, p. 564.
2Ibid.
3Cohen, p. 72; Dobb, p. 92.
4Dobb, p. 93. S.F. Fediukin accuses the Left Communists of regarding the specialists as a "purely parasitical element" (Sovetskaia vlast', p. 31; Velikii Oktiabr', p. 80). No mention is made of Bukharin.
property lay in their monopoly of knowledge, they contended that the principal consequence of October was to deliver the people into the hands of a new ruling class of party officials, government bureaucrats; and technical specialists.¹ At the VTsIK session of 29 April 1918, the anarchist A. Yu. Ge maintained that "spetsы could be compelled to work only under threat of being shot."²

The Leninist riposte was not slow in coming.

Under Lenin's influence, the TsK RKP(b) protocol of 31 March 1918 stated:

It is necessary to recruit for work knowledgeable and experienced people. The sabotage of the intelligentsia circles has been overcome; the technicians are coming over to us and it is necessary to employ them. In the initial period of conquest, we did not recruit, we could not recruit technicians. Now the position has changed; in this sense, we are experiencing a new course.³

Within the month Lenin launched a series of

¹Paul Avrich, The Russian Anarchists (Princeton, 1967), pp. 191-195. Even Lenin appears to have been influenced by Machajski. In his report to the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets in January 1918, he declared that "they - the professors, teachers, and engineers transform their knowledge into an instrument for the exploitation of the working people" (CW 26: 466).

²Feduiukin, Sovetskaia vlast', p. 32.

counter-attacks intended to justify his own policies and reply to critics within and without the Communist Party. Of particular significance was his article "The Immediate Tasks of Soviet Government"; drafted during March-April 1918 and published in Izvestia on 28 April 1918. Arguing that the Brest-Litovsk peace provided only a precarious respite for the Soviet government, he proposed a series of concrete projects to rebuild the economy and advance toward socialism. One means to these ends was the employment of specialists:

Without the guidance of experts in various fields of knowledge, technology, and experience, the transition to socialism will be impossible.... And the specialists, because of the whole social environment that made them, are, in the main, inevitably bourgeois.1

Had the proletariat on assuming power been able to solve the problem of "accounting, control, and organization on a national scale", then it would have been possible to subordinate the bourgeois specialists to the Soviet power by means of universal accounting and control. This was impossible because of the war and Russia's general backwardness, with the result that the Soviets had no alternative but "to result to the old bourgeois method and agree to pay a very high price for

1Lenin, CW 27:248.
the 'services' of the top bourgeois experts." Lenin admitted bluntly that the enlistment of specialists by means of high salaries was "a retreat from the principles of the Paris Commune", a step backward but a necessary sacrifice:

Let us assume that the Russian Soviet Republic requires one thousand first-class scientists and experts in various fields of knowledge, technology and practical experience to direct the labour of the people towards securing the speediest possible economic revival. Let us assume that we have to pay these "stars of the first magnitude"... 25,000 rubles per annum each. Let us assume that this sum will have to be doubled...or even quadrupled.... The question is, would the annual expenditure of fifty or even a hundred million rubles by the Soviet Republic for the purpose of reorganizing the labour of the people on modern scientific and technological lines be excessive or heavy? Of course not.\(^2\)

Once the Soviet people have learned labour discipline and modern techniques, once they develop the appropriate degree of organization, accounting, and control which would induce the bourgeois experts to participate voluntarily, then the Soviet state will cease to pay tribute to the specialists.\(^3\)

The publication of Lenin's article was almost certainly timed to coincide with the VTsIK meeting of 28 April 1918, at which Lenin launched a general attack

\(^1\)Ibid. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 250. \(^3\)Ibid., p. 251.
on the position taken by the Left Communists in their Theses on the Present Moment. At the same time, he reiterated his views on the necessity of specialists:

The whole point is that we have no experts; that is why we have got to enlist 1000 people, first-class experts in their fields, who value their work, who like large-scale industry, because they know that it means improvement in technology. When people here say that socialism can be won without learning from the bourgeoisie, I know this is the psychology of an inhabitant of Central Africa.¹

The problem of special salaries was also discussed. When Bukharin expressed outrage at individuals who were alleged to be receiving salaries in excess of 4000 rubles per month and suggested that they be put up against the wall and shot (perhaps he was not yet "further to the right than Lenin"!), Lenin rebuked him, saying that the whole point was to find such people and employ them: "It is simply a question of attracting such people to us who can be attracted either by buying them with high salaries or by ideological organization." In this respect, Bukharin was no better than the anarchist Ge, who claimed that with a rifle he could force anyone to do anything.²

The meeting ended by adopting Lenin's "Six Theses on the Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", which in part argued that inasmuch as the organization of nation-wide

¹Ibid., p. 310. ²Ibid., pp. 310-311.
accounting and control had lagged behind, the Soviet government was obliged to take backward steps and agree to compromise with bourgeois tendencies: "Such a step backward and departure from the principles of the Paris Commune was, for example, the introduction of high salaries for a number of bourgeois experts."\(^1\)

Lenin followed through his victory with yet another blast at the Left Communists, "Left Wing Childishness and Petty-Bourgeois Mentality," published in Pravda on 9-11 May 1918. Returning to his theme of the need to learn organizational skills and techniques from the bourgeoisie, he explained:

We, the party of the proletariat, have no other way of acquiring the ability to organize large-scale production on trust lines...except by acquiring it from first-class capitalist experts.... The best workers in Russia have realized this. They have begun to learn from the capitalist organizers, the managing engineers, and the technicians.\(^2\)

On 19 May 1918, he instructed the Conference of Representatives of Enterprises to be Nationalized to "nominate candidates from among specialists, engineers, and organizers of large-scale production for the purposes of participating in management."\(^3\) This instruction was followed by a formal SNK resolution of 10 June 1918 ordering

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 315-316.  \(^2\)Ibid., p. 350.  \(^3\)Ibid., p. 388.
VSNKh "to work out a plan of a system of competitions in connection with the recruitment of specialists to responsible Soviet posts." ¹

Closely linked to Lenin's belief in the necessity of learning from and employing bourgeois specialists was the question of salaries, for in his polemic with the Left Communists, he had insisted upon the payment of high salaries to induce otherwise reluctant specialists to collaborate with the regime. As early as 18 November (OS), SNK at the instigation of Lenin had passed a decree limiting the income of people's commissars, state employees, and civil servants to 500 rubles per month, with a supplement of 100 rubles for each dependant family member. ² This decree, however, did not have the force of law with respect to specialists employed in the as yet unnationalized sector of private industry, which was explicitly recognized by SNK in a resolution of 2 January 1918 (OS) affirming that the decree of 18 November was not intended to forbid the payment to specialists of salaries above the established norms for state employees. Accordingly, it was not difficult to find specialists retained by government

¹V.Z. Drobizhev, Glavyi shtab sotsialisticheskoi promyshlennosti (Moscow, 1966), p. 221.

²DSV 1 (1957): 107-108.
commissariats and departments receiving salaries ranging from 1500 to 4000 rubles per month. ¹ In an attempt to rationalize the payment of salaries, SNK passed a resolution on 27 June 1918 which created a series of salary scales for state employees ranging from 350 rubles per month for office clerks to 800 rubles for directors and people's commissars. The simultaneous nationalization of industry made the question of specialists' salaries the direct responsibility of the government, and the decree specifically limited their earnings to 1200 rubles per month. While the decree appeared to place a ceiling on the high salaries that had so recently scandalized Bukharin, two conditions must be noted: the principle of high salaries for specialists had been formally established, and despite the nominal 1200 ruble ceiling, a clause stating that salaries exceeding these norms would require special authorization from the Control Commission and the Commissariat of Labour was a virtual acknowledgement of the possibility of even higher salaries. ²

It is nevertheless ironic that at the very moment of Lenin's victory over the Left Communists, events well beyond the control of the Soviet power would force it to

¹Krasnikova, p. 41
revise fundamentally many of its post-October premises, chief of which was the idea of the gradual transition to socialism. Military opposition to the regime had emerged immediately after October when a number of Tsarist generals attempted to build an anti-Bolshevik army in the Rostov area. By April 1918, however, the Red Army had captured Rostov and forced the so-called Volunteer Army into a long retreat. The dismal prospects of the anti-Bolshevik forces were suddenly reversed early in June by the revolt of the Czech Legion, which not only succeeded in eliminating the already tenuous Soviet power in Siberia, but also served to precipitate the decision of the Allied powers to intervene against the Soviet regime. By the summer of 1918, a full-scale civil war had erupted between the Soviets and the newly-reorganized White Armies, which were determined to reverse the verdict of October on the battlefield. Civil war and foreign intervention were further complicated by the revolt of the Left SR's, which resulted in the wounding of Lenin by an assassin on 30 August 1918. With the signing of the armistice of 11 November 1918, the Brest-Litovsk Treaty became null and void, the Central Powers were effectively eliminated from the Russian scene, and the Allies were free to concern themselves with Russia. At the same time, non-Russian
minorities on the borderlands of what had been the old Russian Empire took advantage of the crisis to form independent national states. Such were the new circumstances - civil war, foreign intervention, a fluid international political situation, national separation - in which Lenin's government was obliged to survive, build socialism, and incidently, concern itself with securing the services of essential specialists.
CHAPTER III
THE CARROT AND THE STICK

The central economic event of the second half of 1918 was the abandoning of the gradualism of state capitalism and its replacement by a series of radical measures known collectively as war communism, a system the features of which would endure until the Tenth Party Congress of March 1921.\(^1\) While it is true that the strain and stress of the civil war provide the basic reason for the implementation of war communism, the fact remains that despite all the optimism of Lenin and his colleagues, the first eight months of Soviet power had not provided the most healthy environment for state capitalism. Certain factors were beyond the control of the government, especially the economic consequences of the World War with its shortages of food, fuel, and raw materials; breakdown of transportation, and disruption of existing market relations. Similarly,

the economic repercussions of the loss of the Ukraine were being felt by the middle of 1918. The issue of workers' control had created considerable difficulties. On the one hand, syndicalist tendencies on the part of factory committees led them to equate workers' control with workers' management to the detriment of production; on the other, resistance of individual employers or even entire manufacturers' associations to workers' control led to shut-downs or cessation of production. Such resistance inspired syndicalist-minded local factory committees or Soviets to engage in spontaneous or punitive nationalization of offending enterprises, which actions were soundly condemned by VSNKh. At the same time, there existed within and without the Communist Party considerable pressure for a more radical advance toward socialism, and certainly Lenin's victory at the VTsIK session of 29 April 1918 did not cow his critics into unconditional surrender. By May 1918, there appeared to exist an effective stalemate between proponents and opponents of state capitalism. If it had been necessary to place the railways under semi-military control to combat syndicalist excesses, so also the failure of the Meshcherskii concession seemed to scotch the possibility of a compromise with private industrialists under the banner of state capitalism.
In the light of these difficulties, the first All-Russian Congress of Councils of the National Economy was convened on 26 May 1918, and as noted in the preceding chapter, its key resolution urged the nationalization of the main branches of industry. Ironically, it was not the resolutions of this Congress or the eloquence of the Left Communists and the non-Party socialists which forced the Soviet government to begin to abandon state capitalism, but rather the actions of apprehensive Russian industrialists who increasingly were transferring their assets into German hands. Since German diplomatic intervention against a future policy of nationalization could be anticipated, SNK decided to act rapidly and on 28 June 1918 issued a decree nationalizing every important category of industry, thereby launching Russia along the path of war communism.¹

In retrospect, Lenin was to declare that "war communism was thrust upon us by war and ruin", and there is little doubt that the exigencies of winning the civil war were the principle factors in determining economic policy. In the opinion of Maurice Dobb, war communism emerged as "an empirical creation, not as the a priori

¹For the text of this decree, see Resheniia partii i pravitel'stva po khoziaistvennym voprosam, 5 vols. (Moscow, 1967), 1: 95-101.
product of theory: as an improvisation in the face of economic scarcity and military urgency in conditions of exhausting civil war. Yet paradoxically, war communism was hailed by its proponents as a great leap into the socialist future, especially in light of such features as the general nationalization of business and industry, the requisition of food from the peasants, the ban on private trade, the concentration of economic authority and power involving centralized control and management, the rejection of commercial market or monetary forms of distribution in favour of production for direct use, the distribution by rationing of basic goods and services free or at nominal prices, and the use of mass mobilization to solve problems. The debate over the essence of war communism - pragmatism dictated by circumstances or a daring leap into the future - was not resolved at the time nor has it been solved satisfactorily by modern scholarship. One fundamental does

1Dobb, p. 122.

2Nove argues that war communism meant different things to different Bolsheviks (pp. 78-79) and Carr makes substantially the same point (pp. 274-275). Lewin sees it as the result of an interplay between the central task of winning the civil war and the psychological need for a utopia among people fighting for survival (p. 77). For a revisionist opinion that war communism constituted an intelligible Marxist economic programme, see Paul Craig Roberts, "War Communism: A Re-examination", Slavic Review 29 (June, 1970): 245.
remain: state capitalism was rejected in favour of a command economy to enable the Soviet power to win the civil war, and it is in this context that the role of the bourgeois specialist must be understood.

In general, the civil war fundamentally altered the conditions under which the specialists were expected to work. Aside from the universal violence, economic devastation, голод и холод, three circumstances are of particular importance. The very logic of the civil war created a distinct political polarization that effectively eliminated any viable middle ground. One was either Red or White, for or against Soviet power. Neutrality or non-involvement became extremely difficult, for given the logic of "who is not for us is against us" peculiar to wartime, any attempt to adopt a position of neutrality became automatically suspect. Secondly, civil war exacerbated class tensions and hatreds. The famous example of the official proclamation of the Red Terror on 5 September 1918 following the attempt to assassinate Lenin served to drive home the point that the majority of the specialists were allegedly of bourgeois origin and hence suspect as representatives of the class enemy. Finally, the socialization of the economy under war communism placed the specialists in the position of having to work for the Soviet
state or not work at all.

Civil war and war communism made all the more acute the question of securing the conscientious collaboration of specialists, and in this respect, Lenin did not deviate from the principles which he had developed since October. An excellent summary of his ideas may be derived from comments made to Gor'kii while convalescing from his bullet wounds in September 1918:

You want an alliance between the workers and the intelligentsia, do you? That wouldn't be a bad thing. Tell the intellectuals to come over to us.... They're welcome to come over to us.... I'm not saying that the intellectuals are not necessary to us, am I? But you can see for yourself how hostile they feel towards us, how little they understand the demands of the moment. They can't even see that without us they're powerless, they'll never read the masses. It will be their fault if we break too many pots.  

Especially interesting here is his inversion of his reasoning that the masses must learn from the specialists—so also must the specialists reach the masses if they

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1M. Gor'kii, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, vol. 20: "V.I. Lenin" (Moscow, 1974), pp. 33-34. An English translation is contained in Lenin and Gorky: Letters, Reminiscences, Articles (Moscow, n.d.), p. 281. Written as an obituary in 1924, this article underwent changes according to Gor'kii's relationship with the Soviet government. This citation is taken from the final 1931 version. For a French translation of the 1924 version authorized personally by Gor'kii, see Maxime Gorki, Lénine et Le paysan russe (Paris, 1924).
desire the welfare of their country, and the Communist Party is the only means by which the two can come together.

Lenin was not the only prominent Bolshevik to value the old specialists and work to secure their services. A.V. Lunacharskii, who described himself as "an intellectual among Bolsheviks and a Bolshevik among intellectuals", had worked ceaselessly since October for co-operation between the Party and the intellectuals in all spheres of endeavour. He believed that:

The internal essence[i.e., ethical imperatives] of the intelligentsia, as doctors, as engineers, as artists, as scholars demands of it that it honestly apply itself to problems in the interest of all humanity in the land. And this, in the final analysis will bring it to an inevitable struggle with capitalism.¹

Leonid B. Krasin, Old Bolshevik, electrical engineer, and former managing director of Siemens-Schückert, devoted considerable effort to encourage specialists. On 31 May 1918, he wrote "a good many professional and business men have come round and are prepared to work under the new regime, regardless of politics", and two weeks later was able to report that "the antagonism of the professional classes is lessening every day, and that in engineering circles many of the skilled men are only waiting

for my return to take on any kind of work that is going."

Writing after his death in 1926, Krassin's wife maintained:

In the days when the majority of the professional classes... had not made up their minds as to their attitude to the Soviet Government Krassin [sic] was, of course, an invaluable link.... Krassin was making no idle boast when he said that his entry into the service of the Government was a signal for a change in the attitude of professional men and technical experts to the Peoples' Commissars. His slogan "The old order changeth, but Russia lives and we must work for her", was the means of enlisting a number of indispensable specialists in all spheres of industry.... To men of science, in particular, he gave every encouragement and saw to it that they did not suffer during the period of famine.... Krassin, therefore, may be said to have given the lead to the policy of the Bolsheviks today in treating specialist workers as privileged members of the community who must be remunerated accordingly.2

While this fond account managed to ignore entirely the role of Lenin in shaping party policy, there is no doubt that Krassin devoted considerable effort to encourage specialists to collaborate. It was he, for example, who brought Simon Liberman to Lenin's attention:

In conclusion, he [Krassin] declared that his new assignment from Lenin was to enlist all the non-Communist experts as loyal employees of the new government and that I must help him in this recruiting.... First of all, he rallied the engineers and economists who once upon a time, in their youth, had sympathized with Bolshevism but had later drifted away from it. In addition,

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2Ibid., pp. 118-119.
to Krassin [sic] came most of the outstanding engineers... who at this time were anti-Communist. 

Other Party members became actively involved in recruiting experts. Gleb M. Krzhizhanovskii, an engineer like Krasin, was anxious to find collaborators for his beloved electrification projects. The young Nikolai P. Gorbunov, an engineer and Lenin's personal secretary, concerned himself throughout 1918 with securing the cooperation of experts. Even the formidable F. E. Dzerzhinskii, who became chairman of VSNKh in 1924, gained the reputation of a "magnet-man" (chelovek-magnit) with respect to specialists. 

Despite the crises of the summer of 1918, the Soviet government was able to consider the development of a science policy, and in particular, the co-ordination of applied research, which had been one of the goals of the KEPS during the world war. In December 1917, Narkompros had created a Scientific Department, but this body evidently did not begin to function until the end of March 1918. During this interval, there began to function within

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1 Simon Liberman, Building Lenin's Russia (Chicago, 1945), pp. 60-61. According to Liberman, Lenin used to boast that Krasin was "our expert, not a stranger, not a bourgeois."

Narkompros a "Department for the Mobilization of Science", the aim of which was to induce the generally hostile or indifferent mass of the scientific-technical intelligentsia to collaborate with the Soviet power.¹ When the Scientific Department began to function, it considered itself the central scientific-administrative organ of the government and its mandate as everything inherent in the "mobilization of science". The radicalism of its leaders, who among other things proposed to dissolve the Academy of Sciences and the universities, and refused to consult properly with non-Party specialists, led to a considerable number of complaints to which Lenin was prepared to listen. For that matter he warned Lunacharskii, "If some brave fellow turns up in your establishment and breaks a lot of china, then you will have to pay dearly for it."²

Early in 1918, VSNKh had created the Council of Experts to provide practical advice on research problems, but the very complexity inherent in expanding applied scientific research seemed to suggest a more sophisticated administrative structure than an advisory council. At the same time the radicalism of Narkompros employees alarmed those who were prepared to listen to non-Communist

¹Ibid., pp. 130-131.

experts and convinced at least one individual that the Scientific Department of Narkompros was not to be trusted with developing applied research. N.P. Gorbunov was commissioned by Lenin to visit the leading scientific institutions of the land and hold discussions with experts in various fields. By the end of June 1918, Gorbunov addressed a letter to the Central Committee levelling serious criticism at Narkompros' handling of the mobilization of science and the organization of applied research; all research institutions, including the Academy of Sciences, should be removed from under the aegis of Narkompros, and a special organ of VSNKh should be created to work out policies for applied research.¹ Both SNK and VSNKh were impressed by this suggestion, and Gorbunov was directed to draw up an appropriate proposal. On 16 August 1918, SNK passed a decree creating NTO, the Scientific-Technical Department of VSNKh.² Its mandate was defined broadly as the centralizing of all scientific-technical matters of the RSFSR, "the rapprochement of science and technology with practical production", and the allocation to the appropriate institutions "the special


tasks of the Soviet power arising from the needs of the national economy." More specifically, NTO was directed to avail itself of "scientific-technical expertise on all questions of the national economy."\(^1\) Appropriately enough, Gorbunov was appointed chairman of the NTO collegium. Presiding at its first meeting, he reported:

For the fullest and best possible development of the national economy of the land, it is necessary to recruit all scientific and technical forces of Russia and to organize links between the various scientific and technical institutions, societies, laboratories, and experimental stations and the entire manufacturing and productive industry.... With the aim of forming such links, there was created the Scientific-Technical Department, made up of the most competent and authoritative specialists from their various fields of applied science.\(^2\)

With men such as Gorbunov in charge of NTO, it is not surprising that a number of specialists were prepared to accept his offer and work for the Soviet power. By 1919, some 250 professors, 300 engineers, and 240 other specialists were working in various capacities, and these experts were representative of some thirty institutions of Moscow and twenty-nine of Petrograd.\(^3\) As early as 28 November


\(^2\) Organizatsiiia nauki, p. 82; Poliakova, p. 58.

1918, Gorbunov was able to send an optimistic report to Lenin:

The old professors and scholars are coming over to us and burning with the creative energy.... Science is progressing!... They are so carried away and enthusiastic that they are beginning to inflame their skeptical colleagues. I know our scholars. I have never seen anything like it.\(^1\)

A note of caution was nevertheless in order, for Gorbunov noted that "the world of scholars, with all its peculiarities" did clash with established Soviet organs and that among the scientific workers there were very few Communists.

At the same time, he lamented that "It is very difficult to move our scholarly forces from the dead, immobile point on which they have been rooted for the last ten years."\(^2\)

A certain amount of controversy exists over the practical results of the work of NTO in its early years. Soviet historians such as M.S. Bastrakova, S.A. Fediukin, and V.A. Ul'ianovskaja maintain that NTO was able to attract the services of leading scholars and provide long lists of names and activities.\(^3\) In contradistinction,


\(^2\)Ibid.

the American Kendall E. Bailes contends that NTO remained largely ineffectual in those years, especially with respect to co-ordinating applied industrial research, and that the real work of research was carried out by the Scientific Council of the various branches of industry.¹ V.N. Ipat'ev, who became head of NTO in 1921, noted that "in 1920 and 1921 the Scientific-Technical Administration [NTO] ...did little except support a number of scientific-technical departments in their request for aid from the S.N.C.E. [VSNKh]."² While the extent to which NTO was capable of initiating and co-ordinating applied research appears far from settled, it at least was instrumental in encouraging experts to work for various Soviet organs.

An obvious corollary of the policy of hiring specialists was to determine who they were, i.e., how many specialists in what field with what education and experience. While the records of the various professional associations could provide some general indication, any

¹Kendall E. Bailes, Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin (Princeton, 1978), p. 57. Bastrakova (pp. 182 ff.) claims that NTO was instrumental in creating a unique system of scientific-technical councils under VSNKh for the specific purpose of industrial research.

national policy would require up-to-date figures. Early in July 1918, the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets resolved that a census of all employees of the Soviet state be conducted, and this project was actually carried out by August in twenty-eight institutions. Of particular interest to this study was the sixth question: "Where were you formerly employed?" (Gde služili do etogo?).

Iroshnikov's study of these returns indicates that employees of former state, public, and private institutions and enterprises working at that time in Soviet central organs represented the following proportions: VTsIK, 39.1%; VSNKh, 48.3%; Internal Affairs, 46.2%; Health, 60.9%; Agriculture, 58.8%; Maritime Affairs, 72.4%; Justice, 54.4%; SNK Administration, 40%; War, 55.15%; State Control, 80%; Food, 60.8%; Ways of Communication, 88.1%; Trade and Industry, 56.2%; Labour, 37%; Finance, 97.5%.

A similar breakdown strictly for civil servants (chinoviki) formerly employed by the old ministries and government departments but now in the service of Soviet central institutions yielded the following results:

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2Ibid., pp. 53-54.
Agriculture, 31.1%; Maritime Affairs, 64.1%; Justice, 27.9%; Posts and Telegraphs, 52.8%; War, 44.85%; State Control, 56.8%; Ways of Communication, 53.6%; Finance, 90.2%.¹ These figures lead Iroshnikov to conclude that the post-October administration of Soviet Russia was characterized by an "extraordinarily great tenacity of bureaucratic officialdom and, on the whole, white-collar employees and specialists, deriving their origin from the old bourgeois apparatus, moreover on a scale larger than would be supposed."

² Similarly, V.Z. Drobizhev reports that of 2228 employees of the VSNKh apparatus in 1918, only 87, i.e., 3.9% were Communists.³ In a word, if the Soviet authorities were obliged to make a virtue out of necessity and "gamble on the civil service cadre that was at hand - despite its manifest enmity to the regime", so also were significant numbers of public employees prepared to work for the Soviet regime, if for no other reason than to weather the storm.⁴

¹Ibid., pp. 57-58. These figures are abstracted from four original tables compiled by Iroshnikov and represent a bottom line summary for those Soviet organs whose "former" employees exceeded 25% of their total.

²Ibid., p. 63.


⁴Alf Edeen, "The Civil Service: Its Composition
This initial census, however, was clearly inadequate for identifying those specialists whose services might be required. On 1 December 1918, a meeting of the Council of Defence discussed plans to mobilize experts for the Red Army. Krasin, supported by Gorbunov and V.I. Nevskii, Commissar of Ways of Communications, suggested that NTO be authorized to conduct a survey of all technical specialists of the RSFSR. Gorbunov was commissioned to devise a concrete plan which, with the personal approval of Lenin, was passed into law by SNK on 19 December 1918. Briefly, the decree made liable for "active technical service" all persons possessing a technical education (including mathematics and applied science) or alternatively having held for two years a responsible technical position; they were to fill out a standard form to be forwarded to NTO which was responsible for maintaining the appropriate records. Registration was also required of technical specialists already serving in the army or navy, employees of government institutions and nationalized enterprises, professors, teachers, and laboratory workers. Individuals or entire categories of specialists could be

and Status", in The Transformation of Russian Society, ed. Cyril E. Black (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), p. 284. Edeen cites a 1957 article from Partiinaia zhizn' which claims that for two decades after the Revolution, "former" employees dominated the civil service corps.
assigned to "active technical service" by the Council of Defence or by the Extraordinary Commission of Army Supply. This was the equivalent of military duty and refusal or unauthorized absence would be treated as desertion.¹

The volume of work involved in such a project necessitated the creation on 18 February 1919 of the Chief Bureau for the Registration and Allocation of Technical Forces as a sub-committee of NTO, the main functions of which involved the keeping of detailed and accurate records and the suggesting of appropriate candidates in response to requests from institutions and the military.² By August 1919, the Bureau reported that it had registered 29722 scientific-technical specialists, of whom 15113 possessed a higher education and 6265 a middle education, the balance being praktiki, i.e., those whose work experience compensated for lack of formal education.³

Syndicalism or an irresponsible interpretation of workers' control were two luxuries beyond the reach of the Soviet government during the civil war. Having

¹DSV, 4(1968): 231-236.
²Ibid., pp. 416-418.
³Fediukin, Velikii Oktiabr', p. 146.
assumed now the entire responsibility for the national economy, it was incumbent upon the regime to win the battle for productivity and to this end, a variety of measures were introduced, among which were the increased employment of specialists in nationalized industry and the strengthening of managerial authority. Lenin had already urged in May 1918 that specialists be selected to participate in the management of enterprises to be nationalized, and the First All-Russian Congress of Councils of the National Economy resolved on 3 June 1918 that one third of the management of nationalized enterprises consist of specialists.¹ In a speech delivered in November 1918 to commemorate the first anniversary of VSNKh, A.I. Rykov assured his audience that in nationalized enterprises, the administration consisted of one third technical personnel and two thirds from "workers" organizations and sovnarkhozy². Industrial efficiency and managerial competence were the central themes of the Second All-Russian Congress of Councils of the National Economy which

¹I.Z. Khasanov, "V.I. Lenin o privlechenii burzhuaaznykh spetsialistov v period grazhdanskoj voiny i voennoi interventsi, "Vestnik Leningradskogo universiteta, no. 20 (1967), p. 11.

²Narodnoe khozialistvo, no. 11 (1918), p. 32.
met on 19-27 December 1918. In the keynote address, Lenin bluntly reminded the delegates of their responsibilities:

There are sometimes people in our apparatus who incline toward the whiteguards, but given communist control in all our institutions, these people cannot acquire political significance or leading positions.... We need them as practical workers and there is no need to fear them.... Now we can obtain these workers from among the bourgeoisie, from among the experts and intellectuals. And we shall ask all comrades working in the Economic Councils; what, sirs, have you done to secure experts, salesmen, efficient bourgeois co-operators...? Time to abandon old prejudices and enlist all the experts we need in our work.  

This admonition was reflected in the Congress's "Resolution on Lenin's Speech", which called for a definition of administrative rights to encourage managers to take personal responsibility in carrying out their work, and declared that even if the political convictions of honest specialists differed from those of the Russian Communist Party," the Congress categorically condemns the exclusion of such persons from the organization of the management of industry."  

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1 F.V. Samokhvalov, Sovety narodnogo khoziaistva v 1917-1932 gg. (Moscow, 1964), pp. 65-68.


3 Izvestiia, 27 December 1918.
recruit persons with experience and knowledge, responsible for the work, irrespective of whether their opinions correspond to those of the Communist Party or not."¹

Some Party members, however, were concerned about the disproportionate influence of specialists in the national economy. In his analysis of the membership of the twenty most important glavki and centres, V.M. Molotov demonstrated that ten percent were former employers or employers' representatives, nine percent technicians, thirty-eight percent officials from various departments, the remaining forty-three percent workers or representatives of workers' organizations. Thus the majority (fifty-seven percent) were composed of individuals "having no relation to the proletarian elements in industry."² On the other hand, a recent study of Rabkrin has argued that "local soviet executive committees were not adverse to meddling in the mundane administrative affairs of nationalized industries and had to be sharply rebuked by the Internal Affairs Commissariat in November 1918."³

¹D.A. Baevskii, "Rol' sovarkhозov i profsoiuзов v organizatsii sotsialistichесkogo promyshленного производства v 1917-1920 gg.", Ispricheskii zapiski, no. 64 (1959), p. 28.

²Carr, 2: 186-187.

No less contentious than the acceptance of non-Communist experts as necessary and honest co-workers was the issue of high salaries for those same specialists. Egalitarianism and the levelling of salaries, or at least the progressive narrowing of disparities, had long been a tenet of many socialists and syndicalists, and Lenin himself had argued in *State and Revolution* for a policy of wage equality even in the early stages of socialism. Given the general lack of enthusiasm on the part of most specialists for wage levelling or, for that matter, the Bolshevik programme in general, the Soviet government resorted to material incentives. By May 1918, Lenin had justified high salaries for specialists as a kind of ransom to deliver Russia from the evils of backwardness. While the salary decree of June 1918 attempted to place a limit on the earnings of specialists, it did admit the principle of the differentiation of salaries and allowed for exceptions from the general guidelines.

Inflation and wartime conditions, made it essential to adjust the wage-scales, but the principles of differentiation and higher salaries for specialists remained, even though the SNK decree of October 1918 stipulated that only indispensable specialists could receive salaries above the stipulated norms and only with
the consent of a permanent commission to be nominated by VTsIK.\footnote{\textit{Sobranie ukazanenii i raspriazhenii rabochego i krest'ianskogo pravitel'stva} 1918, 75-815.} Even the new Labour Code of 9 December 1918 seemed to sanction the principle of differential wage scales.\footnote{DSV 4 (1968): 174.}

High salaries for specialists could be accepted as a necessary compromise under the circumstances, but when significant numbers of specialists were able to find means to circumvent the ceiling placed on their earnings, worker resentment was bound to surface. A perfect forum for complaints was provided by the Second All Russian Congress of Trade Unions, which met from 16–25 January, 1919, for many delegates represented political affiliations other than Bolshevik (e.g., Bundists, Left SR’s, SD, Internationalists, Left Internationalists, Maximalists, Anarcho-Syndicalists, etc.) and therefore had no hesitation in criticizing official policies. For example, delegate Kefali accused the Central Council of VTsSPS of helping the government to introduce Taylorism, "a more refined system of exploitation of hired labour" while delegate Ginzburg deplored the fact that workers' control had lost ground in theory and practice, and delegate Rozenblium declared bluntly that many workers at his plant "understood
the Soviet power [in the same way] as the bureaucratic
tsarist regime."¹ A. Lozovskii, who had been expelled
from the Party in December 1917 for his activities in
the post-October opposition, proclaimed that Soviet
organs and institutions were "98% filled with represen-
tatives of that bourgeois intelligentsia which has served
resolutely under all regimes", and went on to point out
that:

Here at the congress, it is necessary to say
what we think of the high salaries which are
given to the so-called specialists. At a time
when the subsistence wage in Moscow is 390
rubles per month, you have so-called
specialists who receive 4500-5000 rubles per
month. And if we actually want to impose our
proletarian control in this and make the state
apparatus cheap, and Marx in his Civil War says
that this cheap state apparatus is one of the
signs of a proletarian state regime, then we
must extend our influence even to this reserved
category.²

Bolshevik delegates were at pains to justify the
policy of their government. M.P. Tomskii explained that
the proletariat had no choice but "to turn to the
services of specialists, who cannot fathom the proletarian
psychology, who cannot understand the essence of this

¹Vtoroi Vserossiiskii sënzd professional'nykh
soiuzev 16-25 Ianvaria 1919 goda. Stenograficheskiy otchet
(Moscow, 1921), pp. 29-30, 38, 71.
²Ibid., pp. 66, 165.
revolutionary change" while Ia. E. Rūdžutak, reminded the Congress that during the period of the nationalization of industry, the Bolsheviks and the working class had neither the technical personnel nor the experience required for the task - "we were obliged to keep the old technical apparatus. Naturally this apparatus approached the new tasks with old methods for resolving technical questions."¹

On the other hand, Bolshevik delegates did not entirely whitewash the specialists. During the debate on wages policy, Y.V. Shmidt, Commissar of Labour, disparaged those who were "specialists in receiving salaries" and argued that the remuneration of all technical, white-collar, and administrative personnel be integrated into a single wage scale with appropriate gradations and differentiations:

They [the specialists] found themselves outside the influence of the general wage policy, and given free competition, they inflated salaries so high that it required the creation of an entire series of special commissions and conferences in order to regulate the salaries of the so-called specialists.²

Shmidt's analysis was corroborated by delegate Seniushkin, who noted that:

¹Ibid., pp. 84-85, 137-138.
²Ibid., p. 152
The salaries of these specialists in various departments are highly differentiated, which creates the conditions for the crossing-over of these specialists from one enterprise to another, and embitters the working masses against the large salaries of these specialists.¹

Such complaints provide interesting evidence of how some experts were able to exceed salary norms: those individuals whose particular skills were especially in demand could bargain with management and department heads anxious to secure staff necessary to maintain production and prepared to offer all sorts of inducements in violation of official norms. In other words, Soviet institutions were prepared to "raid" each other for key personnel. Other means of exceeding salary guidelines, such as the payment of inflated bonuses, the holding of consultantships or multiple assignments, and working on the basis of an "individual contract", will be considered in other sections of this study.

The Second Congress had recommended that there be a national wage scale for each branch of industry and that all employees be classified under four groups embracing twelve categories, the two highest groups being reserved for "the highest technical, commercial, and administrative personnel."² On 18 February 1919,

¹Ibid., p. 158.
²Ibid., pp. 153-154. This resolution was proposed
VTsIK and SNK passed a decree raising wages and salaries for all categories of personnel. The minimum monthly wage for an adult worker was fixed at 600 rubles while the salaries of administrative and technical personnel were to be limited to 3000 rubles per month; salaries in excess of this amount were to be paid in exceptional cases and only with the consent of VTsIK and SNK. Future wage contracts was to include all higher technical, commercial, and administrative personnel.¹ When the new system of wage scales was finally promulgated by Markomtrud with the agreement of VTsSPS on 13 March 1919, the result was not the four groups embracing twelve neat categories proposed in January but rather a twenty-seven step monstrosity in which rates ranged from 600 rubles per month for unskilled workers in Category 1 to 2200 rubles per month for heads of departments in Category 27. It was further stipulated that the highest scholarly, technical, commercial, medical, and administrative personnel whose functions were not specifically mentioned in the decree were to be remunerated according to the provisions of a separate decree.²

by Shmidt and carried by the Bolsheviks, who constituted 450 of the 600 delegates.

Narkomtrud passed a supplementary decree on 13 March 1919 reaffirming the 3000 rubles per month ceiling for "technical, commercial, scholarly, and medical personnel", but with the important provision that such individuals could accept positions as consultants or experts in addition to their normal regular work. Remuneration for such extra work was not to exceed fifty percent of the established 3000 ruble ceiling and was subject to approval by SNK and registration with Narkomtrud.¹ A subsequent decree ordered persons in violation of these regulations to be brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal.² By way of comparison, a decree of 16 April 1919 fixed the salaries of "responsible political workers" at a maximum of 2000 rubles per month, two-thirds of the so-called maximum allowed to specialists.³ Despite all this legislation, the fact remained that Soviet wage policy in 1919 would become increasingly ineffectual as inflation and the economic chaos of civil war made salaries paid in paper rubles virtually meaningless.⁴

Schoolteachers were the largest single group of

¹SU 1919, 15-174. ²SU 1919, 15-175.
³SU 1919, 18-206.
the professional intelligentsia and in general the least well paid. As noted, teachers for the most part viewed October as a betrayal of the liberal-democratic principles of February and their largest union, VUS, had led a series of political strikes against the Soviet government in late 1917-early 1918 until a combination of professionalism and government control of their salaries forced them back to work. Not all teachers had supported VUS's condemnation of the Bolsheviks, for in December 1917 a number of pro-Soviet members of VUS split with their parent body to form the Union of Teacher-Internationalists (SUIN), which urged all teachers to join with it in supporting Soviet power and creating the "new socialist school."1 Despite some reservations, SUIN was supported by Narkompros. At its first congress of 2-6 June 1918, the keynote speakers included M.N. Pokrovskii, Lunacharskii, Krupskaiia, and Lenin, who condemned VUS and reminded the delegates that "the majority of the intellectuals of the old Russia were downright opponents of the Soviet regime."2

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2Lenin, CW 27:445.
In her turn, Krupskaia accused the leaders of VUS of setting the mass of the teachers against the "teacher-Bolsheviks." 1

The SUIN congress had been timed to precede immediately the Seventh VUS congress which had been scheduled for 8-16 June 1918, but the ideas expressed by the SUIN delegates appeared to have little effect on their colleagues in VUS, who resolved that "the delegates of the VII VUS Congress cannot find a basis for general, constant, and productive collaboration with the Soviet power." 2 Representatives of both unions were present at the First-All-Russian Congress of Teachers convened by Narkompos in July 1918, where the delegation from VUS defended their principles:

... VUS is an educational organization. It sets itself the goal of the autonomy of the school.... They the Soviets say that the teacher is unreliable, and so has to be re-elected. But one might point out that the old bureaucratic officials are sitting in the present commissariats without re-election.... Science does not surrender to politics, VUS is for objective science. 3

An autonomous and apolitical school in the hands of a union that had engaged in a series of anti-Soviet

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1 Fedotova, p. 37. 2 Ibid., p. 38. 3 Fitzpatrick, pp. 39-40.
strikes would scarcely be palatable to the Bolsheviks.
At the First All-Russian Congress on Education, Lenin
delivered on 28 August 1918 a counter-blast to the ideas
of VUS where again the ideas of Machajski may be
detected:

We publicly declare that education divorced
from life and politics is lies and hypocrisy.
What was the meaning of the sabotage resorted
to by the best educated representatives of
the old bourgeois culture? This sabotage
showed...that these people regard learning as
their monopoly and have tuned it into an
instrument of their rule over the so-called
common people.

No basis for compromise between VUS and the
government seemed possible. On 23 December 1918, VUS
was declared an "anti-Soviet organization" and dissolved
accordingly. On the other hand, SUIN was considered too
narrow and unpopular with the mass of teachers to serve
as the basis of a future teachers' union, and instead it
was absorbed in the summer of 1919 into the new All-Russian
Professional Union of Workers in Education and Socialist
Culture.2

Despite all the sound...and fury about the vital role
of the school in creating socialism, salaries for teachers

1Lenin, CW 28: 87-88.

2Fediukin, Velikii Oktiabr', p. 184; see DSV 4
(1968): 249-250 for the dissolution decree, which is
nothing less than a bill of indictment.
remained considerably less generous than those paid to technical specialists. On 26 June 1918, Narkompros passed a decree instituting a new scale of salaries for teachers which ranged from 300 to 600 rubles per month depending on the type of institution and its location.¹ While these salary increases were certainly welcome (many rural teachers had earned no more than 150 rubles per month), and in the opinion of F.F. Korolev, "undoubtedly improved the attitude of the basic mass of teachers toward the Soviet power", the most qualified teacher could expect to earn no more than fifty percent of the salary of a technical specialist.² By November 1918, the ceiling on the salaries of the most qualified teachers was raised to 800 rubles per month, but thereafter teachers' salaries fell rapidly behind those paid to other categories of specialists.³

The first year of Soviet power had witnessed the development of a "carrot and stick" policy toward the


²Korolev, p. 145.

specialists. Inasmuch as they were essential to socialist construction but for the most part unenthusiastic about Bolshevism, they were to be induced to work by a combination of coercive regulation and material incentive. But what of the individuals who were the object of this policy? Could the government anticipate an attitude of survival and time-serving on the part of the specialists or a move toward conscientious collaboration and even identification with the goals of the regime?

First and foremost, the civil war imposed on the specialists an utterly stark choice: work for the Soviets or join the Whites or emigrate. Certainly there existed the necessary legal and economic structures to compel specialists to work. The 1918 Labour Code had declared labour a universal obligation, while the decree of 19 December 1918 had made scientific and technical personnel liable for "active technical service"; moreover, a decree of 5 October 1918 which instituted compulsory labour books for persons living on unearned income included "members of the free professions, unless they perform useful public functions."¹ Not only did war communism mean the elimination of alternative opportunities for employment in private enterprise, it brought specialists' salaries under

¹DSV 3 (1964): 396-397.
the direct control of Soviet institutions and organs. In this connection, it is interesting to note Timoshenko's comment that rather few professionals had any substantial savings to fall back on, i.e., enjoyed financial independence:

I dare say that in those days [1911] many of my colleagues lived from the twentieth of each month, when government employees were paid, until the twentieth of the next, spending all their money with little thought of saving anything.¹

At the same time, the official policy to enhance the authority, material position, and status of the specialists made collaboration increasing attractive for many individuals.

The legal and economic imperatives analyzed above are necessary but not sufficient to explain why specialists were prepared to collaborate with the regime. Equally important are certain values, ideas, and beliefs held by the professional intelligentsia, which induced them to work for a regime which the majority considered politically distasteful and which impelled many among the path of conscientious collaboration. These values, which will be considered presently, may be briefly summarized as follows:

1. Professionalism: the primary commitment to the intrinsic value of one's work which must be performed under any and all circumstances; often associated with "apolicicism" and "internal emigration", or sometimes intense conservatism.

2. Patriotism: the belief that regardless of the political regime in power, one must work for Russia and the good of its people; often associated with the view that the Bolsheviks were fundamentally Russian nationalists rather than Marxist internationalists.

3. Preservationism: the belief that working for the Soviet would soften the regime and "preserve values"; in effect, specialists would civilize the Bolsheviks and mitigate their excesses.

4. Prometheanism: specialists and Bolsheviks were two "modernizing minorities" in a backward peasant society, both of whom shared ambitious plans for economic reform and therefore tended to converge accordingly, for if the Bolsheviks needed the specialists' expertise, so also did the specialists need the Bolsheviks to reach the masses and provide the appropriate structures.¹

¹These categories are not intended to be mutually exclusive or to represent a comprehensive explanation of the world-view of the professional intelligentsia. Rather, they are proposed as convenient rubrics under which to group contemporary attitudes about work and the Soviet power. The author acknowledges a debt to Kendall E. Bailes, S.A. Fediukin, David Joravsky, and David S. Landes for the concept of Prometheanism.
Despite omissions, special pleading, *ex post facto* rationalization, and outright tendentiousness, memoir literature constitutes a valuable source for understanding the wide range of specialists' attitudes toward Soviet power in 1918. Some specialists would have nothing to do with the Bolsheviks. Stephen P. Timoshenko taught mechanical engineering under the auspices of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences and endured various changes of regime in Kiev until he believed that he had no alternative but to emigrate.\(^1\) Other specialists attempted to collaborate but became disillusioned and in their turn emigrated. A. Gurovich, a financial expert from the wartime Union of Municipalities, was asked to work for VSNKh in 1918. When he protested that his attitude toward the Soviets was "decidedly negative", a VSNKh official cheerfully told him that, "We are not doctrinaire. I myself, for example, am not a Communist but a Left SR."\(^2\) Lack of viable alternatives induced Gurevich to work for VSNKh, where he noted that two types were prepared to work for the Bolsheviks: those who were merely careerists and opportunists, and those who believed sincerely that they could contribute

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\(^1\)Timoshenko, pp. 163-171.

\(^2\)A. Gurovich, "Vysshii Soviet Narodnogo Khoziaistva", Arkhiv Russkoi revoliutsii, no. 6 (1922), pp. 308-309.
to the good of Russia and by their actions "soften" the regime, a view he claims was held by many of the Moscow intelligentsia. Once on the job, Gurevich subsumed the VSNKh employees under three distinct categories: ambitious students, clerical personnel, and representatives of the various strata of the semi-intelligentsia; old bureaucrats in love with paperwork and routine who served out of force of habit and material necessity; and the intelligentsia, who consisted of romantic visionaries, unprincipled careerists, and "specialists", who believed they could "soften" the regime and "preserve values." Inasmuch as many Bolsheviks were "constantly full of strong doubts as to the correctness of their decisions regarding concrete questions", it was always possible for the specialists to suggest alternative (i.e., corrective!) measures. At the same time:

It was even easier to paralyze the harmful projects of the more hare-brained Communist schemers. In the overwhelming majority of cases their plans were easy to submit to devastating criticism...and such criticism always made a great impression and often achieved the desired results. Finally, in the last resort, it was almost always possible to introduce at a minimum various charges, additions, and corrections to pernicious projects under the guise of editorial revisions, greater details or something of a similar kind.

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1 Ibid., pp. 305-306.  2 Ibid., pp. 315-316.  3 Ibid., p. 327.
Unfortunately, specialists who modified impractical projects could find themselves accused of acting from counter-revolutionary motives. Moreover, many representatives of the intelligentsia who entered Soviet service for disinterested reasons ended by becoming careerists and assimilating the Soviet viewpoint. Gurovich himself had identified with those who aspired to "soften" the regime, but unable to get along with Communist officials, he felt that no option remained but to resign by the end of 1918.¹

M. Smil'g"-Benario was not in agreement with Bolshevism, but believed that the intelligentsia was obliged to work for the Soviets to demonstrate their support for the "international socialist revolution" since for better or for worse, Russia now had the only socialist government in the world. After having worked some six months for the Commissariat of Justice, he was assigned to the Petrograd Military Commissariat as a civilian employee.² Civil war conditions caused him to become disillusioned with the government: the indiscriminate

¹Ibid., pp. 330-331.

²M. Smil'g"-Benario, "Na sovetskoe služhbe", Arkhiv Russkoi revoliutsii, no. 3 (1921), pp. 147-148.
arrest of members of the intelligentsia after the Uritskii assassination of 30 August 1918; Zinov'ev's open contempt for anyone remotely connected with the "bourgeoisie"; the arrest of the Putilov engineers; the quartering of workers in the homes of the intelligentsia "in order to undermining [their] material position"; the tendency to view the entire intelligentsia as a class enemy. Assigned to work at the front, he was taunted as a "Peter[sburg] bourgeois" and a "Peter[sburg] whiteguard." Like Gurevich, Smil'g'-Benario despairs of collaboration and he too chose emigration.

Influenced by a strong combination of professionalism and patriotism, some specialists found it possible to collaborate conscientiously with the Soviet government throughout the 1920's. As noted in the preceding chapter, both V.N. Ipat'ev and M.J. Larsons had opposed strikes and sabotage during the post-October days on the grounds that only devotion to duty would ameliorate Russia's crisis. Ipat'ev, son of a Moscow architect, major-general in the Tsarist army, and at the time the youngest member of the Academy of Sciences (having been elected in 1916 at the tender age of 49), believed that the Bolsheviks were the only defense against the ignorant masses who would plunge

1Ibid., pp. 149-154, 178. 2Ibid., p. 164.
Russia into anarchy and chaos:

Politics had never interested me...but the events of July 1917 convinced me that further struggle would destroy the nation and that political power should therefore be given to the man capable of calming the upheaval. Who, besides Lenin, could do this?... Whatever we may think of the ideals of the Bolsheviks... it must be admitted that the October Revolution, masterfully led by Lenin, saved the country from anarchy and at least temporarily preserved its intelligentsia and material wealth. Many times I have since maintained that but for the Bolsheviks in 1917 and 1918 I would have possibly lost my life. Rumours of a St. Bartholomew's massacre in Petrograd grew stronger and stronger, and if the Provisional Government had remained in power much longer the intelligentsia would have been the victims.¹

Lev Ia. Karpov, Bolshevik chemical engineer and future head of the Chemical Committee of VSNKh, met with Ipat'ev at the end of November 1917 to request his help in converting the chemical industry from a wartime to a peacetime basis. Noting with satisfaction that Karpov had been a student of one of his colleagues, Ipat'ev recalled, "my first business interview with the Bolsheviks left me well satisfied.... I would do all I could to save the industry which we had created during the war."² Consequently, he rejected active military service with the Red Army in favour of civilian work with the Chemical

¹Ipatieff, pp. 256-257.

²Ibid., pp. 260-261.
Committee of VSNKh, and was appointed chairman of the Technical Section of the War Council in March 1918. In the process, he found time to advise an old friend how to adjust to troubled times - "...above all, he must continue working without interruption, for only in his work could he find a purpose in life and avoid insanity" - and to convince a number of his old colleagues to accept a place in the new order.¹

Thanks to his services as mediator in the bank employees' strike, M.J. Larsons had gained the confidence of several members of the government, including his old classmate from law school, N.N. Krestinskii. ²Personal and political scruples (principally indignation at the "shameless pact concluded at Brest-Litovsk") compelled him to decline an offer to serve as councillor at the new Soviet embassy at Berlin, but with the advent of war communism, he concluded that "there was no field of action for me except in the service of the State", ² Subsequent events led him to state flatly:

For the majority of intellectuals, of former bank officials, commercial or industrial employees [sic], service in the employ of the Soviet was then the only way out. For the

¹Ibid., p. 267.
former merchant or employé, for the intellectual who did not belong to the Communist Party...the proof that he was a Soviet official was the only effective political protection.¹

Larsons accepted a series of assignments from the government, interrupted by a period of self-imposed exile, before finally assuming the position of Deputy-Chief of the Currency Administration in April 1923.

Simon Liberman had no fewer difficulties than Ipat'ev or Larsons in adjusting to the new order, for while those two claimed to be apolitical, Liberman was a Menshevik who was obliged to reconcile his anti-Bolshevism with his commitment to socialism and love of Russia. To boycott the regime was a dead end:

Refusal to work with or for the "usurping" Bolsheviks and their new government was the idea and practice of the intelligentsia and, above all, of the enormous body of state employees, a body that by late 1917 had grown disproportionately as a result of the first three years of World War I.... But personally, I was not only a Menshevik opposing the Bolsheviks; I was also a businessman with much experience in the timber industry....I was one of a small group of non-Bolshevik intellectuals who disapproved of the boycott. We were business experts, and as such we felt that this boycott was harmful to the country....²

Caught in the trap of being both anti-Communist and anti-boycott, he attempted to resolve his dilemma by

¹Ibid., p. 37. ²Liberman, p. 5.
working for the Soviets with appropriate mental reservations:

Presently I accepted a responsible post in my field - I was a Soviet specialist or spets...working with the Communists.... And yet, although I served the Soviet regime as a non-Communist business expert, I continued to be a political opponent of the new government.¹

Through Krasin, who encouraged "business-like economists and cool-headed experts to work with the Soviets for Russia's good", Liberman was able to discuss projects concerning the timber industry directly with Lenin, and "soon it became known in the Communist party, as well as among the experts, that Lenin was always willing to receive me."² Committed to work and country, he concluded that "I must not tear myself away from the Russian people and its destiny. I must remain a servitor of the revolution...no matter what the circumstances or consequences."³

Unlike Ipat'ev, Larsons, and Liberman who had all emigrated by the early 1930's, I.P. Bardin remained in Soviet service until his death in 1960. The son of a peasant, Bardin was nevertheless an "old" specialist who had graduated in metallurgical engineering from the Kiev Polytechnical Institute in 1910 and had worked in private

¹Ibid., pp. 5-6. ²Ibid., pp. 3, 8. ³Ibid., p. 58.
industry in both the USA and Russia before 1917. In 1938 at the age of fifty-five, he published a professional autobiography, Zhizn' inzhenera (The Life of an Engineer). Although the book was largely concerned with his experiences during the Stalinist industrialization drive, it included some interesting material on the reaction of the old specialists to the prospect of working for the Soviets during the post-October years. As noted in the preceding chapter, Bardin had considered it the duty of engineers to serve their country, although he had little understanding of the actual content of the Bolshevik programme and policies. Within the months that followed October, he found time to reflect upon the meaning of recent events and eventually accepted a responsible economic position offered by the Soviets because it seemed to provide a wide scope for his professional activities:

...with an agitation understood only by an engineer, I became absorbed in the details of my technical projects.... My first acquaintance with the Bolsheviks had been made. I knew that my heart was still not with them but my mind feverishly worked under the influence of new impressions.

Once on the job, he encountered considerable anti-Bolshevik sentiment among fellow-engineers, especially.

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1I.P. Bardin, Zhizn' inzhenera (Moscow, 1938), p. 63.
when their plant in Kharkov was captured by the Whites in early 1919. One of his colleagues told him that "Engineers are a breed apart. We are gentry [dvoriane]! We are not on the same path as the Bolsheviks." Rejecting such opinions as fit only for the "politically spineless engineers," Bardin came to his own conclusions:

The Whites were already corpses.
I had no connection with them.
They were alien to my world.
But the plant? The plant was dear to me. My life was in it, and I could not and did not want to give it up.
And I decided to remain with the Bolsheviks.²

A similar sentiment was expressed by Evgeny Paton (1870–1953), a civil engineer born in Nice where his father was the Russian consul:

I wasn't at all sure at the time the Bolsheviks would accomplish anything worthwhile, but... I was sure the people would soon need my knowledge. Work for my motherland had been the chief aim of all my preceding life. True, I could see very well the local representatives of the victorious Soviet government were rather suspicious of people like me. That was natural. To be frank, I was also somewhat skeptical of the new government. The aims and policies of the Bolsheviks were to a great extent incomprehensible to me.... Anyhow [sic] the country was in a bad state and I could not stay idle.³

While it can be argued that Bardin and Paton were

¹Ibid., p. 73. ²Ibid., p. 75.
writing after the fact from the perspective of those who had adapted very well to the Soviet system (Paton joined the Party in 1944 and subsequently made a great deal of the fact that he had been personally sponsored by N.S. Khrushchev), other evidence from the year 1918 suggests that many of the professional intelligentsia were prepared to collaborate conscientiously. In an appeal to his fellow-scholars, the psychiatrist V.M. Bekhterev reminded them of their long tradition of public service:

At the turning-point of history, we cannot stand at the crossroads and wait - what is necessary is a will for activity, for construction, for creative work, and as for us, scientific workers, who have always devoted our strength to the service of mankind, we must not be hesitant... We must therefore strive... to give the entire sum of our knowledge and abilities to creative work...for the benefit of the people.

In a similar vein, the mathematician V.A. Steklov wrote in his diary during 1918:

I am not an optimist...but nevertheless I had begun to think and now still think, that we have begun "to renounce the old world" not only in words, that scientists and educators are receiving proper recognition on the part of the new power, which brought an end to those insults to which they were subjected on the part of the former tsarist administration.

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1 Fediukin, Velikii Oktiabr', pp. 231-232.
2 Bastrakova, p. 84.
And finally, an "Engineer V. Bazhanov" wrote in early 1919 that "the sabotage and negation of the Soviet power, skillfully covered by various phrases about 'the independence of technical thought' must be overcome", for just as workers are expected to produce, so also should well paid specialists work hard, and if necessary, be compelled to work.¹

Since the Soviet power had everything to gain from the collaboration of the experts, a public discussion of the issue was entirely appropriate. An Izvestiia article of 9 October 1918 commenting on "the remarkable turning of the intelligentsia toward Soviet power" provoked Karl Radek to reply that such a broad statement required considerable qualification and analysis, inasmuch as "the intelligentsia was the most bitter enemy of the Soviet power after our October victory."² While a part of the intelligentsia stood firmly with the old bourgeois order because they were tied to it by their material interests, the majority was against Soviet power simply out of "faint-heartedness." The intelligentsia had seen itself as directors of the masses and accordingly

¹Ekonomicheskaiia zhizn', 16 January 1919.
²Pravda, 10 October 1918. All subsequent citations from Radek's article are taken from this issue.
feared the coming of the masses to power. Ironically, among the would-be saboteurs were many misguided individuals who were convinced that by their actions they were actually serving the working people by saving them from the consequences of their own folly.

Although the intelligentsia had only a book-knowledge of revolution and was terrified when confronted with the real thing, it was not entirely beyond all redemption:

In the year that has passed since the October Revolution, the intelligentsia has learned much.... It has seen, above all, the craving for knowledge in the very masses which it considered only as a destructive force.... It has seen that this mass concerns itself benevolently, honestly with all those who came to it for help.

Indeed, the very enthusiasm of the masses for socialist construction was contagious, for "a part of the intelligentsia...is entering the service of the Soviet power, aware that they are serving the people; another part remains in thought." It was therefore incumbent upon the Soviet power to induce the majority of the intelligentsia to "cross the Rubicon", for:

The Soviet power must facilitate the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia in returning to the popular masses. We know all the weaknesses, all the indecisiveness of the intelligentsia... but we need...the intelligentsia.

Recapitulating Trotsky's argument of the previous
March, Radek concluded:

We do not have to be reminded that they represent the crystallized capital of the Russian people, capital which we need for the speeding-up of the rebirth of the exhausted land. The intelligentsia that wants to work on the side of Soviet Russia must not only be given the means for this work, only be given bread, but they must also be given the opportunity in this work to participate as citizens with equal rights.

This same theme of the gradual turning of the professional intelligentsia toward the Soviet power was taken up by Lenin on the occasion of the publication of a brief article, "'Otrechenie' Pitirim Sorokina" ("The 'Renunciation' of Pitirim Sorokin") in Pravda of 20 November 1918. Besides his academic work as professor of sociology, Sorokin had been active in politics as a member of the Right SR's, secretary to Kerenskii, and a member of the Constituent Assembly. An inveterate foe of the Bolsheviks, he was eventually arrested in late 1918. While still in prison, he was offered an opportunity to resume his teaching under the new regime and, sensing the futility of further overt opposition, wrote a letter to the Izvestiia of the Northern-Dvina Executive Committee in which he formally resigned from the Constituent Assembly [!] and from the Social-Revolutionary Party; under present conditions, politics offered no solution to Russia's problems and accordingly he would
withdraw from politics in favour of "work in the fields of science and popular education, always valuable, always needed by the people."\(^1\)

Reprinted in Pravda on 20 November 1918, Sorokin's letter was seized on by Lenin as a point of departure for his article, "The Valuable Admissions of Pitirim Sorokin", a central theme of which was the question of the "change of front" on the part of non-Bolshevik intellectuals:

If Pitirim Sorokin has relinquished his seat in the Constituent Assembly, it is not without reason; it is a symptom of a change of front on the part of a whole class, the petty-bourgeois democrats. A split among them is inevitable: one section will come over to our side, another section will remain neutral, while a third will deliberately join forces with the monarchist Constitutional-Democrats.\(^2\) One of the most urgent tasks of the present day is to take into account and make use of the turn among Menshevik and Social-Revolutionary democrats from hostility to Bolshevism first to neutrality and then to support of Bolshevism.

To wait upon events was not enough; rather, Party members should actively encourage collaboration:

\(^1\)See Pravda, 20 November 1918 for the text of this letter; see also Pitirim A. Sorokin, Leaves from a Russian Diary (Boston, 1950), pp. 194, 202-203, 207. Sorokin conveniently omits this letter from his memoirs.

\(^2\)Lenin, CW 28:189. This was published in Pravda, 21 November 1918.
It is not enough to encourage this change of front and amicably greet those who are making it. A politician who knows what he is working for must learn to bring about this change of front.... It would be...foolish and ridiculous... to insist only on tactics of suppression and terror in relation to the petty-bourgeois democrats when the course of events is compelling them to turn in our direction.¹

Party members had often failed to make proper use of this change of front and this shortcoming ought to be remedied, but not to the extent of embracing uncritically every petty-bourgeois democrat:

But the slogan of the moment is to make use of the change of attitude toward us which is taking place among them. There still remain plenty of the worst bourgeois specialists who have wormed themselves into Soviet positions. To throw them out, to replace them by specialists who yesterday were our convinced enemies and today are only neutral is one of the most important tasks of the present moment, the task of every active Soviet functionary who comes into contact with the "specialists"....²

One immediate consequence of this article was the release of Sorokin from prison. Resuming his professorship at the University of Petrograd, he remained on emplacable foe of the Bolsheviks and in his lectures assisted in the efforts of many professors to maintain the University as

¹Ibid., p. 190.

²Ibid., p. 192. One person who was very impressed with this article was N.P. Gorbunov; see Smirnov, p. 279.
a centre of anti-Communist enlightenment while expressing absolute contempt for "Lenin's scheme for converting me and others into allies of the Communists — that is, making us tools in their hands."¹ Not surprisingly, he was included in the group of intellectuals expelled from the country in 1922.

Lenin would hammer at this theme throughout the winter of 1918-1919. In a speech to the Sixth All-Russian Congress of Soviets on 6 November 1918, i.e., before the Sorokin affair, he reminded his audience of the hostility of the professionals after October:

They [the workers] have coped with industry without the assistance of those intellectuals who from the very outset deliberately used these knowledge and education — the result of mankind's store of knowledge — to frustrate the cause of socialism rather than to assist the people.... These men wanked to use their knowledge to put a spoke in the wheel.²

If Lenin was prepared to warn his audience to remain critical in its attitude toward the professional intelligentsia, so also was he ready to insist that this same class could be used to the advantage of the regime. Two days after his speech at the Congress of Soviets, he

¹Sorokin, p. 225.

²Lenin, CW 28:170. Again, the influence of Machajski is evident.
addressed a meeting of the Poor Peasants' Committees and promised them experts to improve agriculture with the comment "although most of these experts are counter-revolutionary...they will work for the people no worse than they used to work for the exploiters."¹

A formal discussion of the "change of front" was the main item on the agenda of a meeting of the Moscow Party Workers on 27 November 1918. In his "Report on the Attitude of the Proletariat to the Petty-Bourgeois Democrats" and in his reply to the discussion that followed, Lenin re-iterated the point he had made in the Sorokin affair, that objective historical forces and not fortuitous chance were bringing about an inevitable turn towards the Party on the part of professionals. At the same time, he provided what amounted to a recapitulation of his views on specialists during the last year:

Now that there is this change of heart among the petty-bourgeois masses, our slogan must be one of agreement, of establishing good-neighbourly relations.... These people will never become socialists by conviction, honest to goodness socialists. They will become socialists when they see there is no other way.²

Under such circumstances, the Soviet state must use their skills and knowledge to the utmost:

We know socialism can only be built from

¹Ibid., p. 177. ²Ibid., pp. 211-212.
elements of large-scale capitalist culture and the intellectuals are one of these elements.... Now we have the chance to utilise the intellectuals for socialism, intellectuals who are not socialist, who will never be communist, but whom objective events and relations are now inducing to adopt a neutral and good-neighbourly attitude toward us.... Things would not be so bad if we did not have to build socialism with people inherited from capitalism. But that is the whole trouble with socialist construction - we have to build socialism with people who have been thoroughly spoiled by capitalism.... We must make use of these intellectuals, set then definite tasks, and keep an eye on their work.1

Lenin was not so preoccupied that he could not devote himself to the nuts and bolts of utilizing experts. One interesting intervention was made on behalf of P.I. Pal'chinskii, mining engineer, president of the Russian Technical Society, deputy-minister of trade and industry in the Provisional Government, and organizer of the defence of the Winter Palace. Learning on 3 December 1918 of his arrest, Lenin telegraphed Zinov'ev for details and asked, "If he is a scientist, a writer, could he not - if there are serious charges against him - be given special treatment (for example, house arrest, a laboratory, etc.)."2 Pal'chinskii was eventually released and worked in various capacities until his arrest

1Ibid., pp. 213-215.

2Lenin, CW 44:168; see also V.I. Lenin i VChK: Sbornik dokumentov 1917-1922 gg (Moscow, 1975), p. 128.
and execution in May 1929.

Another interesting example is afforded by a resolution of 14 December 1918 passed by the Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defense under Lenin's signature that sought to salvage essential specialists from the VChK. The law stipulated that in cases of the arrest of "responsible workers in Soviet institutions, as well as all specialists, engineers, and technicians engaged in industrial enterprises and in railway transportation", such arrests were to be reported to the appropriate Soviet authority within forty-eight hours; moreover, the municipal or guberniia Party committee or People's Commissariat had the right to authorize the release of essential experts.¹

Like Lenin, Trotsky was well aware of the "change of front" and felt compelled to sound a warning in an article written in early January 1919:

There are rather numerous representatives of the intelligentsia and semi-intelligentsia who are sincerely attached to the cause of the working class but internally still are not transformed and [still] have retained many qualities and modes of thought related to the

¹Iz istoriiia VChK 1917-1921 gg: Sbornik dokumentov (Moscow, 1958), pp. 235-236. It would later be formally acknowledged that a good number of VChK officials had groundlessly harassed specialists because of their alleged class-enemy origins.
petty-bourgeois milieu. These worst elements of the new regime are striving to crystallize themselves in the Soviet bureaucracy. I say "worst", not omitting many thousands of simply idealess technicians, who are utilized by all Soviet institutions. Technicians, "non-party" specialists are carrying out their tasks for better or for worse, not taking upon themselves responsibility for the Soviet regime and not laying on our party responsibility for themselves. It is necessary to employ them in every way possible, not asking of them what they cannot give.

By early 1919, Lenin remained entirely convinced of the absolute necessity of non-Communist specialists for socialist construction and had taken further encouragement from what he perceived as a "change of front" forced on the professionals by objective historical forces. He and like-minded colleagues had worked incessantly to convince the Party and the masses to accept the specialists, and the specialists to acknowledge the reality and legitimacy of Soviet power and collaborate accordingly. The fact remained, however, that Party policy on specialists had been developed piecemeal since October in various speeches, *écrits d'occasion*, resolutions, and decrees. Instead, a firm statement of principle was entirely in order and an appropriate opportunity would be afforded by the Eight Party Congress.

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scheduled for March 1919, since the main item on the agenda was the adoption of a new Party programme.
CHAPTER IV

CLASS ENEMY OR CONSCIENTIOUS COLLABORATOR

By early 1919, the Soviet power was fighting for its very existence in the course of a bitter civil war as no less than four White armies, backed by the Allies, attempted to shoot it out of power. At the same time, the Allies had imposed on Russia a cordon sanitaire so effective that E.H. Carr was led to conclude that "the year 1919 was the year of Soviet Russia's most complete isolation from the outside world."\(^1\) White inroads together with national separatism combined to reduce the extent of territory under effective Soviet control to a size that at one point was approximately that of the sixteenth-century grand principality of Moscow. Widespread economic destruction, social desintegration, hunger, cold, and disease all compounded the horrors inherent in a civil war. Such were the conditions under which the Eighth Party Congress met from 18-23 March 1919.

The central issue at the Congress was the approval of a new Party programme, a project long overdue inasmuch as it had not been revised since its initial adoption at the RSDRP (London) Congress of 1903, and the Bolsheviks were trying to maintain rather than overthrow a government. As early as April 1917, Lenin had advocated the revision of the existing programme and the same point had been raised

at the Seventh Party Congress of 6–8 March 1918, but force of circumstances delayed any effective action until early 1919. Working from the premise that "the programme is a description of what we have begun to do and the next steps we desire to take," Lenin drew up a quite detailed draft for the consideration of the Party and dominated the ensuing debate at the Congress. In this sense, he may be regarded as the real author of the 1919 Party programme.  

One point that Lenin wished to impress upon the Party, and ultimately the masses, was the correct policy with respect to the bourgeois specialists. In his draft programme, he devoted considerable space to summarizing his fundamental ideas on the subject, and less than a week before the Congress opened, he told the Petrograd Soviet:

We are not utopians who think that Russia must be built up by men of a new type.... We are placing people of the new type in new conditions, keeping them under proper control, under the vigilant supervision of the proletariat, and making them do the work we need .... For the purpose of building socialism we must make fullest use of the science, technology, and in general everything that capitalist Russia bequeathed to us.

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2V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, 45 vols. (Moscow, 1963-1970), 29:24; for the relevant portions of the draft programme, see Ibid., pp. 113-114.
At a subsequent session of the Soviet, Lenin explained his wage policy:

The specialist gets three thousand, he goes from place to place and is difficult to catch. I say this about the specialists — they are people who have a knowledge of bourgeois science and engineering at a higher level than the overwhelming majority of workers and peasants. Such specialists are needed and we say at the moment we cannot introduce equalitarian wages, and we are in favour of paying more than three thousand. At the moment, we cannot equalize wages and as long as there are few specialists we shall not refuse to raise their wages. We say that it is better to pay out an extra million or a thousand million as long as we can employ all the specialists, for what they will teach our workers and peasants is worth more than that thousand million. ¹

Lenin’s speeches to the Petrograd Soviet were no less than a dress rehearsal for what he would say at the Eighth Party Congress. For the first time since October, he was afforded the opportunity of expounding formally to a full congress his ideas on the building of a socialist society in Russia and of assuring that the new programme would reflect his vision. ²

As chief rapporteur of the Central Committee, he minced no words. Returning to a point he had made the

¹Ibid., pp. 35-36.

²The Seventh Party Congress of 6-8 March 1918 had been a hastily-convened affair consisting of some 46 delegates. Other than changing the name of the Party to the Russian Communist Party (bolshevik), the entire work of the Congress centred around the decision whether or not to ratify the Brest-Litovsk Treaty.
previous May, he reminded the Congress that:

As far as I remember the earlier teachers of socialism, who foresaw a great deal of what would take place in the future socialist revolution and discerned many of its features, never expressed an opinion on this question [of specialists]. It did not exist for them....

Given that the Party had almost nothing in the way of guiding precedents, it has no alternative but to work out its own solutions:

Take the question of the specialists which faces us at every turn, which arises in connection with every appointment.... We availed ourselves of the assistance of bourgeois experts who were thoroughly imbued with the bourgeois mentality, who were disloyal to us and will remain disloyal to us for many years to come. Nevertheless, the idea that we can build communism with the aid of pure Communists, without the assistance of bourgeois experts, is childish.

The key to the problem lay in effective control, for:

The bourgeois experts must be hemmed in by our organized, constructive and united activities so that they will be compelled to fall in line with the proletariat, no matter how much they fight and resist at every step. We must set them to work as a technical and cultured force so as to preserve them....

Lenin hit full stride in his report on the Party Programme, where he delivered the most extensive and forceful

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1Lenin, CW 29: 154.  
2Ibid., p. 156.  
3Ibid., pp. 156-157.
analysis to date of his policy towards the non-Party experts. With the blunt admission that "the question of the bourgeois experts is provoking quite a lot of friction and divergences of opinion", he insisted that such an important problem be squarely confronted by the Party:

We have, in fact, included this question in the programme because dissatisfaction on these grounds [of specialists' privileges] has gone rather far. The question of the bourgeois experts has arisen in the army, in industry, in the co-operatives, everywhere. It is a very important question of the period of the transition from capitalism to communism... This question of the bourgeois experts must be settled quite definitely at this congress.

Having emphasized once more the necessity of building socialism "with the means provided by bourgeois science and technology", Lenin explained how the bearers of bourgeois culture were to be treated in practice:

We cannot do without the bourgeois experts. That must be said once and for all. Of course, the majority of these experts have a thoroughly bourgeois outlook. They must be placed in an environment of comradely collaboration, of worker commissars and of communist nuclei; but they must be given the opportunity of working in better conditions than they did under capitalism since... [they] will not work otherwise."

But proletarian control did not necessarily mean terror and coercion. While the Soviet power was prepared "to make them dread to respond to the appeals of the white guards", honest individuals would be treated with consideration

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1Ibid., pp. 178-179. 2Ibid., pp. 178-179.
and respect:

To compel a whole section of the population to work under coercion [literally, "under the stick"] is impossible — that we know very well from experience.... It is impossible in this way to compel a whole section to work.... We must not practice a policy of petty principles with regard to the experts.  

Rather, the Party must rely on moral suasion and the "change of front" arising from new historical conditions:

We have a large selection of such bourgeois doctors, engineers, agronomists, and co-operators, and when they see in practice that the proletariat is enlisting more and more people to this course, they will be conquered morally.... They will then of themselves be drawn into our apparatus and become part of it.  

To achieve this goal, the Soviet power must not shrink from paying the experts high salaries, despite the fact that "we are now overpaying experts, but to pay them a little more for giving us their knowledge is not only worth while, but necessary and theoretically indispensable."  

In conclusion, Lenin demanded that "every delegate to the Congress, on returning to his locality, should in his report to his organization and in all his activities, secure its execution." 

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1Ibid., p. 180.  
2Ibid.  
3Ibid., p. 181.  
4Ibid.
Criticism of Lenin's speech and proposals was less than might have been expected, and certainly far milder than the controversies over specialists that would arise at the Ninth and Tenth Party Congresses. If anything, it was the military specialists who came under sustained fire from the so called "Military Opposition", while civilian specialists were criticized either on particulars or on the sufficiently vague grounds of "bureaucratism." Thus D.B. Riazanov complained that "in workers' organizations it is impossible to avoid bureaucratization" and V.V. Osinskii deplored "the necessity to hire our old officialdom, which is the worst thing in the world."¹ In the agricultural section, one delegate declared: "[Agricultural] Specialists? It is necessary to give them up as a bad job," while another delegate complained that the decree to mobilize agricultural specialists had not been put into practice.²

Civilian specialists found defenders other than Lenin at the Congress. Bukharin found time to reply to Riazanov:

As regards the recruiting of specialists, comrade Riazanov has spoken much and let fly many words, but has not brought up a single

¹Vos'moi s"ezd RKP(b): Protokoly (Moscow, 1959), pp. 69-70, 303-305.
²Ibid., pp. 243-244.
reasoned argument, except that among these specialists are many counter-revolutionaries. This we know. Many of them are no good for anything, which we also know. The question is to use them or not, and if yes, then how? He has not answered this, and his caustic remarks remain unfounded in practice and have no significance.¹

G. Ia. Sokolnikov, acting as spokesman for the absent Trotsky, defended his military policies and compared the Military Opposition's criticism of using specialists from the Tsarist army with the equally groundless criticism of the hiring of civilian specialists launched the previous year by the Left Communists:

When the question was raised of recruiting engineers in the factories, of recruiting former capitalist organizers, you remember how from the ranks of the Left Communist fraction was printed sharp "super-Communist" criticism, which maintained that to return the engineers to the factory meant to return capital to command posts.²

Several reasons may be advanced to explain why there was so little debate at the Congress on the question of the bourgeois specialists, despite Lenin's admission that the question had arisen everywhere and had provoked "quite a lot of friction and divergences of opinion." One reason must be

¹Ibid., p. 113. Bukharin appears to refer to remarks made by Riazanov on other occasions, for the opinions attributed to him do not appear in the official proceedings of the Congress.

²Ibid., p. 147.
found in Lenin's forceful advocacy of a formal Party policy that would reflect his analysis of the problem. This is not to suggest a Leninist "cult of the personality" in 1919, but it is difficult to escape from the conclusion that Party members would be impressed by his repeated and insistant demand for a correct policy toward specialists. Despite worker resentment of the specialist as a person from an alien class drawing a high salary, the fact remains that the full authority of the specialists was not yet being felt directly by the workers. As noted in the preceding chapter, specialists were in the minority of the kollegiia of industry where their role was frequently little more than consultative.

One-man management was not yet introduced and Liberman's description of specialists at this time is particularly apt — "jellyfish individuals who had many duties and no rights."¹ Finally, to win the civil war meant also to win the battle for production, and irresponsible opposition to employing all possible means was a luxury that could not be afforded.

In its final form, the Party Programme reflected quite accurately Lenin's policy towards specialists:

This task of developing the forces of production demands the rapid, wide, and many-sided utilization of specialists in science and

¹Simon Liberman, Building Lenin's Russia (Chicago, 1945), p. 61.
technology bequeathed to us as a legacy of capitalism, notwithstanding that in the majority of cases, they are inevitably steeped in bourgeois world-views and experiences. The Party considers that the period of sharp struggle with this stratum, provoked by their organized sabotage, has finished as this sabotage in general has been overcome. The Party must, in close union with the trade-union organizations, conduct its former policy: on the one hand, not to give the smallest political concession to the bourgeois stratum and merci-
lessly suppress all its counter-revolutionary impulses; but on the other hand, mercilessly struggle with the pseudo-radicalism, in fact the ignorant conceit, that the workers are in a position to overcome bourgeois capitalism and the bourgeois order without learning from bourgeois specialists, without utilizing them, without going to school with them a rather long time.\(^1\)

While the principle of the eventual equalization of wages was affirmed, it was considered impossible at the present moment, "therefore it is necessary still to preserve for a certain time higher remuneration of specialists, in order that they may work not worse, but better than before, and to this end it is impossible to abandon the system of bonuses."\(^2\) Finally, "it is necessary to place the specialists


\(^2\)VKP v rezoliutsiiakh, p. 291.
in an environment of comradely common work, hand in hand with the mass of ordinary workers."¹

The 1919 Party Programme has been described as a product of the utopian period of the Revolution, when an optimistic view of the future was needed to counterbalance the harsh realities of the present. Various critics have pointed out how many sections of the Programme were unrealistic and impractical, or else repudiated in practice at different times. One important exception to this generalization is the section on the bourgeois specialists, for not only was it practical, concrete, and feasible, it described quite accurately what would be official policy toward the old experts for the next two decades despite its temporary suspension during the years 1928-1931.²

¹Ibid.

²Perhaps it is this consistency and concreteness that has led a number of Soviet historians to insist without any qualification that Lenin's policy on specialists constituted a unique form of class warfare in a period of transition characterized by a struggle for and not against the intelligentsia. See V.T. Ermakov, "Ideinaia bor'ba na kul'turnom fronte v pervye gody sovetskoi vlasti, "Voprosy istorii, no. 11 (1971), p. 22; S.A. Fediukin, Velikii Oktiabr' i intelligentsiia (Moscow, 1972), p. 11; Genkina, p. 22; I.E. Krutsko, "Obosnovanie V.I. Leniny politiki privlechenii burzhuaznoi intelligentsii k sotsialisticheskomu stroitel'stvu, 1917-1920 gg.," Uchenye zapiski: Volgogradskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo instituta im. A. S. Serafimovicha (Volgograd, 1967), pp. 102-104; N.A. Koroleva, "Rabota partii po povlechleniiu dorevoliutsionnoi intelligentsii v stroitel'stvu sotsializma, 1917-1922 gg., "Iz istorii vypolneniiia vtoroi programmy partii v oblasti kul'turnogo stroitel'stvka, (Moscow, 1968), p. 8."
Reaction to the work of the Congress on the specialists was immediate, and significantly, representative of both sides of the debate. On 28 March 1919, Lenin published in Pravda his "Reply to an Open Letter by a Bourgeois Specialist", in which he reproduced in toto a sharply critical open letter to him by Professor M.P. Dukel'skii of the Voronezh Agricultural Institute. Dukel'skii's letter was nothing less than a cri de coeur against what he saw as a cynical policy of regarding specialists as lemons to be squeezed and then discarded:

Don't you really understand that not a single honest specialist, if he has retained the least shred of self-respect, can agree to go to work merely for the sake of the animal comforts which you are offering to provide him? Have you retired so deeply into the seclusion of the Kremlin... that you do not see how many of the Russian specialists, though not government Communists, are real workers, who acquired their special knowledge at the cost of extreme effort not from the capitalists and not for the purpose of making money, but in persistent struggle against the deadly conditions of student and academic life under the old system? These conditions have not been improved for them under the communist government....

Regardless of their actual social origin, specialists who were working for the people to preserve culture and knowledge and to build a better life were "absolutely genuine proletarians" and as such worthy of respect from the Soviet state:

1 Lenin, CW 29: 228.
A specialist is not a machine. He cannot simply be wound up and set going. Without inspiration, without the internal spark of life, without the urge to create, not a single specialist will produce anything, no matter how highly he is paid. But a volunteer, working and creating among comrades and collaborators who respect him and regard him as a guide who knows his business, and not as suspects to be kept under surveillance of a communist commissar of the 1919 crop, will put his heart and soul into his work.... If you want to "use" the specialists, do not buy them, but learn to respect them as men, and not as livestock and machines that you need for a certain time. ¹

The memoirs of Nikolai Valentinov (Vol'skii), a Menshevik who had been good friends with Lenin in exile and in 1919 was working as de facto editor of the VSNKh newspaper Torgovo-promyshlennaiia gazeta, shed additional light on this incident. According to Valentinov, he had been told by M.K. Vladimirov, vice-president of VSNKh, that Lenin in private considered specialists as little better than mercenaries:

In an extremely rude manner, Lenin declared that there is a simple means of making the specialists work on the side of the Communist regime and of compelling them to work well: all that is necessary is to pay them well; nothing else is required. One can buy any specialist for a price; capitalists bought them; and they have become cynically accustomed to being bought. ²

¹Ibid., p. 229.

²Nikolai Valentinov (Vol'skii), "Non-Party Specialists and the Coming of the NEP", Russian Review 30 (April, 1971): 158.
Granted that Dukel'skii in Voronezh would have had no opportunity to hear the comment reported by Valéntinov and object accordingly, the fact that Lenin felt constrained to reproduce Dukel'skii's letter in its entirety and reply to it indicates a distinct sensitivity to the question raised. While he dismissed some of the complaints as unjustified and exaggerated, Lenin assumed a generally conciliatory tone:

Far from inciting the people against the intelligentsia, we on the contrary, in the name of the Party, and in the name of the government, urged the necessity of creating the best possible working conditions for the intelligentsia. I have been doing this since April 1918, if not earlier.¹

Rejecting the contention that the payment of high salaries amounted to bribery and the treatment of professionals like mercenaries (had they not always received higher salaries?), he concluded:

The author demands that intellectuals be treated like comrades. He is right. We demand that too. The programme of our Party contains such a demand clearly, plainly, and precisely formulated.... Sincere non-Party intellectuals must help us. When they form groups of people personally acquainted with each other, and in their name call for loyal services in Soviet offices, call upon them "to serve the working people," to use the term of the open letter, then the birthpangs of the new social order will be much shortened and eased.²

Valentinov maintained that Lenin subsequently

invited Dukel'skii to his apartment (not his office) for a
two-hour conversation during which he said:

You have pointed out in a very sharp manner
the great political and psychological error,
the tactlessness, which I have committed. For
that, I thank you. I can promise you that I
shall not repeat such a mistake. I should
handle this major and important question of
the specialists so that all the Dukelskys who
work in good faith will have no reason to
complain and be outraged by us. ¹

Although Valentinov cites no source for these
comments by Lenin, which have not yet been found in any
other account, the subsequent career of Dukel'skii does
lend some verisimilitude to this incident. Arrested by the
Whites when they captured Voronezh later in that year, he
decided eventually to cast his lot with the Soviet regime;
not only did his research earn him the Order of the Red
Banner for Labour, he ended his career as a member of the
Communist Party. ²

Reaction from the other side came in the form of
a furious article in Pravda of 27 March 1919 by Aleksandr
G. Shliapnikov, former Commissar of Labour and trade-union
militant. With bitter irony, he noted that the new slogan
of the day was "Everything for the specialists" and accused

¹Valentinov, p. 159.
²Fediukin, Velikii Oktiabr', pp. 100-101.
the Party of "pandering to the specialists", evidence of the emergence of "bureaucratic thinking" in Soviet life. In his opinion, specialists were too purely the products of the old capitalist society to be entrusted with the building of socialism.

What then is the specialist in the capitalist economy? He is usually a person educated under an authoritarian system, working in a defined apparatus with clearly established interrelations. Educated in the spirit of the past, under the system of capitalist relations, this specialist cannot bring to present conditions that which he brought to capitalist relations.

To build a new social order required more than mere technical expertise; it demanded enthusiasm and dedication, qualities notoriously absent in the current crop of specialists, for "it cannot be kept secret that our specialists at the present moment everywhere and in everything see signs of the rapid downfall of the existing [Soviet] order."

Rather than rely on such remnants of a dead past, the Soviet power ought to place greater confidence in the elemental force of the people, for "socialist construction can be successful only to the extent that it is founded on the spontaneous activity [samodeiatel'nost'] of the working masses." Had not the specialists shown themselves hostile to workers' organizations since the very days of October? Why then should

1 Pravda, 27 March 1919.
the creative energies of the workers be subordinated to the "brittle hands of bureaucratic specialists"? In all fairness to Shliapnikov, he was not advocating the wholesale firing of specialists, but rather criticizing the Party for what he regarded as misdirected confidence.  

Whatever concessions or gestures may have been made to Dukel'skii, there were none for Shliapnikov. In April 1919, Lenin followed up his work on the Party Programme with a popular pamphlet, "Achievements and Difficulties of the Soviet Government", in which he devoted the better part of some six pages to reviewing his already familiar ideas with respect to the employment of specialists. While his essay contained little that was new, one passage in particular appeared to be aimed directly at those who held views similar to Shliapnikov's:

They [the specialists] are bourgeois through and through, from head to foot, in their outlook and in their habits. Well, what shall we do, throw them out? You cannot throw out hundreds of thousands! And if we did we should be harming only ourselves. We have no other material with which to build Communism than that created by capitalism.... A Communist who says that he must not get into

1Ibid.

2In a strange passage, he alleges that one reason for employing specialists was to heal the division between management and workers. Can this be understood as a criticism of the methods and competence of the so-called "Red directors"?
a state where he will soil his hands, that he must have clean communist hands, and that he will build communist society with clean communist hands and scorn the services of the contemptible counter-revolutionary bourgeois co-operatives, is a mere phrase-monger, because we cannot hold resorting to their services.¹

Even while preparing this sally against his critics, Lenin continued to concern himself with the question of good salaries for specialists. On 8 April 1919, SNK passed a resolution under Lenin's signature which nullified the existing maximums for categories 19 to 27 of the wage decree of 13 March 1919 (SU 1919, 15-173). Pending the adoption of new salary levels, all persons in those categories were to receive an immediate increase of thirty percent; at the same time, a new and more differentiated system of salary scales for high-ranking personnel, beginning with the nineteenth category, were to be worked out.² On the other hand, efforts were to be made to control the granting of excessively high salaries. A SNK resolution of 22 May 1919 stipulated that any salary of over 3000 rubles per month could be granted only by the kollegia of the appropriate people's commissariat; such salaries were to be reported to Narkomtrud and

¹Lenin; CW 29: 73.
submitted to SNK for final ratification. A special commission to be chaired by Lenin was to meet the next day to work out appropriate modalities of controlling these high salaries.\textsuperscript{1} In the report drafted by Lenin, the Commission recommended that every commissariat submit lists of specialists who were already receiving monthly salaries in excess of 3000 rubles, and of specialists whom the commissariat believed should be paid such a salary; for each individual, a precise job description and an assurance that the person in question was truly an outstanding specialist whose services were absolutely required.\textsuperscript{2}

On 15 August 1919, SNK decreed the new salary scale, a monstrous affair comprising no less than thirty-five categories of wages which ranged from 1200 rubles per month for the first category to 4800 rubles for the thirty-fifth; specialists' salaries varied from 3000 rubles to the maximum of 4800.\textsuperscript{3} Less than one month later, a SNK decree of 11 September signed by Lenin raised salaries for specialists at a rate that ranged from fifty percent for specialists earning 3000 rubles per month under the new salary scale to twenty percent for those earning special salaries in excess of 500 rubles.

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., pp. 503-504.  \textsuperscript{2}Lenin, CW 42: 136-137.  
\textsuperscript{3}DSV 6 (1973): 36-40.
per month.¹ At the same time, SNK passed a decree allowing specialists to take a second job, providing that their services were absolutely required and no other qualified person was available, the salary for the second job not to exceed fifty percent of the base salary for the first job.² Inflation was evidently making meaningless existing salary guidelines!

Not everyone was comfortable with high salaries. In his memoirs, Alexandre Barminé [Western spelling], who in 1919 was a political commissar attached to the Red Army, noted:

As a Commissar, I was paid at the rate of 3000 rubles per month... The first time that I received this sum my conscience as an enthusiastic newcomer to the Party stirred uneasily. Could I accept such a privilege when the ordinary soldier was getting no more than 150 rubles? I had no difficulty in persuading the other Communists in the regiment that it was our duty publicly to refuse to take advantage of this favouritism. The Political Committee of the brigade however, was annoyed by our attitude and reprimanded us for questioning the policy adopted by the Party in respect of specialists.³

Despite Barminé's tender Communist conscience, the economic miseries of the civil war - disastrous shortages of

¹Ibid., pp. 420-421.
²Sobranie uzakonenie i rasporkazhenii rabochego i krest'ianskogo pravitel'stva 1919, 46-449.
food, fuel, and consumer goods along with uncontrolled inflation - rapidly made meaningless existing salary scales and wages paid in paper rubles. In fact, early 1920 witnessed the virtual collapse of the salary policies so painfully developed in 1918 and 1919. Thanks to scarcity and inflation, money payments were largely replaced by payments in kind as centralized food collection and distribution gradually became the basis for the distribution of wages and bonuses in 1920.\textsuperscript{1} Early in that year, the creation of a special "academic ration" for eminent scholars had set a precedent for payment in kind, and in April 1920 SNK decreed that special food rations be issued to "intellectual workers with especially high qualifications" in Soviet institutions.\textsuperscript{2} In October 1920, SNK established a series of guidelines to regulate the payment of bonuses in kind, for which technical and administrative personnel were eligible, along with workers and clerical employers; such bonuses might include foodstuffs, fuel, clothing, and even dishes.\textsuperscript{3} By December, an entire series of decrees ordered the free distribution of food, fuel and consumer goods to both workers and employees of Soviet institutions.\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{1}Margaret Dewar, \textit{Labour Policy in the USSR, 1917-1928} (London, 1956), p. 66.

\textsuperscript{2}SU 1920, 34-165. The "academic ration" will be considered below.

\textsuperscript{3}SU 1920, 92-497.

\textsuperscript{4}SU 1920, 93-505; 99-531; 100-539.
One reason that impelled the Soviet government to move to control bonuses and payments in kind was the practice of many directors of enterprises to use them as a concealed wage increase for workers or as a means to attract badly-needed specialists. At the Third All-Russian Trade Union Congress of 6-13 April 1920, the Menshevik delegate Rubtsov complained that while a typist might earn 3000 rubles per month and an engineer 9000 rubles, that same engineer could pick up rations and payments in kind that could easily amount to the value of 50,000 rubles per month.\(^1\) Despite this allegation, the position of many specialists was by no means comfortable. In an article published in the VTsSPS journal *Vestnik truda* in October 1920, the Bolshevik labour expert A.Z. Gol'tsman concluded that government salary policies had become anarchic. Instructions had been deliberately disregarded, with the result that workers engaged in labour preparatory to the manufacturing stage were earning up to 15000 rubles per month and construction workers up to 60000 rubles per month, while the worst-paid employees were the technical and commercial followed by the scientists.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Tretii Vserossiiskii s'ezd professional'nykh soiuzov: Stenograficheskii oychet (Moscow, 1921), p. 115.

\(^2\)Vestnik truda (October, 1920), pp. 37-39. Gol'tsman's conclusions patently contradict Bettelheim's assertion that "les administrateurs et techniciens s'attribuent la 'part du lion' dans les prélèvements en nature sur les produits et
Ingenious specialists could find ways to get around the problems of scarcity and inflation, one of which was to accumulate multiple appointments as consultant, thereby evading the laws against holding more than one position. Evgeny Paton recalled an encounter with an anti-Soviet colleague:

One day, walking up the institute staircase, I met an old professor. My colleague looked ironically at the thick briefcase in my hands. "The thicker the briefcase, the more rations, hey?" he said with a venemous smile. "Meaning what?" I frowned. "I hear you're on the rolls as a consultant in two Soviet institutions?" "On the rolls? Some people may be on the rolls hunting for rations, My Dear Sir, but we are working. Yes, my good man, working, restoring and building bridges. May I pass, please?"¹

Perhaps the best indicator of the final collapse of existing salary policies was the decree of 16 December 1920 which removed technical, scientific, and administrative personnel from existing wage scales; pending revision, the highest salaries were fixed at 20,000 rubles per month.²

In the terrible years of 1919 and 1920, paper salaries were far less important than the battle to survive.

¹Evgeny Paton, Reminiscences (Moscow, n.d. [after 1961]), p. 72. His priggishness does not detract from the value of this anecdote.

²Suez 1920, 98-520.
in the face of голод и холод - hunger and cold. Starvation and diseases arising from malnutrition were the enemies of all Soviet citizens, especially so for those specialists who were elderly or unused to physical hardship. In 1919, the Academy of Sciences recorded the deaths of some fifty members largely from "lack of nourishment" and "physical over-exertion" and in 1920, H.G. Wells noted that "the mortality rate among the intellectually distinguished men of Russia has been terribly high."¹ In 1921, the journal Нauka и ee rabotniki published a series of 180 brief obituaries of scholars who had perished during 1918-1921.² During his self-imposed exile at Sorrento, Гор'кii told his friend and future biographer Alexander Kaun that, "In 1921 we hungered terribly. More than one hundred scholars died from lack of nourishment."³ 

Specialists resorted to every manner of expedient to survive. Nikolai Valentinov began by bartering his 84-volume Brockhaus-Efron encyclopaedia for two pudь (about 72 pounds) of flour and finished by selling for next to nothing


³ Kaun, p. 491.
his valuable collection of the Church Fathers and Byzantine materials.¹ Stephen Timoshenko and his colleagues took collective action after peasants refused to accept paper money for all-too-scarce food:

At the [Kiev] Polytechnic Institute the teachers elected a special committee for the procurement of food. It was headed by the energetic Professor [Evgeny] Paton. He succeeded in getting hold of a large quantity of wheat of which my share amounted to a sack of grain. The wheat was still green, had to be dried on the balcony. A cat was posted to keep away the birds.²

In a similar vein, the agricultural engineer A.I. Ugrimov described how he and his brother pooled their personal effects to carry on their research:³ V.N. Ipat’ev and his colleagues bartered laboratory alcohol for food:

As alcohol was a wonderful medium of exchange for food, some of it actually saved our families from starvation. The penalty for bootlegging was death, but at times necessity made the risk seem unimportant....⁴

¹N. Valentinov (Vol’skii), Novaia ekonomicheskaia politika i krizis partii posle smerti Lenina (Stanford, 1971), pp. 1-2.


³Sdelom Rossiui elektricheskoi : Sbornik vospominanii uchastnikov Kommissii GEOLRO i stroitelei pervykh elektrostantsii (Moscow-Leningrad, 1961), p. 84.

Some specialists despaired of survival, and rather than wait for what they saw as an inevitable lingering death, chose suicide. Pitirim Sorokin recorded the fate of two of his contemporaries:

Some days ago Professor Khvostoff hanged himself. Yesterday Professor Inostranseff took potassium cyanide.... During the last weeks both he and his wife have been very ill. At last, unable to get good or medicines, unable even to call for assistance, they ended their lives.¹

Even the smallest amount of food could make the difference between life and death; again, Gor'kii told Kaun how he remembered Professor Shimkevich, rector of Petrograd University "... huddled in a corner with a bowl of some gruel or other, he devours his food avidly, his eyes travelling about the room like those of a baby afraid lest someone take away its goody."²

No less debilitating than inflation and hunger was the general atmosphere of fear and mutual suspicion generated by the civil war. As existing problems and tensions were exacerbated, many workers and not a few Party members increasingly associated the specialists with the bourgeois class enemy and hence saw them as potential or actual traitors, and similarly,

¹Pitirim A. Sorokin, Leaves from a Russian Diary (Boston, 1950), p. 230.

²Kaun, p. 491.
many specialists, confused and disoriented by the wartime measures of the dictatorship of the proletariat and by the apparently incomprehensible policies of war communism, saw this popular suspicion and resentment as proof positive of the Party's official policy toward them. Lenin's almost incessant repetition of his ideas on the correct policy to adopt toward specialists between 1918 and 1922 is an excellent indicator of the very great difficulties involved in bringing both sides to a mutual understanding.

One interesting illustration of worker resentment was provided by the British journalist Arthur Ransome, who was allowed to attend a VTsIK session of 26 February 1919:

Krasin criticized the council for insufficient confidence in the security of the revolution.... They were unnecessarily afraid to make the fullest possible use of specialists of all kinds who had taken a leading part in industry under the old regime, and who, now that the old regime, the old system, had been definitely broken, could be made to serve the new.... The speaker who followed him, Glebov, defended precisely the opposite point of view and represented the same attitude in regard to the re-organization of industry as is held by many who object to Trotsky's use of officers of the old army in the reorganization of the new, believing that all who worked in high places under the old regime must be and remain enemies of the revolution, so that their employment is a definite source of danger. Glebov is a trade union representative and his speech was a clear indication of the non-political undercurrent towards the left which may shake the Bolshevik
Specialists complained that they were treated contemptuously not only by "ignorant" workers but also by responsible Party officials who should have known better. Textile-engineer A.A. Fedotov recalled:

Why did we specialists work so poorly before the NEP? It was not only because we were poorly paid and were regarded as servile followers of capital, saboteurs, and secret counter-revolutionaries. We used to waste away at work. We were forced to do nonsensical things such as carrying water in a sieve. We were disheartened by the senseless assignments given to various managing boards and centers.... My communist boss did not know and only repeated words taken out of context from some book. That's how everything was. Could one work productively under those conditions?

In his open letter to Lenin, Dukel'skii complained about

...ignorant, upstart Communists, former policemen, minor officials and shopkeepers, who in the provinces often constitute a large section of the 'local authorities' and it is difficult to describe the horrors of the humiliation they [honest specialists] are experiencing. Continuous denunciation and accusations of the

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1Arthur Ransome, Russia in 1919 (New York, 1919), pp. 162-163. He nevertheless noted that "the technological specialists and the expert works manager are no longer at the caprice of a hastily called gathering of the workmen who may, without understanding them, happen to disapprove of some of their dispositions" (p. 172).

absurdist description, fruitless but extremely humiliating house searches, threats of shooting, requisitions and confiscations, invasion of the most private sides of personal life (a commander of a unit quartered in an educational establishment at which I teach actually ordered me to sleep in one bed with my wife), these are the conditions under which many specialists in establishments of higher learning were compelled to work until very lately.

In a similar vein, A. Potjaev, a member of the "Military Revolutionary Council of the Western Front", felt obliged to mention in a report to Lenin dated 18 December 1919:

A year and a half ago, many of the Petrograd people used to tax me with adopting an excessively benevolent attitude toward the "specialists" (the non-military ones). I have never engaged, nor shall I engage in the persecution of "specialists" and am always ready to work with them on amicable terms.\(^2\)

But far more fearsome than resentful workers and doctrinaire Communists were over-zealous VChK officials who saw economic problems almost exclusively in terms of sabotage and counter-revolution, and specialists as representatives of the bourgeois class enemy. Scant comfort was afforded by

\(^1\)Lenin, CW 29: 228. Lenin's reply to the complaint about sleeping accommodations is delightful - "...to the extent that the desire of intellectual people to have two beds, a bed for the husband and one for the wife, is legitimate (and is undoubtedly legitimate), to that extent it is necessary to have a salary higher than the average to satisfy that desire".

the declaration of M.I. Latsis, published in Pravda in December 1918:

We are not urging war against individual persons. We are exterminating the bourgeoisie as a class. During the investigation, do not look for material and proofs that the accused acted in deed or word against the Soviet power. The first questions that you ought to put are: To what class does he belong? What is his origin? What is his education or profession? And it is these questions that ought to determine the fate of the accused. In this lies the significance and "essence of the Red Terror".

Simon Liberman feared that he would be arrested and charged with sabotage after having rejected as impractical an invention which had been proposed by one of Dzerzhinski's protégés and approved by the VChK technical committee (in effect, it was a perpetual motion machine). When he rejected as impractical a scheme to use pine-cones as industrial fuel, he was summoned before the Council of Labour and Defence where a VChK agent attempted to indict him for sabotage. Thanks to Lenin's intervention, he escaped with a reprimand for not investigating the matter more thoroughly. Lenin later telephoned him to say:

I noticed that the Council's resolution made you sad. Ah, but you are a soft-skinned intellectual! The government is always right. Go on with your work as before.²


²Liberman, pp. 27-32.
A series of similar incidents, in one of which he was threatened with shooting, led Liberman to request an interview with Dzerzhinskii, whom he told:

I can fulfill my duties only if I enjoy your trust, just as I enjoy that of Vladimir Ilych. I don't mind if anyone representing you is placed by my side. But I can't work if I am mind to feel constantly that I am being shadowed and watched by men who are hostile to me and ignorant of my work.

This appeal was successful, for Dzerzhinskii sent to the VChK organs a telegram instructing them to help Liberman's department and reminding them that its activities were based on the policies of the Soviet government.

Ipat'ev encountered similar problems. On one occasion, he forstalled a VChK search of his apartment and laboratory by warning the agents that his quarters contained all manner of poisonous and explosive chemicals; in reality, he was afraid that "in my apartment, as in any other, the Cheka would surely find some excuse for a charge of counter-revolution if they searched hard enough." On a more serious note, he told a pro-Bolshevik colleague:

You must realize, too, that the uneducated workman, when given unprecedented power, will be lost in the complications of the technical and financial questions involved in big industry and he will blame any failures on the technical

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1Ibid., p. 335.
2Ipatieff, p. 279.
plant personnel because he is unable to criticize a possibly absurd programme, the necessity of which has been impressed upon him by intensive propaganda.
The poor engineer will pay dearly for any failure to carry out some foolish assignment and not only will be discharged but will probably be tried before a court. The same is true if he suggests, with perfect sincerity, some modification of the plan and his suggestion, God forbid, does not work out.¹

An excellent indicator of the gravity of the problem was the fact that Bukharin, whose "reputation for honesty, fairness, and incorruptibility was a valuable asset in those days of unchecked authority," took upon himself the task of investigating questionable arrests of bourgeois specialists by the VCHK.²

Two features of this period calculated to disconcert the specialists were the institution of disciplinary "comradely courts" and labour conscription. Created by an SNK decree of 14 November 1919, the disciplinary courts (known as "comradely courts") were intended to strengthen labour discipline and raise productivity by dealing with problems directly as they arose on the actual work-place. Administrative and technical personnel were held accountable to these courts, and if found guilty of non-compliance with wage

¹Ibid., p. 335.
agreements, carelessness in management, inefficiency, and inadequate utilization of resources were liable to arrest and even to confinement in concentration camps.\(^1\) The RSFSR Constitution of June 1918 and the Labour Code of December 1918 had both introduced the principle of the general obligation to work, but on 29 January 1920, SNK formally decreed general compulsory labour service for the entire able-bodied population irrespective of their regular work. Duties could involve the procurement of food and fuel, agricultural work, construction, transportation, and snow removal.\(^2\)

It is not difficult to understand how some specialists would see these measures as purely punitive, or how resentful workers or suspicious Communist officials would see them as means of controlling experts whose alleged class origins made them suspect. Alexander Kaun recorded that

\[\ldots\text{in those days of absolute equality every citizen had to work and no work but manual work was acceptable.} ...\text{As late as August 1920 one could read an announcement on the walls of the Academy of Sciences to the effect that every employé [sic] whether scientist or doorman, was to take turns in watching for six hours at a stretch the firewood stacked on the pavement in front of the Academy.}\(^3\)

Pitirim Sorokin, admittedly a hostile witness, recalled how at the instigation of the Petrograd Soviet all

\(^1\)DSV 6 (1973): 276.  \(^2\)SU 1920, 8-49.

\(^3\)Kaun, pp. 484-485.
personnel of Petrograd University were conscripted to move timber for firewood:

These compulsory labours troubled me little as I was young and strong, and had been accustomed to do manual work. But what a pitiful sight the other University people presented, old professors and women who had never in their lives done other than intellectual work. Having neither strength nor skill in handling heavy timbers, within a few minutes they were exhausted, sore, and wounded.\(^1\)

Granted that professionals may have regarded physical work as the curse of Adam, but the "comradely courts" were to provide a constant source of irritation, for as late as 1927, engineers were afraid to introduce innovations lest something go wrong and they be blamed.\(^2\)

Despite such circumstances, not all specialists were prepared to give up hope; on the contrary, adversity seemed to strengthen the resolve of some to work conscientiously. I.P. Bardin, as noted in the previous chapter, was devoted primarily to work and to Russia and while contemptuous of the Whites, was by no means a Bolshevik convert. Resolved to continue his work and ignore the fine points of political disputes for which he could not care less, his fundamental concern was, "Do the interests of Soviet power coincide with my

\(^1\)Sorokin, p. 224.

aspirations as an engineer?" After some introspection, he concluded that they did indeed coincide:

The Soviet power aroused my dreams. The Bolshevik Party inscribed on its banner the struggle for the flourishing of the Fatherland, and I stood under this banner. I began to work, giving of myself without reserve. 2

At the same time, Bardin found much to criticize in his colleagues, whom he found traditionalist, "caste-minded" unable to comprehend the changes that were taking place; most were apolitical and many were confused and fearful, but there were those who were prepared "to work disinterestedly for the Soviet power." 3 A number of the more conservative of the old specialists were time-servers working while convinced of the ultimate failure of the Bolsheviks. 4

A similar note was sounded by Ipat'ev, despite his many reservations. He had resigned from the Technical Section of the War Council because he had considered himself unfit for purely administrative work and his only occupation was delivering lectures at the Artillery Academy. Bored with his existence, he asked himself:

Why am I lying here when I could be of use to my country in scientific research and in the chemical industry? Why not go to Lenin,

1 I.P. Bardin, Zhizn' inzhenera (Moscow, 1938), p. 108.
2 Ibid., p. 109. 3 Ibid., pp. 80-81, 93-95.
4 Ibid., p. 110.
tell him what I can do, and offer him my services to help rebuild our broken nation.¹

Thanks to the intervention of Lev Ia. Karpov, he was appointed director of the State Scientific-Technical Institute (GONTI), formerly the chemical laboratory of the old tsarist war ministry. For both Bardin and Ipat'ev, love of work and of Russia, i.e., professionalism and patriotism, were sufficiently strong to overcome their reservations about working for the Soviets during the terrible civil war years.

An interesting indication of the willingness of specialists to enter and remain in Soviet service is a survey of the responsible employees in the People's Commissariats commissioned by Lenin and published on 15 December 1919. Of the 1500 individuals studied, some 300 listed their social origin as "bourgeois, landowner, higher intelligentsia, clergy"; some 250 described themselves as workers; and over 900 considered themselves as "working intelligentsia."²

Even allowing for the vagueness of terms used to describe class and the vagaries of any statistical survey, these bare figures provide a corroboration of attitudes expressed in memoir literature.

¹Ipatieff, p. 281.

²L.M. Spirin, Klassy i partii v grazhdanskoi voine, 1917-1920 gg. (Moscow, 1968), p. 386. According to Spirin, the copy of this report in the archives is heavily annotated by Lenin, evidence of his very considerable interest in its findings.
In those harsh times, specialists and the professional intelligentsia found a tireless champion in Maksim Gor'kii. While this is not the place to analyze Gor'kii's troubled friendship with Lenin or his ambivalent relationship with the Communist Party, the very existence of this friendship and his long association with the Russian revolutionary movement, along with his demonstrable concern for preserving cultural values and belief in science as a liberating force placed him in a unique position to mediate between the regime and the specialists.

Like many of the Bolshevik leadership, Gor'kii saw science as a modernizing and progressive force and accordingly, he and a number of members of the Academy of Sciences founded after the February Revolution the "Free Association of Positive Sciences" to work for popular enlightenment, the modernizing of society, and economic development.† Dismayed by Russia's drift toward anarchy in the course of 1917 and firmly opposed to the Bolshevik seizure of power and dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, he staunchly maintained that the "working proletarian intelligentsia" had a sacred duty to continue to work for the people of Russia for "the Russian intelligentsia - scientific

†Its manifestos are reproduced in Maxim Gorky, Untimely Thoughts (New York, 1968), pp. 43-50.
and technical - has been and will remain for a long time to come the only draught horse harnessed to the heavy cart of Russian history."¹ This necessitated his having to defend himself against charges of being a catspaw for the Bolsheviks who was attempting "to enlist scientists, writers, and artists in the service of the Sovdeps" ("Indeed, for many years I have been summoning the intelligentsia to work no matter what might happen and under all conditions") and to blast the Soviet government for neglecting the intellectual wealth of the nation:

The Obukhov hospital for men admitted "with symptoms of severe exhaustion due to malnutrition" a professor of the Technological Institute, the physicist Nikolay Aleksandrovich Gezekhus. In his time, Professor Gezekhus was so popular as a scholar that talented physics teachers were called "Gezekhuses" in his honour. Now he is seventy-two years old; he is lying in the Obukhov hospital blown up with hunger, with swollen legs. I don't think that this fact needs explanations and lamentations. I shall only remind you that the great French revolution, having beheaded the chemist Lavoisier, did not starve its scholars.²

With the outbreak of the civil war and foreign

¹M. Gor'kii, Polnoe sobranie sochinenie, vol. 20: "V. I. Lenin" (Moscow, 1974), p. 29. In the final version of this essay revised after the Shakhty and Prompartiia trials, he explicitly repudiated this passage.

²Untimely Thoughts, pp. 178-181; 216.
intervention, Gor'kii rallied to the side of the Soviet government and urged the intellectuals to do likewise but continued to maintain an independent and critical stance. Disgusted by the senseless violence and destruction all around him, he became aware of an even greater danger than terror and arbitrary methods of government: the threat to Russia's culture, to science and progress, posed by the ignorant masses who saw in every educated individual a representative of the class enemy. In these circumstances the section of the Party Programme according specialists an honoured place in socialist society appeared as so much pious cant. In his 1919 essay "What is Science?", he made clear his position:

The basic wealth of a country consists of the amount of brains, the number of intellectual forces nurtured and accumulated by the nation.... Scientific workers must be valued as the nation's most productive and precious energy, and it is therefore necessary to create such conditions under which the growth of this energy might be facilitated in every way. The premature invalidation or death of a scholar is an enormous loss for this country and this should be particularly clear to a government of workmen.... In these days the life of a scientist is terrible in its physical condition and is morally tormenting....

Gor'kii thereupon set himself the task of using every means at his disposal and his every possible contact, whether Russian or foreign, to preserve Russia's culture and

1 Kaun, pp. 486-487.
science and to protect the lives and health of its bearers. In the words of Bertram D. Wolfe, he became "an importuning fighter for increased rations, more fuel, more light, dwelling space, office space, laboratory space, an organizer of sheltering homes and institutions, a protector of those whose persons were in danger, a sponsor and patron whenever influence was necessary."¹ In fact Gor'kii wearied Lenin with so many petitions, requests, protests, appeals, and telephone calls on behalf of specialists that the latter lost his patience on more than one occasion. In a letter of 31 July 1919, Lenin delivered a sharp rebuke:

The more I read over your letter...the more I arrive at the conviction that the letter, and your conclusions, and all your impressions are quite sick.... Everything is being done to draw the intelligentsia (the non-whiteguard intelligentsia) into the struggle against the thieves. And month by month the Soviet power acquires a growing percentage of bourgeois intellectuals who are sincerely helping the workers and peasants, not merely grumbling and spitting fury.²

Lenin attributed Gor'kii's "sickness" to "a position in which all your strength is frittered away on the sick-grumbling of...

¹Wolfe, p. 88.
²Lenin, CW 35: 410-411. The letter from Gor'kii that provoked this response has not been published to date, but its contents may be surmised from Lenin's reaction.
a sick intelligentsia. ¹

This letter, however, was nothing compared to the blast that Lenin would level at Gor'kii in September. During the summer of 1919, the VChK arrested in Petrograd and subsequently in Moscow a number of the professional intelligentsia on the grounds of their alleged involvement with a counter-revolutionary plot of the Kadet "National Centre", which plot was linked to the surrender to the forces of Iudenich of the Krasnaia Gorka fortress guarding the approaches to Petrograd. ² Considerable publicity was given to the fact that among the arrested were a number of professors and engineers. ³ Gor'kii interceded vigorously with Lenin on behalf of those

¹Ibid., p. 413. Gor'kii told Kaun how on one occasion he and Lenin had an argument that ended in shouting, fist-pounding, and red faces.

²General accounts are provided by D.L. Golinkov Krushenie antisovetskogo podpol'ia v SSSR 1917-1925 gg. (Moscow, 1975), pp. 320-335 and Fediukin, Velikii Oktiabr', pp. 92-93. Both accounts appear to be based largely on contemporary newspaper articles, the most important of which are reproduced in Iz istorii Vserossiiskoi Chrezvyachnoi Komissii 1917-1925 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov (Moscow, 1958), pp. 323-336.

³This explicit identification of members of the professional intelligentsia with counter-revolutionary movements was not unprecedented. In a newspaper report of 30 August 1918 on the breaking of the "Russian Association of Trade and Industry for External and Internal Exchange", accused of speculating in foodstuffs, several of the accused were explicitly identified as engineers. See VChK, pp. 177-178.
whom he considered wrongfully accused. Lenin's response was scathing:

...before receiving your letter we had decided in the Central Committee to appoint Kamenev and Bukharin to check on the arrest of the bourgeois intellectuals of the near-Cadet type and to release whoever possible. For it is clear to us that there have been mistakes here too.... No. There is no harm in such "talents" being made to spend some weeks or so in prison, if this has to be done to prevent plots (like Krasnaya Gorka) and the death of tens of thousands. But we exposed these plots of the Cadets and the "near Cadets." And we know that the near-Cadet professors quite often help the plotters. That's a fact.

The intellectual forces of the workers and peasants are growing and gaining strength in the struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie and its henchmen, the intellectual lackeys of capital, who imagine they are the brains of the nation. Actually, they are not the brains but sh... [it].

To the "intellectual forces" who want to bring science to the people (and not to work as servants of capital), we pay a salary above the average. That is a fact. We take care of them. That is a fact.... As for your moods, I can "understand" them all right.... You allow yourself to be surrounded by the worst elements of the bourgeois intelligentsia and succumb to their whining.1

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1 Lenin, CW 44: 283-285. This letter of 15 September 1919 was not published officially until its inclusion in the 1965 Fifth Edition of Lenin's Polnoe sobranie sochinenie. The letter from Gor'kii that provoked such a blast has not been included in any anthology. A. Ovcharenko, in his study Publitsistika M. Gor'kogo (Moscow, 1965), claims that Gor'kii wrote to Lenin, "If the position of the scholars does not improve, I shall leave the Bolsheviks for the Whites" (p. 406) - an inflammatory statement to say the least.
Despite this contretemps, the evidence suggests that the two were able to remain friends while continuing each in his own way to advance the welfare of the specialists.\footnote{Most of the arrested specialists were soon released. See “V. I. Lenin to M. F. Andreyeva” (18 September 1919) in the anthology Lenin and Gorky: Letters, Reminiscences, Articles (Moscow, n.d.), pp. 340–341.}

In December 1919 both the VChK and the Soviet government took major steps to improve in concrete ways the position of the specialists. As noted above, many of the professional intelligentsia had considered themselves persecuted by overly-zealous VChK organs because of their alleged class origins, which abuses had led to the law of December 1918 requiring VChK organs to report the arrest of specialists to responsible Party officials, who could order their release. On 17 December 1919, Dzerzhinskii sent an order (prikaz) to the entire VChK organization reminding it of the necessity of respecting in practice the Party's policy on specialists:

In the majority, our specialists are persons of bourgeois circles and styles of thought, fairly often of well-born origin. As a rule, we place persons in such categories under arrest as hostages or even place them in concentration camps for public work. To do this indiscriminately to specialists would be ill-advised. We still have very few specialists. We have to engage bourgeois heads and make them work for the Soviet power. Therefore it is necessary to resort to the arrest of a specialist only if it is established that his work is directed toward the overthrow of the
Soviet power. To arrest him on the grounds that he is a former member of the gentry, that he was formerly an employer and exploiter, is forbidden if he works meticulously. It is necessary expediently to take into consideration when he is of greater benefit — under arrest or at Soviet work. 1

At the same time, VChK organs were again reminded of their obligation to report immediately to the responsible commissariat the arrest of any specialist. 2

Hard upon these instructions followed the SNK decree of 23 December 1919 "On the Improvement of the Position of Scientific Specialists" which resolved:

1. To grant an increased allowance to the most eminent specialists in those scientific fields which are essential for the solution of given higher tasks.
2. To release these specialists from every sort of obligation (labour, military, etc.) not having a relation to their scientific knowledge.
3. To create for the scientific work of these specialists living conditions guaranteeing them the absolute minimum of necessary conveniences for such work. 3

Narkompros and NTO were commissioned to draw up a list of specialists whose work would bring them within the scope of the decree, while Narkompros and Narkomprod were to create a committee to work out norms for a special food allowance for essential specialists.

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1 VChK, p. 346, 2 Ibid., p. 347.
3 DSV 7 (1975) : 427-428. But the decree of January 1920 (SU 1920, 8-49) made the entire able-bodied population liable to compulsory labour service.
The idea of granting special food rations to specialists was not new. Early in 1919, V.D. Bonch-Bruevich, SNK's business manager, gained Lenin's approval to issue a "Sovnarkom ration" to scholars, men of letters, and artists in Petrograd and Moscow.¹ This system, however, was not extended to the provinces, partly because of problems of organization and supply, and partly because the influential Petrograd Soviet, "whose head at that time [Pinov'ev] was not very solicitous and understanding of the material position of [intellectual] people, undertook few measures for maintaining the nourishment of this stratum of the population."²

Given the resistance to this system of "Sovnarkom rations", why then was a far more systematic scheme introduced at the end of the year? Bonch-Bruevich claimed in his memoirs that while Lenin had enthusiastically accepted his original proposal to issue special rations ("Vladimir Ilyich was very much concerned that as far as possible, scholars be supplied with a Sovnarkom ration"), he was galvanized into taking even stronger action by the request of the eminent I.P. Pavlov to leave Russia in order to carry on his research. Lenin "sharply blamed our Petrograd Executive Committee and

¹V.D. Bonch-Bruevich, "Gor'kii i organizatsiia TsEKUBU", Gor'kii i nauka (Moscow, 1964), pp. 222-223.

the persons standing at its head for not having guessed what should be done with respect to the scientific world", and told Bonch-Bruevich to write to Pavlov to assure him that the Soviet government would take immediate steps to improve conditions for scientists.¹

Aware of Gor'kii's constant efforts to improve the lot of the creative and professional intelligentsia, Bonch-Bruevich suggested to Lenin that he be summoned from Petrograd to Moscow and be placed at the head of a special society for rendering relief to scholars and writers. Despite the temporary coolness in their friendship, Gor'kii was able to paint a sufficiently forceful picture of the miseries of the Petrograd scholars to strengthen Lenin in his resolve to provide relief to scholars on a steady and sustained basis.²

Such were the immediate circumstances behind the decree of 23 December 1919, from which followed the creation on 13 January 1920 of the "Petrograd Commission for the Improvement of Scholars' Living Conditions" (Petrogradskaja komissiia po uluchsheniiu byta uchenykh, hereafter referred to as PetroKUBU, on the basis of a resolution of the hitherto neglectful Petrograd Soviet. Its mandate was defined along rather broad lines:

¹Ibid.
²Ibid., pp. 226-227.
2. The Commission is charged with the responsibility of: a) putting into effect decrees; b) working out measures, decrees, projects, and resolutions guaranteeing the normal work of scholars in institutions and institutes of higher learning, physical and moral living conditions of scholars necessary for fruitful work; c) presenting the above-mentioned projects to the central administration of institutions and concerning itself with putting them into effect; d) the preliminary examination of projects, decrees, and measures undertaken by administrative organs with respect to scholars, scholarly institutions, and institutes of higher learning; e) informing administrative organs and interested parties on the progress of scientific work and its results by means of the publication of special information organs or by other means.

3. The Commission has the right: a) to communicate directly with all administrative institutions; b) to enquire of all institutions on questions relating to the living conditions of scholars and the position of scholarly institutes of higher learning.¹

Not unexpectedly, Gor'kii was made a member of the Committee and rapidly took the initiative in organizing and directing its activities.²

First among the problems faced by PetroKUBU was the allocation and distribution of special academic rations. The original decree of 23 December 1919 had contained a project marked "not to be published" stipulating that a maximum of


²Bonch-Bruevich, p. 231; Wells, pp. 42-43, 48-49.
500 "scholarly rations" and 50 "literary rations" be allocated to those whose work qualified them for special consideration.  

Upon the publication of the decree itself, no less than 5700 applications for special rations were received. Thanks to Gor'kii's energetic intervention, the 500-ration maximum was raised immediately to 1800 and by May 1920, 2000 rations were being distributed in Petrograd and 1750 in Moscow. The daily ration was determined as follows:

1. Meat without bones
2. Bread
3. Grain (groats)
4. Potatoes
5. Oils
6. Sugar
7. Dried Vegetables
8. or Fresh Vegetables
9. Salt
10. Pepper
11. Tea
12. Tobacco

In addition to these norms each scholar was to receive five boxes of matches and one funta of soap.  

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1Editorial note to DSV 7 (1975): 428.


3Ibid., pp. 327-328; Zaporev, p. 108.

4One funta = 0.903 lb.

5One zolotnik = 1/96 of a funta.

6Borisov, p. 327.
Small as these rations were, they were far superior to what the majority of the other specialists and the great mass of the people were receiving. Ipat'ev for one was grateful for small mercies:

At length in 1919 the members of the Academy of Sciences were given a monthly ration of forty pounds of bread, two pounds of buckwheat, two pounds of sugar, and one pound of some kind of vegetable oil or butter. Only Academy members were so treated. A month or so later, the government gave all registered scientists monthly rations, a "scientist" being defined as one who had published scientific articles. This ration included meat and a somewhat larger amount of fats and was about sufficient to support one man. The rations were distributed at the House of Scientists... in Petrograd. The scientists were divided into groups, and for two years each group came for its rations on days announced in advance. The more well-to-do scientists carried away their rations on sleds in the winter and in little carts in the summer; others used their backs. These rations undoubtedly saved the lives of many talented men who afterwards contributed greatly to the progress of the nation.¹

Ipat'ev's gratitude was not misplaced, for the academic ration provoked considerable resentment among the masses and among many party members. In 1928, the respected S.F. Ol'denburg recalled that:

...it needed the limitless authority of Lenin and the enormous popularity of Gor'kii to carry out the issuing of the 'academic ration.' For this exceptional ration was created before the eyes of the hungry masses, which had set

¹Ipatieff, p. 271. This is surely an extreme example of publish or perish!
themselves the task of destroying all advantages and privileges.¹

Although the granting of the academic ration was a special concession, this measure was by no means a panacea for the difficulties of specialists during the civil war.² The scope of its application was quite limited, for 3750 rations did not even begin to cover the entire spectrum of scientists without an established reputation, engineers and technicians, civil servants and managers, professors and teachers. At the same time, vagaries of supply, transportation, communication, and the military situation limited initial distribution of rations to Petrograd and Moscow, although the Commission eventually managed to extend its activities to major provincial cities and even created a similar commission for the Ukraine.³ Rations were issued to scholars without regard to family obligations, and as Gor'kii repeatedly emphasized, scholars shared their food with their families. In September 1920, SNK provided a partial solution

¹S.F. Ol'denburg, "Maksim Gor'kii i uchenye," Gor'kii i nauka, p. 245.

²An interesting contrast with the eminent scientists is provided by the condition of the rural school teachers, whose "grave material plight" was noted by the editors of Lenin's Collected Works (44:533). In February 1920, Lenin ordered for them an extra ration of bread, potatoes, and footwear (CW 44: 348).

by authorizing the issue of 200 special "family rations" and a supplementary allocation for scholars over the age of fifty-five.¹ Despite these measures, problems of supply frequently made it impossible to issue full rations to scholars; indeed, a law of 8 February 1921 decreed a general temporary reduction of the ration.² Special concession that it was, the academic ration, in the opinion of E.B. Genkina, "did not save [one] from a semi-starved life, from cold and other hardships."³

PetroKUBU's activities were not confined to the distribution of food, but included as well the securing of adequate living quarters, laboratory and library space, clothing, medical care, fuel, and the creation of the Scholar's House, where professionals had access to books and journals, could organize meetings, lectures, and symposia, and maintain tenuous contacts with the international scholarly world.⁴ In his capacity of chairman of PetroKUBU,

¹Ibid., pp: 112-113. ²SU 1921, 11-73.
⁴One of Gor'kii's best international contacts for books, journals, and occasional funds was H.G. Wells, who visited Russia in 1920 and wrote: "He [Gor'kii] is possessed by a passionate sense of the value of Western science and culture, and by the necessity of preserving the intellectual continuity of Russian Life through the dark years of famine and war and social stress, with the general intellectual life of the world. He has found a steady supporter in Lenin." (Wells, pp. 42-43)
Gor'kii maintained an incessant correspondence with Lenin throughout 1920 and into early 1921 on every possible topic concerning the welfare of scholars: the increase in the number of rations and the broadening of eligibility criteria, obstructionism and non-co-operation on the part of the Petrograd Soviet, mitigation for specialists placed under arrest, red tape impeding scientists from going abroad to carry out essential work, protecting the flats of specialists against the compulsory sharing of dwelling space (again the work of the unsympathetic Petrograd Soviet, whose attitude was flayed by Lenin in a special letter of 21 October 1920), the justification of extra rooms for laboratories and libraries, the procuring of motor transportation or at least horse power.  

Two concrete examples may suffice to illustrate the rapport between Lenin and Gor'kii on the subject of specialists. Late in 1919, A.V. Sapozhnikov, professor of chemistry and former tsarist general, was arrested on suspicion of counter-revolutionary activity. Gor'kii immediately took up the case and wrote to Lenin in March 1920:

Chemistry professor Sapozhnikov has discovered that a homoemulsion possessing antiseptic properties equal in strength to carbolic can be produced from gas tar - a waste product of

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1To appreciate the full scope of his activities, see Lenin and Gorky, pp. 155-201 passim; see Lenin, CW 35: 460 for his letter to the Petrograd Soviet.
gas works available in abundance.... Sapozhnikov has been in jail for some months, sentenced to imprisonment until the end of the Civil War because of arms in his flat belonging to his two sons, White-guards who have long ago been shot.... Will you please tell Dzerzhinskii ...to release Sapozhnikov with the Scientists' Welfare Commission acting as guarantor, and I shall see to it that he is given a chance to carry on his work.1

In his essay on Lenin, Gor'kii recalled the incident:

Not infrequently, I was very surprised at the readiness of Lenin to help persons whom he considered his enemies, and not only readiness but concern for their future. Thus for example, a certain general, scientist, chemist threatened with death.

"Hm-hm," said Lenin, having attentively heard out my story. "According to you, he didn't know that the sons had hidden the rifles in his laboratory? There's some sort of romance here. But Dzerzhinskii should investigate this; he has a sharp scent for truth."

Within a few days he spoke to me on the telephone in Petrograd:

"It seems your general will be released, or has already been released. What does he want to make?"

"A homoemulsion."

"Yes, yes, some kind of carbolic. All right, let him cook carbolic. You'll tell me what he needs."

... Within several days, he again asked me, "How's the general? All fixed up?"2

Sapozhnikov was released on Lenin's orders and continued his scientific work until his death in 1935.3

1 Lenin and Gorky, p. 159.
2 Gor'kii, "V.I. Lenin", p. 38.
3 Lenin, CW 44: 359.
Another example involved the mathematician V.A. Steklov, whose reluctant turn toward Soviet power was noted in the preceding chapter. Again, Gor'kii recalled:

I remember I called on him [Lenin] with three members of the Academy of Sciences. We talked about the necessity to re-organize one of the higher scientific institutions of Petrograd. The scholars were sent out Lenin said with satisfaction, "I understand them. They're clever persons. Everything with them is simple and precisely worded; you can see at once that these people know what they want. It's a sheer pleasure to work with them. The one I liked especially was...," and he named one of the most prominent names of Russian science.

The next day he telephoned me: "Ask S[teklov] if he will work with us" And when S [teklov] accepted the proposal, this really delighted Lenin; rubbing his hands, he laughed "That's the way we'll pull all the Russian and European Archimedeses over to our side and then, like it or not, the world will turn over!" 1

Gor'kii continued his work until exhaustion, pneumonia, and a flare-up of his old problem with tuberculosis forced him, on Lenin's urgent insistence, to leave Russia for a rest-cure in Italy. Before leaving, he assured himself that PetroKUBU was in good hands and even from abroad corresponded with Lenin on reconciling intellectuals with the regime.

The year 1919 had witnessed at least on paper a distinct improvement in the position of the specialists. The Party Programme had formally acknowledged them as indispensable.

1Gor'kii, "V.I. Lenin", p. 34.
to socialist construction and explicitly rebuked their critics while Dzerzhinskii had officially told the VChK organs to get off their backs. At a time of hunger and cold, the most prominent specialists were allocated special rations and associated privileges. Not only did Lenin continue to insist that they be treated correctly, they found a tireless champion in Gor'kii. On the other hand, the concrete realities of civil war and war communism often made meaningless paper salaries and paper regulations, while many benefits were limited only to the charmed circle of spetsy with international reputations. And one problem remained far from being solved - the fact that many workers and not a few Party members persisted in regarding the specialists as representatives of the bourgeois class enemy.
CHAPTER V

CONCEITED COMMUNISTS AND NECESSARY EXPERTS

Increased concern for the well-being of specialists in late 1919 - early 1920 was directly related to the movement toward "one-man management" (edinonachalie) in industry. Despite the centralization of economic administration that characterized war communism, the principle of collegiality, sanctioned by revolutionary tradition and apparently by the decree on workers' control but not by the Party Programme, had gained wide acceptance as the appropriate means of administering industry. Many Bolsheviks, however, had begun to question whether democratic but amateur management was capable of winning the battle for productivity. As early as December 1918, Lenin had warned the Second All-Russian Congress of Councils of National Economy that "collegia are indispensable, but collegial administration must not be turned into an obstacle to practical business."¹ Throughout 1919, an increasing number of the Party leadership became convinced that one of the essential conditions for a Soviet victory was the restoration of the command principle and managerial authority in industry, which policy necessarily involved enhancing the authority and prestige of the bourgeois

specialists.¹

Lenin addressed himself to the problem with his characteristic energy. On 2 December, he told the Eighth Party Conference that "the transition from capitalism to communism is impossible unless the bourgeois specialists are used, and all our victories...were achieved partly because of our abilities to use bourgeois specialists."² Three days later, he addressed the Seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets:

We know that in their overwhelming majority those bourgeois specialists are, and must be, against us because of their class character.... Hundreds and thousands of those specialists have betrayed us, and tens of thousands have come to serve us more faithfully...and still larger and larger sections of the people who came over to our side from the other camp, some of them unknowingly, have turned and are turning into our conscious supporters.³

Lenin's defence of the specialists provoked a challenge from T.V. Sapronov, who argued:

The management of factories and plants is collegial, not by means of one-man management.


²Lenin, CW 30: 182.

³Ibid., p. 224.
But the tendency of transition toward one-man management has been present among us for a long time and is with us at the present time more than ever, establishing itself as the order of the day, and we must consider this here at the congress. Comrades, our kollegia are frequently made up without a single worker directly from the factory or plant. The composition of the kollegia is five persons—three workers, two specialists. If you go over to one-man management, then who will you appoint? The worker? But he alone cannot cope. The specialist? It will not do; he will work not for the revolution but for the counter-revolution. We will not reject the employment of specialists, but only under the control of the proletariat and they must administer together with the workers and under their control and therefore under no circumstances may one-man management be permitted.¹

Calling for the rejection of one-man management, he concluded that "we must employ the specialists, but under the strict control of the working class."² Saponov was not a solitary voice crying in the wilderness, for other delegates found grounds to criticize specialists and managers. The system of sovkhozy came under particular attack, as their directors were accused of attracting specialists by offering inflated salaries and of living luxuriously in the houses of former

¹RSFSR: 7-i Vserossiiskii s'ezd sovetov rabochikh krest'ianskikh krasnoarmeiskikh i kazach'ikh deputatov: Stenograficheskii otchet (Moscow, 1920), pp. 200-201.

²Ibid., p. 201.
landowners; indeed, some former landowners had actually been taken on as directors of sovkhozy.¹

Despite Lenin's eloquence, the collegial principle remained so strong that the delegates ended by passing a resolution endorsing collegial management of industry, as did the Third All-Russian Congress of Councils of National Economy in January 1920, notwithstanding Lenin's plea that "the transition to practical work is bound up with one-man management as the system which...guarantees the best utilization of human capacities." One-man management met with bitter opposition from the Communist fraktsiia of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions on two occasions in January and March 1920.² Nothing daunted, Lenin was determined to bring the entire issue before the forthcoming Ninth Party Congress, to be held at the end of March 1920.

Lenin prepared his ground carefully. In a letter of 2 March 1920 addressed to Party organizations, he reminded the members that

...we must literally enlist all bourgeois specialists (because there are incredibly few of them).... We must organize things so that...our working masses may really learn from these bourgeois specialists³

¹Ibid., pp. 199, 219.
³Lenin, CW 30: 406.
Four days later, the same idea was explained to a meeting of the Moscow Soviet. On 15 March 1920, he told the delegates to the Third All-Russian Congress of Water-Transport Workers:

If communism could be built with experts who were not involved with the bourgeois outlook, that would be very easy, but such communism is a myth... and every expert must be treasured as being the only vehicle of technology and culture, without whom there can be nothing, without whom there can be no communism.... Experience tells us that everyone with a knowledge of bourgeois culture, bourgeois science and bourgeois technology must be treasured. Without them we shall be unable to build communism.... But if we are to build a communist society, let us frankly admit our complete inability to conduct affairs, to be organizers and administrators. ¹

This blunt admission of incompetence was repeated the very same day for the benefit of the balky Communist fraktsiia of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions:

Whom shall we learn from if not the bourgeoisie?... Let's get down to learning. We have already said here that we must hold power firmly in our hands, but we haven't yet learned how to manage; we have to do a great deal to learn the business of management. ²

When the Ninth Party Congress met on 29 March - 5 April 1920, the Central Committee's theses on the tasks of economic construction and the role of the trade unions called explicitly for the adoption of the principle of one-man

management and the strengthening of the authority and prestige of the specialists.¹ Lenin delivered the Central Committee's report and once more exhorted his audience to learn from the experts:

Opinions on corporate management [collegiality] are all too frequently imbued with a spirit of sheer ignorance. A spirit of opposition to the specialists. We shall never succeed with such a spirit... and in order to build communism we must take technology and science and make them available to wide circles. And we can take them only from the bourgeoisie - there is nowhere else to get them from. Prominence must be given to this fundamental question, it must be treated as one of the basic problems of economic development. We have to administer with the help of people belonging to a class we have overthrown; they are imbued with the prejudices of their class and we must re-educate them.²

Not unexpectedly, Lenin's proposals touched off a furious debate, which had begun even before the formal opening of the Congress. V.V. Osinskii, T.V. Sapronov, and V.N. Maksimovskii, all of whom would be later identified with Democratic Centralist opposition, published an alternative set of theses which challenged the Central Committee's position on one-man management. Urging collegiality as the form of management most appropriate to socialism, their theses

¹The theses were published on 12 March 1920, which may account for Lenin's troubles with the trade-union fraktsiia three days later.

²Lenin, CW 30:458.
read in part:

Collegial work is the best way of drawing in former bourgeois specialists along the course of comradely co-operation, saturating them in proletarian psychology, and at the same time, the best means of controlling them until old experiences and the old psychology will be completely overcome in them.¹

In a similar vein, the theses of the Moscow gubkom argued that

...until the former bourgeois specialists have reworked a change in general attitude, while they remain loyal to their old class instincts and psychology - and this period will last very long - collegiality is the inevitable form of control of the workers and peasants over the activities of the specialists and a form of bringing them to the side of the workers, in combination with comradely work.²

At the Congress itself, Sapronov attacked both the Central Committee proposals and Lenin's speech:

To read us a lecture about how once upon a time the bourgeoisie recruited feudal officials for administration is superfluous, because we ourselves have recruited bourgeois spetsy and it is not necessary here to veil the question.... No one disputes the fact that it is necessary to recruit spetsy - the question is how to use them. We know very well that we have recruited bourgeois spetsy for the administration of the sovkhozy, who planted there such counter-revolution that regional workers asked that they be taken back.³

¹Deviatyi sobezd RKP(b), mart-aprel' 1920 goda: Protokoly (Moscow, 1960), pp. 565-566.
²Ibid., p. 569. ³Ibid., p. 51.
Placing his faith in collegiality and in the spontaneous activity (samodeiatel'nost') of the masses, he rejected one-man management and the entire principle of commandism that was insinuating itself into Party and Soviet life. At the same time, he refuted the charge that critics of the Party policy on specialists were motivated by mere ignorance or prejudice:

And it is unnecessary to obscure the question by saying that we are against the spetsy, against trained bourgeois specialists. No one stands against them, but neither is it necessary to summon them - come and rule over us!¹

Osinskii subjected the principle of one-man management to a sustained critical analysis. Noting that even under capitalism technical problems were solved by technical councils and not by single individuals, he contended that the art of managing the economy was far more complex than "technical manoeuvring" and mere technical expertise was not enough. Furthermore, the collegial principle was the one most appropriate for a socialist society - leave Taylorism to Ford.² Like Saponov, Osinskii disclaimed any prejudice against specialists, but believed that their proper sphere lay in the nuts and bolts of technology, not commanding the workers:

Individual administration is aimed at getting the specialists going. I have nothing against

¹Ibid., p. 53. Note the echoes of the Russian Primary Chronicle.
²Ibid., pp. 119-120.
specialists; I have worked with many of them like friends and comrades, always fruitfully. But here is the question: will there be with individual administration by specialists the greatest competence in all fields, not only in technology? Of course not.1

V.M. Smirnov noted that there existed support for the collegial principle among some of the specialists:

And comrade Lenin, who all the time earnestly defends specialists, who always says that they must be cherished in all ways (against which we in no way protest) - why does he not pay attention to the opinions of these specialists when they speak out for collegiality?2

On a minor note, A.S. Kiselev rose to denounce "the pettiness of our Central Committee" for having supported a VTsIK decision to shut down the Moscow newspaper Agit-Rosta for having published an article which stated "To be a spets is profitable and pleasant." In a fit of righteous indignation, "the VTsIK Presidium voted to close down Agit-Rosta because it carried out an anti-Party line."3 When Kamenev replied rather lamely that "the paper took an undesirable direction", S.I. Syrtsov rejoined that it was necessary to combat the attitude that "the authorities know best."4

One-man management and the Party line on specialists

1Ibid., p. 120. 2Ibid., p. 158.

3Ibid., pp. 61-62. Kiselev reminded the delegates of the section in the Party Programme that the unions must eventually assume responsibility for running the economy.

4Ibid., pp. 70, 78.
were not without their defenders. While Trotsky deplored "the bureaucratic habits of certain specialists", he nevertheless returned to the themes broached in his speech of 28 March 1918 in which he had described the specialists as the "people's national capital" and had urged "healthy and necessary self-limitation" on the part of the working class. Reminding the delegates that the points he had made two years ago had lost none of their validity, he concluded that "this turnabout, the recruiting of specialists, their employment was absolutely necessary in order that history go not backward but forward." ¹ Bukharin rebuked Osinskii, telling him that "the proletarian dictatorship is so strong, that we are not afraid to appoint to responsible positions persons from among the specialists." ² When A.K. Rykov described the complex economic tasks before the Soviet government and concluded that "these tasks cannot be shouldered by a single spets from the bourgeoisie", nevertheless adding that they were necessary and should be paid accordingly, Bukharin rejoined that "on the one hand, he curses spetsy, but at the end of his speech, he begins to say that we oppress spetsy, and it is necessary to place them in a better

¹Ibid., pp. 107-108. Trotsky cited verbatim entire paragraphs from his 1918 speech.
²Ibid., p. 129.
position."¹ In reply to Rykov's contention that "the trade unions and an entire series of congresses have protected engineers and technicians far more strongly than the Council of People's Commissars", Trotsky maintained that "spetsy very much fear such posts [kollegii] with workers on which they will be questioned. They are terribly frightened."

Moreover, spetsy would be far better controlled by Commissars than by "three illiterates."² A final note of confusion was added by an opponent of one-man management, M.P. Tomskii, who began by attributing its genesis to L.B. Krasin (one of the very few Bolsheviks with both an engineering and management background) and ended by denouncing the entire existing system of kollegii as a sham - the so-called "kollegia of three" was in reality one of "a spets and two commissars."

He nevertheless concluded that there was a place for specialists in a genuine system of kollegii:

We consider it expedient to school spetsy to work with workers on kollegii in a comradely situation. We consider it necessary that there be between them and the workers a living bond, that together the spets and the kollegii will feel themselves partners.³

¹Ibid., p. 138.

²Ibid., pp. 136, 197. Rykov was raising the question of specialists in trade unions, which will be considered in the next chapter.

³Ibid., pp. 159-162. ⁴Ibid., p. 162.
Despite the arguments of the proponents of collegiality, the Congress ended by passing a series of resolutions which endorsed the position of the Central Committee. The principal resolution, "On the Immediate Tasks of Economic Construction", declared flatly that

... the Congress considers it necessary to move toward one-man management in the administration of industry. ... Collegiality, though it may have a place in the process of discussing or deciding, must unconditionally yield its place to individual authority in the process of execution.  

Four models of management might be allowed in the interim while moving toward the goal of one-man management:

1. a worker-director assisted by a specialist engineer;
2. a specialist-engineer in charge, with a worker-commissar attached to him;
3. a specialist-engineer in charge, with one or two Communist assistants, with the right to query but not countermand his orders;
4. a tightly-knit committee with a responsible chairman.  

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1Vsesoiuznaia Kommunisticheskaia Partiia (bol'shevikov) v rezoliutsiiakh i resheniiakh s'mezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK (1898-1939), 2 vols. (Moscow, 1941), 1: 332-333.
2Ibid., p. 333.
An entire section of the resolution concerned itself with the position of specialists in industry:

... the Congress considers absolutely necessary the registering of all specialists capable of working in the various branches of the economy and their utilization in every possible way in the matter of organizing production. Keeping in force the necessity of the furthest control and severe repression of all counter-revolutionary elements striving to make use of their positions in order to oppose the socialist economy of the regime, the Congress at this time in the most categorical way reminds all members of the task of the ideological recruiting of the specialists in the sphere of the productive interests of the Soviet republic; and in strict accordance with the spirit and letter of our Programme, charges Party workers with the responsibility to strive for the establishment of an atmosphere of comradely collaboration of workers and technician-specialists inherited by the proletarian regime from the bourgeois order. The Congress considers as one of the tasks of productive and general-political agitation the explanation to the broad working masses of the grandiose character of the economic tasks confronting the country, the significance of technical education, administrative and scientific experience; and imposes as a duty on all Party members the leading of an irreconcilable struggle with the ignorant conceit of believing that the working class can solve its tasks without utilizing in the most responsible positions specialists of the bourgeois school. Those demagogical elements which play upon such a prejudice of the backward part of the workers have no place in the ranks of the Party of scientific socialism.1

Not only were anti-specialist prejudices to be fought, experts were to be assured of the best possible

1Ibid., p. 334.
working conditions:

The best administrators, engineers, and technicians must be provided with more favorable conditions for the complete employment of their strength in the interests of the socialist economy. In particular, there must be high awards for those specialists under whose direction work is carried out with significant success.¹

These points were further driven home in the resolution "On the Question of the Trade Unions and their Organization", which insisted that:

One-man management, even in those cases when a spets is in charge, is in the final analysis a manifestation of the preletarian dictatorship, which not only sees to it that work proceeds along specific lines, but also exercises supervision in the form of worker commissars.²

Lenin followed through his victory at the Congress with his essay "Left-Wing Communism - An Infantile Disorder". Intended as a "popular essay in Marxian strategy and tactics", and regarded by some critics as his political masterpiece, the work included a brief rejoinder to the critics of the policy of employing bourgeois specialists:

They [the specialists] will worm their way into the Soviets, the courts, and the administration since communism cannot be built otherwise than with the aid of the human material created by capitalism, and the bourgeois intellectuals cannot be

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 340.
expelled, but must be won over, remoulded, assimilated, and re-educated, just as we must...re-educate the proletarians themselves who do not abandon their petty-bourgeois prejudices...1

But the Democratic Centralists were far from being intimidated or defeated, for at the Ninth Party Conference of 22-25 September 1920 they returned to their criticism of one-man management and above all, the placing of bourgeois specialists in positions of direct authority over the workers. Sapronov complained that:

In many industries, in major factories and plants, for example, in the construction industry, a specialist stands at the head of the enterprise, often the former director of the factory and often the one whom the workers in 1917 and 1918 put in prison for his counter-revolutionary activity. Now he comes with a mandate from VSNKh, is not subordinate to the local worker's committee, and does not give it any account. He directs the work, and of course with all diligence carries out labour discipline, imposing fines and often arresting workers not only for cause, but without cause. Of course discipline is necessary, comrades, but when this discipline is carried out by a spets without any worker-commissar over him...naturally, there will arise among the working masses the unfavorable attitude to this type of management which we now have.2

Sapronov was reproached in a rather condescending

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1Leonin, CW 31: 115.
2Devianta-konferentsiia RKP(b), sentiabr' 1920 goda: Protokoly (Moscow, 1972), p. 158.
manner by Rykov, who seemed to have dropped a number of
the reservations about specialists that he had voiced at
the Ninth Party Congress:

Comrade Sapronov cannot [stand to] see a
spets who comes to work in a factory. He
says he's not a communist, he's a specialist.
But with such an attitude toward specialists
and with such a kind of communist, we will
not build Soviet Russia..... Sapronov must
understand that the chiepest of the evils
among us is the absence of specialists
because without them we cannot build our
Soviet Russia and any communist who does not
understand this is worthless.1

This provoked the angry retort that "Sapronov has
never stood against spetsy, but has spoken about the
position in which they are utilized."2 He then accused
Rykov of pampering specialists:

Comrade Rykov loves spetsy too much and
gives them too wide a scope; and these
privileges which Comrade Rykov gives
spetsy attract too much attention from the
workers.... Comrade Rykov says that there
are not enough specialists and therefore
it is necessary to place them in a privileged
position. But not only do we not have enough
specialists, we don't have enough of a work
force.3

Support for Sapronov came from the rather bitter
I.I. Kutuzov, later a member of the Workers' Opposition:

Comrades, it is said that I hate spetsy.
Yes, its true I will die, but I will hate

1Ibid., p. 178. 2Ibid., p. 193. 3Ibid.
them. But in what respect? With regard to spetsy, I understand as follows: until they get into the habit of being found together at work with us, it is necessary to rule them with an iron rod, as they ruled us.¹

Lenin was rather conciliatory, admitting that "as regards the old specialists, we have heard some very heated attacks here... and obviously dissatisfaction with the old specialists is widespread", while at the same time reminding the Conference that "without these specialists... we would not have been able to take those elementary steps that helped us to rise to a definite level."² This spirit of conciliation was reflected in a section of the resolution "On the Immediate Tasks of Party Construction", which stated:

Fully effective practical measures are to be worked out to do away with the inequality (in living conditions, in amount of earnings, etc.) between spetsy and responsible workers on the one hand, and the working masses on the other. In view of the fact that this inequality violates democracy, is a source of demoralization in the Party, and lowers the authority of communists, a commission is to be set up for the above purpose....³

¹Ibid., p. 187. ²Lenin, CW 42: 208-209.
³Deviataia konferentsiia, p. 281. Daniels (p. 116) considers the period of the Ninth Conference as "the high point in the recognition of the rights of the opposition groups by the party leadership." The author of this study has been unable to determine the fate of this commission, although I.I. Smil'ga would declare at the March 1922 Eleventh Party Congress that this resolution was impossible to carry out.
Whatever concessions may have been made on paper to the various oppositionists, the fundamental policy of transition to one-man management remained unaltered and proceeded apace. By November 1920, it was claimed that collegial management survived in only twelve percent of nationalized enterprises: of 2051 enterprises controlled by the central organs, some 1783 were said to be under one-man management. In their report to the Eighth All-Russian Congress of Soviets in December 1920, VSNKh officials reported that 2183 out of 2483 enterprises had introduced one-man management. VSNKh itself employed 14890 specialists in 1920, while the various commissariats retained the services of some 50,275 experts, of whom 23,986 had a higher education and 12,387 a middle education, the balance of 13,902 being praktiki.

As if to corroborate these dry figures, a White professor passing through Omsk noted:

"À la tête de beaucoup de centres et de directions principales du V.S.N.Kh. se trouvent d'anciens patrons et d'anciens gérants ou dirigeants d'entreprises privées. Le visiteur non-prévu de ces"
centres qui connaissait personnellement l'ancien mode commercial et industriel serait surpris de voir les anciens propriétaires des grandes industries du cuir siégeant dans la direction principale de cette branche d'industrie, d'anciens grands industriels siégeant dans des organisations centrales du textile, etc.¹

If the appointment of former capitalists to responsible economic positions under the Soviet power was calculated to infuriate the oppositionists, they would derive even less comfort from a report in Petrogradskai Pravda of late 1920 that complained of "police methods of dragooning the workers from above with the help of specialists."²

Despite opposition, Lenin continued to hammer away at his fundamental theme of the necessity of experts of the old school. At a meeting of the Moscow Guberniiia Conference of 21 November 1920, he reminded the supporters of collegiality that Soviet projects had attracted

...tens and hundreds of engineers and scientists imbued with bourgeois ideas, whom we have given the mission of re-organizing the entire economy, industry, and agriculture, in whom we have aroused interest and from whom we have received a great deal of information....³


²Cited in Schapiro, p. 257. It is interesting to note that Zinov'ev, who had been highly critical of the allocation of special rations for experts, appears to have orchestrated the criticism of the specialists.

³Lenin, CW 31:420.
At the Eighth All-Russian Congress of Soviets which met on 22-29 December 1920, he predicted:

"Henceforth the rostrum of the All-Russian Congresses will be mounted, not only by politicians and administrators, but also by engineers and agronomists. This marks the beginning of that very happy time when politics will recede into the background, when politics will be discussed less often and at shorter length, and engineers and agronomists will do most of the talking."¹

Such a "technocratic slip" was not allowed to pass unchallenged.² Fedor Dan, representing the Menshevik Faction at the Congress, argued that the building of socialism required a political rather than a merely technical approach - "and from the solution of these basic political questions, and not from the solution of questions, so to speak, of technique, depends whether or not our society will be capitalist-exploitive, or whether we will have a free society, a socialist society."³ Rykov thereupon reaffirmed the Party line on specialists:

¹Ibid., p. 514.

²This expression is a frank imitation of the phrase "syndicalist slip" used by Isaac Deutscher to explain why the 1919 Party Programme stated that the trade unions "must actually concentrate in their hands the entire administration of the whole public economy." See Isaac Deutscher, Soviet Trade Unions (London, 1950), p. 29.

³Vos'moi Vserossiiski s'ezd sovetov: Stenograficheskii otchet (Moscow, 1921, p. 35.)
In the interests of the most complete possible utilization of the knowledge and experience of the various types of specialists, it is necessary to recruit them on a large scale for work according to specialty; moreover, in view of the highly diverse composition of the spetsy and their attitude to work in state organs and to the Soviet power, the Soviet power] ought sharply to distinguish specialists fully deserving trust and power to carry out the most responsible work and to occupy the most responsible posts from those specialists, the work of whom ought to be utilized within the limits of their knowledge and experience only under the control and unremitting supervision of responsible workers.¹

Despite this exchange, the question of specialists or such related issues as one-man management occupied no great amount of time at the Congress; rather, the key economic issue was the resolution on the electrification of Soviet Russia, a project dear to Lenin's heart. At both the Moscow Gubernia Conference and the Eighth Congress of Soviets, he had used the identical phase - "Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the entire country."² While the electrification of Soviet Russia is beyond the scope of this study, a brief account of its origins is in order inasmuch as its implementation involved first hundreds and then thousands of specialists.

¹Ibid., pp. 113-114.
²Lenin, CW 31: 419, 516.
As early as the nationalization of the electro-technical industry in June-July 1918, the Soviet government had recognized the need for a state plan of electrification. To this end, the VSNKh présidium created the Central Electro-technical Council, which held its first session on 19 October 1918 under the aegis of Krasin. Some thirty prominent specialists from Petrograd and Moscow participated in its work.¹ Throughout 1919, the Council proceeded to study the problem of electrification, but increasingly it became evident that the development of a national plan was beyond the resources of what was essentially a sub-committee of VSNKh.² By early 1920, however, Lenin had begun to show an intense interest in electrification and on 23 January 1920 wrote to Gleb M. Krzhizhanovskii, a veteran Party member and also an electrical engineer:

Would it not be possible to add a plan... approximately as follows: in 10 (5?) years let us build 20-30 (30-50?) power stations, in order to cover the whole country with a network of centres of 400 (or 200 if we can't manage more) versts radius; using peat, water, combustible slate, coal, oil,... In 10 (20?) years we'll make Russia 'electrical'.³

¹Khasanov, p. 15; "K istorii elektrifikatsii RSFSR", Krasniy arkhiv, no. 95 (1939), pp. 16-17.

²See Krasniy arkhiv, pp. 17-30 for documents illustrating the work of the Council throughout 1919.

³Lenin, CW 35:435. At the same time, he lamented, "What we lack is specialists with a wide horizon and 'an eye for the future'."
On 3 February 1920, the Seventh Convocation of VTSIK passed a resolution subsequently confirmed by SNK charging VSNKh and Narkomprod jointly with the responsibility of drawing up a plan for a national system of electrical power stations; the network design was to be ready for approval by SNK within two months and violators of this resolution were to be sent before the Revolutionary Tribunal.\textsuperscript{1} Under the leadership of Krzhizhanovskii, the Electrotechnical Section of VSNKh began to undertake practical work, and to this end, a special Electrification Commission was created by the VSNKh presidium on 21 February 1920. As the scope and amount of the work mushroomed, SNK was obliged to create on 24 March 1920 a special interdepartmental organ to handle the task — the State Commission for the Electrification of Russia (GOELRO).\textsuperscript{2} By the end of 1920 (i.e., in ten, not two months), GOELRO had produced a plan of some six hundred pages which received approval in principle at the Eighth All-Russian Congress of Soviets; after a series of revisions, the plan was formally adopted into law at the December 1921 Ninth

\textsuperscript{1}Krasnyi arkhiv, p. 31; P.V. Samokhvalov, Sovety narodnogo khoziaistva v 1917-1932 gg. (Moscow, 1964), pp. 87-88.

\textsuperscript{2}Krasnyi arkhiv, pp. 46-47.
All-Russian Congress of Soviets. For Lenin, the electrification plan was "the second programme of our Party", and he treated it accordingly.  

GOELRO immediately retained the services of over two hundred highly qualified scholars, among whom were scientists, engineers, economists, agronomists, and statisticians. Suffice it to say that the overwhelming majority of these experts were drawn from the ranks of the bourgeois specialists. However impressive this collection of talent, GOELRO officials constantly deplored the lack of enough highly-qualified specialists essential to the Commission's work, and these complaints seem borne out by the fact that initially much of the burden had to be carried by only two institutions - the Petrograd Polytechnical Institute and the Moscow Higher Technical Institute.

1Samokhvalov, pp. 89-92. For the texts of these two resolutions, see S"ezdy sovetov Soiuza SSR i avtomonnykh sovetskikh sotsialisticheskikh respublik: Sbornik dokumentov, 3 vols. (Moscow, 1959-1960), 1:146-147, 200-203.  

2Lenin, CW 31:514.  


4Among these experts were L.K. Ramzin and P.A. Pal'chinskii.  

5Kulebakin, p. 35.
As might be expected, reliance on bourgeois specialists to plan and execute a fundamental project such as the creation of a state electricity complex, a socialist scheme ranked second only to the Party Programme, provoked criticism from various quarters within the Party. The result was a counter-blast from Lenin in defense of GOELRO and its specialists, "An Integrated Economic Plan", published in Pravda on 22 February 1921. Lashing out at the "bureaucratic and intellectualist defects of our apparatus" and at the "communist conceit of the dabbler and the bureaucrat", he insisted that:

The main flaw is in the wrong approach to the relationship between the Communists and the specialists, the administrators and the scientists and writers.... Right now, our communist writers and administrators are taking quite the wrong approach because they have failed to realize that in this case we should be learning all we can from the bourgeois specialists and scientists, and cutting out the administrative game.¹

For those wrong-headed Communists, he had a stinging rebuke:

The task of Communists inside GOELRO is to issue fewer orders, rather, to refrain from issuing any at all, and, to be very tactful in their dealings with the scientists and technicians.... Their task is to learn from them and to help them broaden their worldview on the basis of achievements in their

¹Lenin, CW 32:143.
particular field, always bearing in mind that the engineer's way to communism is different from that of the underground propagandist and writer; he is guided along by the evidence of his own science, so that the agronomist, the forestry expert, etc., each have their own path to tread toward communism. The Communist who has failed to prove his ability to bring together and guide the work of specialists in a spirit of modesty...is a potential menace. We have many such Communists among us, and I would gladly swap dozens of them for one conscientious qualified bourgeois specialist.\(^1\)

In conclusion, he admonished the critics of the GOELRO specialists:

Research is the business of the scientist, and once again, because we are no longer dealing with general principles but with practical experience, we find that we can obtain much more benefit from a "specialist" in science and technology, even if a bourgeois one, than from the conceited Communist who is prepared at a moment's notice, to write "theses", issue "slogans", and produce meaningless abstractions.\(^2\)

Not content with this broadside, he wrote three days later to Krzhizhanovskii warning him about tactless Communists who might drive specialists away from the newly-formed State General Planning Commission (Gosplan):\(^3\)

The danger from Iu. Larin is a very great one, because it is in his character to disorganize any work, seize power, overthrow all chairmen, drive specialists away... You must be the "leading spirit" of the work

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 144. \(^2\)Ibid.  
\(^3\)The creation of Gosplan will be considered in the following chapter.
and the ideological guide (in particular, kick out, get rid of tactless Communists who may drive out the specialists... Your task is to catch, select, put on the job capable organisers, administrators (like Osadchy, etc.)....)

The case of I.P. Pavlov provides an excellent example of Lenin's defense of specialists. On 24 January 1921, Lenin approved a SNK decree to form "a special commission with broad powers... whose task is to create, as soon as possible, the best conditions to ensure the research work of Comrade Pavlov and his associates." This same decree stipulated that the complete scientific works of Pavlov be printed in a deluxe edition, that he and his wife each receive a double academic ration, and that he be assured the lifetime use of his apartment and a fully equipped laboratory.

The question of specialists provoked a lively discussion in the press during 1920. Late in 1919, Bukharin

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2Idem, CW 32:69. The importance of living-space for scientists is illustrated by Gor'kii's demand of October 1920 that "the Scientists' Welfare Commission insistently requests that instructions be urgently given to the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet to have the flats of professors and scientists safeguarded against compulsory occupation." See Lenin and Gorky: Letters, Reminiscences, Articles (Moscow, n.d.), p. 186.
and E.A. Preobrazhenskii wrote *The ABC of Communism* as "an elementary textbook of communist knowledge" and as "a running commentary upon the text of the party programme." Published in early 1920, the work contained an individual section by Bukharin on the correct policy toward the specialists - essentially a gloss on the Party Programme. Reminding his readers that socialist construction required the employment of experts, few of whom were from the ranks of the workers, he explained:

We must make use of those persons with specialized skill who served the bourgeoisie, not from fear, but from inclination. The party is well aware that this stratum of technicians and intellectuals, no less than the stratum of ex-managers and capitalist organizers, is saturated with bourgeois ideology.... We would be wrong, of course, to expect fidelity from those experts; to expect from them devotion to communism. It would be absurd to hope that such people, who are connected to the bourgeoisie with a thousand ties, will undergo a sudden transformation. But here the proletariat must act like a far-seeing employer. It needs the bourgeois experts; and it must compel them to work for it.¹

To this end, the proletariat must exercise a strict control over the activities of specialists and "must not be stingy in the matter of their salaries." For those who would reject them out of hand as class-enemies or potential traitors, Bukharin repeated the admonition of the Party

Programme:

On the other hand, the party has to set its face against the unsound and childish view that we can entirely dispense with the services of experts. This would be preposterous. Such an idea can be entertained only by opinionated but ignorant persons who have never given any serious thought to the tasks which now have to be shouldered by the proletariat.¹

Finally, every effort should be made to win the conscientious collaboration of the experts:

Inasmuch as the strengthening of the Soviet Power is inevitable, the adhesion of the intellectuals is likewise inevitable. It would, of course, be absurd of us to repulse them. Far from this, we must accept them into our service upon a basis of comradely collaboration so that in intercourse with us they may have their angles rubbed off, so that through joining us in the common task they may become our own folk. They have a mass of foolish or mischievous prejudices, but under certain conditions they can and will cooperate with us.²

As E.H. Carr notes in his Introduction, this popularization was constantly reprinted and translated for ten years as an authoritative exposition of the aims and tasks of communism.³ As such, it would at least expose to the mass reading public the Party policy on the specialists.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 344. ²Ibid., pp. 345-346.

³Ibid., pp. 16-17.

⁴The authors were concerned about the need of "propagandists and agitators" for such a handbook (Ibid., p. 57).
A far more serious task than providing manuals for agitators was Bukharin's analysis of war communism, *Economics of the Transformation Period*, which appeared in May 1920. While the question of specialists was not fundamental to the work, it was nevertheless discussed within the broad context of his themes. One major idea that he sought to drive home was the law of the "cost of revolution", i.e., that far from being a relatively painless affair as many European Social Democrats had imagined, the transition from capitalism to socialism would, given the merger of political and economic functions under capitalism, result in the serious curtailment of the process of reproduction:

The communist revolution of the proletariat is accompanied, as in every revolution by a reduction in productive powers.... In the process of the struggle for power and of the civil war, in the period of the proletarian dictatorship, the curve of productive powers sinks further and further, at the same time that the forms of organization grow. This growth of organization forms occurs under the resistance (above all, so-called sabotage) of the "officers of industry", i.e., of the technicians who do not want to be in a different hierarchical system in which they previously were.1

1Nicolai [sic] I. Bukharin, *Economics of the Transformation Period* (New York, 1971), pp. 58-59. Rudolf Hilferding, for example, had argued that if the proletariat seized the six largest banks, it would automatically control the economy.
Having suffered the curtailment of production as a necessary cost of revolution, it was now incumbent upon the dictatorship of the proletariat to engage in reconstruction, which involved a "new combination of the old elements", among which were the bourgeois specialists:

The ex-bourgeoisie of an organizational kind and the technological intelligentsia under them are a material which is notoriously necessary for the period of reconstruction. It is the social sediment of organizational and technological-scientific expertise.¹

A fundamental problem was created by the values and attitudes of the old specialists:

We know that social ties of a previous kind continued to live on in the heads of persons of this category in the form of an ideological and physiological sediment.... The precondition for the possibility of a new social combination of production itself must therefore be the dissolution of the connections of a previous kind in the heads of this technological intelligentsia.

The process of this "airing out" is exceptionally agonizing and painful. It is accompanied by the partial annihilation of the technological intelligentsia. The latter lead a bitter struggle for the previous model of decaying and violently smashed conditions.... The resistance of this group is therefore inevitable, and in the overcoming of this resistance lies the internal basic problem of the building phase of the revolution.²

Under these circumstances, "the subordination of technological mental labourers to the proletariat is

¹Ibid., p. 72. ²Ibid., pp. 73-74.
inevitably carried out by means of compulsion."¹ But this in turn leads to the question of how the experts shall be treated once they are appropriately subordinated, for "must not an engineer or technologist issue commands to the workers and consequently stand above them?"² Bukharin's reply was that under the dictatorship of the proletariat the technological intelligentsia's function had been transformed from one of serving as a tool for the extortion of surplus value to swell capitalist profits to one of creating surplus value to satisfy social needs. Granted that the technological intelligentsia would in the early stages of socialism maintain their "middle" rank in the social hierarchy, but:

On the one hand, the technological intelligentsia stands above the large masses of the working class, but on the other hand, it submits itself in the last analysis to the working class....³

Furthermore, the very fact that the old experts must now work in a new set of structures surrounded by the various organizations of the working class assures the inevitable transformation of their collective consciousness.⁴

Bukharin's analysis of the "airing out" of the old

¹Ibid., p. 74. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., pp. 74-75.
⁴Ibid., p. 76. Lenin had an extremely high opinion of this work.
intelligentsia was the subject of a commentary by N.A. Gredeskul in Izvestia of 17 August 1920. Professor of law and former activist in the Kadet Party, he was also a member of a group of old experts who in the course of 1920 had formally announced their decision to collaborate conscientiously with the Soviet regime. Agreeing with Bukharin that the participation of the intelligentsia in socialist construction was absolutely necessary, he noted that the "agonizing and painful" process of the 'coming-over' of the intelligentsia was not only in progress, but was taking on the character of a genuine social 'movement'." Such a generalization required some qualification for not all the old intelligentsia were equally enthusiastic. Among the "upper" layer of the professional intelligentsia, i.e., those performing the most highly qualified mental work, rather few had crossed over to the side of the new regime for "people of this type remain true believers and are not tempted by 'heresy'." The middle layer, whom he designated as the specialists, were prepared to work for the regime without necessarily believing in its socialist goals:

These unworldly [i.e., narrowly professional] people do not believe in the success of socialism; they consider every effort in this aspect futile.... This layer of the intelligentsia also for the time being displays an
almost irresistible stubbornness in old beliefs.¹

The most enthusiastic for Soviet power were the "intelligentsia mass", i.e., students, teachers, young Soviet employees, who although the minority, represented the rising new order. Despite the inflexibility of the upper layer and the narrowness of the middle, he concluded that "the intelligentsia are undoubtedly 'breaking in two'; within it an entire 'movement' is going on, a new meeting halfway."

Gredeskul's article represented the culmination of a formal and public commitment to collaboration with the Soviet power that had began when he appended his signature to the "Declaration of the Working Intelligentsia" on 18 February 1920. This extraordinary document, published in Izvestiia on 3 March 1920, was signed by a diverse group of the professional intelligentsia, including professors V.M. Bekhterev and S.F. Ol'denburg, a number of former directors of industry, banks, and financial institutions, engineers, a former senator, and a variety of former tsarist civil servants and public employees. In his letter to Dukel'skii of March 1919, Lenin had challenged the intellectuals to "form groups of people personally acquainted with each other and in their name call for loyal service in

¹Izvestiia, 17 August 1920.
Soviet offices." The "Declaration" was in effect a response to this challenge; for its signatories urged their colleagues "to revise many of their convictions and opinions as no longer corresponding to "the contemporary needs of the country" and to devote themselves to "the creation in Russia of the future political and economic order." Noting the acute necessity of specialists in all fields of economic-cultural construction, the editors of Izvestiia welcomed the "Declaration", although they felt obliged to express reservations about its vagueness and complained that "the new tendency has scarcely taken shape."¹ Such criticism probably derived from the fact that the entire tone of the "Declaration" was less an explicit endorsement of Bolshevik principles and policies than an exhortation to work for the good of Russia and its people, regardless of what path the revolution may follow.²

Not satisfied with formal adherence to the principles of the "Declaration", Gredeskul proceeded to analyze the position of the professional intelligentsia toward the regime in a series of four articles with the

¹Izvestiia, 3 March 1920.

²In this respect, the "Declaration" foreshadows the 1921 Smena vekh movement.
general title "The Intelligentsia at the Turning-Point."¹

In the final instalment, he posed the stark question -
"we must declare yes or no: with Russia although Soviet or against it?" The answer to such a reductionist question was hardly remarkable:

Well then [should we] continue to repeat that history didn't go our way, that it must turn backwards? But how can this be done without counter-revolution, without a new civil war? Consequently, again bloodshed, again new destruction, again a dictatorship but of the bourgeoisie and not of the proletariat? Or does anyone think that it is possible to return to a former paradise by means of these same Bolsheviks? But this is really quite naive.... No, our die is cast, our Rubicon is crossed, we are already on the other shore along with the entire people and we must adjust ourselves here or drown under the trouble and panic of former passages.²

Again, the message reflects the fundamental ideas of the "Declaration" - the necessity of working for Russia and its people without explicitly endorsing Bolshevism.

The debate on specialists even assumed international

¹These articles appeared in Izvestiia of 11, 12, 15, 29 July 1920.

²Izvestiia, 29 July 1920. Suffice it to say that the unreconstructed Pitirim Sorokin condemned Gredeskul as one of those "in the lower ranks of the scientists... who preferred the benefits of the Government to sacrifice for truth"; a person who adopted "a policy of capitatio benevolentiae, flattery and servility to the ruling powers." See Pitirim A. Sorokin, Leaves from a Russian Diary (Boston, 1950), pp. 248-249.
proportions. Early in 1918, Karl Kautsky had written *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat* as a critique of the October Revolution, which consequently provoked a reply from Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*. Nothing daunted, Kautsky retaliated with his 1919 polemic *Terrorism and Communism*, which contained an extended criticism of the Bolshevik policy toward specialists. Working from his original premise that Russia was unripe for socialism at the time of the outbreak of the Revolution, Kautsky declared that "without the collaboration of the educated and intellectual elements, Socialism at the present stage of production is impossible."\(^1\) At the same time:

The removal of doubt on the part of the educated as to the practical introduction of Socialism and the willingness of such elements to co-operate in its construction and development...belong to the necessary conditions of Socialist production, to the conditions to which society will have progressed if it is to be ripe for socialism.\(^2\)

From this contention, he insisted that:

This importance of the educated classes the Bolsheviks did not recognize at first.... They did not trouble to think about the treatment which was meted out to the "intellectuals."


\(^2\)Ibid., p. 190.
A man of this class, for instance, would be expelled from the factory which the workers alone wished to manage... The Bolsheviks thought at first to get along without the "intelligentsia", without the experts.

Once having realized the error of their ways, the Bolsheviks sought to rectify the problem by a crude policy reversal:

They sought to attract the educated to work apart from any compulsory labour, as had been the case some time before, and indeed, to do work for which they were suited and which they understood. Whereupon the educated classes who entered the service of the Government ceased to count as bourgeois, to be treated and ill-treated as such. They rose in the circle of the "active and working" population by performing "productive" and "useful" labour. They were protected from expropriation and received adequate salary. Since it was not conviction but only fear of ill-treatment that drove most of these educated into the service of the Government, naturally enough their work was in reality neither very productive nor very useful. 2

Summarizing the Soviet treatment of specialists as "a policy which sought to win the educated classes, not through conviction, but merely through kicks from behind as well as from the front", Kautsky condemned the salary policy:

High wages can have only one object. They are calculated to overcome the objection to serve the Soviet Republic, which objection the most capable among the educated secretly

1Ibid., pp. 190-191. 2Ibid., pp. 191-192.
cherish in their hearts, and also to awaken their interest in the new regime.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 193, 194-195.}

Trotsky rather than Lenin responded to this criticism with the publication in June 1920 of an extended essay bearing the identical title, \emph{Terrorism and Communism}. While much of his refutation of Kautsky's critique of the Soviet regime's policy on specialists consisted of extensive citations of his March 1918 speech to the Moscow Municipal Conference of the RKP(b), which same extracts had been quoted verbatim to the Ninth Party Congress of March 1920, he did add an historical overview to his original argument:

It is absolutely false that our party had the idea of managing without the intelligentsia.... On the contrary. When the struggle for the conquest and consolidation of power was in full blast, and the majority of the intelligentsia was playing the part of a shock battalion of the bourgeoisie, fighting against us or sabotaging our institutions, the Soviet power fought mercilessly with the experts, precisely because it knew of their enormous importance from the point of view of organization....\footnote{Leon Trotsky, \emph{Terrorism and Communism} (Ann Arbor, 1961), pp. 116-117.}

Once the opposition of the intelligentsia had been overcome in the course of a severe struggle, the Soviet power proceeded to enlist the experts:
It proved not as simple as it might have seemed at first. The relations which existed under capitalist conditions between the working man and the director, the clerk and the manager, the soldier and the officer, left behind a very deep class distrust of the experts; and that distrust had become still more acute during the first period of the civil war, when the intelligentsia did its utmost to break the labour revolution by hunger and cold. It was not very easy to outlive this frame of mind, and to pass from the first violent antagonism to peaceful collaboration. The labouring masses had gradually to become accustomed to see in the engineer, the agricultural expert, the officer, not the oppressor of yesterday but the useful worker of today - a necessary expert...

On one point, at least, Trotsky showed himself less the hard realist than a fond optimist. The institution of one-man management was placing increasingly the old specialists in direct and often arbitrary authority over workers, thereby increasing opportunities for friction and resentment. Under these circumstances, the assumption that the workers would accept "the oppressor of yesterday" as the "useful worker of today" was indeed tenuous. Moreover, the year 1920 had witnessed the emergence of opposition groups within the Party prepared to question the official line on specialists and thereby act as a focal point for worker discontent.

With the end of the Civil War in late 1920, the

1Ibid., p. 117.
services and expertise of specialists would be all the more essential to rebuild a shattered economy and devastated country. At the same time, the Soviet government was seriously questioning the efficacy of many of the policies of war communism and finding them wanting. The result would be the introduction of the New Economic Policy which would fundamentally alter the conditions under which the specialists would be expected to work.
CHAPTER VI

SPETSY AND NEP

By early 1921, the Soviet government had emerged victorious in the civil war, survived both the Allied intervention and the 1920 Polish War, recovered the greater part of the Ukraine and Belorussia, and was re-establishing itself in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and eastern Siberia. These gains were won at the cost of hunger, cold, epidemics, destruction, and general economic dislocation. At the same time, the Party leadership was becoming convinced that the economic policies of war communism had exacerbated economic disorder rather than effect the transition to socialism. Not only did the end of warfare dictate a reconsideration of existing economic policies, massive peasant opposition culminating in instances of open revolt, the Petrograd strikes of February 1921, and the Kronstadt Revolt forced the Soviet government to reconsider many of the fundamentals of war communism.

The result was a series of economic reforms known collectively as the New Economic Policy, which was to endure with various modifications until the First Five-Year Plan became operative in October 1928. First enunciated by Lenin at the Tenth Party Congress of 8-16 March 1921, NEP meant initially a new agrarian tax policy— the substitution of
the tax in kind for the requisition of the food surpluses of the peasantry. Hard upon this measure followed the legalization of private internal trade and small-scale industrial enterprise, the leasing of state enterprises in the possession of VSNKh, the trustification of state enterprises and the introduction of the principle of khozraschet (i.e., the decentralization and the separation of large-scale nationalized industry from direct state management and its management on commercial principles), the encouragement of co-operatives, the gradual abolition of free rations and services for workers, the stabilization of currency backed by gold, and the general return to financial orthodoxy exemplified by a balanced budget and the creation of Gosbank. At the same time, however, the State retained the "commanding heights" of the economy - large-scale industry, foreign trade, natural resources, banking and finance, planning and the right of economic control. Such were the conditions - a nationalized industry operating on a largely decentralized basis, "planning without control", agriculture dominated by the private sector and defined by a resolution of the 1923 Twelfth Party Congress as the "basis of the Soviet economy" - in which the specialists were expected to work. ¹

¹ There exists an extensive body of literature on the end of war communism and the introduction of NEP. The above summary has been based largely on E.H. Carr, The Bolsheviks.
In general, the reaction of the bourgeois specialists to NEP was favourable. For many, NEP was not simply the sum total of a series of concrete economic measures, but rather a return to "normalcy", a retreat from the terror, rationing, bewildering commandism by doctrinaire Reds, and economic irrationality that they had come to associate with war communism. Nikolai Valentinov noted that:

Tens of thousands of various specialists from all categories of the qualified intelligentsia worked in the Soviet apparatus and in the Soviet economy. The more bourgeois representatives of the intelligentsia accepted NEP in the main, but sometimes only because it put an end to the terrible period of cold and hunger which had not at all been alleviated during the time of rationing. Other members of the intelligentsia...viewed these things in a much broader sense. This group did not regard the NEP simply as the "abolition" of the hated rationing system but as the abolition of the system of ideas which was restricting and killing life.¹

Valentinov cited conversations with various specialists to substantiate his contention. Textile-engineer A.A. Fedotov declared:

Could one work productively under these conditions? Everything changed when the

NEP was introduced. It was at that point that we came out of the airless crypt and began to breathe. Then we rolled up our sleeves and got down to the real work.¹

The Gosplan expert I.A. Kalinnikov was convinced that NEP had liberated the constrained energy of the intelligentsia:

In order to work in the era of war communism, it was necessary to hypnotize oneself constantly with the thought that this irrational structure was ideal and was to last forever.... When the NEP was announced and while it lasted, the whole state of morale improved.... Many of us felt that, thanks to the NEP, we had finally returned from the moon to the earth. The energy of the intelligent and useful strata of the country, which had been repressed up to this time, was now released.²

Less optimistic than Valentinov, Naum Jasny maintained that "the starvation, humiliation and other trials that the 'bourgeois specialists' had endured under War Communism meant that there was no immediate change in their attitude toward the Soviet regime after the introduction of the NEP."³

As if in reluctant corroboration of both Valentinov and Jasny (while citing neither as a source), S.A. Fediukin insists

¹Ibid., p. 161. Fedotov was later indicted in the 1930 Prompartiia Trial.

²Ibid. Like Fedotov, Kalinnikov was to be a defendant in the Prompartiia Trial.

that the old specialists neither understood nor believed in socialism, but instead yearned for a "normal life" and therefore were prepared to support the "business-like" aspects of Soviet power.¹ Citing various forebodings of Lenin and the highly suspect testimony of the 1930 Pro RadioButtonParty Trial, Fediukin concludes that many specialists welcomed NEP because of their "bourgeois-restorationist tendencies", because NEP could create in Soviet Russia the foundations for a future bourgeois republic.²

At least one specialist, however, would have disagreed with Fediukin's conclusions. Valentinov recalled a conversation with N.K. von Meck, who prior to October was chairman of the board and the largest shareholder of the Moscow - Kazan Railroad:

Since Lenin ordered his comrades to treat specialists better, and especially after the promulgation of the New Economic Policy, we, i.e., I, like other bourgeois specialists, who were working in the People's Commissariat of Means of Communication, felt that finally we could straighten ourselves out and do something beneficial for the country. After all the hardships which we had endured, it neither frightened nor disturbed one in the least that the Soviet government had nationalized a huge part of the country's economy. Under the tsarist regime, very important branches of the economy had always belonged to the state.

¹S.A. Fediukin, Sovetskaja vlast' i burzhuznye spetsialisty (Moscow, 1965), p. 143.
²Ibid., p. 146.
It seems that in no other country in the world had such broad nationalization been carried out.\(^1\)

It must be remembered that these specialists whose comments were recorded by Valentinov were speaking after the event, and that perhaps Jasny's evaluation might represent a more accurate reflection of the immediate reaction of those suspicious and guarded specialists whose attitude would not change overnight.

The introduction of NEP was tantamount to an admission of economic failure and an acknowledgement that the revolutionary experiment had over-reached itself. Inasmuch as it represented a frank retreat from the principles of October, it could not but provoke sharp criticism from the opposition within the party, which had already spoken out against what it perceived as increasing bureaucratization, commandism, and militarization within the Party and Soviet institutions to the detriment of proletarian democracy and the future of the socialist revolution. Closely associated with those issues was the question of the position and function of trade unions within the Soviet state, especially now that the Revolution had defeated its enemies on the battlefield. All these problems converged dramatically at the Tenth Party Congress and each one - the new course in

\(^1\)Valentinov, pp. 162-163. Von Meck was arrested and executed along with Pal'chinskii in 1929.
the economy, the criticisms of the opposition, and the trade union controversy raised to some extent the question of the bourgeois specialists.

Of the intra-Party opposition groups, the Workers' Opposition concerned itself most directly with this problem. The origins of the Workers' Opposition are not well documented and remain to be studied in detail, but it is generally agreed that the movement arose in 1919 among trade union leaders and members including those who were Party members. Leonard Schapiro asserts flatly that "it developed out of the discontent of the workers with the official policy of employing bourgeois specialists in responsible positions in industrial undertakings."\(^1\) While such a practice may have been an immediate irritant to the rank and file and sufficient reason to impell them toward the movement, leaders such as former Commissar of Labour A.G. Shliapnikov, G.P. Medvedev and Iu. Kh. Lutovinov addressed themselves to more fundamental issues such as the democratization of all Party structures, greater freedom of criticism and dissent, and the administration of the economy by the unions in the spirit of the 1919 Party Programme. Raised at the September 1920 Ninth Party Conference, these ideas found formal

expression in the January 1921 Theses of the Workers' Opposition, signed by Shliapnikov and thirty-seven other trade union leaders, chiefly from among the munitions workers, miners, and metal workers.

Far from advocating a blind class war against specialists, the Theses of the Workers' Opposition maintained that trade union management of the economy would serve to remove antagonisms between worker and specialist:

The introduction of a system of organization and administration of the national economy by means of the trade unions will create a unified leadership which will eliminate the opposition between the labouring mass and specialists and create wide opportunities for organizational and administrative activities of men of science, theory, and practical experience.¹

At the same time, the theses contested the principle of one-man management:

Many hundreds of complex industrial enterprises are managed by kollegia or individual worker-administrators. Although being representatives of the unions and economic organs, these administrators of enterprises are not responsible, are not obliged to account to representations of their organization and even are not liable to recall, but answer only to economic organs. The unification of industrial leadership will eliminate this unhealthy phenomenon.²

Instead, the determination of economic policy and the administration of industry should be entrusted to an "All-

¹Desiaty s"ezd RKP(b): Stenograficheskii otchet (Moscow, 1963), p. 687.
²Ibid., pp. 687-688.
Russian Congress of Producers", a national assembly elected by the trade unions, while local administration would be in the hands of similarly-elected bodies. At the same time, the unions were to prepare the workers for the actual tasks of industrial management.

With the publication of their platform, the Workers' Opposition gained a formidable ally in the person of Aleksandra Kollontai, current head of Zhenotdel. Neither a trade union member nor a signatory of their platform, Kollontai nevertheless firmly supported their idea of proletarian democracy, sympathized with their reform proposals, and shared their fear that the Party was turning away from the workers in favour of the specialists and bureaucrats. Early in 1918, she had associated herself with the Left Opposition's call for industrial democracy and was listed as a contributor to Kommunist.¹ At the Eighth Party Congress of March 1919, she maintained in a debate on Party work among women that:

It often happens that we put a specialist at the head of an institution, for instance, the children's colonies or the nurseries.

¹Barbara Evens Clements, Bolshevik Feminist: The Life of Aleksandra Kollontai (Bloomington, 1979), p. 144. A new biography by Beatrice Farnsworth, Aleksandra Kollontai: Socialism, Feminism, and the Bolshevik Revolution (Stanford, 1980), was published too recently to be used in the preparation of this study.
She knows her business, but her spirit is alien. She lacks healthy class instinct.¹

In a Pravda article of 28 January 1921, Kollontai accused the Party leadership of lacking confidence in the working class by, among other things, trusting the tasks of economic construction to the "bourgeois intelligentsia, spetsy, and pseudo-spetsy." Affirming her adherence to the principles of the Workers' Opposition, she declared:

Who will introduce creativity into our national-economic life which we are building now on the basis of communism: the workers' class organization, the bearer of the spirit of creativity, the rising class or those state organs, heterogeneous in their social composition, with a considerable number of alien elements from the bourgeois world. They, these aliens [vykhodtsy] from the past can be indispensable executors, technical strength, but can they, permeated through and through with the world-view of the bourgeois would be entrusted with the great creativity of communism?²

Not content with a mere affirmation of support, Kollontai proceeded to campaign tirelessly for the movement, and in February 1921 wrote a forceful exposition of its philosophy and goals with the appropriate title of The Workers' Opposition. With an eye on the forthcoming Tenth Party Congress, she requested that a government press

¹Vos'moi s"ezd RKP(b): Protokoly (Moscow, 1959), p. 298.

²Pravda, 28 January 1921.
print one and a half million copies of the pamphlet at state expense; when this request was refused, she arranged to have 1500 copies printed at her own expense and distributed in time for the Congress.1

In 1918, Rosa Luxemburg had written that the success of socialism depended on the spirit which moved the masses of the people to undertake the reconstruction of society - "otherwise socialism will be decreed from behind a few official desks by a dozen intellectuals."2 This very concern epitomizes the central arguments of The Workers Opposition, for in Kollontai's opinion, the Party was entrusting the building of socialism not to the masses with their "healthy class instinct" but rather to bureaucrats and specialists. As a consequence, the Party line on specialists was subjected to some harsh criticism:

...our party in its soviet state policy is forced to reckon with the influence exerted by the representatives of wealthy bourgeoisie now appearing in the form of specialists, technicians, engineers, and former managers of financial and industrial affairs, who by all their past experience are bound to the capitalist system of production. They cannot even imagine of any other mode of production but only that one which lies within the traditional bounds of capitalist economics.

1Clements, pp. 189-193.
The more Soviet Russia finds itself in need of specialists in the sphere of technique of management and production, the stronger becomes the influence of these...foreign to the working class elements, on the development of our economy.... This social group of brains in capitalist production, of servile, hired, well-paid servants of capital, acquire more and more influence....

This increase of the influence of alien elements was accompanied by the warning of the influence of the proletariat:

The worker feels, sees and realizes at every step that specialists, and, what is still worse, untrained illiterate pseudo-specialists, and practical men, throw out the worker and fill up all the high administrative posts of industrial and economic institutions.... Not in the workers, not in their union organizations does the Party repose its trust, but in these elements.

Such a misplaced reliance on specialists was more than mere short-sighted pragmatism; rather, it was a fundamental error in violation of "scientific Marxian thought." To create socialism required entirely new attitudes and

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1 A. Kollontay [sic], The Workers' Opposition in Russia (Chicago, 1921), p. 11. A Russian-language edition was unavailable to this author, who was obliged to use a translation prepared by the I.W.W. Because the anonymous translator admits that "many sentences and paragraphs are not exact translations but retain the sense of the original copy." (p. 2), this English-language edition has been compared with a modern French translation, Alexandra Kollontai, L'Opposition ouvrière (Paris, 1974).
methods, "new approaches to production and distribution" but the bourgeois specialists were hopelessly bound to the past, "subject to the routine, habits and methods of the capitalist system of production and economy." Only the spontaneous activity (samodeiatel'nost') of the masses could bring about such a fundamental transformation:

The basis of the controversy is namely this: whether we shall realize communism through workers or over their heads, by the hands of soviet officials. And let us, comrades, ponder whether it is possible to attain and build a communist economy by the hands and creative abilities of the scions from the other class, who are imbued with their routine of the past? If we begin to think as Marxians, as men of science, we shall answer categorically and explicitly - no.

The root of the controversy and the cause of the crisis lies in the supposition that "practical men" technicians, specialists, and managers of capitalist production can suddenly release themselves from the bonds of their traditional conceptions of ways and means of handling labor, which has been deeply engrained into their very flesh through the years of their service to capital, and acquire the ability to create new forms of production, of labor organization and of incentives to work.

To suppose that, is to forget the incontestable truth that a system of production can not be changed by a few individual genuises, but by the requirements of a class.¹

To this end, Kollontai explicitly rejected Lenin's idea that the building of socialism required the utilization of the best elements of the capitalist past:

¹Ibid., p. 20.
It is not only necessary not to borrow from the past, but, on the contrary, give complete freedom to the creative powers of the future.... Who can be the builder and the creator of communist economy? That class - and not the individual geniuses of the past - which is organically bound with newly developing painfully born forms of production of a more productive and perfect system of economy...and not by the functional bureaucratic socially-heterogeneous collective with a strong admixture of elements of the old capitalist type, whose mind is clogged by the refuse of capitalist routine.1

"Production, its organization - this is the essence of communism."2 Only the workers were capable of realizing a true socialism, yet the Party perversely continued to rely on "the remnants of the past":

The party task is to create conditions, that is, give freedom to the working masses united by common economic industrial aims, so that they could bring up a worker-creator, find new impulses for work, could work out a new system to-utilize labor power, and might know how to distribute workers in order to reconstruct society, and thus to create a new economic order of things founded on the communist basis. Only workers can generate in their mind new methods of organizing labor as well as running industry.

This is a simple Marxian truth, and yet at present the leaders of our party do not share it with us. Why? Just because they place more reliance on the bureaucratic technicians, descendants of the past, than in the healthy elemental class creativeness of the working masses.3

Although only the workers could create the new values

1Ibid., p. 22. 2Ibid., p. 12. 3Ibid., pp. 29-30.
and forms appropriate to socialism, the old specialists were not to be rejected out of hand:

The Workers' Opposition is not so ignorant as to wholly underestimate the great value of the technical progress or of technically trained men.... Specialists can indeed do valuable work in developing the industries; they can make the workers' manual labor easier; they are necessary, indispensable, as science is indispensable to every rising and developing class, but the bourgeois specialists, even with the communist label pasted on, are powerless physically and too weak mentally to develop productive forces in a non-capitalist state; to find new methods of labor organization, and develop new incentives for intensification of labor. In this, the last word belongs to the working class - to the industrial unions.¹

In a word, specialists were necessary but must be limited strictly to their particular area of competence - the nuts and bolts of technology:

No specialist or technician imbued with the routine of the capitalist system of production can even introduce any new creative motive and vitalizing innovation into the fields of labor, in creating and adjusting the Communist economy.²

While the concerns of "The Workers' Opposition" were far more fundamental than the employment of specialists, Kollontai had nevertheless succeeded in providing the most sustained and intensive criticism of Party policy to date.

¹Ibid., pp. 30-31. This passage appears to contradict Clements's contention that Kollontai opposed the employment of bourgeois specialists (p. 184).
²Ibid., pp. 31-32.
Quite simply, the building of socialism was too important to be trusted to the old specialists and the Soviet state dare not let them place their hands on the levers of economic power:

In every other sphere we may hesitate as to who is to be in control—whether the workers' collective or the bureaucratic specialists, be that in the matter of education, developing of science, organization of the army, care of public health, but there is one place, that of the economy, where the question as to who shall have control is very simple and clear for everyone who has not forgotten history.¹

Kollontai moreover tackled Lenin on two fundamental grounds. While he maintained that the shortest route to a socialist economy lay through rapid industrial reconstruction (for which the old spetsy were indispensable), she argued that simply catching up with the advanced capitalist countries did not constitute socialism, which demanded instead the "creation of a new system of economy."² And while Kollontai was convinced that socialism could be brought about only by the "spontaneous activity" (samodeiatel'nost') of the working masses, Lenin as early as 1902 had contended in What is to be Done? that "the history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness" and that "there can be no talk of an

¹Ibid., p. 30. ²Ibid.
ideology being developed by the working masses on their own."¹
Under no circumstances would he subordinate the leading role of the party to "public-meeting democracy."

When the Tenth Party Congress met from 8-16 March 1921, Lenin delivered a blistering attack on the Workers' Opposition which he branded as a "petty-bourgeois anarchist" movement. In a speech characterized more by sarcasm and insult than by sustained analysis and systematic refutation of the arguments of the Opposition, he declared that "we want no more oppositions" and accused it of misleading the masses, "for it is sheer demagogy to say: 'The specialists are ill-treating the workers; the workers are leading a life of penal servitude in a toilers' republic.'"² If anything, the proposals of the Workers' Opposition would serve only to undermine the economic foundations of the Soviet republic, for "it is very easy to criticise the chief administrations and economic councils, but your kind of criticism leads the masses of non-Party workers to think they should be dissolved."³ Far from the Party having no


²Idem, CW 32: 203. Lenin even made oblique references to Kollontai's sexual relationships.

³Ibid.
confidence in the working class,

...we are on our last legs for want of men and we are prepared to take any assistance with both hands from any efficient man, especially if he is a worker. But we have no men of this type, and this creates the ground for anarchy.

Lenin concluded by linking the Workers' Opposition with the Kronstadt rebels and Makhno anarchists, warning that petty-bourgeois anarchy would not be tolerated within the Party under any circumstances.

In contrast to Lenin, the speakers for the Workers' Opposition were generally restrained, while firmly rejecting any imputation of anarchism or disloyalty. Kollontai warned against "alien elements coming from the bourgeois world and sown in Soviet institutions", deplored the fact that the Party felt "a secret distrust for the broad masses", and urged it to create the optimum conditions for "spontaneous activity." Medvedev maintained that "the policy of the Control Committee in major areas and on important questions of communist construction has had a series of deviations toward mistrust of the creative strength of the working class, and concessions to the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois-official caste" E.N. Ignatov complained of

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1Ibid., p. 205.  2Deziatyi zezd, pp. 102-103.  3Ibid., p. 136.
"a certain type of Soviet bureaucrat who did not assimilate Communist psychology earlier and whom [even] the conditions of the civil war could not sufficiently educate", and urged that all administrative organs consist of a majority of workers from the bench.¹ Shliapnikov was less restrained when he declared, "We propose that the Congress abolish bureaucratic methods of administering the national economy...which have brought us to the present crisis and has delivered our entire economy into the hands of elements alien to us, into the hands of enemies."² Despite these warnings against unspecified class enemies and bureaucrats, no member of the Workers' Opposition delivered a philippic specifically against the old specialists; after all, their increasing influence was only a symptom of the fundamental malaise in the Party and Soviet institutions.

Indeed, the question of the bourgeois specialists provoked remarkably little discussion at the Congress. Certainly there were far more urgent issues to engage the attention of the delegates - Kronstadt, the introduction of the tax in kind, the trade-union debate, and military affairs (which occupied three entire in camera sessions) and the influence of Lenin and previous resolutions,

¹Ibid., pp. 236, 240.
²Ibid., pp. 363-364.
including the Party Programme, almost certainly dissuaded many delegates from re-opening the discussion. Some questions were nevertheless raised. E.M. Iaroslavskii warned that the local comrades might interpret the Workers' Opposition theses to mean "Beat the intelligentsia" and accused it of Makhaevism, a charge indignantly refuted by Medvedev and Shliapnikov.¹ L.S. Sosnovskii accused Shliapnikov of conducting a struggle with the intelligentsia when the real problem was the number of peasants in local party organizations and Rafail (R.B. Farbman) of the Democratic Centralists considered Medvedev and the Workers' Opposition overly-apprehensive about the intelligentsia—the real problem was whether the Party could "digest" them.² M.P. Tomskii declared that:

The entire war of Shliapnikov and the Workers' Opposition against bureaucracy in economic organs is very beautiful, since they approach it with the criteria: you are an unreliable spets, you are an official, etc. But what then do you propose after this? If we have unreliable specialists, is it because we do not want others or because there are none better to be had? This occurs because in Russia there are none better. And neither Shliapnikov nor the metal-workers union have invented better [spetsy]; but if there are—recommend them!³

¹Ibid., pp. 105, 263, 269, 360.
²Ibid., pp. 81, 274.
³Ibid., pp. 368-369.
Perhaps the most interesting comment of all was made by I.I. Smilga, a supporter of Trotsky, who recalled how the September 1920 Ninth Party Conference had passed a major resolution intended to strengthen Party authority which at the same time called for greater equality in Party life:

The September Conference carelessly formulated the question in such a manner that since inequality is the source of demoralization of our Party, is undermining the authority of Communism, it is now necessary to create a commission for the working out of conditions for the leading to equality of wages and living conditions between specialists and responsible workers on the one hand, and the broad working masses on the other. In such a form this resolution is absolutely incorrect, for in practice this resolution is impossible to carry out.¹

The Leninist majority at the Congress overwhelmingly defeated the various platforms and resolutions proposed by the Workers' Opposition; moreover, Lenin on the last day of the Congress introduced and secured the passage of the resolution "On the Anarchist and Syndicalist Deviation in our Party" which explicitly condemned the Workers' Opposition as petty-bourgeois and anarchist, and the resolution "On Party Unity", which gave the Party the legal right to expel members for "factionalism."² Not only had the Workers'

¹Ibid., p. 256.

²An English translation of these resolutions is available in Robert H. McNeal, gen. ed., Resolutions and
Opposition failed to change Party policy, its very existence had now been outlawed.

Criticism and resentment of specialists had not begun with the Workers' Opposition nor would it be ended by a pair of resolutions. There can be little doubt that Kollontai's pamphlet had eloquently and forcefully voiced the concerns of many otherwise inarticulate workers, who remained to be convinced of the validity of the Leninist line on the old spetsv. Moreover, the Workers' Opposition itself indignantly rejected the labels of petty-bourgeois, anarcho-syndicalist, or makhayevist and was determined to continue to advocate its ideas (since "platforms" were now forbidden) within what it perceived as the limitations of the resolutions.

One forum for debate was afforded by the VSNKh organ, Narodnoe khoziaistvo. Its first issue of 1921 featured an article which suggested with heavy irony that surely the Workers' Opposition was not seriously asking "the VTsSPS to turn itself into the presidium of VSNKh for the sake of the resolute elimination of 'systems of conducting economic policies by bureaucratic means...along the lines of officials,"

appointees, unreliable spies.1 Several months later, i.e., after the Tenth Party Congress, this same journal carried an article by an author (P. Koz'min) who appeared to be considerably influenced by the ideas of the Workers' Opposition on the old specialists. He began by reminding his readers of the post-October sabotage of the experts:

But in the rear the ideological allies of the bourgeoisie were disorganizing industry by means of deliberate sabotage—engineers and technicians, specialists in general, i.e., technical directors and organizers of industry of the capitalist economy.2

The workers were further advised not to put their trust in remnants of the bourgeoisie:

The proletariat must know that on the labour front, it has no allies.... The proletariat must not be under the illusion that in the first period of the social revolution it will receive help from the bourgeois specialists in putting right the productive-technical and organizational aspects of the socialist economy.3

Rather, the proletariat must rely only on itself:

A careful study of the history of the development of technology will convince us, that in the productive-technical process, as in the political

1Narodnoe khoziaistvo, no. 1-2 (1921), p. 28.

2Narodnoe khoziaistvo, no. 5 (1921), p. 42. This author has been unable to verify if Koz'min was a member of the Workers' Opposition. If not, then he was surely a sympathizer.

3Ibid.
struggle, the initiative has passed into the hands of the proletariat, that the best part of the bourgeoisie-educated specialists can only register the technical creativity of the productive proletariat,... that the great majority of specialists of the past bourgeois technical school, are profoundly conservative and inhibit the development of technical production.¹

Granted the legacy of bourgeois science and technology was a formidable one, but given the system under which the old experts were educated and had worked, "we cannot expect that, 'on the next day,' after the socialist revolution, the cadres of bourgeois specialists could be in any significant measure useful to us."² The solution to the problem lay not only in educating new cadres of red specialists, but in the creation by the trade unions of a new socialist school of engineering free of the prejudices of the bourgeois past, for the proletariat must "boldly take production into its hands, without mystical worship before the authority of educated specialists...."³

Without once mentioning the Workers' Opposition or citing any of its spokespersons, this article implicitly criticized the Leninist policy on specialists with arguments remarkably similar to those of Kollontai's pamphlet; equally interesting is the fact of its publication in the official VSNKh journal,

¹Ibid., pp. 42-43. ²Ibid., p. 45.
³Ibid., pp. 47-48.
which may suggest that the ideas of the Workers' Opposition were shared by other than rank and file workers.

Another forum for debate was provided by the Third Congress of the Communist International which convened at Moscow on 22 June 1921. Members of the Workers' Opposition were becoming increasingly alarmed by the implementation of the NEP, and Kollontai was determined to bring their criticism to the attention of their foreign comrades. To a generally unenthusiastic audience, she denounced the NEP as an abandonment of the revolutionary proletariat in favour of the bureaucrats and the petty-bourgeois peasantry, for only the workers through spontaneous activity could create a new communist economic system.\(^1\) On the subject of the specialists, she declared:

\begin{quote}
The great part of our population is composed of peasants; then follow the dying bourgeoisie, transforming themselves now into our bureaucracy, and in affiliation with the bourgeois specialists, find themselves, it goes without saying, in close connection, not materially but spiritually, with foreign capital; finally, the chief social strength, the chief social stratum — there is the working class.
\end{quote}

Having linked the specialists with the old capitalist system, she returned to her theme that only the working class

\(^1\)Clements, pp. 202-209.

\(^2\)Tretii vsemirniy Kongress Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala: Stenograficheskii otchet (Petrograd, 1922), p. 368.
could build socialism and that its essential creativity must not be stifled by the dead hand of the old order:

But in order for the proletariat to be able to create, it must have sufficient scope, it must have the opportunity to manifest its initiative, but this of late is being paralyzed among us more and more thanks to our present system. In order to foster a new spirit among the masses we ought to consider that fact and not only paper changes in this system.¹

Kollontai's eloquence evidently made little impact upon her audience. The French delegate Alfred Rosmer, for example, was supremely indifferent, noting very briefly that "Alexandra Kollontai had presented the usual criticism made by the Workers' Opposition: too much importance was being given to technicians at the expense of the initiative and capacities of the working class. "And that Trotsky had replied that "we never claimed that the working class is from its birth capable of building a new society."² Lenin on the other hand, was at pains to justify his policy on specialists and even to praise them before the foreign delegates.

We have already appointed a special commission [GOELRO] consisting of the country's best economists and engineers. It is true that nearly all of them are hostile to the Soviet power. All these specialists will come over to communism, but not in our way, not by way of

¹Ibid., p. 369.

twenty years of underground work.... Nearly all the Soviet government bodies were in favour of inviting the specialists. The expert engineers will come to us when we give them practical proof that this [electrification] will increase the country's productive forces. It is not enough to prove it to them in theory; we must prove it to them in practice, and we shall win these people over to our side if we present the problem differently, not from the standpoint of the theoretical propaganda of communism.¹

For Lenin, the rehabilitation of industry through electrification was the royal road to socialism:

We must give industry a more modern form, i.e., we must adopt electrification.... We have already drawn up plans for electrification. More than two hundred socialists - almost to a man opposed to the Soviet power - worked on it with keen interest, although they are not Communists. From the standpoint of technical science, they had to admit that this was the only correct way.²

Not spontaneous activity but rather Party policy coupled with bourgeois expertise would create the material conditions for a socialist economy. Between Lenin and the Workers' Opposition, there was no basis for compromise or even a mutual understanding. Certainly the foreign delegates did not understand the controversy, as they unanimously endorsed the policies of the Russian Communist Party.

Soviet historiography has not been kind to the

¹Lenin, CW 32: 492-493.
²Ibid., p. 493.
Workers' Opposition. The editors of the *stenograficheskii otchet* of the Tenth Party Congress condemn it in an explanatory footnote as an "antiparty fractional group... with an anarcho-syndicalist deviation."¹ Moreover, "the anarcho-syndicalist position of the 'Workers' Opposition' in the field of economic construction amounted to a denial of the leading roles of the Party and the Soviet state in production."² Contemporary Soviet historians have been equally severe, sometimes to the point of actually distorting the ideas of the Workers' Opposition. Thus V.Z. Drobizhev declares bluntly that the leaders of the Workers' Opposition were "against the attraction of bourgeois specialists" while N.A. Korolova writes that "the members of the group declared that a serious mistake was committed in the employment of the bourgeois intelligentsia, that former bourgeois organizers and not specialists in science and technology were attracted to work."³ Korolova's statement is repeated almost word for word by S.A. Fediukin who maintains that "the oppositionists declared that a

¹Desiatye s"ezd, p. 845. ²Ibid., p. 846.
serious mistake was committed in the employment of the bourgeois intelligentsia, that former organizers of the capitalist economy and not specialists in science and technology were attracted to collaboration.\footnote{1} M.P. Svitsova cheerfully lumps together the Left Communists, the Workers' Opposition, the Democratic Centralists, and "Trotskyite elements" in their opposition to the employment of bourgeois specialists.\footnote{2}

These historians all share the misapprehension that the Workers' Opposition opposed the employment of bourgeois specialists. The available evidence strongly suggests the contrary; at stake was not the use of specialists but rather how the Party proposed to use them. Responsible spokespersons for the Workers' Opposition did not oppose blindly the employment of the old experts (Shliapnikov's theses had called for harmonious collaboration between workers and specialists) but rather insisted that they be confined to their proper sphere of competence - the nuts and bolts of technology and production, which the

\footnote{1} S.A. Fediukin, Velikii Oktiabr' i intelligentsiia (Moscow, 1972), pp. 83-84.

\footnote{2} M.P. Svitsova, "V.I. Lenin ob ispol'zovanii burzhuaznykh spetsialistov v sotsialisticheskom stroitel'стве, "Voprosy strategii i taktiki v trudakh V.I. Lenina posleoktiabr'skogo perioda (Moscow, 1971), pp. 142-144.
workers' had as yet to learn for themselves. To build socialism required values and attitudes simply not possessed by experts whose education and professional experience had taken place under capitalism. When the Party placed these individuals in command positions in the Soviet economy and institutions and granted them authority over the working masses, would there not be the great danger of entrenching old capitalist methods and values in the new Soviet society? Not one-man management but rather the spontaneous activity of the workers would create the new methods of production and labour organization appropriate to socialism - let the experts learn from the workers! In a word, the real problem was not the employment of a capitalist engineer or tsarist administrator but instead the entire Party policy of relying on specialists, one of many indications of a serious malaise in Soviet society.

Even more contentious than the criticism of the Workers' Opposition was the debate at the Tenth Party Congress on the position of the trade unions in Soviet Russia. This controversy, along with the entire question of the relationship of the trade unions to the Russian Communist Party, would be well beyond the scope of this study were it not for the issue of the membership of
specialists in trade unions. As might be expected, rather few specialists had involved themselves in trade union activity prior to 1917. Two exceptions were public school teachers, who in 1905 founded the All-Russian Union of Teachers, and engineers in private industry, who also in 1905 founded the Union of Engineers and Technologists. Both unions proved ephemeral, for the Engineers' Union did not last beyond 1905 while the Teachers' Union split into elementary and secondary unions before falling into desuetude after 1909. Both were revived in the course of 1917 as the All-Russian Union of Teachers (VUS) and the All-Russian Union of Engineers (VSI) respectively. These two unions were based less on the workers' industrial model than on that of the professional association inasmuch as their aims stressed the autonomy of their professions and independence from external control.¹

As noted in Chapter II, experts had condemned through resolutions of their professional associations the Bolshevik seizure of power in October; VUS had led a series

of protest strikes against the Soviet government while VSI members had made no secret of their dislike of Bolshevism. Under such circumstances, the Bolsheviks had every reason to be wary of these "bourgeois" organizations, with the result that VUS was dissolved as a counter-revolutionary groups while VSI was not recognized as a trade union and forbidden to hold congresses. Indeed, given the fundamental role that the unions were expected to play in the development of the Soviet system (as described, for example, in the March 1919 Party Programme), purely "bourgeois" unions made up largely of old specialists would be intolerable. On the other hand, the right to unionize was recognized by law.

One solution was to encourage industrial specialists to become members of existing general industrial unions rather than maintain their own distinct organizations. This principle was first enunciated in December 1918, when an extraordinary conference of VSI passed a resolution requesting that it be recognized as a union within VTS SPS. In its plenum of 27 December 1918, VTsSPS decided not to recognize the existence of a separate engineers' union and recommended instead that:

...the members of the existing corporation of engineers will enter the appropriate industrial unions according to their specialty.
where sections will be created on common grounds; moreover, there should be no compulsion on the part of individual production unions for including engineers in one union or another since their entry should take place on common grounds as workers knowledgeable in one or another branch of industry or enterprise.¹

While it cannot be determined if this decision resulted from the promptings of the Party fraktsija, it offered an excellent solution to the problem of specialists' unions. Not only would the spetsy by denied what might become "class" organizations of their own, their membership in general industrial unions would place them in position where they could absorb new proletarian and socialist values.² Accordingly, both the Party and the VTsSPS began to encourage the creation of engineering-technical sections within the industrial unions, and the year 1919 saw their creation within the metal-workers' and miners' unions.³ At the Ninth Party Congress of 29 March - 5 April 1920, this principle was formally endorsed:

The prejudice against the entry into unions of higher technical personnel of enterprises and institutions must be completely overcome. Including in their unions engineers, doctors,

¹Fediukin, Sovetskaja vlast', p. 103.
²This anticipates Lenin's 1921 definition of trade unions as "schools of communism".
³Korolova, pp. 22-23; Fediukin, Veliki Oktiabr', pp. 314-315.
agronomists, etc., the trade unions will assist these elements with the experience of comradely collaboration with the organized proletariat, will enter into active work in soviet construction, and will gain those necessary workers with specialized scientific knowledge and experience.¹

Unfortunately, discussions at the Congress did not make clear whether the prejudice against specialists entering unions come from the workers, the specialists themselves, or even both. That such prejudice existed was confirmed at the Third All-Russian Trade Union Congress of 6-13 April 1920, for the Party fraktsiia led by A.M. Amosov proposed the same resolution virtually word for word.² At the same time, A. Lozovskii argued the case for the admission of specialists to unions as a means of controlling them:

We should not shut our eyes [to the fact] that among the technical personnel there are for us alien hostile elements. But we are allowing them in the union and are demanding of them definite creative work and are subordinating the majority. In this respect, the congress must completely, concretely, definitely, and clearly state in what way the unions will not only draw in the specialists, but also in what way they will establish control over them, subordinate them, and use them for developing the national economy.³

² Tretii s"ezd professional'nykh soiuzov: Stenograficheskii otchet ([Moscow], 1921), p. 76.
³ Ibid., p. 133.
When the Tenth Party Congress determined to resolve the position of the trade unions in Soviet Russia, the question of specialists in the unions was considered in each of the three principal platforms. Shliapnikov's theses' certainly implied the admission of specialists to union membership:

All workers and employees engaged in all enterprises and institutions of the Republic, being members of trade and industrial unions, with the aim of the soonest possible organization of labour and production on a socialist basis, should in an organized and active way participate in the business of the administration of the national economy.¹

The platform of Trotsky and Bukharin contained a detailed proposal for the admission of specialists to unions:

All specialists without exception must pass through the filter of the trade union. Because of the conditions of the entire past and the barely completed civil war, specialists must be divided into three categories: 1) probationers (yesterday's Kolchakists, Wrangelites, etc.; 2) candidates; 3) full members of the union. Only specialists of the last category may be appointed to responsible posts without commissars. Specialists in the second category may occupy responsible posts only under commissars from the trade union. Specialists of the first category may be only assistants or consultants under administrators comprised of union members. By means of such a rank, a full union member will receive great industrial

¹Desiatyi sъezd, p. 689.
authority which will affect in an equally beneficial way the conscientiousness of the workers as well as the conscientiousness of the specialists.¹

Given the two fundamental principles of the Trotsky-Bukharin platform—the transformation of trade unions into productive unions and their fusion with the state—it is not surprising that one of the functions of these renovated bodies would be the education, control, and discipline of specialists, for whom membership would be compulsory.²

Lenin's "Platform of the Ten", the one finally adopted by the Congress, rejected the idea of compulsory membership and the three-rank system for specialists and essentially maintained the position taken at the Ninth Party Congress. Union organizations were, however, to be consulted when specialist-members were considered for higher responsibilities. The relevant sections of the "Platform" read:

¹Ibid., p. 683. Earlier in the platform, the point was made that "production unions must take in all workers necessary to a given economic branch, from the unskilled labourer to the most qualified engineer...." (Ibid., p. 678).

²Ever-vigilant against Trotskyite machinations, Fediukin maintains that such a resolution "would have significantly hampered the rapprochement of the technical intelligentsia with the working class" (Sovetskaia vlast, p. 170). How this might have happened is not explained.
1. With the aim of the correct employment in industry of union members with a technical work record and administrative-managerial experience, a qualitative individual registration of them is carried out under the economic sections of the union.

2. On the basis of the qualitative registration and the recommendations of the union's technical personnel section and local factory organization of the union a selection of personnel for higher administrative-technical duties is produced.

3. This selection is based on:
   a) an authentic technical work record and scientific training;
   b) the individual aptitude of the union member for carrying out the management responsibilities laid on him;
   c) social position in the past;
   d) attitude to Soviet power, proved in the experience of Soviet construction.¹

Such a mechanism of consultation should not be construed as granting the unions a veto over the appointment of specialists to responsible positions; rather, it encouraged unions to evaluate their membership and thereby subject specialist members to an open scrutiny and evaluation by the general membership. If this was not sufficient, the "Platform of the Ten" also stipulated:

The competence and imposition of discipline of comradely disciplinary courts will apply to all union members, to workers as well as to all higher union, managing-directing and administrative-technical personnel without exception.²

¹Deviatyi s"ezd, p. 671.
²Ibid., p. 672.
The Leninist position on specialists in unions was further re-enforced at the Fourth All-Russian Trade Union Congress of 17-21 May 1921 when V.V. Kuibyshev introduced the resolution, "Trade Unions and Economic Construction":

Whereas the attraction and employment of specialists in the business of the rehabilitation of economic life is one of the most important tasks, the Congress will pay particular attention to the necessity to preserve, and therefore, improve the position of that not numerous stratum of specialists who possess an enormous supply of knowledge and technological experience, and therefore, the only means to prepare and educate the new generation of technical personnel.

Therefore the Congress considers it necessary to take all measures to draw specialists into trade union work and to provide conditions ensuring for them the full opportunity to develop their creative powers.

[There follows the four conditions of the Platform of the Ten.] ¹

This section provoked no particular comment, and the resolution as a whole was passed without opposition to the section on specialists.

By mid-1921, the main lines of Lenin’s policy on specialists in unions had been defined and accepted by the appropriate bodies; as "auxiliary organs of the proletarian state" and "schools of communism", unions would educate and discipline the old spetsy, facilitating their adaptation to the Soviet system. The only fly in the

¹Chetvertye Vserossisski s'ezd professional'nykh soiuзов: Stenograficheskii otchet (Moscow, 1921), pp. 180-181.
ointment was that trade-union membership was not compulsory, so that many specialists avoided it altogether in favour of professional associations which they considered more representative of their interests. For example, the most highly qualified engineers preferred to join the All-Russian Association of Engineers (VAI), while professors who resented joining the Teachers' Union because it embraced all educational workers, including school janitors, formed the Section of Scientific Workers (SNR), in theory a sub-section of the Teachers' Union but in fact operating as though it were autonomous. Alternatively, other specialists regarded union membership as a pro-forma obligation extraneous to their real professional concerns.

Regardless of these setbacks, the recruitment of technical specialists into unions proceeded apace. In September 1922, the Fifth All-Russian Trade Union Congress endorsed the creation of engineering-technical sections of existing industrial unions. The following December, the First All-Russian Congress of Engineers (Union Members) formed a directing organ for engineers' sections of unions —


the All-Russian Intersectional Bureau of Engineers (VMBI). At the Second Congress, held in 1924, VMBI became the All-Russian Intersectional Bureau of Engineers and Technicians (VMBIT). By the Third Congress of 1927, some 106,500 technical personnel had become members of trade unions, which amounted to some ninety percent of all engineering-technical workers. Despite the fond hopes of the Party that those engineering-technical sections would serve as schools of communism for the old specialists, at least one historian is convinced that they became instead "nests" of old specialists who had opposed the Bolsheviks.

If the rank-and-file specialists were being urged into unions, then their elite—research scientists, engineers, mathematicians—were being drafted for economic planning. As noted in the preceding chapter, the creation of GOELRO in early 1920 had led to the recruiting of over two hundred old specialists, the great majority of whom were, as Lenin bluntly admitted, hostile to the idea of Communism. Led by the Bolshevik electrical engineer G.M. Krzhizhanovskii, these spetsy produced a comprehensive plan

1Carr and Davies, 1:576; Fediukin, Sovetskaia vlast', pp. 171-172.

2Fediukin, Veliki Oktiabr', p. 317.

3Bailes, p. 59.
of electrification which Lenin dubbed the second Party programme. Approved in principle at the Eighth All-Russian Congress of Soviets in December 1920, it became law at the December 1921 Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets. E.H. Carr argues that Lenin had become so enamoured of the GOELRO electrification scheme that he could muster but scant enthusiasm for the conception of a general economic plan or for any planning body other than GOELRO; as such, the creation of the State General Planning Commission (Gosplan) attached to the Council of Labour and Defence (STO) by SNK was for Lenin "something of a defeat".\footnote{Carr, Bolshevik Revolution, 2: 372–373. Most of Carr's case is based on Lenin's article of 22 February 1921 "An Integrated Economic Plan", which stated that "GOELRO is the only integrated economic plan which we can hope to have just now.... Ignorance and conceit are equally betrayed by the view that we can have another general planning commission in the RSFSR in addition to GOELRO...." (Lenin, CW 32: 143.)} The Soviet historian E.B. Genkina refutes this interpretation, for she argues that on 17 February 1921 Lenin received from GOELRO itself a proposal that the future working out of a general plan of the electrification of Soviet Russia be based on a general state economic plan. Lenin modified this proposal to read "Under STO will be created a general commission for the working out of a general state economic plan on the basis
of the approved electrification of the 8th All-Russian Congress of Soviets and for the general supervision for the implementation of this plan." Accordingly, Genkina concludes that "...not GOELRO as a single planning centre, but [rather] the creation of a special general planning commission, of which GOELRO would be a part - such is the fundamental result of the Leninist reflections and searchings."¹

Regardless of the controversies among contemporary historians, the State General Planning Commission (Gosplan) was created by SNK on 22 February 1921. Responsible to STO (and not VSNKh), its fundamental mandate was "to work out a single general state economic plan and the methods and means of implementing it."² While GOELRO became a subordinate department of Gosplan, it was Krzizhanovskii who became head of the new commission and, with Lenin's active encouragement, recruited a number of the most eminent old specialists from GOELRO to work for Gosplan.³ In the

¹E.B. Genkina; "Gosudarstvennaia deiatel'nost' V.I. Lenina, 1921-1923 (Moscow, 1969), pp. 164-165. While Genkina had access to more recent documentation than did Carr (1952), she never really considers carefully the passages cited by the latter to support his contention.


³Genkina, pp. 168-169.
opinion of R.W. Davies, Krzhizhanovskii played a vital role in bringing the experts and the government together, helping to form "at least a temporary bridge between some of the scientists and engineers and the new regime with which most of them were out of sympathy." At the same time, however, he received considerable support in this endeavour from Lenin, whom Krzhizhanovskii recalled telling him:

By means of Gosplan, we will bring close to the basic needs of our Soviet economic construction the well-tried representatives of science and technology, inherited by us from the preceding regime. Our Red captains of technology and the economy are still in the process of being built up.

In a similar vein, Krzhizhanovskii recalled in his memoirs how

Vladimir Ilyich attached decisive significance, to the work in Gosplan of specialists and repeatedly came out in the press against "spets-baiting", which probably is a nearly unavoidable concomitant of the mass struggles of the proletariat with its enemies in the period of struggle for the achievement of initial positive economic successes.

The presidium of Gosplan, which by 1 April 1921 had

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been enlarged from 27 to 35 members, consisted of a majority of non-Party "old" specialists including vice-chairman P.S. Osadchii, L.K. Ramzin, I.G. Aleksandrov, G.O. Graftio, I.M. Gubkin, and V.N. Ipat'ev. These old specialists were for the most part engineers and applied scientists who had first worked for GOELRO, and it was not until 3 Nov 1921 that a financial section was created. According to Naum Jasny, the only economist invited to sit on the presidium was the former Menshevik turned ardent Bolshevik S.G. Strumilin and it was not until early 1922 that he was joined by the unrepentant Menshevik economist V.G. Groman, for "...in and after 1919 Lenin held to the absurd opinion that economic plans must be worked out by engineers."2

There is little disagreement that the old specialists constituted the majority of the Gosplan presidium. At the end of 1921, Krzhizhanovskii wrote:

The number of members of Gosplan is about 40 persons. Approximately a quarter of the total are Communist Party members; the majority are comprised of engineers and professors possessing well-known authority in their special work.3

1Genkina, Gosudarstvennaiia, p. 172.

2Jasny, pp. 103-104, 169. He added that "the engineers picked by Krzhizhanovsky...made a farce out of planning" (p. 169).

3Genkina, Gosudarstvennaiia, p. 172.
In a similar vein, Jasny recalled that:

The principal role in Gosplan was played by the Mensheviks, although they were not as important there as they were in VSNKh. The non-Communist GOELRO engineers (none of them was a Menshevik), most of whom were moved to Gosplan in 1921, remained there for years and played a fairly important role there.\(^1\)

Genkina agrees with these evaluations, nothing how Lenin was aware that Gosplan contained an extremely large number of bourgeois specialists and how its "Communist kernel" strove persistently to maintain the correct Leninist line in its work.\(^2\)

Consistant with the "Leninist line", Gosplan specialists were well-treated by the Soviet state. Ipat'ev recalled:

The men working for Gosplan were well paid. We were promised one million rubles per month and the best of rations, plus clothing for our whole families. Members living in Petrograd were given TSIK railroad tickets, which ordinarily went only to members of that body. Such tickets had priority over all others in railway transportation.\(^3\)

Several months after his appointment to Gosplan, Ipat'ev received a letter signed by Lenin appointing him to

\(^1\)Jasny, p. 34.

\(^2\)Genkina, "Deiatel'nost'gosplana v 1921-1925 gg. i bor'ba s burzhuaznoi ideologiei po voprosam planirovaniiia", Istoriia SSR, no. 6 (1961), p. 49.

\(^3\)V.N. Ipatieff, The Life of a Chemist (Stanford, 1946), p. 308.
the VSNKh presidium and naming him chairman of the Chemical Administration. His reaction upon accepting these responsibilities is worth noting:

Thus I became actually a non-Party member of the Soviet Government, in spite of the fact that I had never been politically active and did not accept the teachings of the Communist party.... In accepting this work I believed as a patriot that I could be of use to my country in a field where my knowledge and experience were needed, despite my political convictions. In the Tsarist regime it had been no different: many government people who did not sympathize with the autocracy still did good work for it.

Suffice it to say that criticism of the policy of entrusting the old specialists with such important tasks was not slow in coming. In an article published in Pravda of 9 June 1921, Iu. Larin, whom Lenin had feared would drive away specialists, complained of the excessively academic character of Gosplan's activities and lamented that the March resolution of the VTsIK Party fraktsiia "on the reinforcement of Gosplan with economist-communists to impart to its work a more solid and immediate character appropriate to the needs of the times" had not been carried out.²

If the Soviet government was prepared to allocate extraordinary benefits to its top specialists, so also was

¹Ibid., pp. 310-311.
²Pravda, 9 June 1921.
it prepared to defend them against unfounded criticism and praise their efforts publicly. As noted in the preceding chapter, Lenin warned Krzhizhanovskii soon after the creation of Gosplan to beware of "tactless" Communists like Larin who were likely to drive away specialists. In early April 1921, he again wrote to Krzhizhanovskii deploping the ignorance of Party members about the electrification plan and endorsing the work of specialists while criticizing their proclivity for theoretical over practical work:

When I had before me the Communist "wiseheads" who had not read the book The Electrification Plan and had not understood its importance and were chattering and writing nonsense about the plan in general, I had to push their noses into this book, because there is no other serious plan and there cannot be. If I had before me the people who wrote that book, I should push their noses not into the book but away from it - into the problems of current economic plans. Get down to those problems now, Messrs. Professors! Your electrification is in Allan Ehren. Honour to it indeed. You've written the first edition. We'll make improvements and publish a second.¹

The same theme was repeated in a speech delivered to the Tenth All-Russian Party Conference in May 1921:

We have a precise plan projected by the best Russian specialists and scientists, a plan which gives us a definite picture of the resources... with which we can, must and will lay the basis of large scale industry for our economy. Without it, no real socialist

¹Lenin, CW 35: 480.
foundation of our economic life is possible.\footnote{Idem, CW 32: 408.}

As noted above, Lenin praised the planning work of the old specialists to the delegates of the Third Congress during the summer of 1921, thereby acquainting the foreign comrades with the rudiments of Soviet policy on specialists. On 27 October 1921, he reminded the Seventh Moscow Guberniia Conference that high salaries for specialists had been contrary to the Party's plans in 1917 and indeed ran counter to a number of decrees of the new Soviet government but that changing circumstances made compromise on this question necessary.\footnote{Idem, CW 33:88.} At the same time individual specialists were praised or defended. Of Ramzin, Lenin wrote that "...in the person of Ramzin we have, in the first place, an outstanding scholar in his specialty (heat technology)...and in the second place, we have a person absolutely conscientious by working for the Soviet power."\footnote{V.S. Volkov, "Vovlechenie burzhuaznoi tekhnicheskoi intelligentsii v sotsialisticheskoe stroitel'stvo", Po Leningskomu puti: Uchenie zapiski X. Kafedroshchest'vennykh nauk vuzov Leningrada (Leningrad, 1970), pp. 108-109.}

On 30 May 1921, Lenin wrote a rather long letter to the former Workers' Oppositionist Iu. Kh. Lutovinov in Berlin replying to a number of charges raised by the latter.
Expressing regret that Lutovinov had apparently not recovered from his recent illness (hence his irrational letter), Lenin defended the specialist Lomonosov:

Lomonosov is a brilliant specialist, but has been "exposed by Krasin as engaging in the most criminal commercial transactions." That is not true. If Krasin has exposed Lomonosov committing a crime, Lomonosov would have been removed and prosecuted. You heard a rumour and turned it into a piece of scandal. Krasin wrote me and the CC.: Lomonosov is a brilliant specialist, but is less suitable in trade and has made mistakes. Having come over here and having met Lomonosov and examined the documents, Krasin said nothing about mistakes, let alone crime. Here is your choice: either to start a serious case in the Control Commission (or wherever else you wish) about Lomonosov's crimes, or retract the rumour you have so flippantly picked up.1

One of the most interesting examples of official intervention on behalf of a top specialist may be found in a letter of 16 January 1922 from Krzhizhanovskii to the Moscow Revtribunal discovered by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in the Soviet state archives:

Considering that the permanent consultant of the State Planning Commission, Engineer P.A. Falchinsky, is to deliver a report in the Southern Bureau on Jan. 18 of this year at 3 P.M. on the question of restoring Southern Metallurgy, which is of particularly important significance at the present moment, the Presidium of the State Planning Commission requests the

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1Lenin, CW 45: 163. The unhappy Lutovinov committed suicide in 1924.
Revtribunal to release Comrade Palchinsky by the above-named hour in order that he may carry out the assignment given him.
Chairman of the State Planning Commission Krzhizhanovsky

Pal'chinskii had done much to antagonize the Bolsheviks in the past: during 1917, he had attempted to restore labour discipline in the factories, he had served as Assistant Minister of Commerce and Industry in the Provisional Government, and it was he who had organized the defence of the Winter Palace in October! He evidently had been arrested and imprisoned on several occasions since that time, although his value as an expert was evidently recognized by the Soviet authorities. Two of his contemporaries paid tribute to his merit after his secret trial and execution in May 1929. M.J. Larsons, who had left Soviet service an embittered man, insisted that "...he [Pal'chinskii] was one of the few who after the Bolshevik revolution were opposed, on principle and in the interests of the country, to any sabotage. After his liberation from prison he placed his

1TsGAOR, f.3348, op. 167, 1.32 cited in Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago Two (New York, 1975), p. 314. Even more than Trotsky, Pal'chinskii has become an "unperson" to Soviet historians of the 1920's, rarely mentioned except in the content of excoriating those specialists who had no faith in the Soviet future. See, for example, Fediukin, Sovetskaia vlast', pp. 126-127; Idem, Velikii Oktyabr', p. 153; Genkina, "Deiatel'nost'", pp. 42-43.
services as an expert at the disposal of the State.\textsuperscript{1}

Ipat'ev insisted that he was not guilty and further maintained that "Palchinsky had once told me that Lenin had always defended him because of his value as an engineer. Had Lenin still been alive, Palchinsky would never have been sacrificed to the G.P.U."\textsuperscript{2} Even in this context, it is interesting to note how Ipat'ev returned to his original contention that Lenin had saved the intelligentsia from the anarchistic fury of the ignorant masses.\textsuperscript{3}

If Lenin was prepared to defend his specialists, so also was he ready to criticize them when necessary. On 4 July 1921, he noted in a memorandum on planning, "let science sweat a bit; we have given them good rations, now we must make them work."\textsuperscript{4} On 3 September, he admonished Gorbunov:

It seems to me that the Scientific and Technical Department of the Supreme Economic Council has fallen asleep altogether. It is essential either to wake it up or really set going a drive to dispense these scientific loafers, and establish precisely and without


\textsuperscript{2}Ipatieff, p. 448.

\textsuperscript{3}Like Larsons, Ipat'ev had become disillusioned with the Soviet regime and was writing in self-imposed exile.

\textsuperscript{4}Lenin, CW. 32: 498.
fail who will be responsible for keeping us abreast of European and American techniques sensibly, in good time, practically.¹

Evidently, the scientific loafers had not changed their ways, for on 27 December Lenin wrote to Krzhizhanovskii complaining that certain Russian experts had not kept abreast with the possibilities of using diesel railway locomotives. "I believe the task is above all to 'catch-out' the scientists who have missed the foreign experience, as being idle and pedantic."²

Praise rather than blame was accorded to specialists at the Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets of 22-27 December 1921, where the chief item on the agenda was the formal ratification of the revised GOELRO electrification plan. In his keynote address on the subject, Krzhizhanovskii acknowledged frankly the good work carried out by the specialists while calling the delegates' attention to a resolution of the October 1921 Eighth Electrotechnical Congress which stated in part that work on the electrification plan was carried out "with the specialists' full consciousness...of the seriousness placed on their mission and with scientific conscientiousness, notwithstanding the extremely difficult conditions for creative scientific

¹Idem, CW 36: 545. ²Idem, CW 45: 427.
thought.\textsuperscript{1}

More important than congratulatory resolutions was the Congress's "Instructions on Economic Work". Drafted by Lenin and declared strictly binding on all Soviet bodies, these regulations stipulated that:

The Congress of Soviets' draws the attention of all economic bodies and all mass organizations of a non-governemental class character to the fact that it is absolutely essential still more perseveringly to enlist the service of specialists in economic organization, to employ scientists and technicians, and men who by their practical activities had acquired experience and knowledge of trade, of organising large enterprises, of supervising business transactions, etc. The improvement of the material position of specialists and the training under their direction of a large number of workers and peasants must receive unflagging attention from the central and legal government bodies of the RSFSR.\textsuperscript{2}

Thus the year 1921 witnessed a superb paradox. On the one hand, the principle of economic planning with its corollary of relying upon the services of bourgeois specialists was firmly established; on the other hand, the "retreat" into the New Economic Policy announced at the Tenth Party Congress involved the dismantling of much of the centralized administrative direction of the economy

\textsuperscript{1}Deviaty Vserossiiskii s\'ezd sovetov: Stenograficheskii otchet (Moscow, 1922), p. 220.

\textsuperscript{2}Lenin, CW 33: 178-179.
built up under war communism and permitting market forces to play a larger role in regulating economic life. Under NEP, a general economic plan would not play the leading role originally projected. Under no circumstances, however, would Lenin's government abandon the electrification plan to the forces of the market and if the central role of a general economic plan was temporarily eclipsed, then specialists nevertheless continued to work toward the elaboration of the general principles of economic planning.

Consistent with Lenin's policy of enhancing the authority and status of specialists working for Soviet institutions, SNK passed on 25 August 1921 the decree "On Measures for Raising the Standards of Engineering-Technical Knowledge in the Country and for Improving the Living Conditions of Engineering-Technical Workers of the RSFSR." The first sections of this law frankly acknowledged the vital role of technological expertise in solving economic problems, for engineering-technical associations were exhorted to organize special meetings on economic-organizational and technological questions, give them wide publicity in the press, and establish relations with foreign scientific-

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technical societies. At the same time, the decree urged the creation of additional specialized scientific-technical societies and the rapid expansion of higher engineering-technical education. The final sections concerned themselves more directly with material conditions:

The All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions is charged jointly with the engineers' sections and the Central Trade Union Committee truly to make equal engineering-technical workers, entering into unions, in all rights with worker trade-union members and to assist in the development of engineering-technical organizations within trade unions...

The All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions and the Commission of Workers' Supply are charged to bring about the maximum possible increase in the standard of wages in money and in kind on the basis of the minimum wage of all engineering-technical workers of all specialties working in state enterprises and institutions, in dealing the maintenance of their family members.

The People's Commissariat for International Affairs is charged to grant engineering-technical workers of all specialties, working in state enterprises and institutions, the appropriate living conditions with the right of using living space in workers' communal homes on a level with workers performing physical labour and with the right to supplementary rooms for domestic use, necessary to their specialty. The All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions will guarantee within a month's time to resolve the question of applying the above-mentioned advantages to agronomists, physicians, and other practical highly-qualified workers.¹

¹Published in Izvestiia on 7 September 1921, it has been reprinted in Resheniia, 1: 255-256.
Other than the formal tribute to the technological expertise of the specialists, this decree is significant in two major respects. In the first place, the unions were charged with specific tasks to improve the material conditions of their member-specialists, i.e., more than the old cliché of maintaining "comradely relations"; in the second place, the decree was an implicit admission that there remained much to be done in the way of ameliorating the position of the ordinary specialist.

Hard upon this law followed a SNK decree of 10 September 1921 defining the principles of the wage system under the NEP. With the return to the principle of a monetary economy and the introduction of the principle of khozraschet in industrial management, wages were no longer to be treated as a social service provided to the citizen by the state but rather were to be tied strictly to production; all connections with social maintenance were henceforth to be eliminated as different forms of labour were to be awarded according to their value. Under such a system, valuable specialists could expect to be appropriately rewarded for their expertise:

With the fixing of the wage of workers of various qualifications, white-collar employees, middle technical and higher administrative personnel, all thought of equalization must be
rejected.¹

Not only was levelling to be eliminated as a guiding principle, specialists could anticipate being paid in a stable currency for the creation of Gosbank in November 1921 signalled the return to orthodox methods of public finance, one of the first indicators of which was the adoption in 1922 of a new system of currency backed by gold.²

Scientific as well as industrial specialists were to benefit from the legislation of 1921. Despite the good intentions and hard work of the Commission for the Improvement of Scholars' Living Conditions, the Russian Academy of Sciences continued to insist that much remained to be done for scholars. In a letter to the SNK of 17 May 1921, the Academy deplored "the critical position in which Russian science and Russian scholars are found." Various Soviet authorities had promised appropriate measures, but

¹Sobranie u zakonenie i rasporiazhenii rabochego i krest'ianskogo pravitel'stva 1921, 67-513. A decree of December 1920 (SU 1920, 98-520) had removed the salaries of technical, scientific and administrative personnel from existing wage agreements. It appears that the policy of encouraging specialists to join unions and the legislation enabling unions to negotiate collective agreements on the basis of what would become a 17-level wage scale was an attempt to limit the effect of that decree.

²Carr, Bolshevik Revolution 2: 349-353.
In the meantime, the position of the scholars has become more difficult; new deaths, more illness among scholars, and the sharp deterioration of their condition in general is cogently displayed — so far has the position become critical.¹

The Academy's letter concluded that the prospect of worsening conditions would leave Russian scholars no choice but to emigrate.

Given that the Academy was not noted for exaggeration or extreme positions (unless one gives full credence to its critics on the Left) and given Lenin's proven concern for eminent scholars, it is unlikely that such an appeal would be summarily dismissed. It appears nevertheless that no major new initiative was undertaken until the end of the year. On 15 November 1921, the Sub-Commission for the Distribution of Academic Rations under the Commission for Workers' Supply recommended that the number of academic rations be increased to 8000, with 3250 being allocated to each of Petrograd and Moscow and the balance of 1500 reserved for "the provinces"; at the same time, an additional 4000 rations were to set aside for members of scholars' families and for assistants and

¹Organizatsiia nauki v pervye gody Sovetskoi vlasti 1917-1925: Sbornik dokumentov (Leningrad, 1968), pp. 343-344. This letter corroborates Genkina's contention that the academic ration did not save one from a "semi-starved existence."
workers in laboratories and scientific institutions.¹

During the next month, N.P. Gorbunov and A.B. Khalatov (Commissar of Food and Gor'kii's eventual successor as chairman of the Central Committee for the Improvement of Scholars' Living Conditions) urged SNK to allow PetroKUBU to expand the scope of its activity. Following Khalatov's speech to SNK on 10 November 1921, a commission consisting of Khalatov, M.N. Pokrovskii, and V.P. Volgin was appointed to investigate appropriate ways and means.² By the end of the month, the commission reported to SNK and the result was the decree of 6 December 1921, which gave official sanction to the creation of the Central Committee for the Improvement of Scholars' Living Conditions (TseKUBU) to supersede and elaborate upon the activities of PetroKUBU and the various other regional committees (e.g. MosKUBU founded 13 August 1921) which now became accountable to the central body. At the same time the number of academic rations was to be increased to 7000 effective 1 January 1922. Criteria of eligibility were to be drawn up immediately, along

¹Ibid., pp. 345-346. Family rations were calculated on the basis of 1¼ academic rations while assistants' rations amounted to half an academic ration.

²Ibid., pp. 344-345.
with new lists of eligible recipients in the appropriate categories. A subsequent decree of 16 January 1922 confirmed "the right of scholars to an additional room beyond the number of rooms calculated for the general civic norm" and "the right of utilization of the premises for laboratories, drafting offices, libraries, collection rooms, and for every kind of scientific activity necessary to the specialty."²

TseKUBU took over from its predecessor body such functions as the provision of salary supplements, living and work space, rest and recreational facilities, and the maintenance of the Scholars' House with its multi-faceted activities.³ With the terrible famine of 1921-1922, the distribution of academic rations became its central function for by November 1922 some 22259 rations had been given to scholars and their families — triple the original allocation.⁴ In a word, scientific workers in 1922 were to be

1Ibid., pp. 347-348. Scholars were subsequently divided into five categories ranging from "young scholars at the beginning of their careers" to "outstanding scholars whose work has international significance."

2Ibid., p. 348.

³One purpose behind the monetary stipends was to relieve eminent scholars of the necessity of holding more than one position at a time.

⁴Izvestiia, 13 February 1923.
spared as far as possible the horrors they had experienced in 1919. But despite the efforts of the Soviet government to increase the benefits available to specialists, the recipients still constituted a charmed circle. At the December 1922 Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets, delegate Korostylev reminded the delegates not only of the sabotage of the intellectuals during the past-October days but also that the great majority of the ordinary teachers did not receive the benefits of TseKUBU.\(^1\)

If the year 1921 represented the return to "normalcy", when the alleged excesses of war communism were repudiated and the old specialists were recognized as valuable allies of Soviet power and not as suspect representatives of the bourgeois class enemy, so also did it witness a series of clashes between the old spetsy and the regime. Despite the Soviet government's concern for the conscientious collaboration of the experts in socialist construction and despite the latter's dedication to their profession and their country, there remained areas of friction sufficient to impede a perfect and harmonious convergence between the two groups.

One of the first conflicts broke out at the Moscow

\(^1\)Desiatyi Vserossiiskii s'ezd sovetov: Stenograficheskii otchet (Moscow, 1923), pp. 96-97.
Higher Technical Institute in April 1921. Professors in general had been resentful of Soviet attempts to restrict the university autonomy that had been won from the provisional Government, had bitterly opposed the creation of the rabsfaky, and had resolutely resisted government efforts to include them in the Union of Education Workers the majority of whose members were mural elementary-school teachers. As if to add fuel to the fire, D.P. Bogolepov, a Party member appointed Rector of Moscow State University in November 1920 by Narkompros, wrote an article in Pravda of 27 February 1921 insisting that professors deserved "no greater rights than other Soviet employees" and that only Communist spetsy were capable of rehabilitating the national economy.¹ The last straw for the professors at the Institute was the appointment by the Glavporfobr (Chief Committee of Professional-Technical Education, the body within Narkompros responsible for administering higher education) of a new administration which they considered entirely unacceptable. Angry at the general lack of consultation and the exclusion of representatives of the professoriate from the proposed candidates, the aggrieved professors voted to suspend

¹Pravda, 27 February 1921.
classes.\textsuperscript{1}

Lenin's reaction was a mixture of conciliation and anger. On 14 April 1921, he raised the issue at a Central Committee meeting, which voted to reverse the Glavprofobr action and make this decision publicly known. On 19 April 1921, Pravda published the Central Committee's protocol, which rebuked the professors for resorting to extreme and unacceptable measures while the Party students at the Institute were exhorted "to establish a normal and friendly attitude with workers of higher educational institutes from the Rector to the youngest student, without distinction of their party conviction."\textsuperscript{2}

Lenin nevertheless was far from satisfied with the conclusion of the affair. In a testy letter to Preobrazhenskii, who had supported the original action by Glavprofobr he gave free rein to his reservations about the recalcitrant professors at the Institute and the ineffectualness of Narkompos:

Some of your remarks today show that you

\textsuperscript{1}General accounts of the dispute are provided by Fitzpatrick, pp. 64-67 and Genkina, "O Leninskikh metodakh", pp. 34-36.

\textsuperscript{2}Pravda, 19 April 1921. On 15 April 1921, Lenin dispatched an extremely impatient letter to Molotov berating him for the delay in publishing the Central Committee decision (Lenin, CW 45: 123).
think the Politbureau decision on the professors to be a mistake.... I quite allow that Kalinnikov (that's his name, isn't it?) is a reactionary. There are also, unquestionably, malicious Cadets among them. But they should be exposed in a different way. And exposed they should be on concrete occasions.... Then we can put him [Kalinnikov?] in jail for a month or a year.... The military specialist is caught out on treason. But the military specialists have all been recruited and are working. Lunacharsky and Pokrovsky don't know how to "catch out" their own specialists and, being dissatisfied with themselves, are taking it out on every body else.... The people over at the P.C.E. [Narkompros] have still to learn how to work out methods of "catching out" their specialists and punishing them....

Despite Lenin's evident displeasure at the behaviour of certain eminent professors, their suspension of classes amounted to the proverbial tempest in a teapot compared to the Glavtop trial of 9-15 May 1921 which was conducted in public before the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal of the RSFSR. The defendants, some fifty employees of the Chief Fuel Administration were charged with gross and willful

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1Lenin, CW 45: 127-128. I.A. Kalinnikov, rector of the Moscow Higher Technical Institute and future chairman of the Industrial Sector of Gosplan, was eventually "caught out" as one of the principal defendants of the 1930 Prompartiia Trial.

2For some inexplicable reason, Kendall E. Bailes uses "Glavtop case" to describe the far more serious affair of the Petrograd Combat Organization of the summer of 1921 (Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin [Princeton, 1978], p. 60). The two were of course entirely separate trials with utterly different defendants, although both involved specialists.
mismanagement, technical incompetence bordering on sabotage, and financial peculation going back to 1919. Among the accused were a group of engineers whose alleged incompetence in technical matters constituted the bulk of the indictment against them. Chief among them was thermal engineer V.I. Ochklin (later to figure as a defendant in the 1930 Prompartiia Trial), charged with general negligence in his work as director of the technical division of Glavtop and with "patently having connived at including in this matter a great many engineers, managed under the guise of giving technical decisions."\(^1\) Besides Ochklin, a group of seven Glavtop engineers were arraigned for "malicious sabotage", inasmuch as they spent more time concocting paperwork and figures to cover up their incompetence rather than work honestly at assuring full deliveries of fuel for Glavtop.\(^2\)

In his summation to the Tribunal, accuser Krylenko had some sharp criticisms for the technical specialists, noting that men with years of practical experience in the fuel industry ought to have done a far better job of advising "comrades often brought in from the outside", i.e.,

\(^1\)N.V. Krylenko, Za piat'let, 1918-1922 gg. (Moscow-Petrograd, 1923), p. 374. Krylenko was the "accuser," i.e. public prosecutor, in the case.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 374.
Communists recently promoted to responsible positions.\(^1\) Ochkin was accused of having tolerated within his department "vagueness in work, confusion, muddle, intrigue there and everywhere even among members of the kollegia directing fuel policy."\(^2\) After producing an entire series of horror stories accusing the specialists of every manner of blunder and incompetence in fuel procurement and allocation, he declared:

The question is what to call the activity of all these technical specialists? I think that the expression used in the act of indictment, when it calls this activity sabotage, perfectly correctly reflects the position of things, for such work completely covers up abuses, gives them opportunities, and itself is a criminal offense.\(^3\)

The Tribunal did not entirely agree with Krylenko's summation of the case against the experts, for the majority of the engineers were cleared of the charges brought against them while Ochkin received a sentence of three years' imprisonment with an amnesty of two-thirds; indeed, it appears that he was soon back at work for the scientific-technical section of VSNKh and eventually joined Ramzin's Thermal Technical Institute.\(^4\) While most of the technical

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 381.  
\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 384-385.  
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 388.  
\(^4\)Ibid., p. 404.
personnel were cleared of actual criminal culpability, the
trial and its verdict could scarcely be of any comfort to
the old specialists. Since October, Lenin had constantly
preached the necessity of learning from the spetsy because
they were the sole repository of the technical knowledge
essential to the building of socialism; now they were being
excoriated publicly for professional incompetence without
any intervention on their behalf from Lenin.¹

For both the Soviet regime and the old specialists,
the year 1921 was one of stresses and contradictions as both
attempted to adjust to post-Civil War conditions and to the
logic of the New Economic Policy. The March 1921 Kronstadt
Revolt was the signal for renewed vigilance against alleged
enemies of the regime and under such circumstances Lenin
was obliged to intervene on behalf of old spetsy suspected
of counter-revolutionary activity by the VChK. On 17 March
1921, for example, he wrote to Dzerzhinskii:

I urgently request you not to arrest without
my consent Petr Semenovich Osadchii; he must not

¹The Glavtop case was not the first public trial
that involved specialists. In August 1920, the trial of
the "Tactical Centre" involved such specialists as the
economists N.N. Vinogradskii and N.D. Kondrat'ev and the
biologist N.K. Koltsov. At stake was their alleged counter-
revolutionary political opinions and not their professional
expertise. See Krylenko, pp. 28-56 and D.L. Golinkov,
Krushenie antisoetskogo podpol'ia v SSSR, 1917-1925 gg.
(Moscow, 1975), pp. 348-354.
be confused with Pavel Sergeevich Osadchii, an SR. The former has no connection with the SR's, which comrade Krzhizhanovskii absolutely guarantees.  

On 11 April 1921, Lenin received a telegram from the Petrograd VChK which stated that "Petr Semenovich Osadchii was arrested in the period following the disturbances...as politically unreliable." His comment on this message was:

I am not satisfied with your answer. Petr Semenovich Osadchii has been appointed deputy director of Gosplan. Please closely and in detail inform me who (by name), when, and why Osadchii was arrested.

Evidently, Lenin was far from satisfied with whatever answer he may have received, for on 1 June 1921 he wrote to I.S. Unshlikht, deputy-chairman of the VChK, complaining:

In spite of my precise warning not to confuse Petr Semenovich Osadchii with Pavel Semenovich Osadchii (the SR), a copy of the warning was sent and the Petrogubcheka carried out a search in Petrograd at Petr Semenovich Osadchii's. [I] demand an immediate investigation indicating to me precisely the guilty party by name and the calling-of him to account.

Some ten days later he received a rather lame explanation

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2Ibid., p. 444. 3Ibid.
4Ibid., p. 464.
from the Petrogubcheka laying blame on the "Kronstadt event." ¹

Osadchii was far from exculpated or freed of suspicion. On 5 June 1921 Lenin sent a confidential note to Krzhizhmovskii:

In Peter a new plot has been discovered. Intellectuals were participating. Some are professors and not very far from Osadchii. This has led to a lot of searches at his friends' houses and quite rightly so. Caution!! ²

Another example of Lenin's intervention in a case involving conflict between specialists and the regime is afforded by the arrest of the engineers working on the construction of the Svirskaiia-Volkhovshaia Hydroelectric Power Station. According to the editors of the documentary collection V.I. Lenin i VChK, Dzerzhinskii was apprised as early as November 1920 of an alleged counter-revolutionary organization among the responsible workers on the project. An investigation supervised personally by Dzerzhinskii failed to discover any such organization, but did turn up clear incidents of major abuses of power and mismanagement among the directors and specialists, among whom were a number of former tsarist officers and officials. A number

¹Ibid., p. 471.

²Ibid., p. 469. This is almost certainly a reference to the affair of the Petrograd Combat Organization.
of specialists were arrested in March 1921, but the majority of them were released in August of the same year.\footnote{Ibid., p. 492.}

Lenin first intervened in the affair with a letter to Dzerzhinskii on 17 March 1921:

Please quickly explain with what professor Graftio Genrikh Osipovich, arrested by the Petrogubcheka is charged, and whether or not there is an opportunity to release him for this would be very valuable in the opinion of comrade Krzhizhanovskii for Graftio is a major specialist.\footnote{Ibid., p. 440. It is interesting to note that during his lifetime and after his death, Graftio was praised as an excellent example of a good spets, i.e. one who collaborated conscientiously with the Soviet power.}

Within a week, Graftio was released and sent back to work. Lenin however was concerned with following up the entire case, for on 6 May 1921 he demanded more information from the VChK about the arrested, wishing to know among other things whether or not they were possessed of solid "technical expertise"\footnote{Ibid., p. 452.} Three weeks later he was assured by Krasin that

This matter is obviously not serious; it was instituted on the denunciation of some very loyal but even more immature Communists; the greater part of the arrested has been released but with those remaining still under arrest, the investigating power, it appears, does not know what to begin.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 456-457.}
Even then Lenin was not satisfied, for on 30 June 1921 he wrote to Dzerzhinskii:

Comrade Dzerzhinskii, what do you know about this matter?
I am told that most likely it was a malicious denunciation, slander from some offended or wrongful persons.
If you do not know, commission to report to me [some one], (from the responsible comrades, completely trustworthy) who knows, who has studied this whole affair. ¹

As late as 19 August 1921, Lenin was still asking Unshlikht whether or not the case had come to trial. ² In that month, the balance of the spetsy were released, thereby ending the six-month enquiry pursued by Lenin.

If the case of the hydroelectrical specialists ended almost as a farce, what with over-zealous young communists and a frustrated Lenin, then the affair of the "Petrograd Combat Organization" (Petrogradskaia boevaia organizatsiia) was a tragedy, perhaps the most serious instance of open conflict between specialists and the regime. ³ According to the Soviet historian D.L. Golinkov, who appears to have based most of his account on a lengthy official VChK report published simultaneously in both Pravda and Izvestiia on

¹Ibid., p. 482. ²Ibid., p. 497.
³Given that the basic available source remains the VChK report, a dispassionate history of this affair is difficult to write. Bailes, for example, confuses this trial so badly with the Glavtop case to the point of providing incorrect references.
31 August 1921, the PBO was founded by professor of geology V.N. Tagantsev (son of the eminent jurist N.P. Tagantsev) and included such individuals as N.I. Lazarevskii, rector of Petrograd University, the geologist V.M. Kozlovskii, and M.M. Tikhvinskii, professor of chemistry and laboratory director for the Chief Fuel Commission of VSNKh.¹

Tikhvinskii had been employed by Nobel as a chemical engineer before 1917, and had maintained contact with his former employers after the Revolution; according to Ipat'ev this was done with the knowledge and consent of Lenin.²

According to the VChK report, the PBO was founded to work for the overthrow of Soviet power and the eventual restoration of capitalism in complicity with Whiteguard émigrés, Kadets, and various foreign interests. As a first means to this end, the PBO was to unite anti-Soviet elements within the country and conduct propaganda under the guise of apoliticism (bespartiinost'). In particular, Tikhvinskii was accused of accepting money from the Nobel interests for the purpose of preserving intact the Russian fuel industry for an eventual restoration to its former capitalist owners. The Soviet authorities accepted the veracity of these charges,

¹Golinkov, p.p. 499-506; see also V.I. Lenin i VChK, p. 491.

²Ipatieff, p. 366.
and considered them serious enough to warrant the execution of the leaders of the PBO, including geologist Tagantsev and engineer Tikhvinskii.\footnote{Izvestiia, 31 August 1921; Pravda, 31 August 1921.}

In the course of their investigations throughout the summer of 1921, the VChK cast their nets very widely indeed, resulting in the arrest of a sufficient number of specialists such that Lenin felt obliged to intervene. On 2 June 1921, he ordered Unshlikht:

Make enquiries and let me have precise and exhaustive answers to the following questions not later than tomorrow:

1) Is it true that arrests were made in Petrograd on 27 May of: Professor P.A. Shchurkevich (Electrotechnical Institute), Professor N.N. Martinovich (University and Oriental Institute), Professor Shcherba (University, Professor of Comparative Linguistics), Professor B.S. Martynov (University, Professor of Civil Law), Senior Zoologist A.K. Mordvilko (Academy of Sciences), Professor Tikhonov's wife (Institute of Civil Engineers) and Professor B.E. Vorob'ev (First Polytechnical Institute)?

2) Is it true that Professor Pantelei Antonovich Shchurkevich is being arrested for the fifth time, and Professor Boris Evdokimovich Vorob'ev for the third time?

3) What is the reason for the arrests and why is arrest used as a measure of suppression—they won't run away?\footnote{Lenin, CW 45: 173-174; V.I. Lenin i VChK, pp. 465-466.}

On 4 June 1921 the Petrogubcheka replied that it had
placed under arrest some 180 persons, "a part of whom are members of the Kadet Party taking part in some kind of secret plot."¹ The next day, Lenin advised Krzhizhanovskii of the arrest of persons "not far from Osadchii".² By 17 June 1921, Lenin had been apprised of the suspicion fallen upon Tagantsev, for in a letter directed to M.I. Kalinin, A.S. Enukidz, D.I. Kursk, and Dzerzhinskii, he insisted:

I would very much request whether it is possible to consider rapidly the present application in both its parts (mitigating the lot and the carrying off from Tagantsev's living-quarters of possessions belonging to him personally) and not to refuse him communi- cation with me although he is under strict arrest.³

Virtually any specialist under suspicion or arrest during those days, whether connected or not with the PBO, concerned Lenin. On the first of July 1921, he demanded of the VChK:

Please send to me the report on the arrest of the specialists and the inventions on telegraphy of Aizenstein and engineer Shvarts, worthwhile for our electrical trust.

P.S. Of each of them:
1) When arrested?
2) On whose order?
3) Grounds for arrest?
4) Who is conducting the investigation?
5) Evidence?
6) Decision on the possibility of liberation?⁴

¹ V.I. Lenin i VChK, p. 468. ² Ibid., p. 469.
In its reply, the VChK officials declared that Aizenshtein was arrested along with the engineers for attempting to obtain a foreign passport for a journey to England while Shvarts was arrested for alleged contacts with representatives of Siemens, Telefunken, and AEG. Apparently, this case did not warrant for their intervention on the part of Lenin, for Shvarts was sentenced to two years imprisonment; the fate of Aizenshtein is unknown.¹

On 26 July 1921, Lenin returned to the PBO case to ask for more information on the arrest of Tikhvinskii and was informed three days later that he had been arrested in the "Tagantsev affair."² On 10 August, he noted that:

Tagantsev is seriously accused and with such evidence to liberate him now is impossible; I have noted the information on him more than once.³

During the same month, Lenin took time to consider the letter of the geologist N.N. Iakovlev, who requested the release of academic geologists working on the study of sapropol:

A professor of the Geological Institute. In 1890 Nadezhda Konstantinova knew him personally as an honest and revolutionary-minded man. His son is a communist.

¹Ibid., pp. 478-479. ²Ibid., p. 489. ³Ibid., p. 495.
Comrade Unshlikht:
Please order a check-up. It looks very much as though the scientists will have to be released. Sapropol is a very important item for our economy. 

Unshlikht replied on 25 August that one geologist had been released, but the others were still being held because of their connections with the PBO.

By mid-August, Lenin had evidently become convinced of the guilt of the specialists implicated in the PBO affair, for he made no further intervention on their behalf. When Gorbunov assisted the Russian Physico-Chemical Society in presenting a petition craving mitigation for Tikhvinskii, Lenin despatched a sarcastic note to him on 3 September 1921:

Comrade Gorbunov:
Send an enquiry to the VChK.
Tikhvinskii was NOT "accidently" arrested; chemistry and counter-revolution are not mutually exclusive.

The fact that this note was written almost one week after the executions suggests that at least for the time being, Lenin was left considerably embittered against the specialists whom he had defended time and again against criticisms and accusations. Clearly, he believed the evidence against the accused and almost certainly felt betrayed by representatives of a group whom he had taken pains to support.

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1Ibid., pp. 499-500.  2Ibid., p. 502.
On the other hand, contemporaries such as Ipat'ev and Liberman believed the entire affair to be a terrible miscarriage of justice and considered the charges against at least Tikhvinskii to be utterly fantastic. Liberman claimed that Krasin was truly outraged and horrified at Tikhvinskii's execution while Ipat'ev recalled that the affair was the occasion for his getting disgustingly drunk for the only time in his life.¹ Like the Glavtop case earlier in the year, specialists were condemned in public but on this occasion, it was not for alleged incompetence or petty mismanagement but rather for crimes punishable by death. How could the ordinary Soviet citizen be expected to make sense of the matter, what with Lenin telling him to cherish specialists as "the apple of our eye" and then seeing men identified as specialists condemned for treason with all details exposed at length in the two major newspapers? The worker at the bench, resentful of the privileges and authority of the specialists, was less likely to make fine distinctions between loyal and disloyal spetsy than simply regard them

¹Ipatieff, p. 366; Simon Liberman, Building Lenin's Russia (Chicago, 1945), pp. 15-16. Despite all his fulminations about the injustice of the Glavtop trial in his Gulag Archipelago, Solzhenitsyn says absolutely nothing about the PBO affair — surely a far more serious example of an alleged miscarriage of justice.
all as representatives of the bourgeois class enemy.

Despite all the ex post facto contentions that the adoption of the New Economic Policy initiated the beginning of a return to "normalcy" in Russia, the year 1921 was anything but normal for, by the summer it was obvious that Russia would experience a famine potentially more disastrous than that of 1891. Faced with an impending catastrophe, representatives of the professional and cultural intelligentsia (some of whom had done relief work thirty years before) banded together to create the All-Russian Famine Relief Committee in June 1921. Granted official status by VTsIK (thanks in part to Gor'kii's energetic interventions), the Committee consisted of seventy-three members. Twelve persons, including Kamenev, Rykov, Litvinov, Krasin, Semashko, Lunacharskii, and Shliapnikov, constituted the "Communist cell" of the Committee, while the remaining sixty-one were for the most part prominent representatives of Russian science, culture, and philosophy. By far the largest group (over twenty persons) were agricultural specialists - agronomists, economists, and statisticians including the economists S.N. Prokopovich, N.D. Kondrat'ev (evidently undeterred by the National Centre Trial), and A.V. Chaianov, Rector M.M. Shchepkin of the Zootechnical Institute, and the president of the Moscow Agricultural Society A.I. Ugriumov. Strong
support was offered by the Russian Academy of Sciences, whose members on the Committee included president A.P. Karpinskii, vice-president V.A. Steklov, president of the KEPS P.P. Lazarev, and individual Academicians such as V.N. Ipat'ev and A.V. Fersman. Despite its auspicious beginning and illustrious membership, the Committee was dissolved by VTsIK on 27 August 1921 and certain of its leaders who formerly had been active in the Kadet Party – E.D. Kuskova, S.N. Prokopovich, and N.M. Kishkin – were arrested.¹

What prompted the Soviet government to execute such a volte-face? According to contemporary Soviet historians, the Committee's original aims were quickly subverted by former Kadets who attempted to transform it into a centre for anti-Soviet activity, a base for the overthrow of Soviet power. Thus I. Ia. Trifonov maintains that "the plan of action of the Committee, worked out by Miliukov[,] was basically to establish control by foreign powers in Russia" while Golinkov contends that the "bourgeois elements", in collaboration with Whiteguard émigrés and "agents of international imperialism", strove to "direct it against Soviet

power.\footnote{I. Ia. Trifonov, Ocherki istorii klassovoi bor'by v SSSR v gody nepa 1921-1927 (Moscow, 1960), p. 21; Golinkov, pp. 512-513.} An entirely different explanation is offered by Michel Heller, who argues that the Committee was dissolved because it had allowed itself to become the focal point for the revival of an independent Russian public activity which had been suppressed by the Revolution, a revival of which Lenin feared above all. Indeed, the very existence of the Committee was a standing reproach to the Soviet state and hence an intolerable political act.\footnote{Heller, p. 152.}

A more balanced interpretation may be derived from the analysis of three documents - two letters by Lenin and a Pravda article of 8 September 1921. In the first place, it must be remembered that the summer of 1921 was most stressful for the Soviet leadership, as an imminent famine followed hard upon three years of civil war. The Tambov Revolt as well as other rural outbreaks provided ample evidence that peasant discontent had not yet been entirely appeased by the measures of NEP. At the same time, the PBO affair, which Lenin believed was an authentic case of treason on the part of the old specialists, was breaking wide open. Above all, the Soviet government was very much
afraid that to accept the famine relief measures proposed by such organizations as the International Red Cross, the International Famine Relief Commission, and the American Relief Administration (headed by Herbert Hoover) might open the door to foreign intervention in Soviet internal affairs. On 11 August 1921, Lenin wrote to the Politburo complaining that "there is rank duplicity on the part of America, Hoover, and the League of Nations Council", warning that there would be "arrest and deportation for the slightest interference in our internal affairs."¹

Evidently, the last straw for Lenin was the unwitting proposal of Fridtjof Nansen, the eminent Norwegian arctic explorer and organizer of the International Famine Relief Commission, to name a Kadet member of the All-Russian Famine Relief Committee to his organization which had just agreed to supply food and fuel to Petrograd. Already enraged by the independent line taken by the All-Russian Committee, Lenin ordered it dissolved and its leading Kadet members arrested or exiled to provincial towns, "preferably without railways." The Committee was moreover to be discredited despite the fact that important Communists had become members:

Not later than tomorrow we shall publish five lines of a short dry "government

¹Lenin, CW 45: 250-251.
communiqué": dissolved because of unwillingness to work.
We shall issue an order to the newspapers: the same day, tomorrow, start ridiculing "Kukishi" in a hundred ways. These white-guards and sons of the landed gentry wanted to take a trip abroad and refused to go and work in the localities.... They should be ridiculed and harassed at least once a week in the course of two months.... Foreigners will start arriving and Moscow should be "cleared" of the "Kukishi".....

Lenin was almost certainly over-reacting, but given the fact that the PBO affair had been brought to a head that very week and his quite obvious concern over the Kadet backgrounds of many of the leading figures of the Committee, his actions were not uncharacteristic. On 8 September 1921, Pravda published a VChK communiqué (presumably part of the campaign of ridicule) dilating upon the Kadet background and activities of a number of the Committee members.

Regardless of the actual veracity of these charges, the Soviet government remained convinced that such persons represented a danger to the regime under the present circumstances. Neither Trifonov, Golinkov, nor Heller has provided a satisfactory explanation of this affair, for if the first

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1Ibid., pp. 268-268. The word "Kukiski" is Russian for fig and is an acronym coined by Lenin from the names of two leading Commission members - Kuskova and Kishkin.

2Pravda, 8 September 1921. The article actually attempted to link N.M. Kishkin with the Antopov movement in Tambov.
two accept uncritically all the charges leveled at the Committee, then the last-named interprets it as simply part of the continuing repression of the intelligentsia by the Soviet power. The fact remains that the Soviet government felt itself under tremendous pressure and lashed out at what it perceived to be its enemies. On the other hand, it was not so irrational as to arrest or exile scientific experts such as Karpinskii or Ipat'ev; unlike valuable specialists, Kadet intellectuals were expendable.

Despite the very real conflicts and antagonisms arising between specialists and the regime during the summer of 1921, these events cannot be construed as a return to the worst months of the civil war when specialists were routinely suspected as potential enemies by virtue of their alleged class origin. The fundamental policies of Party and government remained unchanged and specialists continued to work as employees in Soviet institutions. Above all, specialists as a group did not come under general attack from official organs for alleged sins of social origin, political views, or professional incompetence; if anything, Lenin continued to go out of his way to defend the experts against "spets-baiting" and other forms of unwarranted abuse.¹

¹The problem of spetseedstvo ("spets-baiting") will be considered in the following chapter.
One superb example is provided by the Nazvanov case. M.K. Nazvanov, (1872-1934), an engineer with considerable experience in the sugar industry who had served as chairman of the Technical Council of the Central Sugar Administration and advisor to the Production Department of VSNKh, had been sentenced to death for collaboration in the PBO affair. Serious doubts had been raised about his guilt, for not only had his father appealed to Lenin for mitigation, Krzhizhanovskii had requested that his life be spared.\(^1\) On 19 August 1921, Lenin asked Unshlikht to provide him with a copy of the interrogations of Nazvanov.\(^2\) On the basis of Unshlikht's reply, and quite possibly of Krzhizhanovskii's letter of 18 September 1921, Lenin wrote to Molotov on 10 October 1921:

I have an arrangement with Comrade Unshlikht to delay execution of the sentence on Nazvanov, and am taking the question to the Polibureau. In the summer of 1921, I had a letter about Nazvanov from Krasin (before Nazvanov's arrest). Krasin requested that this very valuable engineer, as he put it, should be recruited for our work. Krzhizhanovskii had told me that he, being acquainted with Nazvanov, had repeatedly had sharp arguments with him after 25 x 1917, and had very nearly thrown him out of the house for his anti-Soviet views. He said, however, that in the spring or summer of 1921 he had noticed a change in Nazvanov, and had taken him

\(^1\) Lenin, CW 45: 678, 786.

\(^2\) V.I. Lenin i VChK, p. 496.
to work in the State Planning Commission. After this, I had two comrades from the C.C. of the sugar industry workers who, in reply to my question, gave a positive opinion of Nazvanov, an opinion which they confirmed in writing as well.... For my part, I propose: to cancel the Petrograd - Gubernia Cheka's sentence....

Not only was Nazvanov released as a result of Lenin's intervention, he was re-assigned to his duties at Gosplan; by January 1922 was ordered to work for the Commissariat of Foreign Trade and assigned a mission abroad.

Yet another example of special consideration for specialists in troubled times is afforded by the case of transportation engineer I.N. Borisov. Despite Trotsky's use of military methods in 1920, railway transportation remained in considerable disorder, compounded by the attitude of the Railwaymen's Union which, influenced by the Workers' Opposition, refused to co-operate in matters of tightening discipline and employing bourgeois specialists. Since Transport Commissar A.I. Emshenov had not proved strong enough for the job, the Party Central Committee replaced him on 14 April 1921 with Dzerzhinskii, who as the "sword of the Revolution", could be expected to instill a healthy fear of the regime in recalcitrant unionists.

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1 Lenin, CW 45: 330-331.
2 Ibid., pp. 453-454.
3 Rigby, pp. 135-137.
Aware of his lack of experience in technical matters, Dzerzhinskii discussed with Lenin the need to find a solid technical specialist to assist him in his task. According to V.D. Bonch-Bruevich, Dzerzhinskii told Lenin:

It is necessary to send specialists there [to work on the railways], to provide well for them materially; it will be necessary in every way possible to protect them from irresponsible and anarchistic elements, where [on the railways] anarchist ideas have been forcefully spread, supported completely by the senseless activity of Tsektran. These people will be against the recruiting of old specialists; it will be necessary for them to overcome this attitude...  

Lenin agreed and asked if he had found himself a technical advisor. Dzerzhinskii replied that he had in mind a certain engineer I.N. Borisov:

We have on him the most detailed and precise information. Of course, he's a person of the old order, is discontented, curses everything, the idleness, the poor order in transportation, but all the same he's a remarkable specialist, and chiefly, very much loves and knows the business of railway transportation.

Having obtained Lenin's agreement, Dzerzhinskii telephoned his Chekists and told them:

Go to Borisov's and in the most delicate way invite him to come with you to the Kremlin. Yes, yes, and say: to the Kremlin, to Vladimir

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2Ibid., p. 273.
Ilich: he has a sick wife, who must not be frightened.1

Once at the Kremlin, Borisov informed Lenin that his wife was sick with typhus, that they were all freezing - "the whole intelligentsia is in such a position" - and that in politics he considered himself an Octobrist. Lenin promptly asked, "But you, old Octobrist, do you want to work in your specialty?" "Of course... Its dull without work", replied Borisov.2 Professional that he was, Borisov proceeded immediately to lay down the conditions necessary for him to do a proper job for Dzerzhinskii; these included the hiring of four young engineering colleagues who evidently were known to the VChK, and a most extraordinary request:

Please grant me the right to fire and replace new unqualified cadres, especially to return to their original status the switchmen, road watchmen, and maintenance workers, dismissing them from positions for which their knowledge and experience are inappropriate - station masters, traffic managers, directors of track maintenance, directors of repair shops, and similar areas of responsible work on which the entire life and activity of a railway depends.3

Lenin agreed to these conditions and ordered him

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1Ibid.

2Ibid., p. 275. Borisov did not fail to mention that his flat had been searched three times by the VChK (p. 276).

3Ibid., pp. 276-277.
driven home not without first sending a doctor and a nurse to look after his sick wife and a sailor to clean up his flat! Alone with Bonch-Bruevich and Dzerzhinskii, he commented "An original fellow, this Octobrist... he'll never hide his Right convictions, but he'll work." Borisov's new supervisor rejoined that,"With respect to the cadres of worker-directors, he is very right."

This anecdote may very well be atypical, but its particular details correspond to Lenin's expressed views and policies during the previous four years.

One of the most balanced pictures of the relationship between spetsv and the regime in 1921 was provided by a sympathetic foreigner, A.A. Heller, who spent three months in Western Siberia and the Urals as representative of a group of Russian-American workers who wished to return to Russia to participate in socialist construction. A sensitive and perceptive observer, Heller provided a well-balanced chronicle of the vagaries of the process of mutual adjustment between spetsv and the Soviet power.

In one instance, Heller described a skit put on at a local workers' club involving a mock trial of a local factory manager, played by a worker-actor:

The plaintiff was accused of living in ostentatious

\[^{1}\text{Ibid., p. 277.}\]
style, of absenting himself unduly from his work, of showing lack of consideration for the workers. His accusers were Mr. Speculator, Mr. Hard-to-please, and Mr. Town Tattler. As the case developed, it became clear that each of them had axes to grind and that the accused man had frustrated the attempt at grinding at the public expense. Witness showed that he was a faithful and effective administrator.... In the end, the audience were asked to decide the guilt or innocence of the accused, and by a show of hands they voted unanimously in his favour.¹

In a thumbnail sketch of an old engineer, Heller noted:

Then there is Pirojkin, the manager of two coal mines. Though one of the disinherited intellectuals, outspoken in his dislike of Soviet policies, he serves the government faithfully. He is an engineer of the old Russian school.... He didn't like the revolutionary overturn, because it upset all established values; but, like a good sport, he gave in and worked as conscientiously for his new masters, the Communists, as for the old; yet he did not spare them in conversation, cursing them up and down as ignorant, incompetent, incapable of ruling.... The commissar who was with us listened and smiled. He know Pirojkin and his type well; they are not to be changed, but they can be made to work effectively, in spite of their talk.²

Striking a more serious and sober note, Heller spoke of engineers and technicians who had taken to farming and woodcutting to supplement meagre salaries (p. 61) and

²Ibid., pp. 37-38.
his final analysis showed that the condition of the rank-
and-file specialists in the industrial provinces could not
be compared with the status of the Moscow and Petrograd
elite:

The engineers and professional people in
general...have unquestionably suffered a
good deal from the revolutionary dislocation.
The average person of the former "better
classes" was looked on with suspicion; his
prestige had diminished; he received little
more than the ordinary workmen's pay;
perhaps his home had been taken from him.
He had no opportunity to travel, to correspond,
to keep in touch with his former friends in
Russia and abroad. As a result he is hopelessly
bitter, disappointed and discouraged; and
naturally, while he is obliged to hold some
position under the government, he does so
only under compulsion. His attitude, therefore,
is always that of a critic and an opponent.
Even men who are indifferent to politics, who,
under ordinary circumstances, would have been
sincerely devoted to their work, have become
discouraged and lost interested.... The
conscious or unconscious sabotage of the
technical staffs has been an important factor
in the disintegration of Russia's industries.\(^1\)

This is scarcely a portrait of overpaid and pampered
specialists treated with extreme deference by the regime in
violation of the fundamental canons of proletarian socialism,
i.e., the vision conjured up by the Workers' Opposition, nor
"does Heller's analysis vindicate entirely the claim that the
Soviet regime was doing everything in its power to improve in

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 123-124.
a concrete way the material position of the specialists.

The danger here is to read too much into the caricatures of the Workers' Opposition, the claims of various Soviet bodies and the anecdotes of memoir literature or to generalize from either the relatively good treatment accorded the very top specialists in the major cities or the precarious condition of specialists in Western Siberia. In 1921, life was difficult for all citizens of the RSFSR as a terrible famine followed hard upon the devastation of the Civil War, as the regime attempted to implement a major economic readjustment described frankly as a step backwards. In a year of contradictions, it would be most unusual if the condition of the specialists were at all stable.
CHAPTER VII

NON-COMMUNIST HANDS

An enduring trait of human optimism is the fond belief that a new year will bring about a change for the better, that the disappointments and misfortunes of the old year will not repeat themselves. Given the warfare, political and social upheaval, economic collapse, and famine which Russia had experienced in one form or another since 1914, in tandem with the revolutionary faith in a new order, Soviet citizens could scarcely be blamed for anticipating that the year 1922 would witness some sort of amelioration or at least a respite. If such hopes existed, they were to be cruelly disappointed as the unresolved problems of the old year persisted into the new.

On 3 January 1922, Pravda carried a brief item on the suicide of V.V. Ol'denborger, chief engineer of the Moscow Municipal Waterworks:

The Moscow Soviet, in agreement with the Moscow Committee of the RKP, appointed a special commission to investigate the causes of the suicide of V.V. Ol'denborger, chief engineer of the Moscow Municipal Waterworks. The Commission found that the deceased was not only a highly qualified worker, but a man utterly devoted to his work. The cause of the suicide was the difficult conditions which interfered with the daily routine of Ol'denborger's work. ¹

¹Pravda, 3 January 1922.
The article went on to blame Ol'denborger's subordinates and the Soviet appointees with whom he was obliged to work:

Some of the members of the Waterworks Special Troika, instead of trying to improve thing at Moscow's Waterworks, made them more difficult and complicated. Engineer Semenov, chief inspector for the Narkom RKI, who is a member of this Troika, was rude, cavilling and bureaucratic in his relations with Ol'denborger; Makarov-Zemlianski, chief inspector of the same commissariat and a former clerk at the Waterworks, carried out a ceaseless persecution of Ol'denborger and workers at the Alekseevsk Pump-House. Elagin and Merkulov accused Ol'denborger groundlessly of technical disorganization of the Waterworks and of an attitude of disrespect toward the communist cell. All this was bound to have an effect on the emotional state of the deceased.¹

The report condemned Ol'denborger's persecutors and recommended that they be dismissed or transferred; in particular, Makarov-Zemlianski was branded an intriguer "alien to the spirit of Soviet service" who under no circumstances should ever again be employed in any Soviet institution.²

Lenin was outraged at the entire affair and promptly fired off a furious memo to Molotov complaining of "the utter inadequacy (or reticence?) of the report in Pravda."

Ol'denborger's persecutors were to be brought to trial, the Communist employees at the Waterworks were to be tried before a Party Court, and the entire affair was to be given the widest possible publicity. Moreover:

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.
All cases of the murder of engineers (and specialists) at Soviet enterprises shall be reported to the Politbureau together with the results of the investigations ((the Supreme Economic Council, the A.C.C.T.U., etc., through the C.L.D.)).

P.S. This is scandalous: we should ring the tocsin.1

Prior to learning of the affair, Lenin had been working out a set of draft theses for the Central Committee on the role and functions of the trade unions under the conditions of the New Economic Policy. If anything, a timely reminder about the correct attitude toward specialists was now clearly in order, and the appropriate warning was inserted in the draft, which was dispatched to the Politburo on 4 January 1922. After discussion and minor amendments, the final text was published in Pravda on 17 January 1922 as a formal decision of the Central Committee.

In his usual fashion, Lenin minced no words about the question of trade unions and the specialists:

The main principles of this question are set forth in the Programme of the Russian Communist Party; but these will remain paper principles if constant attention is not paid to the facts which indicate the degree to which they are put into practice. Recent facts of this kind are: first, cases of the murder of engineers by workers in socialized mines not only in the Urals, but also in the Donets Basin; second, the suicide of V.V. Oly'denborger, Chief Engineer of the Moscow Waterworks,

because of the intolerable working conditions
due to the incompetent and impermissible
conduct of the members of the Communist group,
as well as of organs of the Soviet govern-
ment.\textsuperscript{1}

Assigning the greater part of the blame to the Party
and government, he declared unequivocally:

Unless our leading bodies, i.e., the Communist
Party, the Soviet government, and the trade
unions, guard as the apple of their eye every
specialist who does his work conscientiously
and knows and loves it - even though the ideas
of Communism are totally alien to him - it
will be useless to expect any serious progress
in socialist construction.\textsuperscript{...} Nobody will
regard a government department as being tolerably
well organized if it does not take systematic
measures to provide for all the needs of the
specialists, to reward the best of them, to
safeguard and protect their interests, etc.,
and does not secure practical results in this.\textsuperscript{2}

Lenin's theses were significant in two respects: they
provided the basis for a significant resolution on trade
unions which would be passed at the forthcoming Eleventh Party
Congress and they constituted one of the very frankest ad-
missions that in the fifth year of Soviet power, worker re-
sentment against specialists could be literally murderous.

In February, Ol'denborger's tormenters were tried
before the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal, the indefatigable

\textsuperscript{1}Idem, CW 33: 194. See Lenin, CW 42: 388-384 for the
original draft and CW 33: 194-195 for the final published
version.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid.
Krylenko acting as accuser. In his concluding speech to the Tribunal, Krylenko generally vindicated the character and professional competence of the deceased. For example, Ol'denborger had refused to join his colleagues in a strike against the Bolshevik seizure of power in October with the ingenious answer "On technical matters, I'm not on strike, but in general, in general, yes, I'm on strike." Similarly, when his remark to the effect that Bolshevik power would not last two weeks was construed as proof positive of his anti-Soviet attitude, Krylenko retorted that "Not only spetsy thought that way — we, Bolsheviks thought it more than once."  

Particular blame in the affair was attached to T.I. Sedel'nikov, chairman of the Party cell, for treating the deceased as a class enemy. In one notorious instance, Ol'denborger had been proposed as a candidate from the Waterworks to the Moscow Soviet; Sedel'nikov promptly nominated a Party member as candidate and moved a resolution at a workers' meeting which declared that "Ol'denborger is the centre and soul of sabotage; Ol'denborger will be our political enemy in the Moscow Soviet." When the workers responded with cries of "Lies, untrue!", Sedel'nikov retorted that they were

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1N.V. Krylenko, Za piat'let', 1918-1922 gg. (Moscow-Petrograd, 1923), p. 437.

2Ibid., p. 439.
nothing but a bunch of Black Hundreders.\textsuperscript{1} Undaunted, Sedel'nikov wrote a letter to the newspaper \textit{Ekonomicheskai zhizn}' deploiring the catastrophic conditions at the Waterworks and even when the subsequent investigation cleared Ol'denborger of all allegations of professional incompetence, Sedel'nikov declared that "I set myself the task of making a noise around the question of the Waterworks, so that the question of the \textit{spetsy} would be investigated."\textsuperscript{2}

Krylenko concluded that the accused had flagrantly violated the Party line on the question of the \textit{spetsy} and thereby created the conditions which had led to the suicide of Ol'denborger. For such disorganization of the work of Soviet power ("there are few such specialists at our disposal"), he demanded heavy sentences.\textsuperscript{3} The verdict must have been disappointing, for Sedel'nikov was sentenced to a two-year prison term reduced to one year under the terms of the amnesty of 7 November while defendants Elagin, Merkulov, Makarov-Zemlianskii and Semenov, in view of their "sincere repentance", were sentenced to "public censure":\textsuperscript{4}

Comparing this trial to that of the Glavtop engineers (sic; read Petrograd Combat Organization), Kendall E. Bailes maintains that the incredible difference in sentences "no doubt"

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., p. 448. \textsuperscript{2}Ibid., pp. 449-450. \textsuperscript{3}Ibid., pp. 457-458. \textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 459.
\end{flushleft}
led Soviet citizens to draw their own conclusions about the relative gravity of the two types of offense, i.e., the harassment of spetsy was a relatively minor offense.¹ On the other hand, S.A. Fediukin argues that the affair prompted "a wave of indignation" on the part of the working masses against the practice of spetseedstvo (spetsy-baiting).² Furthermore, this was carried out by the culturally-backward sections of the working class and was not of a mass character; the fact that the press paid so much attention to it is not proof of its widespread occurrence but rather evidence that Party and unions were doing their job in promoting awareness of the correct policy towards specialists.³ Neither interpretation is entirely convincing. Bailes forgets that Lenin and most of the Party leadership were entirely convinced that the charges against the members of the Petrograd Combat Organization were well-founded, and participating in a movement to overthrow the Soviet regime was a far cry from making life miserable for a waterworks expert. On the other hand, Fediukin almost certainly minimizes the very real resentments


³Idem, *Velikii Oktiabr' i intelligentsiia* (Moscow, 1972), pp. 300-305.
felt by workers against privileged specialists; his explanation is all too neat and tidy, blaming it as he does on the unfortunate legacy inherited from capitalist times, and its fails utterly to account for the persistence of the problem throughout the 1920's.

One point, however, is worth noting. Thanks in no small way to the persistence of Lenin, the Ol'denborger affair brought the problem of spetssegdovtvo squarely into the open as a subject for discussion in the Soviet press. For example, a circular letter of February 1922 issued jointly by VTsSPS and WSNKh which deplored spetsy-baiting and reminded its readership that:

One of the achievements of the revolution is that close bond and mutual confidence which has been established in industry between workers and those specialists, who regardless of all burdens, have worked side-by-side with the workers for the preservation of industry and its rehabilitation.¹

Lenin's concern that the official policy on specialists was being flouted for reasons of ignorance and intent and that such violations necessitated prompt and serious action was reflected in his speech to the Eleventh Party Congress of 27 March-2 April 1922. Not only did he provide perhaps his most forceful and protracted defense of the

¹V.Z. Drobizhev, Glavnyi shtab sotsialistichekoi promyshlennosti (Moscow, 1966), pp. 240-241.
employment of bourgeois specialists in the building of socialism, he used the very necessity of their services as a standing reproach to those Communists who had not learned how to administer and manage:

Wherein lies our strength and what do we lack? We have quite enough political power.... The main economic power is in our hands.... The economic power in the hands of the proletarian state of Russia is quite adequate to ensure the transition to communism. What then is lacking? Obviously, what is lacking is culture among the stratum of the Communists who perform administrative functions. If we take Moscow with its 4,700 Communists in responsible positions, and if we take that huge bureaucratic machine, that gigantic heap, we must ask: who is directing whom? I doubt very much whether it can truthfully be said that the Communists are directing that heap. To tell the truth, they are not directing, they are being directed [emphasis added].

Using the historical analogy of a vanquished nation which imposes its superior culture on a culturally inferior conqueror, he continued:

Has not something like this happened in the capital of the RSFSR? Have the 4,700 Communists (nearly a whole army division, and all of them the very best) come under the influence of an alien culture? True, there may be the impression that the vanquished have a higher level of culture. But that is not the case at all. Their culture is miserable, insignificant, but it is still at a higher level than ours. Miserable as it is, it is higher than that of our responsible Communist administrators, for the latter lack

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1Lenin, CW 33: 287-288.
administrative ability. Communists who are put at the head of departments— and sometimes artful saboteurs deliberately put them in these positions in order to use them as a shield—are often fooled. This is a very unpleasant admission to make...but I think we must admit it, for at present this is the salient problem. I think that this is the political lesson of the past year; and it is around this that the struggle will rage in 1922.¹

Communists therefore had no option but to learn how to manage for themselves, and not be content to enjoy title and rank while "actually swimming with the stream together with the bourgeoisie":

Will the responsible Communists of the RSFSR and of the Russian Communist Party realize that they cannot administer; that they only imagine they are directing, but are, actually, being directed? If they realize this they will learn, of course, for this business can be learned. But one must study hard to learn it, and our people are not doing this. They scatter orders and decrees right and left, but the result is quite different from what they want.... Very often the bourgeois officials know the business better than our best Communists, who are invested with authority and have every opportunity, but who cannot make the slightest use of their rights and authority.²

Under these circumstances, Communists had to be on their guard not to be dominated either ideologically or functionally by the bourgeois specialists, a situation made all the more difficult by the fact that the latter were essential to the building of communism and the only teachers

¹Ibid., pp. 288-289. ²Ibid., p. 289.
available at the present time:

The idea of building communist society exclusively with the hands of Communists is childish, absolutely childish.... We Communists shall be able to direct our economy if we succeed in utilizing the hands of the bourgeoisie in building up this economy of ours and in the meantime learn from these bourgeoisie and guide them along the road we want them to travel.¹

In a word, the essential task was "to build Communism with non-Communist hands."²

This analysis of specialists and Communists, Lenin's last major public pronouncement on the subject, provoked remarkably little comment or discussion at the Congress, possibly because he was reiterating in a rather provocative way the basic ideas he had advocated since October. When delegates chose to comment, their remarks were generally made within the context of a broader issue. Thus for E.A. Preobrazhenskii, the real problem was that the policies of NEP were strengthening capitalism in Russia - "It's time to get away from superficiality, from commissars over spetsy."³

At the same time, he did not fail to note that:

In our Programme there is a point where it says that we must attract this stratum [spetsy] into comradely relations, give them the best material support, etc., but there is another point that

¹Ibid., pp. 290-291. ²Ibid., p. 291.
the Party must not make any political concessions to that stratum and it is put even more strongly.¹

Returning to the recent university strikes, S.S. Ioffe, representative of the Communist students of the Moscow rabfaky, called the attention of the Congress to "the class war between the Kadet-Black Hundreds professors and Narkompros." According to Ioffe, the attitude of the specialists could be summarized as

"You [Communists] cannot rule the country; leave the holy of holies to science. We scientists must rule, and you — get away from this matter." They have seen that if from the universities there will emerge new revolutionary forces in connection with changed cadres of students at higher institutions, and if there are no replacements for them from among the bourgeois specialists, then they will have to die a natural death.²

The irrepressible Larin, whom evidently Krasin had been unable to keep in London for a long time, declared that Lenin's two major "theories" on the bourgeois specialists were mutually exclusive. Of the two, the theory that the spetsy were directing the Communists was the true one:

These very specialists who are convinced that we cannot settle accounts with the peasants —

¹Ibid., pp. 85-86.

²Ibid., pp. 94-95. E.M. Brusnikin, confuses S.S. Ioffe with the Soviet diplomat A.A. Ioffe. ("Iz istorii bor'by Kommunisticheskoi partii za vuzovskuiu intelligentsiiu v 1917-1922 gg.", Voprosy istorii KPSS, no. 8 [1972], p. 91)
they are convinced of the development of a bourgeois economy and they have influence over our Communists.\(^1\)

Far more controversial than Lenin's report on behalf of the Central Committee was the resolution "The Roles and Tasks of the Trade Unions under the Conditions of NEP."

Based substantially on Lenin's January theses, the resolution affirmed the principle of one-man management and explicitly endorsed the authority of the plant managers. At the same time, it contained a sustained plea for trade unions members to support more actively the work of specialists:

The transition of industry to strict economic accounting demands the most complete utilization not only of all elements of production and of labour productivity but also the management of industry by technicians, engineers, and other specialists. In this respect, the tasks of the trade unions lie in putting the work of the specialists necessary for industry in the most favourable conditions, paying in a proper manner for their work and knowledge, and creating those conditions under which they will not have to waste time in unproductive work to support their existence.

The trade unions must remember that one of the achievements of the Revolution is the close connection and mutual trust which have been established in industry between the working masses and those specialists, who, disregarding all burdens, worked side-by-side with the workers for maintaining industry and its rehabilitation. This close spiritual tie must not be violated by any means and therefore any improvement in the conditions of salaries and existence of specialists must be provided, for systematically, avoiding the rise of conflicts from this, however that may

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 111.
be, from which follows in the appropriate cases to give all necessary explanations to the working masses about the true value for enterprises of technicians or engineers, demonstrating that under abnormal conditions, the knowledge and experience of these people cannot be utilized.

We may not be able to achieve it soon but we must at all costs achieve a situation in which spetsky, as a separate social stratum, which will persist as a special stratum until the achievement of the highest stage of development of Communist society, can live better under socialism than under capitalism with respect to material and legal status, comradely collaboration with workers and peasants; and matters of ideas, i.e. with respect to satisfaction with their work and the awareness of its public benefit independent of the mercenary interests of the capitalist class.

Noting that no government department could claim to be tolerably well run unless it took systematic measures to protect the interests of the specialists, provide for their needs, and reward the best of them, the resolution concluded by laying yet another burden on the trade unions:

On the trade unions with respect to the specialists devolves the heavy and arduous work of daily exercising influence on the broad working masses in order to create correct relations between them and the specialists....

Like the January theses on which it was based, the

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1Vsesoiuznaia Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia (bol'shevikov) v rezoliutsiiakh i resheniiakh s'mezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK (1898-1939), 2-vols. (Moscow, 1941), 1: 422.

2Ibid.
section on specialists of the trade-union resolution did not involve any new ideas or departures from existing policies; rather, its significance derives from its reiteration in an explicit and unequivocal manner of existing Party policy, an affirmation made all the more immediate by Lenin's heartfelt indignation at popular violence against spetsy. For the militant trade-unionists at the Congress, a repetition of established policy on specialists was far less objectionable than the general thrust of the entire resolution on trade unions: a reassertion of the broad principles of the 1921 Platform of the Ten on trade unions, a frank endorsement of one-man management and the managerial rights of directors of enterprises, and the recognition of khozraschet as the fundamental policy for industrial management.

Khozraschet was a new policy, having been introduced in the latter half of 1921 by SNK and sanctioned formally by the December 1921 Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets. Briefly, state enterprises were divided into two broad categories: those which were to remain dependent on the state and those which were to work on a purely commercial, i.e., profit-making basis. In all cases industrial reorganization was to be characterized by a vigorous reduction of personnel and an intensified drive for higher discipline and productivity. Such a course of action effectively eliminated unions from an active role in industrial management, for the
rehabilitation of industry would in the future depend upon the efficiency of the factory manager who henceforth would bear sole responsibility for his enterprise; unions must therefore confine their participation in the management of industry to the election of representatives to the appropriate economic organs.¹

Such an augmentation of the authority of the industrial managers over and above the earlier endorsement of one-man management was bound to provoke comment at the Congress. Once more, Larin took the lead in contesting the controversial resolution, asking ironically whether Soviet Russia would make any greater progress when industrial management was taken out of the hands of "worker-Communists" and turned over to the "non-party intelligentsia".² D.B. Riazanov, whom the Congress subsequently banned from future trade union activities, declared:

"I very much respect specialists, but not Soviet spetsy. By virtue of an entire series of conditions, we have received for our part an enormous mass of highly untalented illiterate spetsy. Such illiterate spetsy would have made out poorly under the old order. Only in appearance


²Odinnadtsatyi s"ezd, p. 257."
have exceptionally famous engineers remained with us, and have remained on orders of their former bosses, to take care of the bosses' property. An enormous mass of talented engineers have left, have made off. But of the remaining specialists, we have already remembered [them] in our 1919 Programme; we have said we must surround them with a comradely atmosphere, not place a revolver at the head as formerly was manifested by us in the matter of recruiting military spetsy. Why then, I have asked, was it necessary, namely in this resolution of the TsK RKP, to consecrate an entire paragraph to the necessity of preserving spetsy as the apple of our eye. I have said that this is only a prize for the untalented, undistinguished spetsy, who have filled up our institutions and who after this resolution will cock their noses above [the tower of] Ivan the Great.1

Trotsky took it upon himself to answer Riazanov:

...We are compelled to learn from the bourgeoisie and from the bourgeois spetsy in this damned commercial sphere. It would have been ridiculous to disclaim in connection with this the increased role and knowledge of spetsy in the present transitional epoch in our society. Of course the spets will attempt to cock his nose, but we, no doubt, will call him to order at the proper time. And we must tell to every backward worker that the spets is necessary to us now; of course he will be lost without us, he is compelled to serve us but we are obliged to provide him with those conditions in which he can work. And that which happened at the Moscow Waterworks, what does it signify? It signified that these comrades have proved not only not to have had the necessary culture to bring the Waterworks under their authority but also not to have had the standard of culture to say to themselves "I am sufficiently strong to exercise authority over the Waterworks but insufficiently prepared and educated to administer the Waterworks"- technical or commercial, its all the same.

1Ibid., pp. 266-267.
This, certainly, is the lowest qualification for one to administer, but it is even higher when a worker consciously says "I can't do everything myself; for this I'll take on a spets and place him in certain conditions."

Trotskii circuitously corroborated Trotskii in this matter:

If Communists in party meetings and even the non-party speak against spetsy, this means taking the line of least resistance. For the masses, owing to the hunger, striving for equality at any cost, will be in a mood against the spetsy. A spets lives better, he's paid more, a spets commands and demands, a spets is an alien person, a spets didn't make the October Revolution. That's the evaluation of a spets.... But this is why it is necessary to raise the question before the working masses, but it is impossible to take the line of least resistance - your spetsy, apple of the eye, etc. Of course many spetsy steal, but many who are not spetsy steal; many spetsy are lazy, many spetsy do not know how to work, etc. But it is necessary to select the best from among the spetsy and create conditions in which they can prove themselves to a sufficient extent.

In general, the delegates to the Congress offered no fundamental criticisms of Lenin's policy on specialists but neither was there a reaction comparable to his outrage at the violence that had been directed against them nor did any Communist take up his argument of who was directing whom.

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1Ibid., pp. 273-274. 2Ibid., p. 279.

3Zinov'ev remarked rather sourly that in 1919 many of the bourgeois intelligentsia preferred to work in factories rather than serve at the front (Ibid., p. 388).
With the exception of a minority of militant trade-unionists, the policy on specialists appears to have been accepted generally as a "given", the only problem being its concrete application and the resolution of whatever conflicts that might arise.

Some delegates may have been less than enthusiastic about the old specialists as a result of the recent professors' strikes earlier in the year. At the end of January 1922 professors at the Moscow Higher Technical Institute again went out on strike and were joined by their colleagues at Moscow University as well as by professors at universities at Petrograd and Kazan. At issue was the professors' resentment at the new university constitution which they claimed threatened the hard-won autonomy of the university, their desire to have the rabfaky abolished, the precarious financial position of the higher schools, and the late payment of staff salaries. Preobrazhenskii, chairman of Glavprofobr, demanded stern repressive measures ("class war" in the universities) including the arrest of the striking professors but the Central Committee responded instead by creating two commissions, the one to review the economic situation of the higher schools and the other to scrutinize the actions of Preobrazhenskii in the entire affair. One of the latter's recommendations was that
Preobrazhenskii be dismissed from Glavprofobr.¹

The Soviet historian E.M. Brusnikin has attached considerable blame to Preobrazhenskii in this matter, arguing that in both the 1921 MVU strike and the 1922 strikes his "ultra-left mistakes" and "sectarian practices" had exacerbated an already difficult situation, thereby frustrating the correct application the Party policy on the employment of specialists and providing a ready-made situation for the "reactionary professors" to exploit.² Granted that Preobrazhenskii and his supporters cannot be blamed directly for the dismal financial straits of the higher schools nor can they be held accountable for the actions of professors tacitly or overtly resentful of Soviet educational policies, but there is no denying that he had argued in a Pravda article of 16 July 1921 that "higher education be largely diminished in favour of lower"³ and that his response to the university strikes was to urge the repression of those alleged centres of bourgeois predominance.⁴ According to Lunacharskii, Lenin inclined to the view that the Left in the Party were to blame for provoking futile turmoil in the

¹General accounts of the 1922 academic strikes have been provided by Brusnikin, pp. 84-91; Fediukin, Velikii Oktiabr', pp. 328-329; Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Commissariat of Enlightenment (Cambridge, England, 1970) pp. 223-227.

²Brusnikin, p. 88.

³Pravda, 16 July 1921.
academic world:

At the time of the confrontation of our excellent-in-political-attitude VUZ cells with the professoriate, whom Lenin more often than not frankly designated "bourgeois", he, even at the moment of the pernicious strikes of these professors invariably took the side of the latter and in the course of my remarks to a TsK meeting that the cells were overflowing with hatred toward the bourgeois professoriate and involuntarily hindering the work of reconciliation and the arrangement of any normal work with them, replied "Scholars are absolutely essential to us; it is necessary to beat the cells unconscious."

Lenin's language at the Eleventh Party Congress was more conciliatory, but he nevertheless maintained that "it is true that the Communist cells are fine cells and the rabfaky are fine rabfaky, but they are not insured against mistakes, they are not sacred"; as for Preobrazhenskii, "everyone knows and values his strong side, but when he comes up with a political and administrative point of view, something monstrous comes out." If anything, Lenin's reaction to the academic strike of 1922 was more temperate than his reaction to that of the previous year, almost certainly because of his concern with violence against specialists and the hatred of the cells at the higher institutions, and quite possibly because of his annoyance at

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1A.V. Lunacharskii "Tezisy o politeike RKP'v oblasty literatury", Literaturnoe nasledstvo, no. 74 (1965), p. 29.

2Odnadtsati s"ezd, p. 142.
Preobrazhenskii's campaign against NEP in the countryside. ¹

Lenin's defense of specialists received practical support from Dzerzhinskii, who, as noted in the preceding chapter, had been appointed People's Commissar of Ways of Communications (NKPS) on 14 April 1921. Inasmuch as his mandate was the immediate rehabilitation of railway transportation, he was obliged to recruit the appropriate specialists and equally important, was prepared to treat them as valuable employees and defend them from groundless attacks. In a letter of 20 April 1922 to D.F. Sverchikov, deputy-commissar of the Petrograd railway district, he declared that "our line now with respect to spetsy and Red spetsy in transportation is not easy; it is very complex - hence the instability and vain hopes of saboteurs and panic of Communists." Under those circumstances, only one course of action was possible: "It is necessary to beat in the most absolute way spetsy - saboteurs and ignorant Communists." It followed necessarily that the Communists' slogan must be "to give honest spetsy the opportunity for initiatives." ²

Some three months later (8 July 1920) in a speech to a

¹Ibid., pp. xii-xiii.

congress of administrative employees of NKPS, he argued that a better understanding between Communists and specialists was already being worked out, for "if you ask all honest specialists how we were victorious and are victorious on the Red front, every one will answer us: the Communist spirit, i.e., the spirit of the workers' and peasants' Russia."\(^1\) Both specialists and Communists were the necessary complement of each other, since "our Communists and specialists must be aware of the indisoluble connection of these two spheres: knowledge derived from long experience and specialized study, and communist zeal and will."\(^2\) If Communists need expertise, so also should specialists come to terms with a socialist voluntarism that would transcend mere professionalism.

At the same time that Lenin was making what would be his last great appeal for active collaboration between specialists and the regime, the influence of a new Russian émigré intellectual movement was making itself felt within the country. Known as smenoveshovstvo, this school of thought originated among anti-Bolshevik émigré intellectuals, most of whom were former Kadets or Octoberists and had participated in a number of White movements during the Civil War,

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 54. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 55.
but who for a variety of reasons now wished to make their peace with the Soviet regime. Their name derived from a collection of essays published in Prague during the summer of 1921 entitled *Smena vekh* (A Change of Landmarks). While an extended analysis of the smenovkhovstvo movement is beyond the scope of this study, a short summary of its salient ideas is clearly in order.¹

Briefly, the smenovkhovtsy argued that the October Revolution was not an historical aberration or a conspiracy of a small group of plotters who managed to seize power but rather the logical consequence of the entire course of Russian history, and in particular, the history of the intelligentsia. Far from being a foreign importation, the revolution was genuinely Russian and a national phenomenon. Campaigns against the Bolsheviks must be rejected as futile and unpatriotic; indeed, Russian intellectuals must accept responsibility for the revolution, recognize the Bolsheviks as a legitimate government, and as Russian patriots work for the reconstruction of Russia as a powerful state. If anything, the intelligentsia now had the weapon of state power

by means of which it could transform Russia according to its pre-revolutionary goals. Reconciliation with the regime was the leitmotiv of the symposium and one essay in particular, the impact of which may be understood from its rather precious title "V Kanossu!" ("To Canossa"), called for repentance on the part of the non-Bolshevik intelligentsia:

   We are not afraid to say here: "Go to Canossa! We were wrong, we were mistaken. We will not be afraid to admit it openly to ourselves and to others."

Central to smenovekhovstvo was the belief that the intelligentsia must work for the new Russia. As early as 1920, N.V. Ustrialov, a law professor and journalist who would become the leading member of the group, had written from exile in Harbin that "since the power of the revolution, and only that power, is now capable of reviving Russia as a great power with international prestige, our duty in the name of Russian culture is to recognize its political authority." This theme was further elaborated in the Smena vekh supposium wherein Ustrialov drew a felicitous analogy between the French and Russian Revolutions. In response to charges in the émigré press that the Kronstadt Revolt represented the Russian Thermidor, he contended that

1 Smena vekh: Sbornik statei (Prague, 1921), p. 159.
2 Cited in Williams, p. 266.
Thermidor represented not the rejection of the revolution but rather its continuation by evolutionary means—"the path of Thermidor is the path of the evolution of minds and hearts."\(^1\) The analogy with modern Russia was obvious—"in contemporary Russia this new phase is apparently already making itself felt."\(^2\) Furthermore, the transition to the NEP seemed to offer further evidence that the Russian Revolution had entered into its evolutionary phase; indeed, in the opinion of Ustrialov, NEP was the "economic Brest of Bolshevism" and signified the adoption of "measures necessary for the economic rebirth of the country regardless of the fact that these measures are of a bourgeois character.\(^3\)

The reaction of the Soviet regime to the Smena vekh anthology was, to say the least, ambivalent. On the one hand, the government could scarcely be expected to welcome an ideology that insisted upon a sharp distinction between Bolshevism and Communism, regarded the revolution as a unique expression of the Russian soul, suggested the synthesis of Bolshevism and Slavophilism, and expressed satisfaction that Russia was entering a period of normalization as revolution gave way to evolution; on the other,

\(^1\)Smena vekh, p. 66.  \(^2\)Ibid., p. 71.  \(^3\)Ibid., pp. 63-65.
the movement signified a split in the émigré anti-Soviet bloc and could be useful in encouraging specialists to collaborate conscientiously with the regime. On 14 October 1921, Pravda reviewed the Smena vekh symposium and concluded on a note of cautious approval:

We have said that the authors of the book have still retained many survivals of their old psychology. But life teaches and they are gifted pupils.... The authors of the book are placing new landmarks on the path of the rapprochement of the intelligentsia with the revolution.¹

Lenin was not slow to grasp the significance of smenoveshovstvo for the Soviet regime. At the Eleventh Party Congress, he exhorted the delegates to come to grips directly with the questions that it raised:

It is very useful to read this sort of thing, Smena vekh... because it is really the class truth, bluntly and frankly uttered by the class enemy. "I am in favour of supporting the Soviet government", says Ustrialov, although he was a Constitutional-Democrat, a bourgeois, and supported intervention "I am in favour of supporting Soviet power because it has taken the road that will lead it to the ordinary bourgeois state...." The enemy is speaking the class truth and is pointing to the danger that confronts us and which the enemy is striving to make inevitable. Smena vekh adherents express the sentiments of thousands and tens of thousands of bourgeois, or of Soviet employees whose function it is to operate our New Economic Policy.²

¹Pravda, 14 October 1921.
²Lenin, CW 33: 286-287.
This analysis provoked a scornful retort from N.A.

Skrypnik:

The point is that the movement of the smenovekhovtsy and intelligentsia, arising at the present - their landmarks are not changed on the present question. The unity and indivisibility of Russia - the former slogans of the Denikinites and Wrangelites - are at present the slogans of the these smenovekhovtsy.¹

The reference to the movement in the Central Committee report was as guarded as the Pravda review of the previous October:

We note here the further fact of the coming sobering-up in the ranks of the bourgeois intelligentsia, which has been expressed more outstandingly in the publication abroad of the anthology under the title of Smena vekh. This anthology and the subsequent journal of the same name now published abroad united from the very outset a number (evidently still in the not distant past) of active counter-revolutionary governments and parties struggling against the Soviet power along with the armies of Kolchak, Denikin, and Wrangel. Now by naming itself the Smena vekh group, the representatives of the bourgeois intelligentsia are openly moving toward the recognition of Soviet power, its historical role and the active, necessity of its support. It is impossible not to acknowledge this fact, as symptomatic of the disintegration in the ranks of our enemies. It is reasonable to suppose that further events will come from this tendency.²

By the summer of 1922, the Party leadership had

¹Odinnadtsatyj s'ezd, p. 73.
²Ibid., p. 642.
evidently decided that smenovekhovstvo was of value. An Izvestiia article of 9 June 1922 reprinted extensive quotations from articles by Professor Iu. V. Kliuchnikov, one of the original contributors to the Smena vekh anthology, that had appeared originally in their Paris newspaper Nakanune (On the Eve). The reviewer particularly emphasized those passages which stressed the change of attitude on the part of the formerly anti-Bolshevik intelligentsia, and even commented that "the Soviet power should show the greatest confidence in the intelligentsia and support it materially and morally in those conditions of work in which they can show the greatest productivity."¹

At the Twelfth Party Conference of 4-7 August 1922, the delegates in the absence of Lenin voted a resolution which defined formally the attitude of the Party towards smenovekhovstvo. Despite the ominous title "On Antisoviet Parties and Tendencies", the appropriate section of the resolution concluded that the movement was of positive value to the regime:

The so-called smenovekhovstvo up to now has played and still can play an objective-progressive role. It has rallied and is rallying those groups of the émigrés and the Russian intelligentsia who are "reconciled" with the Soviet power and are prepared to work with it for the rehabilitation of the country. Thus far, the smenovekhovstvo tendency

¹Izvestiia, 9 June 1922.
has deserved and deserves a favorable attitude. But at the same time it is impossible for one minute to forget that in the smenovkhovstvo tendency is a strong bourgeois-restorationist tendency, that the smenovkhovtsy together with the Mensheviks and the SR's hope that after the economic compromise will inspire a policy on the side of bourgeois democracy, etc.¹

Despite a very real concern for the dangers of "bourgeois" restorationism", the Party could not afford to neglect

...the non-Party elements from among the representatives of the technicians, scientists, teachers, writers, poets, etc. who if only in the basic sense have understood the real significance of the carrying-out of the great transformation, the necessity of systematic support and practical collaboration.

The Party must do everything within its power to aid the crystallization of those tendencies and groups which will reveal an active desire to aid the worker-peasant state.

The resolution nevertheless ended on a warning note:

At the same time, the use of repressive measures cannot be renounced not only with respect to SR's and Mensheviks, but also with respect to the intriguing upper stratum of the pseudo non-Party, bourgeois-democratic intelligentsia, who for their counter-revolutionary aims, abuse the fundamental interests of entire corporations [sic] for whom the true interests of science, technology, paedagogy, co-operation, etc. are only hollow words, a political screen.²

On 3 September 1922, Pravda published the results of a survey administered to 230 engineers employed in Soviet

¹VKP (b) v rezoliutsiiakh, 1: 465.
²Ibid., p. 466-467.
institutions and trusts. The sample was divided into two groups according to social background, the first being comprised of former owners of businesses, company directors, holders of important administrative positions, directors of factories and plants, etc. while the second comprised the

... rank-and-file engineers who are an intellectual proletariat in the full sense of the word, receiving salaries which made it difficult to make ends meet, doomed not infrequently to unemployment, forced to endure all the caprices of petty-tyrant directors and bosses; nevertheless, they were in the overwhelming majority of cases faithful servants of capitalism and obedient tools for the exploitation of labour.  

Communists and former Communists were excluded from the survey.

Among the questions posed to the engineers was to define their attitude toward Soviet power. The results were quite revealing:

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group I</th>
<th>Group II</th>
<th>In All</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hostile</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smencovkhovt'sy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>110</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathize with the Soviet Platform</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In All</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>230</td>
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1Pravda, 3 September 1922.
From one perspective, the results could not have been encouraging for the Soviet government inasmuch as only twelve percent of the respondents expressed active support for the regime, i.e., less than the percentage who declared themselves indifferent (20 percent) or would give no answer (15 percent). On the other hand, some consolation could be taken from the forty-eight percent who identified with the opinions of smenovkhovstv. Even then, one engineer is alleged to have commented, "Formerly we doffed our caps before the capitalists; now we bow down before the Soviet power but in the future Order we will bow down to the peasant-kulaks." In a similar fashion, scant comfort could be derived from the fact that only twenty-nine percent of the two groups considered bribery "absolutely inadmissible" and forty-one percent believed that Russia would revert to a greater or lesser extent to "former capitalist attitudes." The author noted that while his survey was administered only to technical specialists, the attitudes expressed were most likely representative of spetsy in general including "spetsy-lawyers" and "spetsy-financial experts", but not of "spetsy-businessmen" who constituted a special category. Under these circumstances, the task of the Soviet power and the Party was to encourage the process of differentiation among the spetsy, to.
separate the hostile from those who are prepared to co-operate with the regime not merely from fear or necessity but from conscience.

According to his sister Mariia I. Ul'ianova, "Vladimir Il'ich was so interested in the article that he constantly referred to it and asked me to speak with the author, to give him Il'ich's opinion, and to tell him where he works." It is impossible to tell from his remark whether Lenin was pleased that a survey of specialists' attitudes had been carried out and published, or whether he derived some measure of satisfaction from the fact that almost half of them declared that they subscribed to the values held by the smenovskhovstvo. Given his entire policy on the specialists, neither position would necessarily exclude the other for a public discussion of specialists' attitudes was entirely in order while the Party policy on the limited usefulness of the movement had already been enunciated.

The fact that adherents and sympathizers of the Smen vekh ideology were permitted to form associations, deliver lectures, hold conferences, and publish journals within the country indicates the extent to which Party and

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government saw the movement as an asset, however flawed and imperfect. For example, the Russian Technical Society, founded originally in 1866, began to publish in 1922 the journal Ekonomist (The Economist) which provided a forum for smenovkhovstvo opinions. According to one Soviet historian, it was widely read by the bourgeois specialists and, among other things, served to spread the ideas of "Kondrat'evism." Similarly, the journals Ekonomicheskoe vozrozhdenie (Economic Revival) and Novaia Rossiia (New Russia) served to disseminate legally the new trend of thought which was beginning to achieve acceptance under the sobriquet "National Bolshevism." Indeed a second edition of the original Smena vekh symposium was published in Smolensk.

Historians in general have judged the smenovkhovtsy


3Trifonov, p. 68; Idem, Ocherki istorii klassovoi bor'by v SSSR v gody nepa (Moscow, 1960), p. 97.

4Williams, p. 266.
severely. Robert C. Williams argues that the movement failed to persuade the émigré professional classes to return to Soviet Russia while Michel Heller dismiss it as an ideology of capitulationism.¹ E.H. Carr considers it significant only insofar as it helped to bring about a reconciliation of the revolutionary with the national tradition.² Soviet historians have condemned the movement severely for its alleged "bourgeois-restorationist" tendencies. Thus I. Ia. Trifonov views it as a reactionary and counter-revolutionary movement, an "ideological-political weapon of capitalist elements - nepmen, kulaks, and bourgeois spetsy", all the more pernicious because it fostered capitalist-restorationist tendencies among Gosplan experts and reinforced careerism, and indifferentism.³ In a 1949 article E.B. Genkina denounced it as the ideology of the new bourgeoisie, an attempt to undermine the Soviet order from within, while its adherents were lumped with such notorious capitalist-restorationists.


²Carr, Socialism, 1: 59.

³Trifonov, "Iz istorii", p. 68; Idem, Ocherki, pp. 97, 153-155, 158-159.
as the Trotskyites and Bukharinites. In subsequent articles, she adopted a more moderate line but continued to see it as the ideology of kulaks and nepmen, of those who viewed NEP as the first logical step to a restoration of capitalism. Especially pernicious was the influence of "smenovshchestvo" on the Gosplan specialists, for this encouraged "minimalism" in the rehabilitation of the national economy. But Trifonov and Genkina agree, albeit reluctantly, that the ideology was useful in inducing specialists to work for the regime (if only in hopes of "normalizing" it) and thereby starting them on the path towards their socialist re-education.

A more temperate interpretation is offered by S.A. Fediukin. Like Trifonov and Genkina, he recognizes its "bourgeois-restorationist" tendencies and its attraction for those who hoped to "normalize" Russia, i.e. transform it into a "bourgeois-democratic" republic. Its influence and importance must not be exaggerated, for the majority of the old specialists served the Soviet regime before the

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1 E.B. Genkina, "Iz istorii bor'by bol'shevistskoi partiiz za ukreplenie ideologicheskogo fronta, 1921-1922", Voprosy istorii, no. 1 (1949), pp. 16-20.

promulgation of NEP or the publication of *Smena vekh*.
On the other hand, the ideology did play an "objective-progressive role" in establishing correct relations between the intelligentsia and the working class, inasmuch as it induced specialists to collaborate conscientiously and help to reconcile them with the regime.¹

Why should an ideology of secondary importance generate so much controversy? The answer probably lies less with *smenovekhovstvo* itself and rather with the problem of the nature or essence of NEP. Was NEP a temporary withdrawal from socialism into capitalism or was it a fresh advance toward socialism? Although Lenin signalled the end of the "retreat" at the 1922 Eleventh Party Congress, the fact remained that NEP was nevertheless the repudiation of many of the policies of war communism and had raised speculation within and without the country as to whether Russia was now entering upon a process of "normalization". Certainly, the *smenovekhovtsy* insisted that the Revolution had entered into its evolutionary phase. Would such an historical process serve to diminish the leading role of the Party and to augment the authority of such surviving traditional elites as the professional intelligentsia? *Smenovekhovstvo* ¹

was a two-edged sword: on the one hand, it was useful to encourage collaboration: on the other, it could serve to encourage a belief in "restorationism" and therefore could be construed as a standing reproach to the alleged revolutionary nature of the regime, or even more dangerous, as a viable ideological alternative. Lenin himself had acknowledged the powerful influence of this ideology. It is within this context that the debate over whether smenovkhovstvo was the ideology of kulaks and nepmen or an "objective-progressive" tendency must be understood.

Stalin was one leader who had no doubts about the pernicious influence of the ideology, for he condemned it as early as the 1923 Twelfth Party Congress.¹ At the December 1925 Fourteenth Party Congress, he described it as the ideology of the new bourgeoisie, of the kulaks and civil-service intelligentsia who aspired to "an ordinary bourgeois republic."² By the time of the July 1926 T&K plenum, he was able to put through a resolution on the necessity of eliminating the opportunities for the views of the bourgeois intelligentsia to reach the working masses;

¹ Trifonov, "Iz istorii", pp. 76-80.
² I. V. Stalin, Political Report of the Central Committee to the Fourteenth Congress of the CPSU (B) (Moscow, 1950), pp. 107-109.
smenovekhovtsvo publications were cited as specific examples. As a consequence, the movement's publications and conferences were effectively banned.

It is not unreasonable to view the stress existing within the Smena vekh movement as a reflection of the contradictions inherent in NEP Russia. Despite all the talk about "normalcy", whether as a danger or a desideratum, the fact remained that there continued to exist in Soviet Russia some very fundamental political tensions as exemplified by the public trials in the summer of 1922 of the Churchmen and the Social Revolutionaries, both of which attracted international attention. Relations between the specialists and the regime were by no means as smooth as official decrees would have them; indeed, the second half of 1922 saw the specialists subjected to some sharp criticism from various quarters.

In August 1922, a group of some 160 intellectuals, most of whom were lawyers, writers, philosophers and professors of human and social sciences were sentenced to internal or external exile on the grounds of anti-Soviet activity. The majority of deportees were members of the cultural rather than scientific-technical intelligentsia, of whom many had distinguished themselves as leaders of

\[1\text{VKP v rezoliutsiiakh, 2: 151.}\]
the liberal intelligentsia or by participating in such public bodies as the All Russian Famine Relief Committee or TsSKUBU. It appears that this action was taken less for any concrete offence (in contrast with the trials of the Churchmen and the Social Revolutionaries, who were charged with specific crimes) but rather was intended to intimidate the entire professional and cultural intelligentsia, to deter it from excessively independent or critical opinions and actions.\(^1\)

While the expulsions involved largely the cultural intelligentsia, the message was clearly intended for the spetsy as a whole, for the action was announced by a major article in Pravda of 31 August 1922; its ominous title "First Warning", left little to the imagination. Working from the premise that "definite strata of the bourgeois intelligentsia did not reconcile themselves with the Soviet power, did not give up their hopes in a counter-revolutionary reversal", the article proceeded to enumerate their offenses against the Soviet state. In the case of the professors:

\(^1\)Aside from the rather partisan article by Michel Heller cited above, the expulsion of the cultural intelligentsia in August 1922 has been largely neglected by contemporary historians. Pediukin (Velikii Oktiabr', p. 287) devotes less than a scant paragraph to the event as does Bailes (p. 62). Sheila Fitzpatrick, Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921-1934 (Cambridge, England, 1979), pp. 77-78, gives more consideration to the expulsion.
In all sorts of opportune and inopportune occasions, they carried out a policy of active and passive opposition to all measures of the Soviet power, took the side of the bourgeois part of the student body, sabotaged the reforms in higher education and even dared [to undertake] an open struggle, as was [conducted] in the spring of this year at the time of the academic strikes of the professors.¹

University professors were not the only guilty parties among the professionals, for:

Groups of anti-soviet-in-attitude doctors zealously fabricated anti-soviet opinions within their ranks, which were brilliantly revealed at a recent congress of physicians. Counter-revolutionary elements among the agronomists carried out such work in their fields, food for support among student circles and SR-minded elements of the kulaks.

As if to add insult to injury, these ungrateful individuals had been employed by the Soviet state and given good treatment:

All this anti-Soviet counter-revolutionary work was conducted by these gentlemen at the expense of the Soviet power itself and the working people, insofar as all these representatives of the bourgeois intelligentsia were in Soviet service, received specialists' salaries, were on academic rations, and made use of that support which was rendered by members of our Narkompros.

Under such circumstances, only one course of action was possible:

¹Pravda, 31 August 1922. All subsequent citations are from the same article.
By decree of the State Political Administration (GPU) the most active counter-revolutionary elements among the professors, doctors, agronomists, writers have been expelled, some to the northern gubernii of Russia and others abroad.

Lest anyone concern himself over the loss of valuable specialists, the article assured the public that:

Among the expelled are almost no important scientific names. In the majority, these are the intriguing elements of the professoriate, who are much better known for their membership in the Kadet Party than by their scientific services.

The article ended with a re-affirmation of the Party's basic line on specialists:

The expulsion of the active counter-revolutionary elements from the bourgeois intelligentsia is the first warning of the Soviet power with respect to this stratum. The Soviet power, as formerly, will highly value and in every way possible support those representatives of the old intelligentsia and specialists who will work loyally with the Soviet power, as are working now the best part of the specialists.

Three points are worth noting in relation to this case. First, the persons involved were exiled either internally or abroad without a formal indictment or trial in a court of law, in marked contrast with other cases involving alleged anti-Soviet activity. Second, despite the claim that no major names from the world of science, the exiled included V.V. Stratonov, dean of the Moscow University school of mathematics and physics, professor of biology Novikov, former
Rector of Moscow University, and Professor V. Iasinskii of the Moscow Higher Technical School and former organizer for TseKUBU.\(^1\) Third, it is obvious that the Soviet government was entirely convinced of the gravity of the charges against the exiled, that the implementation of NEP and its flirtation with the amnesties had in some measure released ideological forces that had to be controlled. At least one Soviet historian is convinced that "anti-Soviet elements" within the bourgeois professional and cultural intelligentsia had in fact mounted a major ideological counter-offensive in 1922.\(^2\) In a word, the message was clear - bourgeois specialists should derive professional and personal satisfaction from working for the Soviet power on terms laid down by the regime and not aspire to an independent role or ideology. As if to leave no doubt about the latter point, the Central Committee Report to the Twelfth Party Congress of April 1923 declared that:

The growing influence of a revitalized bourgeois ideology in the young Soviet Republic made it necessary for us to apply decisive measures of struggle against this evil.... The Soviet government took measures for the administrative deportation beyond the borders of the Soviet Republic of a considerable group of ideologists of the "new" bourgeoisie.

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\(^1\) Fitzpatrick, *Education*, p. 76.

\(^2\) Golinkov, pp. 540-541.
In the contemporary situation, the expulsion of some dozens of old bourgeois activists and ideologues of the petty bourgeoisie from the largest cities was a necessity.

In a word, any compromise that the Party chose to make with the specialists would be made exclusively on terms laid down by the Party.

In the interval between the Eleventh and Twelfth Party Congresses, it is possible to detect an unspectacular but distinct shift of emphasis in the continuing debate over the specialists. Certainly the question was no longer whether or not to employ them or how to attract them to enter Soviet service, and even the persistent question of the specialists as representatives of the bourgeois class enemy appeared to have been satisfactorily resolved on at least a practical basis by the policy of differentiation between "good" and "bad" specialists, exemplified by the dramatic events of August 1922. As Lenin indicated so explicitly at the Eleventh Party Congress, the real problem was now how to control the specialists in such a way as to assure that they would carry out the policies of the regime consistent with the government's intentions.

The introduction of the New Economic Policy in general, and in particular the reorganization of industry

1Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd RKP(b): Stenograficheskii otchet (Moscow, 1968), pp. 79-786.
into trusts and syndicates as well as the adoption of the policy of khozraschet, served to augment the authority of the specialists, particularly those in industry. Suffice it to say that the trade union movement was evidently alarmed at what it regarded as a disproportionate increase in the authority of the experts. In a series of articles probably intended for the forthcoming Fifth All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions, the VTsSPS newspaper Trud took aim at the alleged pretentions of the managers.¹ An article of 15 August 1922 entitled "Our Differences" warned of the formation of a "united front" of industrial managers, the purpose of which was to diminish the role of the trade unions in the areas of wage agreements and the hiring and firing of workers; indeed, managers were accused of assuming the role of "masters."² A subsequent article was even more blunt: "our managers, even the best of them, have been wonderfully quick in adopting the manners and tastes of our former capitalist owners."³ Granted that no differentiation

¹The author was unable to obtain the stenograficheskii otchet of the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions of September 1922. Efforts on the part of the Slavic Reference Service of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to order a copy from the Lenin Library were equally fruitless (letter to the author of 1 October 1980).

²Trud, 15 August 1922.

³Ibid., 17 August 1922.
was made between "Red" and "bourgeois" managers, both being tarred with the same brush, but such an accusation could only serve as a reminder of the persistence of the old discredited values which the bourgeois specialists seemed rightly or wrongly to embody. A front-page article in Pravda of 26 October 1922 went even further in its criticisms than the trade union press. Its author, a former organizer of the Marxist circle at the Saratov Textile Mill and now a student at Sverdlovsk University, denounced in furious language the plant's director who evidently had held that position since 1905. Stripped of its rhetoric ("I affirm that citizen Pershtudt is the poorest and most-hostile-to-the-working-class director in the Soviet Republic"), the article contended that director Pershtudt behaved precisely like an old-time boss, even to the point of calling the plant's union "a band of thieves and loafers."

Pravda printed the article without comment, but the very fact of its publication was doubtless intended as a clear warning to specialists not to abuse their authority.

Specialists came under fire from other quarters. On 28 October 1922, the Party write and critic I.I. Skvortsov-Stepanov published in Pravda an article entitled "What is

Pravda, 26 October 1922.
a *Spets* and How is He Made*, which argued that Soviet Russia required more experts with a solid general education and fewer narrow scholastic academics as exemplified by a certain chemist who spent five years in his laboratory without achieving a single practical result. As if returning to the old arguments of the Civil War period, he declared that:

The proletarian dictatorship will collapse if, in the first place it does not have at its disposal good *spetsy* of various categories, and secondly, if these *spetsy* are not our own *spetsy* such as see their task in the consolidation and development of the dictatorship of the working class.¹

He then approached obliquely a question which increasingly was to concern to Party members: how were the new cadres of "Red" specialists to receive their training if not from the old bourgeois specialists? In a scathing indictment of university research, professors were depicted as autocrats of the laboratory forcing their students and assistants to endure the same stultifying routines and academic exercises which they themselves had once experienced. In a word, traditional academic methods still reigned supreme.² The answer was rather to develop a new co-operative

¹*Pravda*, 28 October 1922. All subsequent citations are from this article.

spirit in science and scientific research: "The scientific laboratory is [i.e., must be] a united collective, acting in a co-ordinated manner,concertedly and consciously in all its elements."

Lenin was not so sick that he did not read the article or find time to send a personal letter of rebuke to the author on 15 November 1922. In Lenin's opinion, Skvortsov-Stepanov was absolutely wrong when he argued that the proletarian regime would collapse for want of its own Red specialists:

We shall not have such [Red] specialists for a long time, until the bourgeois specialists, the petty-bourgeois specialists have disappeared, until all the specialists have become Communists. Yet the proletarian dictatorship must certainly not "collapse" in the mean time. A lesser condition will be enough - namely the first. The second does not imperil our existence. It is sufficient to "have at our disposal"... The second condition will last until the end of the dictatorship, and therefore is not a condition of the dictatorship.¹

Certainly it was no time to return to ideas more appropriate to the civil war:

This [egalitarianism in science] is not scientific, but sentimental: before classes have been abolished, "share and share alike" in everything. Wrong. It will degenerate into the practices of 1918: medical assistants

¹Lenin, CW 35: 557.
demand that doctors should "share and share alike" in everything (scientific).

This is both wrong and practically harmful. An example: the Political Bureau and its girl secretaries. "Share and share alike" in everything (scientific)? You yourself will not insist on that. You have been carried away.¹

Lenin's response is not astonishing; more surprising is that a responsible Party official active in publishing and editing should still subscribe to the prejudices of 1918.

At the same time, specialists received a somewhat unexpected defence. Long impatient with what he regarded as the anarchistic tendency and irrationalism of the Proletkult movement, Lenin commissioned Ia. A. Iakovlov of the agitprop department of the Central Committee to write a rejoinder to a particularly objectionable article by its president V.F. Pletnev.² Iakovlov's articles were published in Pravda on 24-25 October 1922 and concerned themselves largely with problems of art and culture but included some cogent remarks on science and the old specialists.

Working from the premise that "the mistake which comrades made in 1918-1919 about military specialists, and later about specialists in industry, is mechanically transferred by Pletnev to the sphere of culture", Iakovlov

¹Ibid., p. 558.
²For a review of this controversy, see Fitzpatrick, Commissariat, pp. 238-239.
condemned those who would define socialist science so narrowly as to categorize Darwinism as mere "bourgeois science". On the contrary, many Western scientists were "historical materialists in the methods and results of their work" and the fundamental task was "to combine the dedication of Communism with the serious study of all that bourgeois science gives for the raising of the national economy."\(^1\)

Despite occasional sallies reminiscent of sentiments more appropriate to the civil war, most responsible Communists would concur with the opinion that their greater authority and freedom of action made it all the more essential to control specialists lest they use their authority and expertise to divert government policies into channels which they considered more appropriate. Lenin certainly missed no opportunity to drive home his point. In a speech of 13 November 1922 to the Fourth Komintern Congress, he declared:

> In 1917, after we seized power, the government officials sabotaged us. This frightened us very much and we pleaded: "Please come back." They all came back, but that was our misfortune. We now have a vast army of government employees, but lack sufficiently educated forces to exercise real control over them. In practice

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\(^1\)Pravda, 25 October 1922.
it often happens that here at the top, where we exercise political power, the machine functions somehow; but down below government employees have arbitrary control and they often exercise it in such a way as to counteract our measures.... Down below...there are hundreds of thousands of old officials whom we got from the tsar and from bourgeois society and who, partly deliberately and partly unwittingly, work against us. It is clear that nothing can be done in that respect overnight.¹

Two weeks after his incapacitating strokes of 11–12 December 1922, Lenin was able to dictate from his sickbed a series of brief articles which were published only in 1956 under the title "On the Granting of Legislative Functions to Gosplan." Despite his evident concern with more immediate problems, he continued to insist that ways be found to control specialists without constricting their creativity:

A certain independence and autonomy of the State Planning Commission is essential for the prestige of this scientific institution and depends on one thing, namely, the conscientiousness of its workers and their conscientious desire to turn our plan of social and economic development into reality. This last quality may, of course, be found now only as an exception, for the overwhelming majority of scientists, who naturally made up the Commission, are inevitably infected with bourgeois ideas and bourgeois prejudices.

The check on them from this standpoint must be the job of several persons who can form the Presidium of the Commission. These must be

¹Lenin, CW 33: 428–429.
Communists to keep a day-to-day check on the extent of the bourgeois scientists' devotion to our cause displayed in the whole course of the work and see that they abandon bourgeois prejudices and gradually adopt the socialist viewpoint.¹

On 23 January 1923, Lenin dictated what would be his last word on the subject. His article, "How Should We Re-organize the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection", published in Pravda on 25 January, contained a warning against those persons within the Soviet administrations who would seek to guide the Republic back to a condition of bourgeois normalcy:

I foresee an objection that, directly or indirectly, may come from those spheres which make our state apparatus antiquated, i.e. from those who urge that its present utterly impossible, indecently pre-revolutionary form be preserved....²

Although the old specialists were not singled out in this warning, its implications were sufficiently clear.

Salaries for specialists remained a perpetually contentious issue but at the same time constituted an area in which at least nominal control could be asserted. On 2 August 1922, STO passed a decree to place a ceiling on the earnings of specialists "in order to eliminate the misappropriation of national resources and their self-seeking.

¹Idem., CW 36: 601.
²Idem., CW 33: 483.
use by individual persons, and also in order to put into effect a greater correspondence in remuneration between physical and intellectual work." To this end, the maximum earnings of an individual employed in state enterprises or institutions was fixed at 60,000 rubles per month in 1922 currency. At the same time, this maximum was effectively overridden by the provision that the highest administrative and technical-economic personnel were entitled to bonuses (tantièmes) after six months of work.¹

This practice of half-measures, of claiming to subject specialists to tighter control by Soviet organs while in practice allowing them more latitude (punctuated by sporadic crack-downs) did not pass without criticism. At the VTSIK session of October 1922, questions were raised over whether G. Sokol'nikov allowed too free a rein to the old specialists in the Commissariat of Finance.² At the Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets of December 1922, the irrepressible Larin referred disparagingly to the ideological attitudes which certain Narkomfin experts brought to their work; in particular, he attacked the theses on the

¹Sobranie uzakonenii i raspordazhenii rabochego i krest'ianskogo pravitel'stva 1922, 49-617.

²Izvestiia, 28 October 1922. One speaker even called Sokol'nikov a saboteur.
financing of industry which had been presented at a recent conference by N. Kutler, the effective professional head of Gosbank and former financier, industrialist, Kadet, and member of Witte's cabinet.\(^1\) According to E.H. Carr, Larin accused Sokol'nikov as being led by the nose by "former Tsarist ministers, Kutlers, etc." but that this comment was not reprinted in the official record of the Congress.\(^2\)

Perhaps Larin might have been provoked by the recent public celebration of the first anniversary of the founding of Gosbank and the introduction of a stable currency, at which Kutler made a speech which was "well received".\(^3\)

Perhaps the strongest protest that the Party had not done enough to control the specialists was made by V.V. Osinskii in a Pravda article of 24 March 1922, published as a contribution to the forthcoming Twelfth Party Congress. Intended ostensibly as a commentary on Lenin's article "How Should We Re-Organize the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection", i.e., as a purist or legalist protest against proposal to merge a Soviet organ (Rabkrin) with a Party organ (Central Control Committee), the article devoted

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\(^1\)Desiatyi Vserossisskii s'ezd sovetov. Stenograficheskii otchet (Moscow, 1923), p. 123.

\(^2\)Carr, Bolshevik Revolution 2: 350.

considerable time to a critique of Lenin's "non-communist hands" speech at the preceding Party congress. Working from the premise that proletarian control over the economy had actually diminished since 1918, he once again pleaded that specialists be confined to their proper sphere of influence, i.e., professional expertise and the execution of the policies of the Soviet power. With respect to the circumstances of 1918, he agreed that:

It was absolutely necessary in all respects to employ specialists, and at that particular time, even entrepreneurial talents, the "Red merchants." In many cases it was necessary to place immediately engineers at the head of entire plants, granting them the fullest responsibility and giving scope for the development of all their technical and organizational initiative, and even to learn from them.... However, it is impossible to hand over to them the deciding influence over our entire industry, for the revolutionary-proletarian element must take a position of control.1

Unfortunately, the greater part of the Party members responsible for economic affairs had little practical experience in these matters and approached their work as "mere party members", with the result that their effective function consists of employing "cultured, educated, hired employees" who "daily and hourly take upon themselves proprietary authority." In a word, the Communist administrators who were

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1Pravda, 24 March 1923.
supposed to control the bourgeois specialists had become little more than the employees of experts for more experienced than themselves, entirely capable of leading their superiors around by the nose. Certainly specialists were to be given full scope to exercise initiative and responsibility, but it was absurd to hand over to them "the keys to our economy." If this was not sufficiently serious, the implementation of NEP had led to hopes on the part of Soviet Russia's "new Americans" for the restoration of a "normal-bourgeois order." The main thrust of the article, however, was to suggest alternatives to Lenin's proposal for an enlarged and combined Central Control Committee and Rabkrin, which alternatives he believed would, among other things, lead to better control over the old specialists. The same issue of Pravda features a rebuttal to Osinskii by Kamenev, who confined himself largely to a review of Osinskii's alleged oppositionist sins of the past and a critique of his counter-proposals.

The Osinskii-Kamenev dispute was a tempest in a teapot compared to the controversy provoked by L.B. Krasin. Like Osinskii, he objected to the proposed merger of a State with a Party organ on purely juridical grounds, but he was even more concerned about the expanded mandate of the new unified body, which he believed would make possible
extensive and undesirable interference by economically incompetent Party officials in practical economic affairs. His first salvo was fired in a Pravda article of 24 March 1923 entitled "Control or Production." Defining the fundamental task of the Party as the raising of production, he denounced what he regarded as unnecessary, bureaucratic interference with economic decisions; instead, "the maximum production and the minimum control - this is the goal towards which we must strive." The more the Party decried bureaucracy, the more "an entire series of control and inspection commissions" continued to proliferate. If the Soviet power wanted results, then:

Feed well these spetsy, give them at least two rooms with heating and light, change the psychological environment of their work so that they will not fear a daily unnecessary catastrophe, don't turn their existence upside down and our spetsy will work.2

Even more controversial was a polemic that he directed against the Menshevik-turned-Bolshevik A.S. Martynov. Throughout his article, Krasin was strongly, almost harshly critical of Party policy and the proposed resolution to extend the powers of a unified Rabkرين-Central Control Committee. Repeating his argument that every resource of the Party must be geared to raising productivity, he insisted that:

1Pravda, 24 March 1923. 2Ibid.
The strictly consistent political line of the Party and the State power must not impede the restoration of production, but in order for this not to happen, it is necessary that the same state and guiding Party apparatus accord to those engaged in production and managers - certainly Party [individuals] - at least the same share of influence as journalists, literateurs, and mere politicians.¹

If this was not provocative enough, he went on the charge that "needed workers" were being transferred arbitrarily and that the Party would "pour in some common replacement from the party man-power fund, some times absolutely unfit for work or control."²

Thus on the eve of the Twelfth Party Congress, the debate on specialists continued apace. Despite some ritual protests over specialists' salaries, privileges, attitudes, and on-the-job authority, the focus of the discussion had undergone a distinct shift of emphasis, for which Lenin had given the cue with his question "who controls whom?" Within the Party leadership, there existed a growing belief that the Party should exercise a more direct control over appointments to key economic positions, that perhaps the economic organs had abdicated their responsibility for control. Against this trend stood Krasin, convinced that productivity would be placed at the mercy of the economically-ignorant.

¹Pravda, 15 April 1923. ²Ibid.
CHAPTER VIII
ON THE EVE

When the Twelfth Party Congress opened on 17 April 1923, Krasin found himself at the centre of a lively controversy as a result of his recent Pravda articles, as Zinov'ev devoted a portion of the Central Committee report to a rebuttal of his arguments. Quoting with disapproval Krasin's alleged "Render unto Caesár..." argument and his criticism of Communist officials as useless for either effective work in or control of industry, Zinov'ev exclaimed "Can you imagine the psychology of the comrade writing these lines!" Yet his argument completely evaded Krasin's charge that the Central Committee and indeed Communists in general were wanting in economic expertise, preferring instead to quote a Western example:

Now Lloyd George is not an agronomist either. Poincaré is not a transportation engineer and if the bourgeoisie have their politicians, then truly it is no sin if the working class, which was oppressed for decades and in the end won power, also have their political leaders.1

Hardly one to tolerate such specious reasoning, Krasin accused Zinov'ev of quoting him out of context and of grossly misconstruing his arguments:

Its my contention that this [the hampering of industrial recovery] can be avoided only when there will be in the ruling apparatus of our party not only politicians, but also organizers, administrators, and managers.... And finally, as a matter of fact, when technicians, financial experts et al. from day to day are acquiring greater and greater significance, if I on the basis of a decade of experience tell you "Take into account this circumstance in the building of the Party apparatus", am I wrong in this? I will propose to Comrade Zinov'ev: lay the terms of the dispute before the workers in the best factories of Petrograd and Moscow. And I am confident that the workers will subscribe to my opinion.¹

Moving swiftly to his main point, he declared:

I tell you: you are no longer an underground party but rather the government of a vast land, working in difficult internal conditions created by years of war, intervention and blockade, and in complex international conditions, conditions more difficult than any government in the world has ever worked under. For such work it is necessary to take into account all Party experience of the past and present time, and not only political experience; it is necessary to take into account the experience of administrators, managers, organizers.²

In a word, the restoration of production was the absolute economic priority of the Party, and to this end, experienced and tough-minded "production leaders and economic managers" should be elevated to the Party's leading

¹Ibid., p. 124. ²Ibid., p. 125.
organs. Such individuals were not the non-party "bourgeois specialists" - Krasin was scarcely suggesting that they be recruited into the Party and promoted en masse, but rather the so-called "Red directors", Communists whom the Party had assigned to managerial posts in the years after October. On the other hand, given the Red directors' primary commitment to production and tendency to adopt a "managerial identity", they could be expected to share many values with the old specialists and even influence Party policy accordingly.

Krasin received some support from Preobrazhenskii, who noted the frustration experienced by directors obliged to deal with Party officials ignorant of industrial problems, and from Trotsky who compared the Red directors to the heroic Red Army commanders of the civil war and deplored the resolution which denied them salaries and benefits enjoyed by the non-Party specialists. V.P. Nogin protested that the broadening of the role of the Assignments Department

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1 Ibid., pp. 127-128.
3 Dvenadtsatyi tz, p. 74.
of the Central Committee would lead to a situation where appointments to responsible economic positions would be made by comrades who had never "worked in the branches of industry which they in effect direct and will in no way be oriented toward those questions which determine the work in one or another branch of industry."¹

On the whole, delegates tended to disagree with Krasin for he seemed to be advocating the virtual abdication of the leading role of the Party in industrial affairs. As Zinov'ev indicated in the Central Committee report, the imputation of economic in competence to Communists was becoming increasingly resented:

In every guberniia you will recall some manager, who says either rarely or frequently (rather frequently than rarely): "Comrades, you are not competent in economic questions."²

Thus Kamenev felt obliged to assert the primacy of the Party in economic affairs, noting that Communist directors were constantly exposed to non-socialist forces which influenced their attitudes and work while Bukharin rebuked Krasin for being the spokesmen of the "pure productionists", who were so obsessed with results that they never question whether these are obtained by capitalist or socialist means.³ Other

¹Ibid., pp. 142-145, 346-347.
²Ibid., p. 47. ³Ibid., pp. 154-155, 190-191.
delegates even failed to distinguish between Red directors and old specialists, or preferred to tar them both with the same brush. I.I. Stukov observed rather sourly:

We have experienced the bourgeois specialists; we know that these spetsy are building our state apparatus in a manner similar to the old state apparatus; we cannot depend on the old intelligentsia - we can depend only on ourselves, only on our internal party strengths.1

V. Ia. Chubar' noted how some directors interpreted one-man management and the policy of khozraschet as a licence to behave like pre-revolutionary bosses, or even enrich themselves:

The workers and peasants will give credit to their government but not every spets wants to give credit; many of them in the confusion want grab what they can, to stand solidly on their feet as property owners and cock a snoot at Soviet power.2

G.I. Lomov complained that many specialists preferred to remain in comfortable offices in the cities, avoiding going into plants and tackling concrete problems of production.3

In spite of Krasin's arguments, the Congress passed a resolution merging Rabkrin and the Central Control Commission, providing the new combined organ with a broadened

1Ibid., p. 141. 2Ibid., p. 375. 3Ibid., pp. 377-378.
mandate to exercise control in economic affairs. \(^1\) At the same time, the resolution endorsing the Central Committee report explicitly affirmed the principle of a more direct control over managerial appointments by the Party's Assignments Department:

The Congress...instructs the new Central Committee to give high priority to the work of the Assignments Department [Uchraspredotdel], which is now to play an especially important role in the correct assignment of personnel to ensure that the Party exerts real leadership in all areas of the administration without exception.

This resolution did no more than approve and give formal sanction to what had already taken place, for in delivering the Central Committee's organizational report to the Congress, Stalin blandly explained that the Assignments Department, for which the Secretariat had ultimate responsibility, had appointed some 1300 industrial directors, of whom twenty-nine percent were Party and seventy-one percent non-Party. \(^3\) In a word, the leaders of industry would be increasingly appointed by a Party organ and not by the appropriate Soviet economic body.

\(^1\) For the complete text of this resolution, see Ibid., pp. 698-701.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 673.

\(^3\) Ibid., pp. 63-64.
A year later, the resolution on the work of the Control Commissions passed at the May 1924 Thirteenth Party Congress noted with satisfaction that:

Even at the present time, the Party's work on selecting the directors of institutions and economic organizations has yielded great and positive results, placing staunch and tested party members at the head of state and economic organs.¹

Managers, whether bourgeois or Red, could take some consolation in the resolution on industry if for no other reason than it again confirmed explicitly the principle of strengthening managerial authority:

The manager stands between two perils: a) to set against himself by his increased demands the workers of the enterprise and their representative organs or regional Party and Soviet institutions; b) to follow on questions of productivity and wages the line of least resistance, giving up thereby the profits of the enterprise and consequently, his future. Of course the director of a Soviet factory must with the greatest attention concern himself with the material and spiritual [dakhovnyi] interests of the workers, their feelings and attitudes. But at the same time he must never overlook that the highest responsibility with respect to the working class as a whole is the raising of production work, the lowering of the costs of production, the increasing of collective material wealth at the command of the

Although lip service was paid to respecting workers' sensibilities, the whole resolution made it perfectly clear that managers were being given a mandate to hold the line on labour discipline, hiring, and wages.

An entire section of the resolution was devoted to the bourgeois specialists, and seemed to provide some substantiation for Lomov's contention that the old specialists were avoiding the plant in favour of the office:

The organization of industry up to the mark demands the strengthening of technical forces in production. The replenishment of insufficient technical strength by new cadres of technicians and engineers will be carried out with inevitable slowness. The best utilization and redistribution of technical forces available to the country is therefore necessary. In the period of NEP, a significant number of major specialists, working formerly directly in production, in factories and plants, turned to more comfortable or better arranged work in institutions, departments, offices or in trade or commercial activity. The watchword of the day must be: "Back to production, to the factory and the plant!" For the achievement of this, it is necessary to create normal conditions of work in enterprises to satisfy morally and materially specialists recruited into industry, implementing in particular the principle of every kind of incentive for directly attaining in the process of production technical or economic successes...

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1Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd, p. 685. 2Ibid', p. 686.
Despite the implicit rebuke to those old specialists who avoided production work, the sense of the resolution made it abundantly clear that they were still very essential and that the Party remained committed to the policy of treating them well.

How then did the specialists fare at the hands of the Twelfth Party Congress? Certainly Krasin's forceful arguments on behalf of the "Red directors" and his imputation of economic ignorance to Communists in general were tantamount to a vindication of the position of the old specialists, particularly to those who may have chaffed under the control of Red enthusiasts during the Civil War years. Similarly, the resolution on industry reinforced the policy first introduced at the 1920 Ninth Party Congress of explicitly strengthening the authority of the industrial manager. On the other hand, the Congress did confirm the prior right of the Party's Assignments Department in the appointment of leading industrial managers, in apparent contradiction of the Central Committee theses of the Eleventh Congress which had called upon the Party to group its economic organs in terms of the economic competence of their members. According to V.Z. Drobizhev, the Assignments Department moved very quickly in this matter and in the interval between the Twelfth and Thirteenth Party Congresses
appointed some 595 individuals to leading positions in industrial and economic organs.¹ Kendall E. Bailes has argued that this policy had the effect of demoting old specialists in the industrial hierarchy, forcing them to work under Red directors whose formal qualifications for management were lower than ever before.² Neither historian, however, addresses himself to the question raised by Lenin: who controls whom?³

One interesting sidelight to emerge from this affair was an evaluation of various types of specialists drawn up by V.V. Kuibyshev, who had been commissioned early in 1923 to carry out an investigation preliminary to proposing new powers to the Assignments Department. In his report, he described five types of specialists, along with their distinguishing characteristics. The first was the "Communist-spets", typically a member of the young Party technical intelligentsia. Second was the "Soviet spets", who supported

¹V.Z. Drobitshev, Glavnuy shtab sotsialisticheskoi promyshlennosti (Moscow, 1966), p. 234.
³Trotskii claimed that Party leaders went out of their way to protect their specialists. In his last conversation with Lenin in late 1922, he asserted, "Attacking a functionary, you run into the party leader. The specialist is a member of his retinue." Leon Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification (New York, 1971), pp. 73-74.
the Soviet platform largely because he realized that his career was tied to the Soviet power; such a person was generally competent, loyal, and on good terms with the union local. Third was the "Temporizing spets" (vyzhaevaishchii spets) who was a pessimist, not believing in the permanence of Soviet power, unresponsive to new ways of life, unwilling to take initiatives at work. Such persons Kuibyshev believed to be the majority. The fourth type was the "Patent spets", described as a speculator, adroit, capable of impressing others with his abilities, a backstairs businessman whose expertise in particular areas made it possible for him to insinuate himself into Soviet institutions. Finally, there was the "Whiteguard spets", often a former capitalist or company director, a smart operator who could do destructive work on the sly. Kuibyshev concluded that the last three types of specialists were the ones most likely to be found in Soviet economic organs, and given such a conclusion, it is not difficult to understand why the Party chose to assert a more direct control over appointments to responsible economic positions. 

the contemporary social scientist, they provide a fascinating indication of how a rapidly rising economic controller who would attain tremendous power under Stalin regarded the old specialists; certainly, he was no Lenin or Krasin!

A quite minor issue at the Congress would soon prove to be an indicator of a problem which the Party leadership had attempted to control since October. In the Control Committee report, Zinov'ev acknowledged that there had been a serious crisis in the Donbas coalfields the previous summer, but that the Party had taken decisive measures to prevent its repetition.¹ No elaboration was provided, but it appears that in an effort to resolve the persistent fuel crisis, STO had sent a special commission to the Donbas to reorganize all aspects of production from top to bottom. On the whole, its efforts were successful, despite a temporary slump in production during July 1922, to which Zinov'ev appeared to refer.² His comment provoked little reaction from the delegates except for Trotsky, who felt compelled to defend the work of Chubar' in the Donbas and deplore the

¹Dvenadtsaty tšezd, p. 29.
²Ibid., p. 842 (editorial note); for a general account, see Maurice Dobb, Soviet Economic Development since 1917 (New York, 1966), pp. 152-153.
lack of proper planning.\textsuperscript{1} If silence implies consent, then the Congress must have been entirely satisfied with Zinov'ev's slogan of "no more crises in the Donbas".

Precisely two days after the Congress ended, the STO newspaper \textit{Ekonomicheskaia zhizn'} published a furious article by Ramzin denouncing the Donbas economic administration in general and Chubar' in particular:

Along with an extremely irrational policy, the administration of the Donbas has taken a very highly false and incorrect position with respect to administrative-technical personnel. The cohesion, the common interest established in 1921 between the administration of the coal industry and the technical-administration personnel has disappeared. At that time technicians and engineers willingly and voluntarily worked in the Donbas; now they run \textit{en masse} from beloved work for there is not any opportunity to work productively.\textsuperscript{2}

Ramzin's article provoked an immediate and angry reaction from Dzerzhinskii, whose responsibilities for railway transportation of necessity involved him in questions of fuel supply. In a furious letter to Stalin, he demanded that the Central Committee investigate and take immediate action on Ramzin's charges, most of which he considered justified. The existence of what he considered "spetsy-

\textsuperscript{1}Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd, pp. 337-338.

\textsuperscript{2}Ekonomicheskaia zhizn', 27 April 1923.
baiting" particularly infuriated him, all the more so since Chubar', i.e., a responsible Communist, appeared to be at fault for setting the general tone which made possible such outrages - "Everything comes from his personality and [his] incorrect communist antisoviet line. This was the verdict in a hall full of spetsy." The Central Committee evidently took the situation seriously enough to create on 7 May 1923 a special commission of enquiry which included Dzerzhinskii.2

Two points emerge from this incident. One is that despite more than five years of resolutions, directives, and exhortations on the necessity of creating comradely conditions for specialists, "spetsy-baiting" still persisted, with the possible connivance of important Party figures.

The other is the outrage at this abuse expressed by Dzerzhinskii, for the "Russian Torquemada" (Liberman's phrase) was starting to emerge as a staunch defender of specialists.

In February 1924, Dzerzhinskii was appointed chairman of VSNKh with a clear mandate to work toward industrial expansion in general and the development of the metal industry in particular.3 Suffice it to say that most specialists

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2 Ibid., p. 91 (editorial note).

were terrified at the prospect, fearing that he would bring the methods of the GPU to VSNKh and destroy its effectiveness entirely.\(^1\) Instead, they were in for a pleasant surprise, as Ipat'ev recalled:

I was much impressed by the first meeting of the reorganized presidium [of VSNKh]. Dzerzhinsky was an excellent chairman, his clear questions requiring direct replies. He called the attention of the other members to me and mentioned my wide experience in the chemical industry, saying that I was an expert whose knowledge should be used whenever possible. I must admit that his praise pleased me.\(^2\)

Entirely aware of the apprehension that his reputation inspired among the specialists, Dzerzhinskii set out to win their confidence and respect, for quite simply, production work could not be done in an atmosphere of fear. According to a VSNKh expert, Dzerzhinskii considered fear entirely salutary when he was head of the VChK, "but now its unpleasant for him to hear that his personality rouses fear among his subordinates and collaborators."\(^3\) Indeed, he appeared genuinely hurt when Valentinov told him bluntly that his very presence intimidated the VSNKh staff, who were

\(^{1}\)N. Valentinov (Volskii), Novaia ekonomicheskaia politika i krizis partiiposle smerti Lenina (Stanford, 1971), p. 101.


\(^{3}\)Valintinov, p. 102.
afraid to take an initiative lest they make a mistake and be blamed. He replied:

There's nothing to fear from me. Tell that to everybody. I'm not a beast; I don't bite. And the GPU is absolutely not here. It has nothing to do here.¹

Dzerzhinskii was as good as his word, for in the two and a half years during which he headed VSNKh he came to enjoy the confidence and support of the specialists.² Not only did he impress them as a competent and efficient administrator, he went out of his way to defend them against unwarranted criticism and attacks, i.e., spetsy-baiting. According to Valentinov, this abuse was still extant by the mid-1920's as workers blamed non-Party specialists for everything from working conditions to wage-rates and piece-work:

In one plant, they [the specialists] were threatened, cursed with the worst words as bourgeois and people of the "old regime"; in another plant, unexpectedly doused with water; in a third - trundled out of the plant in a wheelbarrow; in a fourth - their apartment windows were broken; in a fifth, an engineer was hit in the face, but in order that the beaten engineer would not know who hit him, a sack was thrown over his head. Only fragments of similar facts reached the pages of the Soviet press. It was forbidden to write about this; it was a poor testimonial for the "dictatorship of the proletariat", and could be infectious.³

¹Ibid., p. 104. ²Ibid., pp. 105, 111.
³Ibid., p. 117.
Such abuses infuriated Dzerzhinskii who on at least one occasion gave living hell to a factory director who had failed to curb spetsya-baiting in his plant.¹ He used more temperate language to make essentially the same point to the presidium of VSNKh:

Our technical personnel regrettably do not occupy the place that they should occupy in the campaign for productive work. They are hindered. This is a sore subject.... We must defend the technical personnel. We must actively take upon ourselves the responsibility for the difficult work of the technical personnel, [work] demanding specialized thought. Our plant engineers and specialists are living in rather difficult conditions. And don't think that it's only because they are receiving inadequate salaries. When they wish to carry out some kind of useful initiative, they meet with obstacles from all sides. A specialist can be thrown out of a plant in three minutes if he can't get support.²

If Dzerzhinskii was prepared to defend his specialists against ignorant workers, so also was he ready to protect them from incompetent and interfering Party and government officials. At the April 1925 Fourteenth Party Conference, he took his colleagues to task for komchanstvo ("com [munist] conceit") in their dealings with technical personnel and declared:

¹Ibid., p. 118.

²Ibid. No date is given for this speech.
It is necessary to create new living conditions and friendly attitudes toward them [the specialists], in order actively to separate the irreconcilables, who bear a grudge against us, from the others whom we have in a rather great number. At the same time, we must give them for this some kind of constitution at the plant and in the factory administration. In this matter, if we consider the question of internal order, then what is the position of technical personnel in the factory section? Everything is demanded of him; he must not take risks and in conscience point out all shortcomings of qualifications; he must not cover up for them [persons short on qualifications]; he must explain and say "learn"; and within the limits of his allotted time he must teach and compel them to work.¹

Dzerzhenskii was not a solitary voice crying in the wilderness, for at the same Conference it was reported that:

In relations between workers and technical personnel, it is necessary to note, as a general trend, some improvement and growing of mutual understanding. However, in many enterprises the relations of workers and spetsy remain far from normal, and sometimes in the work of production conferences they become all the more strained. In some enterprises are noted extremely poor relations between specialists and workers.²


²N.A. Koroleva, "Rabota partii po vovlecheniu dorevolutsionnoi intelligentsii v stroitel'stvo sotsializma, 1921-1925 gg.: v istorii vypolneniia vtoroi programmy partii v oblasti kul'turnogo stroitel'ства (Moscow, 1968), p. 23.
These comments did not pass unnoticed at the Conference, for its resolution on the metal industry emphasized that specialists must be allowed authority and initiative in administration and problem-solving.1

Dzerzhinskii returned to the same point in May 1925 at the Third Congress of Soviets of the USSR, where he made a forceful appeal for respect for the specialists:

In turning all our attention to the improvement of technology, it is necessary for us at the same time to devote particular attention to the position and to the role in production of our technical personnel, whether below or above. In the war years, in the years of the employees' sabotage, in those years when the technical personnel still did not break their links with the old economic order, our distrustful attitude toward the technical personnel was justified and was correct.

Now, in 1925, in the eighth year after the October Revolution, in the structure of the technical personnel, in its psychology, in its political attitude, there has occurred an enormous change and a complete revolution. Our intelligentsia, our technical strength has seen that the workers state has opened the greatest perspectives for science, for knowledge which only for the first time under the Soviet order will bring a firm base for the material wealth of the land.... Very often our relations with the technical personnel were determined not by the matters at hand but by old experiences. We very often approached the technicians, whether the highest or lowest personnel, as

1Vsesoiuznaiia Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia (bol'shevikov) v rezoliutsiiakh i resheciiakh s'ezdov, konferentsii, i plenumov TsK, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1941) 2:25.
mercenaries. This is incorrect.¹

Such an appeal did not pass unnoticed, for the preamble of the Congress's decree on industry referred directly to Dzerzhinskii's speech, while the decree itself acknowledged explicitly the importance of specialists in Soviet society:

The Third Congress of Soviets of the USSR acknowledges that on the knowledge, experience, goodwill and devotion to the matter of the revival of Soviet industry, on the part of technical and administrative personnel depends to a large extent the success of raising production, and therefore instructs the Administration to pay attention to the careful selection of those workers, to the raising of their qualifications, to reinforcing not only their theoretical knowledge but also practical experience, as well as to the increasing of cadres, creating for them comradely conditions at work, improving their living standards and settling their position in the general system of the administration of industry. ²

Given the priorities now assigned to the rehabilitation of heavy industry, the crying need of specialists for such a task, and the persistance of those prejudices which found their most obvious expression in the abuses known as spetsy-baiting, it is not unexpected that the government in 1925 took positive measures in support of specialists. In this respect, the law of May 1925 was a

¹Dzerzhinskii, 2: 156-157.
²Собрание законов и распоряжений СССР 1925, 35-251.
prelude to a Central Committee resolution of August-September 1925, which granted a virtual bill of rights to specialists.\(^1\) After the familiar prologue about the need for specialists to participate actively in the tasks of economic construction, the resolution then got down to essentials:

> It is necessary to struggle resolutely against groundless criticism of specialists in Party, trade, union, and other press organs, as well as in newspapers and wall newspapers, without at the same time refraining from business-like criticism of specialists on concrete grounds for authentic deficiencies in their work.\(^2\)

[It is necessary] to bring before the editors of newspapers and also before organizations of worker and village correspondents the task of establishing a more serious and responsible attitude toward the criticism of specialists and a more careful attitude to conclusions from those facts which are noted in the press, widely allowing specialists the opportunity to come forward in the press with explanations concerning one criticism or another of their work, and in particular, with refutations of incorrect charges against them appearing in the press.\(^2\)

Material conditions were not neglected as the Central Committee acknowledged the need:

\(^1\)The essential principles of the resolution were printed in *Pravda* on 23 August 1925. The final version of the resolution was ratified on 14 September 1925.

\(^2\)Resheniia partii i pravitel'stva po khoziáistvennym вопросам, 5 vols. (Moscow, 1967), 1: 496.
To recognize the necessity, with the aim of improving the living standards and conditions of work of specialists, to put forward to the Soviet order a series of measures providing for the establishment of privileges for the admission of specialists' children to institutes of learning, the improvement of living conditions of specialists, granting them tax privileges, and also the introduction of a system of individual and collective bonuses for achievements in the fields of improving production, etc.¹

The authority of specialists on the job was to be clearly defined:

[It is necessary] to establish such a system of allocation of functions between directors of an enterprise - Communists and specialists - in order to attain a complete precision in the functional duties and responsibilities of specialists at their work and not to give grounds for the transference of responsibility without sufficient grounds on the directors of trusts or economic organs and conversely, the responsibility of directors on specialists.²

Other sections of the resolution dealt with the scientific-technical sections of trade unions, the necessity of old specialists to share their knowledge and experience on the job with young specialists, and the encouragement of scientific and technical societies, publications, and public discussions of relevant issues. One point is of particular interest. The Pravda summary of the resolution noted that

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 497.
the Central Committee had decided "to establish for specialists a special salary scale in order to avoid the system of personal salaries"; this clause did not appear in the final version of 11 September 1925.¹

Two fundamental conclusions may be drawn from this document. Despite the contentions of some historians that this decree constituted proof positive of the regime's concern for its specialists, the very fact that it had to be passed indicates that much remained to be done to ameliorate the position of specialists, not the least of which was to defend them against groundless criticism and attacks. Secondly, the insistence on the distinct separation of the functions of Communists and specialists indicates that the Party had not forgotten Lenin's question "Who controls whom?" and was determined to carry through the decisions of the Twelfth Party Congress on Party control of management.

Dzerzhinskii was especially concerned that the letter and spirit of these laws be observed. On 15 November 1925, he wrote to G.I. Lomov, a member of the VSNKh presidium:

It is necessary for us to put into practice our Party line on specialists and technical personnel.... I consider the arrival of 60

¹Pravda, 23 August 1925. This problem of salaries will be considered in another section of this chapter.
specialists in our cell and the appearance of Khrennikov and others is the beginning of a new epoch, signifying the recognition of us, of our Party by the spetsy and the wish to work under our direction.¹

At the same time, he warned that "we must have Party authority and connections and not be spetsy-baiters."²

In a similar fashion, he told the Fourteenth Moscow Gubernia Conference on 11 December 1925:

I have already said that in order to fulfill these tasks of moving our industry to a new basis, we must carry out and carry through the directives of the Central Committee with respect to technical personnel. These directives must be followed. I must declare here frankly that if we have attained that level at which we now find ourselves and which we did not expect, then this is only because our Party by means of its correct administration was able to influence and was able to involve in our creative economic life the non-Party technical personnel. Between Party and non-Party, specialist and non-specialist we have such co-operation that is making our factories and plants truly one whole.³

The December 1925 Fourteenth Party Congress resolution on the work of trade unions reflected the concerns of the Central Committee in general and Dzerzhinskii in particular about specialists during the year:

¹"Dokumenty F.E. Dzerzhinskogo", p. 87. S.A. Khrennikov was eventually arrested in connection with the 1930 Prompartiiia affair. He was not brought to trial and his fate remains unknown.
²Ibid. ³Dzerzhinskii, 2:214.
Soviet employees (teachers, doctors, engineers, agronomists, etc.), in their aspirations and attitudes are beginning in essence to take a position for the Soviets. This requires of the trade unions and the Party a different approach to these categories of toilers; it is necessary systematically and steadily to lead a struggle with prejudices against specialists. A more thoughtful and comradely attitude toward Soviet employees is necessary....

Aside from acknowledging that prejudice against specialists was still very much extant, the resolution emphasized that honest specialists were indeed workers, a point that would be made explicitly by Stalin at the December 1927 Fifteenth Party Congress.

There is no doubt that Dzerzhinskii looked after his own people. Even a hostile critic such as Trotsky admitted that "[Dzerzhinskii] guarded his associates from criticism and interference with a passionate fanaticism that had no element of the personal in it, for he was completely dissolved in his work." While his perspective differed from Trotsky's, Valentinov would agree with this judgement, for he noted that Dzerzhinskii's goodwill toward technical personnel was dictated largely by "utilitarian-practical considerations." This was not to suggest that he

1VKP v rezoliutsiiakh, 2:69.
3Valentinov, p. 130.
regarded specialists merely as lemons to be squeezed and discarded. On the contrary, he attempted to reconcile them with the Soviet regime and even had hoped to create in Moscow "some kind of a club" where Communist and specialist could mingle and exchange ideas in a relaxed, informal atmosphere, with similar clubs to be created in the other industrial centres of the USSR.¹ At the same time, he remained convinced that the status of specialists needed to be enhanced in various concrete ways, and to this end he would be prepared "to give the specialists some kind of constitution at the plant and in the administration of the factory."² And certainly his impassioned defence of his people suggests that he regarded them as more than "lemons". Valintinov recorded an instance of his sharply rebuking a colleague who criticized his policy toward specialists:

Have you discovered America? Isn't it an established fact that we can administer the economy and the land only if the mass of non-Party specialists, many of whom are still far from the ideas of the Communist Party, do it together with us? It is necessary to take account of not only this fact, but another - without them, without this non-Party personnel, specialists and technicians, we would never have escaped from the pit of 1921.³

On another occasion, he delivered a blast against

¹Ibid., p. 133. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 134.
Larin who had recently accused VSNKh of being Menshevik influenced. Recalling Lenin's comment on how Larin loved to gossip, he proceeded to analyze the composition of the responsible workers at VSNKh:

The first layer are our Communists, to be found in the minority. The second layer are non-Party, leading economic, planning, controlling, inventive, and scholarly work. And the third layer are engineering-technical, production personnel. Our former Mensheviks, for better or for worse, have all the same gone to the Marxist school and have a knowledge of general economic questions. This explains their influence on the second layer of VSNKh workers. Besides, precisely because they have gone to the Marxist school, they are closer to us than the non-Party spetsy-industrialists, many of whom formerly had adhered very much to right convictions. Without the help of spetsy engineers and technicians, of course we shall be able neither to rehabilitate nor to expand our industry, but their technology conceals social-economic problems....

Support did not mean that Dzerzhinskii was prepared to whitewash his people. The later to be vilified "Menshevik planners", who were at least Marxist, were preferable to narrow experts who did not understand the implications of their own technology. On other occasions, he complained of the "caste"-consciousness of certain specialists, of "self-loving 'recognized' specialists", of

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1Ibid., pp. 138-139.
"technical personnel with old traditions."¹ To encourage initiative did not mean to permit absolute freedom, for he was firmly convinced of the need to maintain the leading role of the Party at all levels of economic and political administration, and as Valentinov noted, took pains to impress this upon his staff.²

In the opinion of R.W. Davies, one of the most impressive achievements of Dzerzhinskii was to win the confidence of professional engineers for despite his lack of technical training, he became a kind of a bridge between the Party and the VSNKh experts.³ His sudden death in July 1926 was keenly felt by the specialists, one of whom said of him: "He made us into people again."⁴ The old Bolshevik I.I. Iavorskii recalled in 1961 how Dzerzhinskii knew how to value the "worker-specialists" and make good use of their advice.⁵ Valentinov recalled how experts said:

¹Dzerzhinskii, 2:117; "Dokumenty F.E. Dzerzhinskogo", pp. 69-84.
²Valentinov, p. 133.
It's too bad, Dzerzhinskii's death! We could work well with him. He valued and defended us specialists. Under him we could sleep soundly. We weren't afraid of being taken away by the Black Maria.¹

Substantially the same sentiments were expressed in a Pravda article commemorating the first anniversary of his death:

...in the matter of putting into effect the directives of the Party and administration with respect to specialists, he devoted not only a great part of his characteristic feverish energy, but also his personal benevolent attitude to the specialists, with whom he did not avoid contact and with many of whom he managed to become closely acquainted at work. F.E. knew how to value people of this type....²

Under such circumstances:

It is perfectly natural that such a kind of attitude on the part of F.E. towards the specialists would call forth the most profound respect for him not only as the official head of industry and as an enthusiast for industrialization, but also for his individual human disposition and trust.³

Despite the efforts of Dzerzhinskii and like-

¹Valentinov, p. 101. It is interesting to note that when Trotsky became head of NTO in 1924, he was utterly unable to get along with the VSNKh specialists in the opinion of Valentinov (pp. 214-218). Surely this is strange for a man who had been so effective in attracting the military specialists during the civil war.

²Pravda, 20 July 1927. ³Ibid.
minded colleagues, the problem of spetsya-baiting was far from being eradicated. Some interesting evidence of its persistence is provided by the Smolensk Archive.¹ For example a report from the Party cell at the Kalinin plant on 26 January 1926 noted:

There were observed cases of misunderstanding [on the part] of individual comrades, in particular among members of the RKP(b), of abnormal attitudes toward administrative-technical personnel; the latter consists of groundless attacks and of non-fulfilment of the directives of the TsK of our Party on specialists.²

In a similar vein, the report of the Production and Transportation Cells of the Smolensk guberniia organization of the VKP(b) noted "abnormal relations towards specialists on the part of workers" and the existence even of explicit anti-specialist attitudes among Party and non-Party workers alike; indeed, specialists at the plant encountered difficulty in having their advice and their very presence in the plant accepted in a "normal" way.³ While historians such as S.A. Fediukin may attempt to attribute spetsya-baiting to a culturally-backward minority of the working class, a consequence


²Smolenskii Oblastnoi komitet: Partiinyi archiv. R5, WKP27.

³Ibid., R.34, WKP 294.
of the unfortunate legacy of capitalism, the Smolensk Archive indicates that many rank and file Party members were among the worst offenders with respect to flouting directives on specialists.\textsuperscript{1} At the Seventh All-Union Trade Union Congress of December 1926, delegate Stroev representing VMBIT reported that anti-specialist violence on the part of workers was not yet a thing of the past:

Recently there have become more frequent excesses which have occurred between engineering-technical workers on the one hand, and individual union members-workers on the other. This is a most grievous occurrence. We are perfectly aware that this formerly was always explained by lack of culture and in this respect our unions carried out the appropriate explanatory work on the significance and role of engineers. But despite the fact that the unions advanced this work, these excesses did not cease. They are even taking on here and there the colour of hooliganism. I consider that the present Congress, on this occasion must pronounce itself. It should say that hooligan elements have no place among union members. This is of the utmost importance because the tendency of engineering-technical workers in factories and plants where these excesses are happening to get out is already making itself felt.\textsuperscript{2}

Such complaints in the tenth year of Soviet power serve only to substantiate E.H. Carr's conclusion that at the

\textsuperscript{1}S.A. Feduliuk, Velikii Oktiabr' i intellektual'nostiia (Moscow, 1972), pp. 300-302.

\textsuperscript{2}Sed'moi s'ezd professional'nykh soiuzov SSSR: Stenograficheskii otchet (Moscow, 1927), p. 124.
factory level, bad relations between specialists and workers were chronic.\(^1\)

If *spetsy*-baiting remained a problem, then one of its roots was surely the enduring question of high salaries for specialists. The decree of December 1920 (*SU 1920, 98-520*) had removed the salaries of technical, scientific, and administrative personnel from existing wage agreements, while the decree of September 1921 (*SU 1921, 67-513*) had repudiated explicitly the principle of wage-levelling.\(^2\) In the seventeen-grade wage scale accepted by the trade unions in 1921, the highest eight were reserved for clerical and administrative staff with the ratio between the lowest and highest grade being 1:8.\(^3\) In April 1923, specialists employed by enterprises run on the principle of * khozraschet* were to be granted bonuses (*tantièmes*) based on net profits at year end.\(^4\) Specialists made a major gain in November 1923 when a system of "personal" salaries separate and distinct from existing collective agreements and general wage funds was implemented while at the same time all remaining ceilings

\(^1\) Carr, *Planned Economy*, 1: 578.

\(^2\) The significance of these two decrees has been analyzed in Chapters IV and VI respectively.

\(^3\) Carr, *Socialism*, 1: 376.

\(^4\) *Sobranie u zakonenii i raspobizheni rabochego i khrestianskogo pravitel'stva* 1923, 29-336.
which had been imposed on specialists' salaries were abolished. This decree effectively created two classes of specialists: those covered by the general salary-scales (or, by 1926, state-decreed salaries) and the fortunate minority in receipt of "personal" salaries.

Ironically, the November 1923 law had been preceded by a vigorous press campaign waged largely by the trade unions against the bonus system and high salaries. To some extent, these protests appear to have had some effect for hard upon the initially unpopular general wage reform of April 1924, "personal" salaries for specialists were reduced by ten percent for those earning 100 to 150 rubles per month and by twenty percent for those earning over 150 rubles. In May 1924, a ceiling on specialists' salaries was re-imposed, any salary in excess of 250 rubles per month requiring the express consent of VSNK. While these measures seemed to represent a concession to worker resentment at specialists' high salaries, a severe critic might have dismissed them as mere tokenism: the principle of bonuses was

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1MU 1924, 11-90.


4Dewar, p. 124.
not undermined; the institution of "personal" salaries remained, the ceilings of which could be exceeded by special permission; and the rank-and-file specialists continued to enjoy the monetary benefits of the upper levels of the general wage scale.\footnote{It is interesting to note that the Sixth Trade Union Congress of December 1924 explicitly recommended the bonus system; see Shestoi s"ezd professional'nykh sciuzov SSSR: Stenograficheski otchet (Moscow, 1925), pp. 460-461.}

Workers might grumble and latter-day historians criticize, but there were contemporaries who believed this regulation of specialists' salaries to be useful and beneficial. An article in the Narkomtrud journal Voprosy truda praised the law of November 1923 for restoring a modicum of order to what had been an increasingly anarchical situation. Prior to the reform, "cadres of specialists increased not [only] by the day but by the hour" and they had been in the receipt of salaries which had made established maximums meaningless. Now that a system of "personal" salaries had been introduced, specialists would be assured of appropriate remuneration for creative work while directors would acquire greater "freedom to manoeuvre", for inasmuch as these "personal" salaries were to be paid from a spetsfond strictly proportional to the total wages bill of the enterprise, it would be considerably easier for directors to control the
total number and individual amounts of such salaries. In this respect, the law of April 1924 had a salutary effect in controlling salaries.\(^1\)

Unfortunately, some workers did not understand the significance of these recent measures:

At workers' meetings, the abnormalities of the putting into effect of specialists' salaries has almost always been mentioned. Now excessive salaries and "inflated" spetsy have doubtlessly provoked and naturally will provoke hostility on the part of the working mass.\(^2\)

Now that positive measures had been taken to control specialists' salaries, it was incumbent upon the unions to take cognizance of them and inform their membership accordingly.\(^3\)

A year later, Voprosy truda was less optimistic. Complaints in the press about specialists' salaries were declared "not without fundation" for "in the area of the payment of specialists' work, we truly have up to now sufficient confusion and muddle." One example was afforded by an analysis of 4075 "personal agreements" signed between specialists and enterprises and institutions during the first six months of 1925: Of this total, no less than 3809, i.e. 93.4 percent were for categories fifteen to seventeen on the general salary scale, which begged the conclusion that

\(^1\)Voprosy truda, no. 7-8 (1924), pp. 43-44.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 44.  \(^3\)Ibid., p. 45.
specialists were being given disguised salary increases by virtue of being over-classified. At the same time, the article noted union proposals to abolish "personal" salaries and the spetsfond and either to limit specialists to the existing seventeen-grade wage scale, or as the Miner's Union proposed, to integrate their salaries into a new twenty-five step wage structure. The article concluded with yet another call for a review and reconsideration of the whole question.¹

Specialists were not without their supporters. As noted above, Dzerzhinskii believed that most specialists were underpaid in relation to the value of the work they performed and told as much to the presidium of VSNKh early in 1925. Other members evidently must have agreed with him, for in July 1925 VSNKh passed a decree which noted that the remuneration of specialists had not kept pace with the growing importance of their work; accordingly, salaries should henceforth correspond to the importance of the work performed and bonuses should be awarded for technical or economic improvements and cutting costs.² A new bonus system was indeed implemented but was suspended temporarily in March 1926 following protests against specialists'...

¹Voprosy truda, no. 9 (1925), pp. 20-23.
²Dewar, p. 252.
privileges; however, a system of "incentive payments" for leading technical and administrative personnel was instituted in March 1927.¹

An article in a 1927 issue of the VTsSPS journal Vestnik truda noted that the question of specialists’ salaries had still not been properly resolved and demanded a full and open discussion to clear up the problem for once and for all.²

As noted above, the Central Committee had considered in August 1925 the possibility of a distinct salary scale for specialists that would eliminate "personal" salaries, but the text of the resolution passed in September made no mention of this and the proposal appeared to have been dropped. If this project was stillborn, then two new policies would emerge to determine the structure of specialists' salaries. Between 1925 and 1927, a system of state-decreed salaries for employees of state institutions and enterprises was gradually implemented, with appropriate provisions for the payment of exceptional salaries to persons with high qualifications.³ At the same time, complaints at the November 1924 Sixth Trade Union Congress about high salaries for


²Vestnik truda, no. 2 (1927), p. 4.

³Carr, Socialism, 1: 381-382; Dewar, pp. 132-134.
specialists, the ratio of 1:8 in the seventeen-step wage scale, and the need to expand this wage scale to accommodate the salary needs of specialists led to a government policy of excluding technicians, specialists, and employees from the general wage scales, i.e., the separation of salaries from wages. High salaries continued to be paid from special funds.\footnote{Shestoi s"ezd, pp. 613-615; Dewar, pp. 134-135.} By 1927, there existed a variety of systems for the remuneration of specialists - "personal" salaries, state decreed salaries, salaries based on industrial scales, bonuses and incentives of different types, income from consultation and project work - the net consequence of which was to place the specialist in economic position distinctly superior to that of the ordinary worker.\footnote{According to E.H. Carr, information about the income of specialists is scarce and is complicated by wide variations. For example, an average worker in 1927 could expect to earn 63 rubles per month while a rank-and-file specialist earned 115 rubles. Specialists who were highly qualified or held responsible positions could easily earn over 300 rubles per month in 1926 and the decree of 1927 ordering the registration with Narkomtrud of salaries in excess of 360 rubles per month suggests that anything less was normal. The very top specialists could earn up to 1500 rubles per month from all sources (Foundations 1: 602-604). S.A. Fedikuin claims that an ordinary specialist in the metallurgical industry could expect to earn a basic salary of 165 rubles per month in 1925 while the highly-qualified experts could expect salaries of 500-600 rubles per month (Sovietskaia vlast', p. 156).}
Thanks largely to the energetic efforts of Lenin and his like-minded colleagues, specialists had come to be recognized as an essential part of the Soviet order during the NEP years. Their status and authority had been determined by positive legislation, and despite incidents of spetsy-baiting and protests against high salaries on the one hand, or grumblings about the Soviet system on the other, specialists and Communists were on the whole prepared to co-operate with each other without many of the reservations which had characterized their relations during the period of civil war. Such co-operation was distinguished by both mutual accommodation and criticism as each side sought to convince the other of its values.

Consistent with Lenin's opinion that the question of specialists be given wide discussion and be brought before the masses, the Soviet daily and periodical press took care to acquaint its readership with various aspects of the question. In 1922 and 1923 for example, Pravda ran a series of articles entitled "Our Administrators", brief pen-sketches of industrial directors at work. While most publicity was accorded to the "comrade-directors", the old specialists were not forgotten. In Pravda of 29 March 1923, a fabkor wrote to praise the work of old specialist Engineer Vasil'ev, who although not a Communist, was exemplary in his active
involvement in production work - "it's a pity we have so few specialists like Engineer Vasil'ev."¹ In a similar vein, Izvestiia of 3 May 1923 featured an article on "Ural spetsy." The author began by deploring the general shortage of experts available to industry in the Urals, for a substantial number of them had either retreated eastward with Kolchak or else preferred to go to Moscow and work in the offices of the control organs. Those who remained were the subjects of a series of brief pen-sketches. One old professor of metallurgy, nicknamed the "Black-Hundred Bolshevik", was doing outstanding work because of his total devotion to science and his profession - "if he stayed in the Urals it was not because we, the Bolsheviks, pleased him; no, he rather loves the Urals and his furnace." Another engineer, possessed of only average abilities, was more useful to the plant because of his hard work and enthusiasm than some wunderkind recently sent out from Moscow.²

If specialists received praise, so also would they be criticized. I. Ia. Trifonov contends that a report for the economic year 1921-1922 accused "NEP men and their collaborators from among the bourgeois specialists" of wasting

¹Pravda, 29 March 1923.
²Izvestiia, 3 May 1923. The whole article has a certain implicit contempt for citified engineers.
state property with an estimated value of 150-200 million gold rubles.¹ In March 1923, the Central Committee theses on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Communist Party warned the "old bourgeois intelligentsia" not to place their hopes in a "rebirth of bourgeois ideology" simply because NEP involved elements of capitalism.² At the November 1923 First All-Russian Congress of Scientific Workers, Zinov'ev treated the delegates to a prolonged scolding of the intelligentsia for their past political sins, especially their post-October sabotage wherein they used their "monopoly of knowledge against the Revolution." After six years of Soviet power, the coming-over of the intelligentsia was to be welcomed and the government should certainly encourage this process. On the other hand, their should be no illusions about the true political essence of this coming-over:

It is often said now that the intelligentsia, the representatives of science, have accepted the October Revolution. This would be perhaps very risky to maintain with respect to the entire intelligentsia. We say, again guardedly, that when a significant part of the intelligentsia thinks that it has accepted the October Revolution, in reality it has accepted in the meantime only NEP from the October Revolution.³

¹I. Ia. Trifonov, Likvidatsiia ekspluatatorskikh klassov v SSSR (Moscow, 1975), p. 201. No information about whether this report was acted upon is provided by the author, who is generally hostile toward the old specialists.

²Pravda, 1 March 1923. ³Pravda, 25 November 1923.
This did not mean that the intelligentsia should be lumped together with the NEP men; rather, they unavoidably see NEP as "more reasonable, more feasible, more appropriate to the historical moment" than world revolution.\footnote{Despite the criticism levelled by Zinov'ev, Pravda of 30 November 1923 carried an article clearly aimed at the Russian emigration in which scientists at the Congress praised the work of the government in encouraging science.}

Criticism of specialists' attitudes also appeared in the VTsSPS journal Vestnik truda. Beginning with the disclaimer that he had no intention of discussing the "spetsya question" inasmuch as it had been resolved by the Party, the author proposed instead to deal with the practical question of specialists at work. In spite of his disclaimer, the author began by rehashing all the stale arguments about specialists' attitudes. Thus a certain number of engineers were utterly unconvinced that the Soviet power was capable of accomplishing fundamental economic tasks, but their hostility was more implicit than overt; the second and probably largest group entered into their work conscientiously without really understanding the significance of the policies and goals of the Soviet republic; and finally there was a small group of enthusiasts who realized that they were being called upon to build a new socialist order and
worked accordingly. These preliminaries finished, the author did succeed in making two interesting points. The first was the absolute necessity of a normal attitude between the chief engineer and the (Red) director of a plant—almost certainly an admission that the relations between these two often left much to be desired. At the same time, more should be expected from technical personnel:

It's high time to put an end to the bad practice of "bribing" spetsy with high salaries. It is necessary to pay for work and not only for the diploma.¹

While this article can hardly be compared with the Workers' Opposition manifesto, it nevertheless drove home the point that specialists were not beyond reproach in the matters of attitudes, productivity, and salaries.²

In general, specialists encountered at the formal, official level more support than criticism. For example, an article in the Party journal Bol'shevik directed against

¹ Vestnik truda, no. 4 (1923), p. 42.

² At the January 1924 Thirteenth Party Conference, Mikoian told the delegates about a specialist who demanded as condition of his employment an entire series of extravagant concessions, including the right to graze a cow on the factory grounds. The co-operative that was running the factory agreed to these terms, but in the meantime the specialist had accepted an even better offer. See Carr, Interregnum, p. 50.
A.A. Bogdanov and the "Workers' Truth" opposition movement did not fail to accuse them of "proclaiming here, there, and everywhere a struggle against the technical and organizational intelligentsia." In a similar vein, the STO newspaper Ekonomicheskaia zhizn' felt constrained to reply to some harsh criticism of specialists in the trade-union newspaper Trud. It was simply untrue to write off specialists as representative of "dry formalism and the psychology of soulless bureaucracy" or to allege that "they have worked out for themselves two languages: one for internal usage and the other for conversation with Party and trade-union workers" and that they prefer paperwork to practical work. To insist that "our specialists are joined to the thought that there is no other way to increase production besides the merciless and illegal exploitation of workers" was pure fabrication. Granted that, most specialists were products of the old capitalist system, but "it is impossible to deny a providential turning-point" as the majority of these people are increasingly identifying Soviet construction with their own interests. Encouraging as this trend may be, much remained to be done to create "an atmosphere of close comradely collaboration."  

1Bol'shevik, no. 7-8 (1924), p. 39.

2Ekonomicheskaia zhizn', 29 November 1924. The original Trud article was not available to the author.
The identical theme had been seized upon at the Sixth Trade Union Congress of November 1924, where despite critical articles in the trade union press and complaints against specialists' salaries, the delegates passed a resolution instructing factory committees to work for good relations with the specialists:

An especially responsible role in the work for raising productivity falls to the factory administration, from whom is demanded initiative, energy and a thoughtful attitude to the small details of factory life. Therefore it is necessary for the unions to pay particular attention to the selection and promotion of plant technical personnel in the first place from among the workers and to the establishment of normal, business-like, and comradely attitudes between specialists on the one hand and the working masses and their organizations on the other.¹

An optimistic article in the last number of Vestnik truda for 1924 argued that a new and positive attitude toward Soviet power was clearly evident among the intelligentsia, which offered a unique opportunity for the trade unions to bring together the proletariat and the "working intelligentsia", to bridge the gap now existing between practical and intellectual workers. This would require some considerable effort, for if it was no secret that working conditions and standards of living were not all that they should be for intellectual workers, so also did the masses

¹Shestoi s"ezd, p. 461.
perceive them as using their monopoly of specialized knowledge to exact high salaries and other concessions. Specialists should therefore identify themselves more closely with the workers' state and be aware of the social significance of their work:

The intellectual worker must be, above all, a public person [obshchestvennik], not only in the carrying out of assigned tasks, but in the consciousness of his public significance, in keeping in mind the influence of his work upon public attitudes, on the economy, on the whole of public life.¹

Trade unions had an essential role to play, for they were the means by which intellectual workers could effect a reconciliation with the masses:

Before the unions therefore stands a most important task - to intensify the revelation of the public interests of the intellectual workers, to direct their public energy in the direction of fulfilling tasks essential to the interests of the working class, and to assist to the maximum their rapprochement with proletarian society as a whole.²

This same theme of the rapprochement of specialists with the workers' state was brought up in Rykov's speech to the First Congress of the All-Russian Association of Engineers (VAI). Noting that the majority of specialists had adapted themselves to the new regime, he defended them against

¹Vestnik truda, no. 11-12 (1924), p. 61.
²Ibid., p. 62.
charges of "restorationism" and inasmuch as their efforts were essential to the building of socialism, he declared that:

In our conditions, the specialist, the engineer, the man of science and technology must possess complete independence and freedom to express his opinions on questions of science and technology without any kind of subservience to society.... Complete independence of opinion in these matters must be binding for every specialist who sincerely wishes to work on the reconstruction of the economy at the present time.\footnote{Izvestiia, 4 December 1924.}

Would Lenin, Krasin, or Dzerzhinskii have gone so far in defending the autonomy of the specialist?

The fact remains that official concern for the welfare of specialists and the necessity to reconcile them with the Soviet order was not a flash in the pan peculiar to the latter months of 1924, for this same concern was evident throughout the following year. In March 1925, the Central Executive Committee of the USSR broke with precedent to meet in Tiflis, Georgia. At its third session of 5 March 1925, it received a delegation of Georgian doctors whose address expressed their willingness to devote their "strength, knowledge, skill and energy" to the service of the Soviet power. In his reply on behalf of the Executive Committee, G.I. Petrovskii thanked the "comrade-doctors", welcomed the
"union of labour and science", and proclaimed, "Long live the new helpers in the achievement of Communism - the Transcaucasian intelligentsia." Even allowing for the rhetoric appropriate to such moments, the principle that had been articulated in various ways during the preceding eighteen months came across clearly: conscientious specialists must not be regarded as an alien but necessary remnant of the dead past but rather an integral part of the new Soviet order.

As noted above, the Third Congress of Soviets of the USSR held in May 1925 heard Dzerzhinskii's powerful speech analyzing the change of attitude on the part of the technical personnel and condemning those who would treat them like mercenaries. His was not a solitary voice, for Rykov had spoken before him and had made substantially the same point:

It is necessary to apply science and Western-European technology to all branches of our economy. Necessary for this are knowledgeable people, intelligentsia, specialists without whose aid there is no possibility of building tractors, of electrifying the land... Recent years have shown that the broadest mass of the intelligentsia has found a place on the side of sincere and honest work with the Soviets...2

1Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet SSSR 2 sozyva: Stenograficheskii otchet (Moscow, 1925), pp. 144-146.

2Tretii s"ezd Sovetov SSSR: Stenograficheskii otchet (Moscow, 1925), p. 51.
In the course of the budget debate, Rykov supported the policy of paying good salaries to the specialists.\(^1\) Other delegates expressed views similar to those of Dzerzhinskii and Rykov and the Congress, as noted above, finished by passing a resolution with the force of law recognizing the importance of specialists for socialist construction and the necessity of creating the optimum conditions for their work.\(^2\)

The same ideas were expressed in an otherwise pedestrian article in Pravda on the need to prepare new cadres of Red specialists: despite the difficulties of building socialism with experts educated under the old order, "hundreds of thousands of engineers, agronomists, and teachers are convinced from experience that the socialism we are building is not in vain...."\(^3\)

At the Fourteenth Moscow Guberniia Party Conference of December 1925, Rykov mounted the rostrum to reiterate what was by then the familiar theme of the increasing support

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 154.

\(^2\)For an example of such support, see Ibid., p. 28 for the views of delegate Portenko.

\(^3\)Pravda, 29 November 1925. The article may have been pedestrian, but the shortage of specialists was very real. The 1926 general census enumerated only 37,988 "managing personnel" and 81,241 "engineering-technical personnel". Vsegoiuznaia Perepis' Naselenia 1926 goda: tom 34 (Moscow, 1930), p. 144.
of the intelligentsia for socialist construction:

In this change of attitude toward us on the part of the intelligentsia we have a tremendous plus as regards the construction of the entire economy and all the new culture directly in connection with the tremendous application of the intelligentsia's work, and it is impossible to solve with any success the tasks of the coming years without the recruiting of specialists—engineers, doctors, teachers.¹

Rykov then followed through by justifying higher salaries for specialists at the December 1925 Fourteenth Party Congress, where the following exchange ensued:

And if in the labour market, in one section or another a specialist begins to disappear, then in the condition of the absence of militarization of labour, there is a single method to attract workers, and this is to raise the salaries for specialized work. (Stalin: "Correct!").²

Even the President of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, Mikhail I. Kalinin felt obliged to address himself to the question, for at a doctors' conference of December 1925, he declared that:

Communism is being created in the provinces by the man who says: "I am against Communism, decidedly against Communism." But by his work that very man is helping the Communist cause, for at present the Communist cause signifies in medicine, for example, raising the people's health.... It is precisely in

¹Pravda, 9 December 1925.
²XLIV s"ezd Vsesoiuzoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii(b): Stenograficheskii otchet (Moscow, 1926), p. 799.
this that the struggle of Communism lies under the Soviet regime Communist work is being performed by everybody who is working honourably, conscientiously, in his own field.  

Such "cheerful indifference" (Joravsky's phrase) was not typical of the Soviet leadership as a whole but given the efforts of the last two years to bring about an identification between the specialists and the goals of socialist construction, Kalinin's attitude was not entirely incongruous.

Specialists and government continued their rapprochement throughout 1926. One very important concession made to the specialists was the abandonment of the policy of komandirovanie, a quota system originally intended to fill the universities with politically and socially reliable proletarian and Communist students, in favour of a system of competitive admissions. While complaints from VSNKh about the poor quality of recent university graduates certainly influenced the government's decision, so also may this policy be interpreted as a concession to the specialists since they could be expected to work better if the access of their


2This should be taken to indicate a movement toward utter latitudinarianism in matters of ideology. As noted above, the Smena vekh publications were suppressed in March 1926.
children to university were not restricted.¹

Perhaps the most important economic event of the year was the proclamation on 25 April 1926 of the "regime of economy" by the Party Central Committee. Intended to promote industrialization without having to place excessive pressures on the peasants, it aimed at the reduction of industrial costs by means of stringent economies, increased labour productivity, and improved labour discipline.²

Suffice it to say that responsibility for implementing this policy on a practical level would fall squarely on the shoulders of factory directors and management personnel, in particular the technical specialists. There can be little doubt that Stalin had this in mind when at the Central Committee plenum of 13 April 1926 he condemned those who engaged in groundless criticism of managers:

> It has been observed among us of late [the trend] to whip managers, which is demoralizing; moreover, frequently a single occurrence of a negative character is inclined to extend to the entire cadre of managers. Anyone who feels like it quite often finds it necessary to kick the managers accusing them of all the deadly sins.³


³I.V. Stalin, Sochinenija, vol. 8: "O khoziaistvennom polozhenii Sovetskogo Soiuza i politike partii" (Moscow, 1948), p. 139.
Not unexpectedly, the regime of economy inspired tremendous resentment among the workers, much of it directed against the specialists whom they regarded "both as the principle agents and as the beneficiaries of the regime of economy and of rationalization."¹ Criticism from within and without the Party impelled SNK to issue on 16 August 1926 a declaration under the signatures of Stalin, Rykov, and Kuibyshev. While re-affirming the government's determination to carry through its economic measures, the declaration nevertheless took severely to task certain unnamed "higher ranks" who in the name of implementing the regime had committed an entire series of unconscionable abuses against the workers and the Soviet state. At the same time, the declaration was careful to note that such individuals "must not by any means be confused with conscientious specialists devoted to their job."² Despite its consistency with Party policy, it is difficult to believe that this single phrase would influence in any meaningful way worker attitudes towards specialists who appeared in every way better off than themselves.

Relations between workers and specialists were an

² Direktivy KPSS i sovetskogo pravitel'stva po khoziaistvennym voprosam, 1917-1928 gody (Moscow, 1957), pp. 593-594.
important topic of discussion in the early months of 1927. At the Twenty-Fourth Leningrad Guberniia Party Conference, Bukharin considered it necessary to defend the *spetsy*:

The attraction of scholars and the technical intelligentsia to a greater extent than before must become one of our most urgent concerns. We will fight as before against such unhealthy occurrence as "spetsy-baiting", although new workers of the semi-rural [*poluderevenskii*] type will cry out against the *spetsy* on the job and off the job. Absolute nonsense are all kinds of rumours which in particular are going around in Leningrad, that our Party wishes to alter its course with respect to the intelligentsia and return to the "norms" which existed in 1918, that we want the intelligentsia to feed on herring and to regard them as saboteurs.¹

It is tempting to speculate whether these unfounded rumours actually originated among the rank-and-file Party members, and whether this is in any way related to the "Lenin enrollment" of 1924-1925 of some 200,000 "bench-workers" into the Party, i.e., were these new proletarian recruits responsible for anti-specialist sentiments among the lower echelons of the Party?² This author has not yet discovered sufficient evidence to substantiate entirely to his satisfaction such a hypothesis, but the very fact that

¹*Pravda*, 2 February 1927.

Bukharin felt constrained to deny such rumours at a time when the official policy towards the specialists was one of conciliation suggests strongly that such speculation may well have originated from among the lower echelons of the Party.\textsuperscript{1}

Bukharin's attempt to attribute spetsy-baiting to backward workers fresh from the village was simply too facile. At the Third All-Union Congress of Engineers and Technicians, Tomskii deplored the fact that incidents of spetsy-baiting continued to break out but also insisted that sometimes such outbreaks were provoked by "arrogant and tactless technical personnel."\textsuperscript{2} For delegates who expected to hear more soothing platitudes about the reconciliation of government and specialist, V.V. Kuibyshev's speech must have come as a disappointment. It was not enough merely to be competent or to have a benevolent attitude toward the Soviet power; rather, engineers must be actively committed toward the goals of the regime:

\begin{quote}
Our engineer must be not simply an executor of orders; he is obliged critically to weigh them and to give a clear account in all matters
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{2}Pravda, 7 April 1927.
of the economic and social-political life of the country.... The social conditions in our country powerfully demand of the engineer accommodation to its peculiarities.... Every engineer must be not only a technician but also a public person, knowing how to connect the responsibility laid on him with all the complexity of our social-political conditions.1

Kuibyshev did sugar the pill by admitting that "the resolutions of the Central Committee on specialists have not been completely carried out", but his advice on how to discourage spetsy-baiting was of small comfort to traditional-minded engineers: "more active work by engineers in workers' organizations - this will insure them against excesses."2 In a word, professionalism was necessary but not sufficient and Kuibyshev was indicating clearly that in the future engineers would be expected to identify themselves far more actively with the goals and policies of the Soviet order; "internal emigration" and professional passivity would henceforth be less and less tolerated.3 Despite this warning, the ideological gulf between the regime and the old specialists remained as wide as ever, for the Congress's resolution on Kuibyshev's speech failed utterly to come to

1Pravda, 12 April 1927. 2Ibid. 3For a discussion of the idea of "internal emigration", see Raymond A. Bauer, Alex Inkeles, and Clyde Kluckhohn, How the Soviet System Works (New York, 1956), p. 169.
grips with his main idea, substituting instead a series of
vacuous platitudes on the role of experts in economic con-
struction for a serious consideration of the challenge laid
before it. On one topic, however, the resolution was
crystal-clear and straight to the point — "the Congress
acknowledges that attitudes between workers and engineers
on the job are still not always normal and entirely satis-
factory."¹

Kuibyshev's speech was nothing less than a dress
rehearsal for a much blunter version which he would deliver
a week later to the Fourth Congress of Soviets of the USSR.
Without any danger of offending the mass sensibilities of
engineers and technicians, he could state unequivocally:

We must demand of the technical personnel
a significantly greater economic horizon,
because under our conditions every technician
must be a public person. We cannot move
forward quickly should every technician fulfill
his responsibilities formally, conventionally,
bureaucratically.... If there will be a
formal routine attitude and if only that which
is given will be carried out, if the engineer
will not inquisitively search for himself, if
the technician will not suggest that which
should be done, if they - technician and engineer
will not be public persons who themselves are
interested in developing production, then
perfectly naturally we very much will lose
tempo, we will not be utilizing all experience

¹Pravda, 15 April 1927.
and knowledge.  

The conclusion was obvious — "we must therefore demand that engineers and technicians carry through measures and methods appropriate to our regime." Old methods and attitudes would no longer do.

Behind this declaration of war on professional time-serving and non-involvement in public life lay a significant principle which could easily be overlooked if this speech is interpreted only as a preliminary to the Shakhty and Prompartiia affairs. In demanding that engineers and technicians increasingly take the initiative, Kuibyshev was actually seeking to augment and enhance their position in the life of the plant. Further corroboration for this interpretation may be found in the Congress's resolution on industrialization:

In connection with strengthening the role of technical personnel, placing on them the greatest responsibility, it is necessary to put into effect as rapidly as possible measures for the regulation of the utilization of engineering-technical workers in enterprises. Economic organs, trade unions, and the broad mass of workers must create those conditions of work for technical personnel which would

1 SSSR. 4 s"ezd Sovetov: Stenograficheskii otchet (Moscow, 1927), pp. 396-397. These remarks were interpolated by a horror-story about an engineer who had declared that he merely followed orders, not caring less whether what was produced was right or not.

2 Ibid., p. 398.
stimulate the fulfilment of the tremendous task standing before them of the correct, scientific-technical maintenance and management of industry.¹

To take the initiative was all very well in theory, but to do so in practice meant running considerable risks. In a direct reply to Kuybyshev, G.I. Lomov, an Old Bolshevik and chairman of Donugol, asserted that engineers and technicians were afraid to take any initiative because of fear of investigation and possible punishment:

The element of the unexpected, the element of risk can be reduced to a greater or lesser extent, but in the final analysis it cannot be eliminated. . . . And it is necessary to state that among us on the job, when engineers and technicians attempt to introduce something new for production, every one of them thinks less that he will be successful than that he will encounter something unexpected that will ruin the affair and if there will be a breakdown, then "there'll come a thousand commissions, he'll answer to all of them, it's best to give up innovation and rationalization of production - it'll be easier!" At the time of my joining Donbas, engineers and technicians repeatedly explained that they were often afraid of the arrival of new assemblies, new machinery and often thought - couldn't we foist this machinery on some other plant?²

Lomov insisted that technical specialists feared

¹S"ezdy sovetov Soiuza SSR, soiuzykh i avtonomnykh sovetskikh sotsialisticheskikh republik: Sbornik dokumentov, 3 vols. (Moscow, 1959-1960), 3: 121-122. This same resolution exhorted technical personnel to have a "broad economic horizon."

²Pravda, 8 May 1927.
responsibility and the taking of risks; moreover, one of his Communist managers had told him:

All the pit managers in charge of mining work, the chief engineers, are before the courts, of whom some have 2-3 cases [pending] and others-5.... The atmosphere of constantly being before the courts creates among the technical personnel an oppressive attitude.... The result of this attitude is that within the course of three months we have never had such oppressed and fearful managers in the Donbas plants.¹

Lomov concluded that getting the best from engineers and technicians was not simply a matter of paying them well, but involved also creating conditions of work where they would not be afraid to take initiatives, for "it is impossible to crush the element of scope, the element of risk among engineers and technicians." Kuibyshev's and Lomov's remarks are less contradictory than complementary, and provide a useful corrective to some of the official clichés that had been circulating in recent years.

If Bukharin felt compelled to scotch disconcerting rumours, Kuibyshev to demand more public involvement and initiative, and Lomov to point out what could happen to those who actually did take initiatives, then Lunacharskii chose

¹Ibid.
to warn the professional intelligentsia against overweening pride and presumption. In an article published in 1927, he expressed concern that

...the intelligentsia has become the representative of a general political mentality approximate to democracy and to a sufficiently softened form of the proletarian dictatorship; the intelligentsia is waiting for an appeal from the Soviet power for the most valuable elements of the aristocracy of the mind [to enter] the highest organs of government. This kind of talk is dangerous...1

Above all, they dare not entertain any senseless dreams that a meritocracy of the intelligentsia (intelligentsiokratiiia) could some day usurp the leading role of the Party.2

Regardless of these discordant notes, official policy toward specialists continued to stress the themes of reconciliation and convergence. Even amidst the tumult of the December 1927 Fifteenth Party Congress, Stalin was at pains to emphasize "the passing of hundreds and thousands of working intellectuals to the side of the Soviet regime." The technical intelligentsia were the pioneers in this process, and in these circumstances, it was incumbent upon the Party "to strengthen the link[smychka] between the

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1A.V. Lunacharskii, "Intelligentsia i ee mesto v sotsialisticheskom stroitel' stve," Revoliutsiiia i kul'tura, no. 1 (1927), p. 32.
2Ibid., pp. 29, 32.
working class and the working Soviet intelligentsia in town
and country.\textsuperscript{1} Inasmuch as the term \textit{smychka} had been
by Lenin to characterize the relationship between the pro-
letariat and the peasants, its repetition by Stalin in-
dicated that the specialists occupied an honorable place
in the Soviet order. Three months later came Shakhty.

Now then may Soviet policy towards the special-
ists during the years of NEP be understood in light of the
events of 1928-1931? A recurring and simplistic answer,
which has found its most recent expression in the work of
the Soviet dissident Boris Shragin, alleges that Lenin's
policy on specialists was "to suck them dry and replace them
in due course with the children of workers and peasants."\textsuperscript{2}
Michel Heller claims that Soviet policy may be understood
as one of granting concessions if no other course of action
was possible, withdrawing them once the original need had
passed, and then taking revenge upon those who had been the

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{1}I. Stalin, \textit{Political Report of the Central Committee
to the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. (B)} (Moscow, 1950),
pp. 67-69. Despite Stalin's optimism, only 1.2 percent of
all specialists employed in the economy were Communists in
1928 (Rigby, p. 409).

\textsuperscript{2}Boris Shragin, \textit{The Challenge of the Spirit}
object of such concessions.\textsuperscript{1} A more balanced and satisfactory explanation than Heller's is provided by Sheila Fitzpatrick, who argues that the official policy before 1928 may be characterized as one of "expedient accomodation with the intelligentsia, on non-negotiable terms laid down by the party leadership and without institutional guarantees."\textsuperscript{2} If the Soviet government had chosen to make compromises with the specialists, so also did it reserve the right unilaterally to alter or suspend their terms according to the vagaries of the political situation. What had been expedient since 1921 would be considered unsuitable for the new circumstances of 1928.


\textsuperscript{2}Fitzpatrick, "'Soft' Line", p. 267.
CONCLUSION

This analysis of the complex relationship that
developed between the bourgeois specialists and the Soviet
regime in the decade between 1917 and 1927 yields two
fundamental conclusions:

1. The Soviet government was remarkably
   successful in translating the principles
   of the 1919 Party Programme into a prac-
   tical policy—specialists were to be
   well-treated and accorded an honoured
   place in the socialist order but were
   to receive absolutely no political
   concessions of any kind;

2. Any concessions granted to the specialists
   were made on non-negotiable terms laid down
   by the regime and subject to unilateral
   change according to circumstances.

Each of these propositions will be considered in turn.

Marxian literature prior to 1917 paid rather scant
attention to the question of specialists and socialism,
since the bourgeois revolution of modernization was expected
to resolve complex organizational and economic tasks which
would become so simplified under socialism that the functions
of specialists would ultimately wither away. To a large
measure, Lenin subscribed to this idea for his pre-October
writings assumed that the economic and administrative
functions of a socialist society would be reduced to a
matter of accounting and control which would eventually be
simplified to a point that these operations could be pre-
pared by any literate person; in the interval, specialists
would be employed at a moderate salary and they would work
better for the socialists than the capitalists.

The post-October months shattered these assumptions. Not only had Russian capitalism failed miserably in its historical mission, the great majority of the old specialists were either actively or passively hostile to Bolshevism. Under Russia's unique circumstances, Lenin had no choice but to alter radically his former assumptions: socialism would be achieved by industrialization and to this end the services of the old specialists were absolutely indispensable. His insistence that socialism be founded on the legacy bequeathed by capitalism provoked a bitter controversy within and without the Party. Many Communists believed that the building of a new socialist society required a clean break with the past, new values, attitudes, and approaches to work that the bourgeois specialists as products of the old capitalist world could not possibly provide. This belief found its most eloquent expression in the Workers' Opposition movement of 1920-1921. On a lower level, specialists were resented by Party and non-Party alike not only for the concessions accorded to them but also because they were regarded as representatives of the bourgeois class enemy; in its crudest expression, this resentment took the form of "spetsy-baiting."

Apologists to the contrary, the Soviet policy on
specialists did not spring fully-armed from the head of Lenin but rather was painfully developed under the extraordinary conditions of world war, revolution, civil war, and three distinct economic regimes — state capitalism, war communism, and the New Economic Policy. From the carrot-and-stick logic of 1918-1919 to one-man management in 1920-1921 and the 1925 legislation re-affirming the key role of specialists in the economy, official policy on specialists followed rather than determined the course of events for as Lenin admitted in 1918, the question of specialists was important but secondary.

Regardless of their expertise or influence, the old specialists were under no circumstances permitted to determine economic policy. This is not to suggest that they did not make a substantial and indeed indispensable contribution to Soviet economic life in the 1920's. Rather, it was the Party that decided economic policy, set the specialists' tasks, and determined the conditions of their work. Whatever concessions may have been made in matters of salaries, working conditions, on-the-job authority, and perquisites (all of which were considered a necessary minimum to achieve economic goals), absolutely no political concessions were granted to the specialists. Claims to professional autonomy were whittled away as specialists were urged to join trade unions and while such latitudinarian
ideologies as smenovekhoystvo might be provisionally tolerated as a tactical measure, no autonomous activity on the part of the specialists would be tolerated. Lenin's 1922 question of who controlled whom was taken very seriously and the decisions of the 1923 Twelfth Party Congress provided an unequivocal answer.

At the same time, specialists possessed no independent foundation from which to assert their claims against the Soviet regime. With the possible exceptions of the Academy of Sciences and some tightly-knit faculty bodies, specialists were in no position of strength to negotiate the terms on which they would work. Certainly their representations received a generally sympathetic hearing and an entire series of Party leaders concerned themselves with providing spetsy with good working conditions and defending them against unwarranted interference or criticism, but by no stretch of the imagination were the spetsy able to impose conditions upon the government.

If specialists were in no position to take on independent stance in their relations with the government, so also did their values—professionalism, patriotism, preservationism, and Prometheus—impel them toward collaboration rather than covert but protracted resistance. The motives for conscientious collaboration were very strong indeed, but a word of caution against an exaggerated
convergence theory is in order. S.A. Fediukin's argument that the Soviet government afforded the specialists glorious opportunities to carry out grandiose projects otherwise impossible under the tsarist regime has been taken to an extreme by Kendall E. Bailes who contends that the old specialists and the Bolsheviks were two modernizing minorities, isolated amidst a mass of peasants, whose common aspirations outweighed their differences.¹ Their theory has its distinct attractions, but much of their case is based on the experiences of a relatively small number of prominent specialists with international reputations and tends to minimize the very real differences and points of friction between the old specialists and the regime which, as this study has shown, existed well before the traumatic events of 1928-1931.

What then should be the final word on the specialists? If they brought to their work a deep sense of professionalism and a true love of country, so also did the majority fail to understand the essentials of the Bolshevik transformation of Russia. Limited collaboration between the

old spetsy and the regime was always possible on the terms of the latter, but only the emergence of a new generation of Red specialists to supercede the old would resolve a decade of tension.
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GLOSSARY OF RUSSIAN TERMS

Akademiia nauk: Academy of Sciences

Fabkor: Fabrichnyi korrespondent (Factory correspondent)

Glavk.: Glavnyi komitet (Chief Committee)

GOELRO: Gosudarstvennaia komissiia po elektrifikatsii Rossii (State Commission for the Electrification of Russia)

golod i kholod: hunger and cold

Gosbank: Gosudarstvennyi bank (State Bank)

Gosplan: Gosudarstvennaia obshcheplanovaia komissiia (State General Planning Commission)

khozraschet: khoziaistvenny raschet (strict economic accounting)

Komintern: Kommunisticheskii Internatsional (Communist International)

KPSS: Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskago Soiuza (Communist Party of the Soviet Union)

KUBU: Komissiia po uluchsheniuiu byta uchenykh (Commission for the Improvement of Scholars' Living Conditions)

MVTU: Moskovskoe vysshoe tekhnicheskoi uchilishche (Moscow Higher Technical School)

Narkomfin: Narodnyi komissariat finansov (People's Commissariat of Finance)

Narkomprod: Narodnyi komissariat prodoval' stviiia (People's Commissariat of Food)

Narkompros: Narodnyi komissariat prosveshcheniia (People's Commissariat of Education)

Narkomput': Narodnyi komissariat putei soobshcheniia (People's Commissariat of Railways)

Narkomtrud: Narodnyi komissariat truda (People's Commissariat of Labour)

NEP: Novaia ekonomicheskaiia politika (New Economic Policy)
NTO: Nauchno-tekhnichekii otdel (Scientific-Technical Department)

rabfak: rabochii fakul'tet (workers' school)

Rabkrin: Raboche-krest'ianskaia inspeksiiia (Workers' and Peasants' Inspection)

RKP(b): Rossiiskaia Kommunisticheskaiia partiia (bolshevikov) (Russian Communist Party: Bolsheviks)

RSFSR: Rossiiskaia Sotsialisticheskaiia Federativnaia Sovetskaia Respublika (Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic)

samodeiatel'nost': spontaneous activity

SNK (Sovnarkom): Sovet Narodnykh Komissarov (Council of People's Commissars)

spets; pl. spetsy: popular word for specialist

SSSR: Soiuiz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

STO: Sovet truda i oborony (Council of Labour and Defence)

SUIN: Soiuiz uchitelei-internatsionalistov (Union of Teacher-Internationalists)

TseKUBU: Tsentr'al'naia komissiia po uluchsheniiu byta uchenykh (Central Commission for the Improvement of Scholars' Living Conditions)

TsIK: Tsentr'al'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet (Central Executive Committee)

VAI: Vserossiiskaia assotsiatsiia inzhenerov (All-Russian Association of Engineers)

VChK (Cheka): Vserossiiskaia chrezvychainaiia komissiia po bor'be s kontr-revoliutsiei i sabotazhem (All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage)

VKP(b): Vseobshchaa Kommunisticheskaiia partiia (bolshevikov) (All-Union Communist Party: Bolsheviks)
VMBIT: Vsesoiuznoe mezheksional'noe biuro inzhenerov i tekhnikov (All-Union Inter-sectional Bureau of Engineers and Technicians)

VSI: Vserossiiskii soiuze inzhenerov (All-Russian Union of Engineers)

VSNKh (Vesenkha): Vysshii sovet narodnogo khoziaistva (Supreme Council of the National Economy)

VTsIK: Vserossiiskii Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet (All-Russian Central Executive Committee)

VTsSPS: Vsesoiuznyi Tsentral'nyi Sovet Professional'nykh Soiuzov (All-Union Central Trade-Union Council)

VUS: Vserossiiskii uchitel'skii soiuz (All-Russian Teachers' Union)