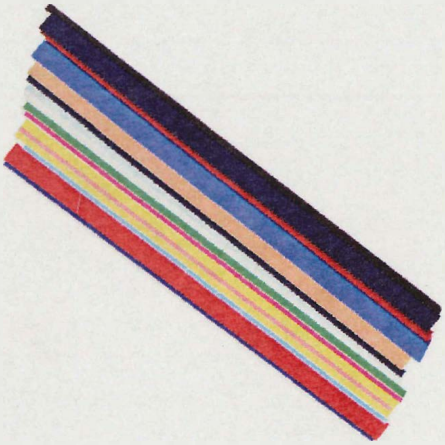
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PATRONAGE, PERSONAL NETWORKS AND THE PARTY-STATE: EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE CULTURAL SPHERE IN COMMUNIST RUSSIA AND EAST CENTRAL EUROPE

Edited by György Péteri

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Preface

This book includes the articles which were originally published in the theme issue of Contemporary European History, Vol. 11, Part 1 (February 2002). We wished to reissue this collection of essays because the collaborative project underlying it had been initiated and hosted by the Program on East European Cultures & Societies in Trondheim. The first drafts of the essays presented here were discussed at a workshop held in Brekstad (West of Trondheim along the waterway to the open Atlantic) on 13-17 August 1999. This workshop was also attended by Catherine Albrecht, John Connelly, Håkon With Andersen, Eduard Mühle, Ute Schneider, Ola-Svein Stugu, and Balázs Varga, to whom the authors and the editor are indebted for their valuable comments and participation in the discussion. Our special thanks go to the anonymous reviewers whose comments substantially contributed to improving the quality of our essays.

PEECS is also glad to acknowledge the financial support received from the Norwegian Research Council and the Faculty of Arts of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Last but not least, we are grateful to the Cambridge University Press for the generosity with which they granted the permission and assisted us, even in other ways, to produce this book.

György Péteri

Trondheim – Dragvoll, March 2004.

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Abstracts

From Illusory 'Society' to Intellectual 'Public': VOKS, International Travel and Party–Intelligentsia Relations in the Interwar Period

This article examines the emergence of the Soviet regulation of foreign travel in a specific context: the space in which Soviet international aspirations overlapped and interacted with Party–intelligentsia relations at home. The discussion ties together two major, international aspects of Party–intelligentsia relations. The first is a detailed discussion of the regulation of foreign travel, exploring the manner in which access to the outside world in the early Soviet years was, like other scarce or highly sought-after resources, subject to bureaucratic monopolisation and, as a result, became not only subject to party-state regulatory agendas but also a prime staple of patronage transactions. The second is an examination of how the emergence of Soviet cultural diplomacy in the 1920s began to influence Soviet domestic interactions with the non-party intelligentsia. Specifically, the article examines the particular way in which the intelligentsia was enlisted in foreign cultural relations by the All-Union Society for Cultural Ties Abroad (VOKS). The article shows the policies and attitudes behind the creation of VOKS as an ostensibly non-governmental association and dissects the many aspects of its intricate engagement with the non-Party, intellectual public known by the Russian term *obshchestvennost'*. The analysis suggests that the widespread assumption that personal and bureaucratic relations are dichotomous or fully separable ignores the way in which institutional agendas and personal connections were routinely intertwined in Soviet patronage. Furthermore, key stages in the Soviet handling of the intelligentsia's access to international contacts, from the New Economic Policy to Stalin's 'Great Break' to the Great Purges, were fundamentally shaped by the intense ideological and cultural significance invested in the foreign cultural resources as they were transformed from prized assets to fatal sources of contagion.

'Most Respected Comrade . . . ': Patrons, Clients, Brokers and Unofficial Networks in the Stalinist Music World

This article utilises primarily archival sources to explore unofficial networks in the Stalinist music world. It analyses the relationship between the patrons, clients and brokers whose personal interactions helped an inefficient and over-burdened music bureaucracy to accomplish its two basic tasks: administering musical production and ensuring the material wellbeing of Soviet composers, musicologists and musicians. Musicians used unofficial networks to resolve professional disputes with bureaucratic institutions and to acquire material support, especially scarce apartments. Because they were used to manipulating bureaucratic procedures, unofficial networks sometimes came under attack. Investigating

these ubiquitous informal interactions therefore contributes to our understanding both of the Stalinist music system and the cyclical campaigns to purge the Soviet arts.

Contacts: Social Dynamics in the Czech State-Socialist Art World

This article analyses the strategic manipulation and use of contacts by artists and art historians in state-socialist Czechoslovakia, and focuses on the role of friendship, political favours, professional nepotism and bribery in this process. It criticises Howard Becker's belief that totalitarian regimes cannot partake in discourses of patronage common to Western democracies because of the lack of freedom of individuals. Instead, it argues that the conventional concept of patronage can only partly explain the motives behind the use of contacts by individuals, because its focus is limited to exploring vertical relationships between 'powerless' and 'powerful' social actors. The analysis therefore takes a wider and more dynamic view, and looks at the interplay of vertical and horizontal processes.

'Cultural Bosses' as Patrons and Clients: the Functioning of the Soviet Creative Unions in the Postwar Period

The article argues that the postwar years rather than the 1930s, as hitherto has been assumed, was the period when top administrators of the Soviet creative Unions acquired their super-elite status. It shows how in this period the Union leaders finalised their control over the production and distribution of, as well as the reward for, literary and artistic work. The article looks at the reasons behind the government's conscious decision to allow a small group from the intelligentsia to become part of the state elite. It also assesses the consequences of postwar government policies towards the intelligentsia for the long-term stability of the regime.

Kruzhok Culture: the Meaning of Patronage in the Early Soviet Literary World

The formation of a relationship between early Soviet writers and the young Soviet state was conditioned by a pre-Revolutionary culture of patronage and clientelism among Russian literati. This culture enabled them to exert considerable influence over the state as they pushed it, via numerous state-based literary patrons, to provide them with a growing system of welfare and privilege in return for political support. In the literary battles of the late 1920s and early 1930s, Stalin took control over all patronage chains and established himself as the single de facto patron of the literary world. His personality cult emerged from this process.

Purge and Patronage: Kádár's Counter-revolution and the Field of Economic Research in Hungary, 1957–1958

The article attempts a detailed analysis of the post-1956 purges in the field of economic research. It tries to identify and assess the role of patronage in protecting the field from lasting damage. Such damage was threatening in the form of both losing several young talents from the field as well as weakening the position of the empiricist research programme successfully launched in the immediate post-Stalin years of 1954–6. The analysis devotes great attention to the dialectical relationship between purge and patronage, that is, to the inevitability of certain senior communist patrons administering purges in order to be able to act as patrons.

Extraits

VOKS, les voyages internationaux et les relations Parti-intelligentsia dans l'entre-deux guerres

Cet article examine l'émergence de la régulation des voyages internationaux culturels par les autorités soviétiques. On effectue tout d'abord une présentation détaillée de la réglementation des voyages internationaux et de l'accès au monde extérieur, en tant que denrée rare contrôlée par la bureaucratie, terrain privilégié de l'expression des rapports officiels de pouvoir tout autant qu'enjeu des relations de patronage. Puis on scrute la manière dont l'émergence d'une diplomatie culturelle soviétique dans les années 1920 modifia les relations domestiques entre le pouvoir et l'intelligentsia 'hors-Parti'. L'article utilise le VOKS (Société pour les liens culturels avec l'étranger) pour questionner ces deux dimensions internationales de la relation entre parti et intelligentsia. Il peut ainsi suggérer que les réseaux bureaucratiques et politiques s'intriquaient avec les relations personnelles jusque dans la routine du patronage. Il souligne aussi combien les étapes clés dans le contrôle de la relation de l'intelligentsia soviétique avec les ressources culturelles étrangères furent liées à l'importance et aux modifications des significations qui furent prêtées à l'accès à l'étranger, tour à tour atout indispensable ou source de contagion.

'Très respecté Camarade . . . ': Patrons, clients, intermédiaires et réseaux parallèles du monde la musique pendant l'ère stalinienne

Cet article utilise des sources archivistiques de première main pour explorer les relations entre les patrons, clients et intermédiaires dont les interactions personnelles contribuèrent puissamment à soutenir l'action d'une bureaucratie musicale inefficace et surchargée dans l'accomplissement de ses deux tâches de base: gérer la production musicale et assurer le bien-être matériel des compositeurs, musicologues et musiciens soviétiques. Les musiciens utilisaient ces réseaux non officiels pour régler leurs disputes professionnelles avec l'administration et pour obtenir un soutien matériel (attribution de logement, . . .). Parce qu'ils manipulaient les procédures bureaucratiques, ces réseaux furent maintes fois attaqués. Travailler sur ces interactions informelles permet donc de contribuer à la fois à notre connaissance du système musical stalinien et à celle des purges du monde des arts soviétique.

Les dynamiques sociales du monde artistique tchécoslovaque

Cet article analyse les manipulations stratégiques et les usages des contacts personnels par les artistes et les historiens d'art de la Tchécoslovaquie socialiste. Il s'attarde particulièrement sur le rôle de l'amitié, des faveurs politiques, du népotisme professionnel et de la corruption. C'est une critique de l'hypothèse d'Howard Becker selon laquelle les régimes totalitariens ne peuvent pas participer aux discours du patronage communs aux démocraties occidentales, à cause de l'absence de liberté individuelle. L'article explique qu'au contraire le concept conventionnel de patronage ne peut que partiellement expliquer les motivations de l'usage des contacts personnels, parce qu'il se limite à explorer la relation verticale entre ceux qui ont du pouvoir et ceux qui n'en ont pas. L'analyse développée ici propose une vision plus large, qui met en scène l'intrication des mécanismes horizontaux et verticaux de patronage.

Patrons et clients culturels: le fonctionnement des syndicats soviétiques des arts et lettres dans l'après deuxième guerre mondiale'

L'article situe dans l'après deuxième guerre mondiale, plutôt que dans les années 1930, le moment où les dirigeants administratifs des syndicats des arts et lettres s'établirent comme une super-élite. Il montre comment ces dirigeants pérennisèrent à ce moment leur contrôle sur la production et la distribution du travail artistique et littéraire, ainsi que sur les systèmes de récompense qui réglaient cette sphère. L'article recherche aussi les raisons qui présidèrent à la décision gouvernementale de donner à une petite fraction de l'intelligentsia la possibilité d'intégrer l'élite d'état soviétique. Les politiques suivies dans l'après guerre vis à vis de l'intelligentsia ont aussi des conséquences pour la stabilité à long terme du régime, que ce travail propose d'évaluer plus précisément.

La culture du *Kruzhok*: les significations du patronage dans le monde littéraire des débuts de l'ère soviétique

La mise en place d'une relation entre les premiers écrivains soviétiques et le jeune Etat soviétique fut conditionnée par une culture pré-révolutionnaire du patronage et du clientélisme dans le milieu des lettrés russes. Cette culture, dont l'influence s'exerça par l'intermédiaire d'un groupe de patrons littéraires installés dans le système d'Etat, permit aux écrivains d'exercer une influence considérable sur celui-ci. Ceci se traduisit par la mise en place d'un système de privilèges et d'assistance pour les écrivains, en échange de leur soutien politique. Dans les batailles politiques des années 1920–1930, Staline prit le contrôle des chaînes de patronage et s'autoproclama comme protecteur du monde littéraire. Le culte de la personnalité émergea de ce processus.

Purge et patronage: La contre-révolution kadarienne et la recherche économique en Hongrie 1957–1958

Cet article propose une analyse détaillée des purges effectuées dans le monde des économistes hongrois après 1956. Il essaye d'évaluer le rôle du patronage dans la protection de ce milieu contre la perte de jeunes talents tout autant que contre la perte du statut que la recherche empirique avait acquis depuis la mort de Staline. L'analyse insiste sur la relation dialectique entre la purge et la patronage, à savoir l'inéluctable nécessité pour certains mandarins communistes d'administrer les purges afin de pouvoir agir comme patrons.

Kurzfassungen

Von der illusionären 'Gesellschaft' zur intellektuellen 'Öffentlichkeit': VOKS, internationale Reisen und Beziehungen innerhalb der Parteiintelligenz während der Zwischenkriegszeit

Der Aufsatz untersucht die Entstehung der sowjetischen Regulierungen von Auslandreisen in einem bestimmten Zusammenhang: im Überschneidungsbereich zwischen internationalen Ambitionen und Beziehungen innerhalb der heimischen Parteiintelligenz. Zuerst wird detailliert erörtert, wie die Reiseerlaubnis in der frühen Sowjetzeit wie andere knappe Ressourcen bürokratischen monopolisiert wurde und damit nicht nur parteistaatlichen Absichten unterworfen, sondern zugleich zu einem Hauptgut im Patronagesystem wurde. Danach untersucht der Aufsatz, wie die Entstehung einer sowjetischen Kulturdiplomatie in

den zwanziger Jahren sich auf das innere Verhältnis zur nicht der Partei angehörenden Intelligenz auswirkte, indem die Intellektuellen durch die All-Unions Gesellschaft für Kulturelle Beziehungen zum Ausland (VOKS) eingebunden wurden. Die politischen Absichten und Haltungen hinter der Gründung der VOKS als scheinbar nichtregierungsamtliche Vereinigung werden erläutert. So kann gezeigt werden, dass persönliche und bürokratische Beziehungen keineswegs dichotomisch, sondern engstens mit der sowjetischen Patronage verbunden waren. Die ideologische und kulturelle Bedeutung, die den Auslandsreisen beigemessen wurden, wirkte sich jeweils auf die Hauptphasen der Regulierung von Auslandskontakten aus, die sich von wertvollen Gütern zu infektiösen Kontakten wandelten.

'Verehrtester Genosse . . . ': Patrone, Klienten, Mittler und inoffizielle Netzwerke in der stalinistischen Musikwelt

Der Aufsatz stützt sich vorwiegend auf Archivquellen, um die inoffiziellen Netzwerke in der stalinistischen Musikwelt zu erkunden. Er analysiert die Beziehungen zwischen Patronen, Klienten und Mittlern, deren persönliche Interaktion einer ineffizienten und überlasteten Musikbürokratie halfen, zwei grundlegende Aufgaben zu erfüllen: die Musikproduktion zu verwalten und das materielle Wohlbefinden sowjetischer Komponisten, Musikwissenschaftler und Musiker sicherzustellen. Musiker nutzten die inoffiziellen Netzwerke, um berufliche Auseinandersetzungen mit bürokratischen Institutionen beizulegen und um materielle Unterstützung zu erlangen, insbesondere Wohnungen. Da die Netzwerke bürokratisches Handeln manipulierten, wurden sie gelegentlich angegriffen. Die Untersuchung der allgegenwärtigen Beziehungen trägt daher sowohl zum Verständnis des stalinistischen Musiksystem bei wie auch zu den immer wiederkehrenden Versuchen, die sowjetischen Künste zu ‚säubern'.

Beziehungen: Soziale Dynamik in der Welt der tschechoslowakischen staatssozialistischen Kunst

Der Aufsatz analysiert die strategische Manipulation und den Gebrauch von 'Beziehungen' durch Künstler und Kunsthistoriker in der staatssozialistischen Tschechoslowakei; er stellt die Rolle von Freundschaft, politischen Gefallen, beruflichem Nepotismus und Korruption in den Mittelpunkt. Dabei kritisiert er Howard Beckers Meinung, dass totalitäre Regime nicht wie in westlichen Demokratien an einem Diskurs der Patronage teilhaben könnten, weil es in ihnen an individueller Freiheit mangele. Stattdessen wird hier erläutert, dass das konventionelle Konzept von Patronage nur teilweise die Motive hinter den 'Beziehungen' erkläre, weil es sich auf vertikale Beziehungen zwischen mächtigen und machtlosen Akteuren beschränke. Die vorliegende Analyse nimmt eine weitere und dynamischere Perspektive ein, indem sie vertikale und horizontale Prozesse betrachtet.

'Kulturbosse' als Patrone und Klienten: Die Arbeitsweise der Sowjetischen Künstlergewerkschaften in der Nachkriegszeit

Der Aufsatz verdeutlicht, dass nicht, wie bisher gedacht, die dreissiger Jahre, sondern die Nachkriegszeit jene Epoche war, in der die Sowjetische Künstlergewerkschaften ihren ungewöhnlich elitären Status gewannen. Es wird gezeigt, wie in dieser Zeit die Gewerkschaftsführer ihre Kontrolle sowohl über Produktion und Distribution als auch über das Entgelt für literarische und künstlerische Arbeit vervollständigten. Die Gründe für die Entscheidung der Regierung, eine kleine Gruppe aus der Intelligentsia zum Teil der

No doubt, there are a number of ways of restoring human agency to the history of the communist era in eastern Europe. Nevertheless, we believe that the study of patronage and informal networks is a particularly important and intellectually rewarding way of doing so.

First, it enables students to focus on questions and issues ignored by both the old and new versions of totalitarianism. How may we explain the continuity of scholarly and artistic work in many fields and many countries even after the communist takeover? And how are we to understand at least the revival of professional attitudes and practices during the post-Stalin era? Obviously, political discrimination in favour of particular schools of academic or artistic activity in many fields was not necessarily to the good (especially if it went hand in hand with discrimination against all divergent paradigms). But, again, as there were beneficiaries and stakeholders of such policies within the scholarly and artistic communities, such practices can hardly be properly described merely as acts of oppression by the cultural party-state. These matters were surely much more complicated, and only if the simplistic ideas of a unitary 'power' and homogenous artistic and academic fields ('communities') are abandoned can we start doing justice to their actual complexity.

Second, focusing on patronage and informal networks allows us to develop an understanding of the internal dynamism of state socialist regimes. Within the intellectual framework of totalitarianism no change seems possible without substantial external shocks. Yet, this contradicts just about everything we know empirically and theoretically about modern and modernising societies as well as the life-experiences of the people who lived under eastern Europe's state socialist regimes.

Third, the study of patronage and informal networks promotes problem-oriented historical research and writing. It emancipates our question-generating power from under the narrow confines of particular institutions and organisations. One of the benefits of this is that we can problematise (raise questions about) the issue of institutional boundaries (such as those between 'art' and 'politics', or 'science' and 'politics') instead of assuming that such boundaries exist and can be located. Patron–client relations and/or horizontal networks (where cohesion may be generated by some common experience in the 'illegal movement', in higher education, by common values of a professional character, and/or by common professional or other interests) did often provide the platforms upon which major trans-institutional coalitions emerged, uniting groups of policy-makers, scholars and high-level bureaucrats. Such coalitions constituted a necessary condition for policy change and played a major role in making feasible the introduction of economic reforms in Hungary during the 1960s, to name only one significant example.

The communist dictatorship perverted the state just as much as other areas of society – as Paul G. Lewis rightly reminds us in his 'Democracy, Civil Society and the State in Contemporary East-Central Europe', in Peter J. S. Duncan and Martyn Rady, eds., *Towards a New Community. Culture and Politics in Post-Totalitarian Europe* (London, Hamburg, and Münster: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, and LIT Verlag, 1993), 29–30. On the other hand, an interpretation of the history of state socialism under communism dominated by victimology reflects the societal (artistic, scientific, political, and other) experience under communism just as one-sidedly as the dualistic constructs based on the supposed antagonism between 'state' and 'society'.

Fourth, the study of patronage and informal networks prompts us to refocus (i) from the history of high political decisions (and their makers) to the history of everyday life (in the sphere of high politics as well as in other segments of society); (ii) from Kafkaesque, alienated and alienating 'machineries' or 'mechanisms' of power to the actual practices of interaction involving rulers and ruled alike; and (iii) from sterile and preconceived system-models to complex, historically and culturally contingent settings or contexts.

The fifth feature supporting the study of patronage and informal networks is that it helps to develop a more dynamic and realistic understanding of the emergence, nature, and reproduction of the communist party-state. The papers of Michael David-Fox, Maruška Svašek and Kiril Tomoff suggest that the distinction between 'formal' and 'informal' (or 'official' and 'unofficial') may cause more confusion than clarity. This is partly because patronage and formal communist authority were, like Siamese twins, symbiotically related. The main resources that the communist patron could rely on were those which his formal hierarchical position could yield. On the other hand, access to such 'informal' resources as protective networks and loyal clients was a necessary precondition for a communist official in securing efficiency and maintaining his position or/and attaining advancement in the nomenklatura. However, the 'formal'–'informal' distinction is of little help because historically this borderline appears to have been completely blurred. Indeed, rather than having been an alternative or complementary to the cultural party-state, in many respects we found patronage to be *constitutive* of it. As Vera Tolz's and Barbara Walker's excellent papers show, patronage was a major form through which the mutual obligations and rights (the 'patronage contract', to use the term coined by Walker) between the creative intelligentsia and the state were negotiated and defined. Patronage could thus rightly be seen as the cultural party-state *in statu nascendi*.[2]

The sixth important feature of our perspective is that it helps to reveal some significant commonalities in the experience of modern capitalist democracies and state socialist dictatorships. Some arguments see patronage and informal networks in communist societies as a symptom of backwardness or (new) traditionalism.[3] To my mind, the study of patronage and informal networks under communism does not separate the Russian and east central European experience from the experience of the rest of the modern world. On the contrary: the significant role assumed by patron–client relations and other personalised connections is to some extent a phenomenon characterising all modern societies. In East and West alike, late nineteenth- and twentieth-century states have taken an increasing role in providing the necessary funding for science and the arts. In capitalist democracies as well as in

[2] This finding seems to resonate with Geoffrey Hosking's view that one should 'look upon the Russian political system in both its major hypostases, tsarist and Soviet, as being a statised network of personal power'. G. Hosking, 'Patronage and the Russian State', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 78, 2 (April 2000), 301–20.

[3] Barbara Walker discusses some works inspired by the model of 'neo-traditionalism' in her '(Still) Searching for a Soviet Society: Personalized Political and Economic Ties in Recent Soviet Historiography' (review article), *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43/3 (July 2001), 631–42.

the state socialist regimes, there is a mismatch between the distribution of scientific/artistic competence and the distribution of economic (and/or bureaucratic–political) resources required for academic and artistic activities. It is this mismatch, that is, the patrons' inability to judge the adequacy of the science (or art) they support and the scientific (or artistic) enterprise's dependence on resources possessed by agents outside the institution of science (or art), that constitutes the general background to our discussion here.[4] It seems that patron–client relations constitute the forms of the modern state's involvement in various cultural domains. Science and the arts, in their modern form, have to cope with the fundamental tension created by the institutional separation between expertise and talent, on the one hand, and discretion over the means (economic, political and sociocultural resources of often high inter-convertibility) that are, directly or indirectly, the necessary prerequisites of artistic creativity and of the production of new knowledge, on the other. In general terms, then, the role of the patrons is exactly to bridge this mismatch.[5] Patrons can rightly be seen as Schumpeterian entrepreneurs of modern intellectual and artistic production, combining economic, political and cultural–symbolic resources with scientific or artistic creativity, thus promoting the continuity of already established paradigms as well as the emergence of new forms of expression, new artistic or epistemological programmes, new knowledge and new aesthetic values. The modern individual patron in bureaucratic societies acts first of all as an interface between different societal institutions organised according to different rationalities and using, in their internal communication, different, often highly specific idioms. S/he is, therefore, located, by definition, along the borderlines between various cultures, where not only new combinations but also encounters and conflicts with the 'other' occur. Last, but not least, the patron is – as is the broker of the capitalist market economy – the lubricating element in all modern cultural production. S/he is the broker between disparate institutional cultures, the agent who actually makes things happen by virtue of being able to comprehend and to speak authoritatively interpreting such differing idioms as that of politics, bureaucratic administration, various groups of professionals and various academic and/or artistic fields. Indeed, the makers of modern cultural and scientific policies tend to implement their objectives – if and when they want to achieve anything – via patrons who pursue particular projects over particular sets of clients rather than rely on neutral rule- and norm-abiding bureaucratic executives of the cultural resort. No modern regime of cultural and science policies can fully be understood and assessed without due attention being paid to its capacity to give a home to and rely on a set of patrons who both enable two-way communication between politics and the

[4] The discussion following was inspired by Stephen P. Turner, 'Forms of Patronage', in Susan E. Cozzens and Thomas F. Gieryn, eds., *Theories of Science in Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 185–211.

[5] This mismatch is clearly in evidence in Kiril Tomoff's study, in the present issue, of the role of patrons, brokers and clients in Soviet musical life under Stalin, especially in his illuminating discussion of the role of political–bureaucratic patrons in asserting professional–creative authority!

various academic/artistic fields and act as catalytic agents of the country's intellectual endeavour.

Last but not least, as the seventh advantage to be mentioned in connection with the study of patron–client relations, I wish to emphasise the great potential of this kind of 'micro-historical' investigation to bring to the surface longer-term tendencies in the cultural patterns characterising European societies. John Connelly's *srodowisko*[6] and Barbara Walker's literary *kruzhki* constitute compelling case studies demonstrating the embeddedness of significant segments of Polish academic and Soviet-Russian literary patronage in a historical culture of solidarity and cohesion dating back, in both cases, at least to the nineteenth century.

Serious *historical* study of patron–client relations in the region covered by the present issue is by and large restricted to Soviet Russian history,[7] although even in this field there has been little systematic empirical work done and published as yet. Practically no research has been conducted and published on communist east central Europe.

The present theme issue makes public a series of articles presenting empirically solid new work in the field – four of them on Soviet Russian and two on east-central Europe's cultural life. The authors and the editor hope that their work will provide new impetus and inspiration for further research and writing in a field that they believe to be of crucial importance to our understanding of the communist era in Russia and east-central Europe.

[6] See chs. 8 and 9 in John Connelly, *Captive University. The Sovietization of East German, Czech, and Polish Higher Education, 1945–1956* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 142–79. The first draft of these chapters was presented at our workshop in Brekstad, Norway, 13–17 August 1999.

[7] I am thinking of two important essays in this respect: Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Intelligentsia and Power. Client-Patron Relations in Stalin's Russia', in Manfred Hildermeier, ed., *Stalinism before the Second World War. New Avenues of Research* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1998), and Hosking's 'Patronage and the Russian State'. There is a much more impressive body of scholarship (and proportionately larger number of publications) from sociology, political science and economics discussing various aspects of informal society (second economy, *blat*, etc.) in Soviet Russia and communist east central Europe from the 1970s on. However, this literature yielded little or nothing in terms of studying the politics and sociology of everyday life in the cultural–academic spheres.

From Illusory 'Society' to Intellectual 'Public': VOKS, International Travel and Party–Intelligentsia Relations in the Interwar Period

MICHAEL DAVID-FOX

The topic of 'power and the intelligentsia' (*vlast' i intelligentsiia)* emerged in the late 1980s as one of the standard rubrics for studying the Soviet period. It has by now moved significantly beyond the martyrology and binary thinking that in its early usages simply opposed the one as oppressor and the other as victim. Rarely, however, have Soviet international agendas or the politics surrounding contacts with the outside world intruded into the discussion of the party-state's interrelationship with its 'own' domestic cultural and intellectual elites. This article examines the emergence of the Soviet regulation of foreign travel in a specific context: the space in which Soviet international aspirations overlapped and interacted with Party–intelligentsia relations at home. It does not concentrate on the encounters of foreign intellectuals with communism, but rather on international aspects of what has almost exclusively been considered a domestic Soviet story, the relations between the Communist Party (VKP(b) – Vsesoiuznaia Kommunisticheskaia Partiia (Bol'shevikov)) and the Soviet Russian intelligentsia. My premise is that the material and ideological dimensions of cultural access to the outside world both became crucial in the evolution of Soviet cultural politics in general in the 1920s and 1930s.

In particular, two major international aspects of Party–intelligentsia relations are tied together at the centre of the article. The first is the manner in which the party-state's efforts at regulation and monopolisation in the 1920s made foreign travel and access to contacts abroad an important resource, which 'power' could proffer or withhold from domestic scientific and cultural elites. While the Soviet regime faced many obstacles in the international arena, its diplomatic and military weaknesses were one important explanation for the extraordinary importance cultural diplomacy assumed in Soviet international strategies of the interwar period. The intelligentsia, while ever more dependent on the waxing power of the party-state,

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had much to offer in this realm. It possessed cultural prestige and its elite representatives were internationally renowned. With lectures, public statements, publications or even just their signatures, these figures could make what were deemed politically valuable declarations, something Party leaders and cultural administrators alike perceived as crucial to the balance of international opinion about the Soviet Union. Yet even the most famous and well-connected members of the intelligentsia could not so much as cross the border without the sanction of the new regime. In the early Soviet years foreign travel and access to the outside world, like other scarce or highly sought-after resources, were subject to bureaucratic monopolisation and, as a result, became not only subject to party-state regulatory agendas but also a prime staple of patronage transactions.

It has already been well established that clientistic relations were endemic to the functioning of the Soviet system in general. It has also been suggested that no group in Soviet society was more successful in finding high-level patrons than the 'creative intelligentsia'.[1] Sheila Fitzpatrick has written that 'The feature that distinguished Soviet patronage from other varieties was that the state was the monopoly distributor in a context of shortages of all goods and services. State monopoly meant that *allocation* was a major function of the Soviet bureaucracy . . . The ultimate allocational decisions were made by bureaucrats – but on personalistic, not bureaucratic–legal reasons.'[2] The unprecedented degree of state monopolisation clearly also applies to the areas targeted here, international travel and cultural affairs. The discussion that follows also contains examples of how the informal features characteristic of patron–client relations inserted themselves into the allocation of international cultural resources, most notably the coveted 'business trip' (*komandirovka*) abroad. However, the most important implication for understanding Soviet-type patronage that follows from this article is that institutional–bureaucratic imperatives were also key to the functioning of Party–intelligentsia patronage. While informal relationships could surely bypass or subvert the functioning of the ever-present apparat, personal ties could in turn be profoundly shaped by the official missions and ideological outlooks of discrete branches of the bureaucracy. The widespread assumption that personalistic and bureaucratic relations are dichotomous or fully separable ignores the way in which institutional agendas and personal connections were routinely intertwined in Soviet patronage. Given the ubiquity of this additional feature of patronage in the Soviet Union, it becomes crucial to

[1] See Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 109–14; *eadem*, 'Intelligentsia and Power: Client-Patron Relations in Stalin's Russia', in Manfred Hildermeier, ed., *Stalinismus vor dem zweiten Weltkrieg: Neue Wege der Forschung* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1998), 35–53. Fitzpatrick notes the importance of 'institutional sources of patronage', but stresses that there were 'no obvious tangible benefits' that party patrons derived from intelligentsia clients (37, 40, 44, 50). In international cultural affairs, this discussion suggests, members of the intelligentsia did have much to give. For other treatments of patronage in the Russian/Soviet context, see Geoffrey A. Hosking, 'Patronage and the Russian State', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 78, 2 (April 2000), 301–20; T. H. Rigby, 'Was Stalin a Disloyal Patron?' *Soviet Studies*, 38 (July 1986), 311–24.

[2] Fitzpatrick, *Everday Stalinism*, 114.

examine the way in which specific sites of state–society and Party–intelligentsia relations affected the nature of patronage transactions.

The second broad 'international' theme featured here, therefore, will be an examination of the way in which the emergence of Soviet cultural diplomacy in the 1920s began to influence Soviet domestic interactions with the non-Party intelligentsia. Specifically, the article will explore the particular way in which the intelligentsia was enlisted in foreign cultural relations by one key institutional player, the All-Union Society for Cultural Ties Abroad (VOKS). Special attention will be paid to the manner in which its officials conceived and approached the intelligentsia.

Considering these two international dimensions in the history of 'power and the intelligentsia', it will be observed, deliberately juxtaposes a nitty-gritty, 'material' consideration of resources and interests with a number of more elusive conceptual and ideological forces at play. Studies of patronage, under communism and elsewhere, can often serve to strip away high-sounding rhetoric to reveal seamy undersides, calculating economic and practical interests, concealed backscratching, and the unexpected quid pro quo. The opening of the former Soviet archives provides important grist for these kinds of considerations. Indeed, the first part of the article offers a detailed picture of a complex and evolving system for regulating and allocating international travel. However, international contacts also had extraordinary cultural and ideological significance, ranging from the heightened importance attributed to promoting the Soviet cause abroad to the winds of xenophobia and 'infection' brought by 'non-proletarian elements' abroad and, especially during the Great Purges, by foreigners in general. By embedding the distribution of scarce 'international' resources in the deeper context of the meanings that those resources implied, we will be better able to assess the range of motivations behind the exchange.[3] Investigating motivations and assumptions along with interests and resources reveals, in this case, not that the pervasive early Soviet instrumentalism somehow trumped ideology, but rather that the two need to be considered in tandem. The article argues that key stages in the Soviet handling of the intelligentsia's access to international contacts, from the New Economic Policy (NEP) to Stalin's 'Great Break' to the Great Purges, were fundamentally shaped by the intense ideological and cultural significance invested in the foreign cultural 'resources' as they were transformed from prized assets to fatal sources of contagion. The second part of the discussion, then, attempts to contextualise the practices developed for regulating foreign travel and contacts that are described in the first. It will ask how VOKS, one distinctive player in the multi-agency apparatus covering cultural relations and international affairs, approached, imagined, and itself was fundamentally changed by its engagement with the intelligentsia. How did VOKS define the

[3] An example of uncovering both material interests and deep patterns of cultural assumptions simultaneously is Barbara Walker's work. See her article below, and '*Kruzhok* Culture and the Making of the Soviet Intelligentsia: Case Studies of Maximilan Voloshin and Maxim Gorky', paper presented at the AAASS in 1996; *eadem*, 'Maximilian Voloshin's "House of the Poet": Intelligentsia Social Organisation and Culture in Early Twentieth-Century Russia,' Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1994.

role of the 'public' in the affairs of the 'society', and what were the underlying assumptions behind its approach to the intelligentsia? Only by asking these sorts of questions can we fully understand the context in which patronage ties operated within and around the evolving political and bureaucratic relationships VOKS was simultaneously establishing with non-Party elites.

VOKS, founded in 1925, is particularly suited to examining the interaction of international and domestic factors in the history of Party-intelligentsia relations. It co-ordinated a vast and varied set of responsibilities that combined domestic and international functions. Abroad, it managed the burgeoning number of 'societies of friends' of the Soviet Union, as the variously named Russo-European cultural friendship societies were informally called, gathered information on public opinion and cultural and intellectual trends, published widely circulated bulletins on Soviet cultural life and supplied the world press with articles and photographs. At home, it received foreign intellectuals and arranged their contacts within the Soviet Union, managed cultural, scientific and book exchanges, and mobilised the domestic intelligentsia to contribute to its activities and to present the outside world with cultural information. At one point in the late 1920s, VOKS was even charged with propagating the study of foreign languages and bringing Western cultural and scientific achievements to the Soviet masses.[4] There were thus two 'cultural fronts', a domestic and an international one, and VOKS was completely enmeshed in both. Its particular blend of tasks, which developed out of the institution's origins in the early 1920s and in its political struggle for greater influence, also affected how and why it approached the non-Party intelligentsia.

Finally, VOKS's leadership exerted considerable influence on the institution's significance and evolution in the prewar years, as it was headed, with one interlude in the early 1930s, by two energetic and extraordinarily well-connected leaders. From 1925–1930, the *predsedatel'* of VOKS was its founder, Ol'ga Davidovna Kameneva, the polished wife of Politburo member Kamenev and the sister of Trotsky. Kameneva is rarely mentioned in historical literature, despite the profound and formative influence she exerted through VOKS on the development of early Soviet cultural diplomacy. She was followed fromn 1930 to 1934 by the colourless but capable Fedor Nikolaevich Petrov, an Old Bolshevik whose biography combined a pre-Revolutionary higher education with working-class origins and who from the end of 1922 had headed Narkompros's Main Directorate on Scientific, Artistic, Museum, Theatrical, and Literary Institutions and Organisations

[4] Outside the circumscribed efforts of Soviet scholarship, VOKS has rarely been seriously studied. Noteworthy recent treatments include the work of the Australian scholar Ludmila Stern, 'The Creation of French–Soviet Cultural Relations: VOKS in the 1920s and the French Intelligentsia', *AUMLA: Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association*, 89 (May 1998), 45–66; *eadem*, 'Iz predistorii sozdaniia frantsuzskogo obshchestva kul'turnogo sblizheniia Novaia Rossiia (po ranee neopublikovannym materialam VOKSa)', *Australian Slavonic and East European Studies*, 11; 1/2 (1997), 143–59; and a selection of documents published by A. V. Golubev and V. A. Nevezhin, 'VOKS v 1930–1940-e gody', *Minuvshee*, 14 (Moscow: St. Petersburg: Atheneum-Feniks, 1993): 313–64, whose other works often incorporate VOKS materials.

(Glavnauka).[5] His move to VOKS was itself evidence of the links between 'domestic' cultural policy and Soviet 'cultural ties abroad'. Finally, in the crucial Popular Front period from 1934 to 1937, VOKS was headed by Aleksandr Iakovlevich Arosev, a well-known writer and Soviet ambassador to Prague in the 1920s who also happened to be the schoolboy comrade of Molotov from Kazan's revolutionary underground.[6] Since it was Kameneva's agendas that particularly shaped VOKS and its relationship with the intelligentsia in its formative period, this paper makes a special effort to appreciate her outlook as VOKS manoeuvred a key shift in Party–intelligentsia relations in the mid–late 1920s. Her activities illuminate the complexities of her various motivations – among them, what might be called conspiratorial, institutional, diplomatic and personal considerations – in attempting to include a degree of participation by the intelligentsia in VOKS affairs in the 1920s. This attempt clearly distinguished the organisation under her leadership from the 1930s modifications that followed.

One important feature of VOKS was its status as a 'society', and not formally an arm of the Soviet state. As we shall see, this was a fiction designed for external and internal consumption, but it carried with it important ramifications. It meant that VOKS was something of an orphan in the Soviet bureaucratic hierarchy, since it was deprived of a single powerful oversight agency. This hindered it from rising very high in the councils of the party-state. To be sure, VOKS was distinctly oriented around the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (NKID), but it also developed firm ties with the secret police (OGPU) and, especially in the 1930s, with the Central Committee apparatus. Foreign Affairs and the secret police fostered very different goals in international matters, those of the first rooted in foreign diplomacy, the second in internal security. Ultimately, this symbolises the complications embedded in the internal–external nexus VOKS exemplified. VOKS's formally non-governmental status also meant that leading non-Party groups and figures actually joined VOKS and its management. Members of the non-Party intelligentsia made up its various cultural and disciplinary 'sections' that for a time achieved importance, especially in a key time of transition in the late 1920s. In its formative years, this nominally independent Soviet 'society' tried not only to mobilise but also to rely on the input of non-Party scholarly, artistic and technical groups and institutions to augment its own role and capabilities.

These forces of the intelligentsia were called *obshchestvennost'*, an untranslatable term carrying in various degrees connotations of the public sphere, public opinion, civil society, social forces, educated strata and even the intelligentsia itself. The term was first coined in the late eighteenth century, but appears to have been reinvented by Russian radical thinkers of the 1840s and 1850s to denote 'both the qualities of social engagement, and the sector of society most likely to manifest such qualities,

[5] See F. N. Petrov, *65 let v riadakh leninskoi partii. Vospominaniia* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1962).

[6] By far the most revealing source on Arosev is the memoirs of his daughter, the well-known actress, which include lengthy excerpts from his never-published personal diary: O. A. Aroseva and B. A. Maksimova, *Bez grima* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo 'Tsentropoligraf', 1999).

the radical intelligentsia'.[7] It was thus an alternative to high 'society,' or *obshchestvo*, and might thus be compared with another, equally culturally contingent concept that arose in the nineteenth-century German context, *Bildungsbürgertum*, a keyword that also carried with it the values and nature of the non-entrepeneurial bourgeoisie. With the flowering of civil institutions and public debate after the Great Reforms of the mid-nineteenth century, the term conjured up an engagé public more than the revolutionary underground. But, in part because of its lingering leftist and oppositionist associations, the Bolsheviks embraced the concept of a 'Soviet *obshchestvennost''* after the Revolution even as they moved swiftly to ban many societies and independent organisations. Devotion to social work (*obshchestvennaia rabota*) was obligatory for Party members and one of the desired attributes of the 'new Soviet person', and, although it has not yet been a topic studied extensively by historians, the evolving concept and phenomenon of *obschestvennost'* became part of Soviet life.

On the one hand, a positive notion of *obshchestvennost'*, even in the Stalin era, was not relinquished by non-Party professional groups and societies as a quasi-corporate and frequently elitist self-identification.[8] On the other hand, Party forces maintained a particularly problematic relationship with the idea, one that informed VOKS's engagement with the non-Party intelligentsia. For Bolsheviks, the term still carried a positive gloss coming from decades of intelligentsia opposition to tsarism, and the Party, especially after the introduction of the fragile NEP-era rapprochement with the intelligentsia, embraced the official ideal of a loyal, engaged 'Soviet *obshchestvennost''*. But, insofar as the term carried with it liberal, corporatist, or anti-statist baggage as well as the connotations of an independent social force, the ruthlessly statist, proletarianising Bolsheviks ridiculed the notion among themselves. However, they preserved it also as a façade, especially for touting civic obligations at home and a kind of virtual Soviet civil society abroad. Thus VOKS, a cultural institution that was only in a partial, fictional and conspiratorial sense a cultural 'society', reached out to a broader intellectual public about which it harboured conflicting impulses. This doubly ambiguous engagement, ironically, occurred just as the radicalisation in foreign and domestic policy of Stalin's 'Great Break' after 1928 transformed both VOKS and the nature of the relationship.

[7] Catriona Kelly and Vadim Volkov, '*Obshchestvennost'*, Sobornost': Collective Identities', in Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd, eds., *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution, 1881–1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 27. The most significant work on the development of *obshchestvennost'* in the context of the contradictory development of a public sphere in Russia after the Great Reforms of the mid-nineteenth century is Edith Clowes et al., eds., *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). For a stimulating comparative discussion of the importance of such culturally particular concepts in the history of the professions in Russia, see Harley Balzer's introduction to Harley Balzer, ed., *Russia's Missing Middle Class: The Professions in Russian History* (Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe, 1996).

[8] See, for example, the case of nature conservationists as described by Douglas Weiner, *A Little Corner of Freedom: Russian Nature Protection from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 5–11 and *passim*.

'We are always grateful for Ol'ga Davidovna's invitations': VOKS's foreign cultural resources in the mid–late 1920s

What could the intelligentsia provide that VOKS wanted? If VOKS's packet of 'external' functions – the development of societies of friends, its system of information-gathering through its representatives abroad, its important book exchange – were first developed by its precursor organisation under the aegis of the Central Executive Committee (1922–25), they became well known to the intelligentsia only during the first few years of VOKS's existence, in 1925–28. Above all, VOKS needed lecturers, scholars and cultural figures whom it could present to 'its' societies in Europe, which it strove to direct from Moscow. To gain these services, VOKS needed to advertise itself openly to the intelligentsia. One 1930 document, a form letter to scientists VOKS knew were being sent abroad to 'study foreign achievement in your specialty', made an especially open appeal, but still kept its language vague. You can help strengthen cultural ties abroad through the societies, the letter noted, and 'VOKS for its part will be glad to share with scientific workers travelling abroad all the contacts that it has there in order to make your work easier'. Interested scientists were invited to visit VOKS before making their trip.[9] VOKS was involved not just with approaching those already travelling abroad, but with organising exhibitions, cultural exchanges, student exchanges, tours, concerts, and sporting events for which it recommended and chose participants. Paradoxically, however, VOKS was perhaps better known abroad than at home: virtually no foreign intellectual planned a trip to the USSR without finding out about VOKS. The agency put out travel guides and published in German, English and French, and became a kind of troubleshooter for foreigners interested in things Soviet. However, the fact that VOKS became well known abroad in the mid-1920s seems towards the end of the decade to have raised its prestige among the Soviet non-Party intelligentsia.

When Kameneva gave her standard advertising talk about VOKS to the influential Union of Scientific Workers in late 1928, she was peppered with questions about what VOKS could do for scholars. Could it receive foreign literature? Could it transfer hard currency to pay for membership dues in foreign societies? 'Through our help you can carry out a book exchange, and through us receive the literature necessary for you,' Kameva replied, promising to help also with the foreign dues. 'We help [those travelling abroad] in various ways.' She gave the example of aid in receiving visas, but, given that her audience was drawn from the scolarly elite, she especially emphasised that VOKS could prepare 'foreign public opinion' by giving advance notice of a visit to the press. In addition to publishing its well-known *Bulletin* in four languages, VOKS cultivated extensive ties with news-

[9] Untitled circular, spring 1930, Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF) f. 5283 [fond VOKS] op. 8, ed. khr. 79, l. 188. It took VOKS years of bureaucratic wrangling to secure advance lists of Soviet scholars travelling abroad – for an example, see GARF f. 5283, op. 1, d. 95, l. 1–42.

papers and journals around the world, supplying them with news items about Soviet culture.[10]

VOKS could also function as a kind of courier for the intelligentsia, transferring and receiving materials from outside the Soviet Union. This became increasingly important in the late 1920s as a legitimised way of contacting the outside world, and as a channel abroad for those in the provinces whose connections were limited. In a short period in 1929, for example, VOKS transferred photographs and correspondence between a scholar at the Nizhnii Novgorod Archeo-Ethnographic Commission and Professor H. F. Osborn of the American Museum of Natural History ('I will always be glad to be useful to Osborn and VOKS', the grateful scholar wrote), located the address of Max Planck for a Soviet physicist, and, among many other similar services, exchanged correspondence between the Bodleian Library in Oxford and the Leningrad State Public Library.[11]

For the cultural elite, VOKS could even arrange publication abroad. In June 1929, to cite an example, VOKS actively sought out Parisian publishing houses that it hoped would publish a work on the Meyerhold Theater.[12] In addition, VOKS offered privileged access to the foreigners to whom it was host in Moscow. VOKS's favour was bestowed in the form of engraved invitations to receptions at the Riabushinskii mansion (the art nouveau architectural masterpiece in which VOKS was housed until it became Maksim Gorkii's villa in 1930), evenings of friendship (*vechera sblizheniia*) for the visiting dignitaries, lectures and cultural events in various fields of the arts and sciences, and individual meetings with the parade of visiting Western cultural figures for whom VOKS arranged guides and translators.

Even so, by no means everyone was clear about what VOKS could do for them. To cite one blatant example of an uninformed inquiry, an engineer from Ufa wanted VOKS to obtain a foreign passport for him. He was told (somewhat disingenuously, as we shall see) that 'VOKS can only provide co-operation (*sodeistvie*) with you once you are already abroad'. And 'as for your desire to take part in VOKS's work, it could in the first place take the form of a small article about cultural construction in your republic' to be published in the VOKS bulletin.[13]

A much more pointed and savvy inquiry about how VOKS might deploy its services, in the light of the increasing dangers of foreign connections in the late 1920s, came from academician Marr, the linguist whose theories and stature were on the rise even as the still-independent Academy of Sciences was under siege.[14] 'We speak [about this] in private,' he told Kameneva at the late 1928 meeting of the scholars' union, 'so we should therefore speak about it openly. How can I be

[10] 'Zasedanie Predstavitelei sektsii nauchnykh rabotnikov v VOKS 7 dekabria 1928', GARF f. R-5283, op. 1, d. 91, l. 96–98.

[11] GARF f. 5283, op. 1, d. 115, l, 97, 100, 123.

[12] Robert Aron, 'Société des Relations Culturelles entre l'Union R.S.S. et l'Etranger', 28 June 1929, GARF f. 5283, op. 1, d. 115, l. 139.

[13] 'Inzh. Prostevu N. I. Gor. Ufa. 21/I-1929', GARF f. 5286, op. 1, d. 115, l. 70.

[14] On Marr, see Yuri Slezkine, 'N. Ia. Marr and the National Origins of Soviet Ethnogenetics', *Slavic Review*, 55, 4 (1996), 826–62; Vera Tolz, *Russian Academicians and Revolution: Combining Professionalism and Politics* (Basingstoke and New York: Macmillan, 1997).

guaranteed that I will not only be published abroad, but that I can do so in a publication that will not result in a whole mass of unpleasantnesses for me later on?'[15] Marr's question, with its implicit complaint, came in late 1928. This was a time when the war scare of 1927 and the Shakhtii trial of 'bourgeois' technical specialists of the previous spring had ushered in a period in which anti-specialist measures and themes of international 'capitalist encirclement' were intertwined. The Shakhtii 'wreckers', and by extension all 'bourgeois specialists' at home, were supposedly aided by foreign powers and had made dupes of naive communists.[16] Certainly, both a heightened Soviet xenophobia and greater restrictions on foreign contacts accompanied the dominant 'proletarianising' themes of Stalin's 'Great Break'. Professor Derzhavin, the rector of Leningrad University, expressed warm appreciation for VOKS's services at the same meeting of the union of scientific workers, but his message arguably contained coded warnings about the new dangers facing those with scientific and cultural contacts abroad. 'The work of VOKS has become much more complicated,' he asserted, 'due to new political combinations in the West' – or, he scarcely needed to add, within the USSR. Again putting his comments in the form of a criticism of the bourgeois West, he continued: 'VOKS should consolidate all its forces around scientific workers . . . so as to break up that block of ice, that political closed-mindedness of the powers who do not wish to make contact with us.' Derzhavin ended his appreciative plea for political protection on a global scale on a personalistic note: 'We are always very grateful to Ol'ga Davidovna for her invitations, we always willingly accept them . . .'[17]

As this suggests, making foreign contacts through VOKS seemed to offer legitimacy and hence political protection. In the anti-specialist assault of the late 1920s, for obvious reasons, the desire of intellectuals to approach VOKS appeared noticeably greater. Professor A. A. Sidorov of the Academy of Arts (GAKhN) wrote personally to Kameneva about his Berlin-published album about the city of Moscow, which VOKS had recommended to German intellectuals. By April 1929, the album and Sidorov were attacked in the Soviet press because the work displayed an incriminatingly high number of churches. Writing 'in great personal pain,' Sidorov cited his 'concrete services rendered' to VOKS in the cause of 'cultural ties with the West'; this, he insisted, gave him 'the right to a defence' and VOKS the justification 'to rehabilitate my book'.[18] Later that year, VOKS was contacted by the famous agronomist Chaianov, who was a non-Party member of the VOKS administration (*pravlenie*) at the time under attack from Party forces. Chaianov

[15] 'Zasedanie Prestavitelei sekstii nauchnykh rabotnikov VOKS. 7 dekabria 1928', GARF f. R-5283, op. 1, d. 91, l. 100.

[16] 'Ob ekonimicheskoi kontr-revoliutsii v iuzhnykh raionakh ugol'noi promyshlennosti', widely distributed Central Committee circular approved by Politburo 7 March 1928, Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no- politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI, the former Central Party Archive) f. 17, op. 3, ed. khr. 676, 11. 11–12.

[17] 'Zasedanie Prestavitelei sekstii nauchnykh rabotnikov VOKS. 7 dekabria 1928', GARF f. R-5283, op. 1,d. 91, l. 99–100.

[18] Prof. A. A. Sidorov (*Uchenyi sekretar'* GAKhN) to O. D. Kameneva, 16 April 1929, GARF f. 5283, op. 1, d. 115, l. 7.

forwarded proposals for co-operation he had received from Bulgaria and Yugoslavia with an inquiry about whether it was desireable to establish contacts with those countries, and if so in what form. VOKS replied that the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs considered those contacts 'extremely desireable'.[19]

Clearly, much of what VOKS could offer the intelligentsia stemmed from its contacts, which themselves resulted from the society's unique position straddling the internal and external 'cultural fronts'. But to understand fully its relations with the intelligentsia, one must recognize that VOKS was a relatively minor player in the byzantine bureaucracy that developed significantly in the 1920s to regulate travel outside the USSR.

From negotiable to top secret: the regulation and politics of foreign travel

In the system that emerged in the 1920s, cultural and scientific figures who wanted to travel abroad needed sponsorship or at least a recommendation from their place of work, which almost always meant state (Soviet) institutions. Communists travelling on Party business or whose primary place of work was in the Party apparat went through different, Party channels, starting with permission from the Party cell and ending with one of the nine largest oblast' party committees (obkoms) or the Central Committee.[20] Since 'private' travel became strictly limited, even those who in reality wished to go on holiday or travel for anything other than for the official rationale of a sponsored business trip often arranged travel 'at their own expense' (*za svoi schet*) through a state institution. To get approval for a trip, one needed to negotiate at least three levels of bureaucracy: the first was one's home institution and any additional sponsoring group (such as the special commission, institution, or group arranging the event); second was the commissariat (ministry) to which one's institution was subordinated (most artists, humanists and scholars had to go through the Commissariat of Enlightenment, Narkompros, but scientific and technical specialists often worked under the economic commissariats, medical personnel under the Commisssariat of Health, and so on); and finally there was the Central Committee's commission for verification of foreign travel for state institutions and social and economic organisations. This last bureaucratic hurdle was created in 1924.[21]

Running the bureaucratic gauntlet held its own pitfalls and complications at each level. The first level, approval from a sponsoring organisation, was ostensibly the

[19] A. V. Chaianov, 'V VOKS. F. N. Petrovu', no date, no earlier than 13 Oct. 1929, GARF f. 5283, op. 1, d. 115, l. 186.

[20] A. V. Golubev et al., *Rossiia i Zapad. Formirovanie vneshnepoliticheskikh stereotipov v soznanii rossiiskogo obschestva pervoi poloviny XX veka* (Moscow: Institut Istorii RAN, 1998), 121–2.

[21] For example, see the Orgburo's approval of Soviet participation in the international music festival in Frankfurt, assigning organisation to VOKS: 'Vypiska iz protokola zasedaniia Orgbiuro TsK VKP(b) ot 20–5–27', GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, d. 97, l. 70. A fourth level can be identified as the overriding decisions of higher Party organs such as the Politburo and the Organisational Bureau (Orgburo), which typically spent a great deal of time on international matters, even when it came to minute decisions on cultural events and individual cadres.

lowest. It involved filling out detailed questionnaires and gaining the recommendation of one's place of work.[22] But this could also require the approval of whichever special commission or agency was arranging an particular event, which could mean extensive and often high-level consultations in various corners of the party-state. One example should suffice. In March 1928 a special commission was formed by the Orgburo to approve the Soviet delegation for the international cinematography exhibition in Holland. The commission met in the Kremlin, in the office of Lezhava, the deputy director of the Council of People's Commissars, and comprised Ol'ga Kameneva and three other members. There they considered the proposals of the Kino-Section of VOKS, but later also consulted two Central Committee agencies, Uchraspred and the Kino-Section of the Central Committee's agit-prop. These latter agencies were asked to approve the special commission's recommendations of travel for one of the directors of the film studio Sovkino and ten specific directors, who would be sent 'in order to acquaint themselves with all the latest developments in the film production of the West'.[23]

On the second level, that of the commissariat (the prewar Soviet term for ministries), the candidates' credentials, paperwork and recommendations were considered. If approval was granted, it was usually decided what kind of funding, if any, the traveller would receive. Resources were extremely scarce, and financial as well as political considerations were typically involved. In 1926 Litvinov, deputy head of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, alerted his own agency to the expenses that Soviet embassies abroad were incurring in bailing out artists, performers and scholars sent abroad with insufficient funding, who ended up 'living a half-hungry or even starving existence and discrediting the Soviet state'. Embassies then had to find the funds to send them back to the USSR. Litvinov singled out Narkompros for blame, saying that it should either provide the necessary funding or refrain from approving travel.[24] In the protocols of Narkompros' commission for scholarly foreign trips from 1930 are approvals with and without subsidies, as well as rejections with and without reasons provided. Considerations of specific requests from VOKS (*pros'ba VOKS*) featured in all categories.[25]

The workings of the third bureaucratic level, the Central Committee commission on travel for state institutions, were undoubtedly much less well known to artists and scholars. The commission was founded by Orgburo decree in April 1924, under

[22] A 1922 example of such an *anketa* included questions on relatives abroad, criminal record, family situation, citizenship record, previous travel abroad, and relatives, as well as purpose of the trip and, of course, social origins. RGASPI f. 17, op. 85, d. 663, l. 10.

[23] 'Protokol Zasedaniia Komissii Sovetskogo Otdela na mezhdunarodnoi Vystavke Kinometografii v Gollandii . . . 23 marta 1928', and 'Zam. Pred. Sovnarkom A.M. Lezhava. Uchraspred TsK VKP(b). Sekretno. Kopiia – tov. Ol'khovomu, Kino-Setskiia Agitpropa TsK VKP(b)', RGASPI f. 17, op. 85, d. 663, l. 134–36, l. 133.

[24] 'Zamnarkomindel Litvinov. Upolnomochennomu NKID pri RSFSR to Aralov . . . 1 iiunia 1926 goda', RGASPI f. 17, op. 85, d. 665, l. 2.

[25] 'Protokol zasedaniia komissii po nauchnym zagranichnym komandirovkam pri Narkompros RSFSR ot 15 aprelia 1930 g.', and other protocols, GARF f. 5283, op. 8, ed. khr. 79, l. 187, 183–196; ibid ('. . . ot 21 fevralia 1930'), l. 204.

the Central Committee's Orgraspred, succeeding a precursor commission that verified the travel of foreign policy and trade officials. It was made up of Central Committee, central control committee, and OGPU representatives. This travel commission only examined all-union institutions in certain parts of the country; analogous commissions existed for the North-West (Leningrad) Oblast', the Caucasus, Central Asia, Belorussia, and Ukraine, as well as Siberia and the Far East. The Orgburo's original mandate instructed the commission (i) to limit foreign travel to only the 'necessary minimum'; (ii) to raise the professional and political qualifications of those sent on business trips; and (iii) to determine the actual time needed for 'temporary trips' (*komandirovki*, as opposed to travel for more permanent work abroad). In addition to this, as the commission detailed in a top secret 1928 report, it strove to increase the number of Party members among those allowed to travel and to limit unnecessary trips: in 1925, 29 per cent of the requests were rejected as 'not needed', but in 1926 this figure jumped to 64 per cent. Indeed, one commission document called the period from May to October 1926 a 'period of intensified struggle for the limitation of foreign travel', motivated by financial considerations.[26] In general, each traveller was preliminarily checked by the secret police (which maintained its own 'commission on travel abroad'), and OGPU personnel also joined the Central Committee commission. In the mid–late 1920s, these included such figures as Ugarov, Peters, and the head of the Foreign Affairs Section (INO OGPU, responsible primarily for foreign espionage), M. A. Trilisser. Indeed, the Central Committee travel commission prided itself on minimising what would otherwise have become direct conflicts between the Soviet state institutions and the secret police, as the former generally wanted to send their officials abroad while the secret police were inclined to veto many of them.[27] Representatives of the lower-level institutions attended the travel commission's meetings, and were regularly instructed to gather more information before 'their' travel requests were approved.

The aggressively interventionist stance of the commission in 1926 apparently prompted opposition from senior Soviet officials, including the head of state, A. I. Rykov, and the head of the commissariat on foreign trade, Mikoian. In 1927, both of them advanced separate proposals that would have either eliminated the commission altogether (leaving the secret police to make 'political' recommendations on foreign travel) or limited it to political evaluations (and hence ban its criterion of 'unnecessary travel').[28] These unsuccessful attacks led the commission, in its defence, to detail its record: of 298 individuals refused travel in six months in 1926, two were on trial, 115 were rejected because of OGPU material or 'political'

[26] 'Material k pun. 35 poriadka dnia zasedaniia Sek. TsKVKP(b) ot 28.1.27', RGASPI f. 17, op. 85, d. 665, l. 20.

[27] 'Doklad. Sov. Sekretno', Dec. or Jan. 1928, RGASPI f. 17, op. 85, d. 665, l. 4–5. 'Pis'ma Orgraspreda TsK VKP(b) OGPU komissii po vyezdam za granitsu' from May 1929–March 1930, in RGASPI f. 17, op. 85, d. 665; 'Protokol zasedaniia komissii po proverke lits, komandiruemykh za granitsu gosuchrezhdeniiami . . .', May–Oct. 1928, *ibid.*, d. 664.

[28] The former was Rykov's propsal: 'Sov. Nar. Kom. A. I. Rykov. V Sek. TsK. Sov. Sekretno', RGASPI f. 17, op. 85, d. 665, l. 16–17.

Table 1. *Applications for travel abroad considered by the Central Committee commission*

Selected people's commissariats	1924			1925			1926		
	Approved	Rejected	VKP(b) members sponsored	Approved	Rejected	VKP(b) members sponsored	Approved	Rejected	VKP(b) members sponsored
		% of applications			% of applications			% of applications	
NDKID (Foreign Affairs)	1,489	9	60	1,484	3.5	70	1,088	2.5	88
NKTorg (Foreign Trade)	523	12	44	1,043	5.5	48	733	5.2	54.4
VSNKh (National Economy)	148	14	39	630	5.8	39.2	488	19.8	35
NKPros (Enlightenment)	70	30	8	196	13.2	18	131	58	14.5

Source: Central Committee commission on foreign trips for state organisations, RGASPI f. 17, op. 85, d. 665, l. 8. Data for some important institutions sending scholars abroad (Academy of Sciences, Commissariat of Health) were not given.

motives, and 181 were refused because travel was deemed 'unnecessary'. A somewhat different ratio of rejections was detailed for eight months in 1927 (nine for ongoing trials, 166 for political reasons, and 189 for 'unnecessary' travel requests).[29]

Two other features of the politics of foreign travel can be deduced from the work of the Central Committee travel commission. First, the vast majority of technical specialists (those sent primarily by Vesenkha, the All-Union Council of the National Economy) traveled to western Europe, in particular Germany before 1933. The United States was a distant second-most-popular destination. This geographical orientation echoed the realm of cultural relations (whether its representatives were sent by VOKS or Narkompros), although fewer cultural figures travelled across the Atlantic.[30] Secondly, from additional data compiled by the travel commission for 1924–6, we can appreciate how differently the commission treated nominees for travel from the Commissariat of Enlightenment, Narkompros – which included the bulk of artists, cultural figures and academics – and those recommended by other state agencies such as the commissariats of Foreign Affairs (primarily diplomats), Trade (trade officials and experts), and the National Economy, VSNKh (technical specialists).

[29] 'V Polit-biuro TsKVKP(b)', no exact date, late 1927, RGASPI f. 17, op. 85, d. 655, l. 37–43.

[30] Of 528 VSNKh specialists travelling in that period, 401 went to Germany and 106 to the United States, 99 to France, 48 to Czechoslovakia and 33 to England. 'Svedenie o zagranichnykh komandirovkah po linii VSNKh Soiuz SSSR za 1927–28 god', VOKS's orientation towards western Europe and within it Weimar Germany – was blatant. See Michael David-Fox, 'Showcases, Fronts, and Boomerangs: Nationalists versus Leftists in Soviet–Weimar Cultural Diplomacy', forthcoming in a volume edited by Susan Gross Solomon.

Several things are revealed by this data. First, the number of travellers sent abroad by the cultural commissariat, Narkompros, was much lower than the number sent by other agencies. Second, the percentage of Narkompros nominees for foreign travel who were rejected by the Central Committee was between two to four times higher than the other commissariats. Finally, Narkompros sponsored fewer members of the Communist Party – since, after all, under its aegis were educational, scientific, artistic and cultural institutions in which the non-Party intelligentsia worked. It may be that Narkompros was in general less more willing to forward non-Party candidates who might appear questionable to the travel commission. But the most plausible interpretation is that Communists and non-Party experts working for economic and diplomatic agencies were far more likely to be approved for foreign travel than the non-Party cultural and scholarly types who had to go through Narkompros, which had the reputation in the Party of being 'soft'.[31] The 1926 data suggest that the crackdown of that year, which Foreign Affairs felt not at all, hit Narkompros travellers severely.

Within the framework of this complicated system for approving foreign travel, what could VOKS do for the non-Party intelligentsia? What were its justifications for sponsoring foreign travel? VOKS could and did become involved at all three levels of the bureaucracy discussed above. First, VOKS was a clearing house for invitations from abroad for Soviet citizens to participate in international exhibitions, conferences, exchanges, and projects of scientific co-operation. In the first stage of the bureaucratic process, therefore, it was a direct organiser and sponsor of international travel. Embassies abroad (where VOKS representatives most frequently also worked as diplomats) received numerous invitations which were forwarded to Moscow. VOKS dealt with other branches of the party-state as well to arrange its projects, such as 1927 student exchanges with western Europe that involved negotiations with Agitprop and the Commissariat of Finance.[32] Insofar as Kameneva and officials from the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs then discussed the desirability on foreign policy grounds of sponsoring a cultural event in a particular place, VOKS was acting as a branch of the foreign policy apparatus.[33] VOKS, moreover, could lobby the central bureaucracy for the events it sponsored. In these interactions, airing political–ideological as well as foreign policy justifications for a cultural initiative was *de rigeur*. In a 1927 letter to Molotov on joint German–Soviet sponsorship of an international musical exhibition in Frankfurt, for example, VOKS attempted to obtain 23,000 roubles, and a VOKS official but the 'political side' of

[31] This meshes with Vladlen Izmozik's materials on the secret police's close monitoring of and hostile reporting on intelligentsia groups, *Glaza i ushi rezhima: Gosudarstvennyi politicheskii kontrol' za naseleniem Sovetskoi Rossii v 1918–1928 godakh* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta Ekonomiki i Finansov, 1995), 123, 133, and *passim*.

[32] 'O. D. Kameneva. Tov. Barangikovu. Agitprop TsK VKP(b). 20 iiulia 1927', GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, d. 97, l. 74.

[33] For a good example of such a discussion, an invitation to the Second International Conference of Anthropologists in Prague, see 'O. D. Kameneva. Zam. Zav. Otdelom Pechati NKID tov. Rozenberg. 4 iiunia 1924', GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, ed. Khr. 37, l. 32. Kameneva was writing as head of VOKS's precursor organisation.

the question: Soviet 'peaceful cultural work' in Frankfurt could become a 'vivid counterweight to the forms of influence practised by the Entente'. In 1930 a request from the VOKS representative in Germany to send a German-speaking agrarian specialist was made in order to counter reports in the German press about collectivisation.[34]

Aside from promoting its own travellers, VOKS could support the requests of those sponsored by other institutions. Most routinely, it could intervene in the Narkompros (i.e., the second, or commissariat-level) commissions on foreign travel by forwarding its expressions of support. But it could also lobby other organisations involved in the process. For example, in 1930 VOKS wrote to the scientific–technical sector of the central executive committee's committee on scholarship (Uchenyi Komitet TsIK) asking that they 'fully support' the request to travel to London of the eugenicist Viktor Valerianovich Bunak, director of the Institute of Anthropology. Bunak had agreed to give a report on the 'position of Soviet scholars' at the English Society of Friends of the USSR. VOKS, again motivated by its foreign propaganda role, considered this especially timely to counter reports in *The Times* and other newspapers 'that non-Party scholars supposedly cannot conduct scientific research, etc.'[35] With this single request, VOKS in fact pursued two of its main foreign preoccupations: supplying the societies of friends of Russia with lecturers and countering press reports from abroad. Travellers actively held out promises of co-operation with VOKS in return for their participation. For example, a gynecologist sent to France under the auspices the Commissariat of Health in 1928 offered to help 'strengthen [cultural] ties', at the same time asking VOKS for a 'monetary subsidy'. He also requested that VOKS support his request to the Hard Currency Directorate to carry US$300 in addition to the $150 that travellers were normally allowed to convert. Kameneva scrawled in the margins of the request: 'support the intervention of the Commissariat of Health'.[36]

The personal language typical of patronage relationships appears in intelligentsia letters to the head of VOKS in connection with travel requests. For example, Professor Iulii Shokal'skii wrote to 'Deeply Respected Aleksandr Iakovlevich' Arosev in 1936 to express 'deep gratitude' for his 'great attention paid to me', saying that he was 'deeply touched' and asking for his daughter Zinaida to travel with him to Edinburgh.[37] It should also be noted that VOKS officials, in a manner entirely consistent with the nesting hierarchies of the party-state, sent personal appeals to top Party leaders that were routinely inserted in their own official travel requests. In 1927 Kameneva, for example, wrote informing the Central Committee secretariat

[34] 'I. Korinets. Tov. V. M. Molotovu.. TsK VKP(b)', 13 May 1927, GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, d. 97, l. 68. 'Lorents. Tov. Shumanu – VOKS', 15 Jan. 1930, GARF f. 5283, op. 8, ed. khr. 79, l. 204.

[35] 'D. Novomirskii. Zav. Anglo-Amerikanskim Sektorom [VOKS]. A. Bruk, Otv. Sekretar' Nuachno- Tekhnicheskogo Sektora. Uchenyi komitet pri TsIK SSSR', no later than Sept. 1930, GARF f. 5283, op. 8, ed. Khr. 79, l. 171.

[36] 'Professor Mstislav Grigor'evich Serdiukov. Zav. VOKS. 2/VIII-1928', GARF f. 5283, op. 1, ed. khr. 91, l. 32. Kameneva's notation meant that the commissariat's (level 2) recommendation would also be supported by VOKS at the Central Committee (level 3) stage.

[37] Professor Iulii Shkal'skii to A. Ia. Arosev, 22 July 1936, GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, d. 308, l. 80.

that her request for a two-week vacation in Turkey enjoyed the 'full support' of Foreign Affairs commissar Chicherin and was 'sympathetically viewed' by Mikoian, as well as having been recommended by doctors. Yet the vacation would also further VOKS work in a hitherto ignored 'eastern' country.[38]

There is evidence that, for those it favoured, VOKS could also supply hard currency, which was always in short supply. In 1925 Kameneva wrote to request 3,000 gold roubles from the Gold Section of the Commissariat of Finance for payments to scholars giving talks at the societies of cultural friendship. In 1927 a Lappologist, Professor Griuner, who had made a good impression on the VOKS representative in Sweden for his reports on the conditions of Soviet scholars, was found 'literally starving'. VOKS wrote to the Narkompros commission on foreign travel (level two of the bureaucratic system) to obtain 500 roubles for him from the Special Hard Currency Directorate (Osoboe Valiutnoe Upravlenie).[39]

VOKS could also act as a troubleshooter when something went wrong along the way. In 1925, academician Marr wrote to VOKS about a scholar in his Institute for the History of Material Culture. This philologist had been supported by Narkompros (level two) for travel to work in France and Spain, but had not been approved for a passport (most probably at level three); it turned out that his wife had been living in Paris for almost a year – for health reasons, Marr assured VOKS. Marr gave his personal guarrantee: 'I personally know that B. A. Krzhevskii is travelling in order to complete certain specific scientific tasks'. The deputy director of VOKS, Nikolai Loboda, forwarded Marr's letter and wrote in flawless bureaucratese to Trilisser of the OGPU (level three): VOKS 'supports [Marr's] intervention [*khodataistvo*] on the granting of a foreign passport and requests corresponding directives to be authorised in Leningrad. On actions taken you are requested to inform us'.[40]

During 1927–8 the war scare, the Shakhtii trial, and the heightened propaganda about foreign sabotage and capitalist encirclement all brought with them greater hostility to things foreign. In trying to understand how the intelligentsia scrambled to adjust, it is safe to conclude that the actions of the Central Committee travel commission, with its balancing of secret police and commissariat interests, was one of several parts of the foreign travel bureaucracy that remained opaque to even the best-informed intellectuals. After all, the head of the Council of people's Commissars (Sovnarkom) and nominal head of state, Rykov, himself at one point in 1927 confused the secret police apparatus headed by Trilisser (INO OGPU) with the Central Committee commission (which OGPU officials, including Trilisser, attended).[41] In one revealing case, the peripatetic, internationally renowned scientists of the Academy of Sciences bitterly complained about the constant delays

[38] O. D. Kameneva, 'V Sekretariat TsK', no date, 1927, GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, d. 97, l. 70.

[39] 'O. D. Kameneva, R. Beller. Tov. M. N. Pokrovskomu, Pred. GUS. 13 Maia 1925', GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, ed. khr. 55, l. 9; 'O. D. Kameneva, Pred. Obshchestva. V Kommissiiu po nauchnym komandirovkam zagranitsu pri Narkomprose RSFSR. 10 dekabria 1927', GARF f. 5283, op. 1, d. 81, l. 141.

[40] 'Nik. Loboda, Zam. Pred. Obshchestva. Tov. Trilisser. Nach. INO OGPU. 24 iiunia 1925', GARF f. R- 5283, op. 1a, ed. khr. 52, l. 7.

[41] 'Pred. Sovnarkom A. I. Rykov. V Sekretariat TsK', RGASPI f. 17, op. 85, d. 665, l. 16–17.

and unexplained rejections of the special oversight commission headed by Enukidze that before 1929 dealt with the privileged institution on travel questions. They did not realize that Enukidze himself was at the time begging to be liberated from the strict and time-consuming oversight of the Central Committee travel commission.[42] If the details were kept secret, however, it was abundantly clear throughout the 1920s that travellers abroad (just as any other group that needed something from the complicated party-state) needed all the help they could get to negotiate the system, to cut through delays, and to address unexpected reversals. In this atmosphere, the domestic non-Party intelligentsia may have overestimated the power of VOKS – a major player among the intellectual visitors and cultural elites, but a relatively lightweight cog in the broader bureaucratic machine.

VOKS, however, had the distinction of being one of those institutions that actively made overtures to the non-Party intelligentsia. Like certain subdivisions of the sprawling Narkompros, it tended to hold out the carrot, while other parts of the party-state (the secret police, Party factions of state institutions, and Party organs such as the Central Committee's agit-prop) generally wielded the stick. Unusually, VOKS actually intensified its overtures to the non-Party intelligentsia in the late 1920s, at the outset of a general offensive against the 'bourgeois specialists'. The reason, as we shall see, has to be considered along with the tangled threads of intentions bundled up in VOKS's own evolving goals in regard to the intelligentsia.

One of the most revealing occasions when these threads may be considered is the 1924 debates leading up to the founding of VOKS the following year. The establishment of VOKS essentially affirmed and expanded the tasks of a precursor organisation (the Commission for Foreign Aid). This commission, along with its United Information Bureau (OBI), had operated as a state institution under the All-Union Central Executive Committee (TsIK) since 1922. It was from the functions of these organisations that Kameneva had fashioned the particular combination of 'cultural' activities at home and abroad that VOKS later pursued. Kameneva's consultations with high-level Bolshevik intellectuals in the period leading up to the founding of VOKS reveals that the idea of an ostensibly unaligned society was initially not her idea. For example, she inquired of David Riazanov, the old Social Democratic Marx scholar who headed the Marx-Engels Institute:

> What forms of work do you imagine for our organisation, insofar as remaining under TsIK [the Central Executive Committee] is politically awkward? Do you think it advisable to create a 'civil [*obshchestvennuiu*] organisation'? NKID [the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs] is in favour of the latter. At the same time it considers that financial credits from the government also will be necessary for the work of such a 'Society for Cultural Ties Abroad'.[43]

[42] 'Enukidze. V TsK VKP(b)', 1 Aug. 1927, RGASPI f. 17, op. 85, d. 665, l. 22. On this episode in the relations between the Enukidze Commission and the Academy, see Michael David-Fox, 'Symbiosis to Synthesis: The Communist Academy and the Bolshevisation of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 1918–1929', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 46: 2 (1998), 235–6.

[43] O. D. Kameneva to D. B. Riazanov, 12 Dec. 1924, GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, d. 31, l. 62.

Kameneva around this time was also consulting a number of important state figures about the future status of VOKS as a non-governmental organisation. For example, the commissar of health, Semashko, a significant player in the realm of Soviet international medical and scientific initiatives, wrote to Kameneva suggesting that the future organisation should not be a state agency or even an inter-agency organ. Since it had the important function of dealing with 'the cultured West', it should rather take the form of 'a special Society, on the lines of those existing abroad (the Society of Friends of Russia), which could really attract broad cultural circles [abroad]'. Of course, he added, commissariats and other institutions interested in foreign cultural relations would enter such a society.[44] Importantly, in a letter to Chicherin on 8 December Kameneva indicates that the foreign societies of 'friends of the Soviet Union', the first of which was the German Gesellschaft der Freunde des neuen Russland, founded in 1923, provided a crucial rationale for VOKS's own status as a formally autonomous society. 'Soviet culture', she wrote, 'must be represented *outside the framework of* [state] *agencies* [*vedomstv*]. The Societies of Friends of Soviet Russia cannot have relations with separate institutions of the Republic.'[45] In other words, the newly founded European societies, made up largely of leftist but non-communist intellectuals, had to be kept both independent of west European state interference and under Moscow's control. These imperatives provided a key justification for VOKS's own status as a society. Around this time, Kameneva seems to have made up her mind how to approach the ad hoc TsIK commission (headed by 'comrade Narimanov') that had been formed to organise the founding of VOKS. To the people's commissar of the Worker-Peasant Inspectorate, Kuibyshev, and in a second letter to Chicherin, she called for a single, centralised, authoritative organisation that would co-ordinate 'informational materials' abroad along already established lines, and would oversee the societies of friendship. 'I imagine this work in the form of an interagency commission on foreign cultural ties, under which sections on individual kinds of cultural and scientific work could be formed. These scientific, literary and other sections could be endowed with an *externally public* [*obshchestvennyi*] *character.*'[46] Not only is the desire to create a fictional Soviet analogue to the already existing societies abroad repeated, but already we see that VOKS's 'sections' were to be that particular part of VOKS that enlisted 'civil society' or the 'public'. Like all non-governmental 'social organisations' [*obshchestvennye organizatsii*], it promulgated a charter [*ustav*]. The VOKS administration in 1927 did include several 'outstanding figures in science, art and literature who stand close to Soviet power', but, in typical fashion for non-Party state institutions, also

[44] 'N. Semashko. RSFSR. Narodnyi komissar Zdravokhraneniia. Predsedeateliu komissii zagranichnoi pomoshchi tov. O.D. Kamenevoi', 16 Dec. 1924, GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, d. 31, l. 52.

[45] 'Vypiska iz pis'ma tov. O. D. Kameneva Narodnomu komissaru po Inostrannym Delam, tov. G. B. Chicherinu. 8 dekabria 1924 g.', *ibid.*, l. 5. Emphasis in orig. The founding of the German society in 1923 was followed in 1924 with counterparts in England, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, and Denmark. By 1932 they existed in 42 countries worldwide. See David-Fox, 'Showcases, Fronts, and Boomerangs'.

[46] O. D. Kameneva to V. V. Kiubyshev, 18 Dec. 1924, GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, d. 31, l. 75. Emphasis in orig.

had a communist faction and a list of 'responsible workers', who in fact were five party members. A 'bureau' of the administration also comprised five members.[47]

VOKS's foundation as a society in 1925 corresponded to the heyday of non-governmental organisations, including societies, professional organisations, intelligentsia groupings, clubs and regime-inspired 'mass organisations', in the early USSR, but in certain respects it was unique among them. There was no single rubric for all these institutions until the 1936 Stalin Constitution standardised the term 'social [*obshchestvennye*] organisations' for a radically reduced number of them. However, plans to reduce the number actually dated as far back as the outset of their period of greatest growth – the years between 1925 and 1928. Reduction was implemented in a 1928–30 'purge' that drastically reduced their numbers from many hundreds to fewer than 20 all-Russian or all-union organisations after 1934. Even in the 1920s, however, VOKS differed in important ways from those cultural, professional, and scientific organisations that received regular state financial subsidies (or were even included in the state budget). It was also very different from the 'mass organisations', staffed completely by Party members at the top, that survived and prospered in the 1930s. For VOKS emerged as a 'society' out of pre-existing Soviet state agencies. It continued to function as a full-fledged part of the party-state, boasting a network of representatives in Soviet embassies abroad and complete integration into the branches of the bureaucracy concerned with cultural and international affairs in Moscow. It thus most resembled a regular state agency with the features of a 'society' – dues-paying members, formally non-governmental status, and intelligentsia participation included – grafted on.[48] (That it was not utterly alone in combining the functions of state agency and non-governmental organisation, however, is suggested by the fact that such institutions as the formally independent trade unions and the Soviet section of the Red Cross often acted abroad as branches of the Soviet state.) The distinctive nature of VOKS is underscored by the fact that even the most favoured 'mass organisations' founded in the 1920s were closed in 1947–8, while VOKS alone of all the non-governmental organisations of that era persisted until 1958.[49]

VOKS's status as an independent society thus remained something of a sham. While the conspiratorial ethos of the Party perhaps dictated ironic, disparaging references to the role of the 'public' in its affairs, it is important to note that this was the way in which VOKS officials consistently referred throughout the 1920s to the role of the intelligentsia in the 'society' when outsiders were not present to observe. In Kameneva's 1927 report on VOKS, she discussed the already thriving organisation's place in the entire Soviet system of operating abroad. Such agencies as the Comintern and Profintern handled the communist and workers' movements. VOKS, while helping those movements, 'handled' *(obrabatyvaet)* 'an intermediary

[47] 'Vypiska iz protokola Orgbiuro, 14/VI-27', GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, d. 97, l. 112.

[48] The above is drawn from I. N. Il'ina, *Obshchestvennye organizatsii Rossii v 1920–e gody* (Moscow: Institut Rossiiskoi istorii RAN, 2000), 107, 141, 174–214.

[49] *Ibid.*, 95. See also V. V. Kravchenko, *Obshchestvennye organizatsii SSSR n mezhdunarodnoi arene* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo 'Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia', 1969).

stratum – intelligentsia "civil society" (*obshchestvennost'*) . . . utilising for penetration into these circles the flag of a "neutral" society'. The rest of the report demonstrated, as do similar documents throughout the period, that the societies of friends in western Europe were the jewels in VOKS's crown, the main imagined point of entry into foreign intellectual circles. They were the primary means of enlisting domestic cultural figures in VOKS work and a prime arena in which VOKS touted its own influence and prestige at home. It is interesting to observe the definite slippage between notions of intellectuals abroad and the intelligentsia at home: both were part of an intermediary stratum (that, according to Soviet Marxism, wavered between the great social classes of proletariat and bourgeoisie), and both were presented with VOKS's façade of neutrality. Both needed to be handled or used.[50]

If the emphasis on an illusory cultural society highlighted VOKS's conspiratorial mode in dealing with the intelligentsia, the goal-oriented aspects of using 'non-proletarian hands' for the construction of socialism reveal a persistent instrumental mode as well. Kameneva wrote quite typically in 1924 to the head of Foreign Affairs' Department of the West that it was necessary to 'use to the maximum' Soviet scholars traveling to Germany.[51] But there was also a third kind of interaction with the intelligentsia, an officially sanctioned mode that nonetheless could engage the informal ties characteristic of patronage, that might be referred to by the contemporary term 'winning over' (*zavoevanie*). This derived from the NEP-era injunction to 'attract' the wavering intelligentsia to the cause. In practice, Kameneva from the outset developed warm and genuinely close working relations with co-operative non-Party figures, such as the conciliatory Academy of Sciences permanent secretary Sergei Fedorovich Ol'denburg (a member of the VOKS administration and frequent contributor to its deliberations and publications). Especially after 1927, when her initial ambitious agendas for VOKS became stymied by limited funding and lukewarm support from on high, she repeatedly announced to public meetings that VOKS could only expand by relying on the work of *obshchestvennost'*. 'You know our conditions,' she said at one such occasion, a gathering of the presidium and secretariat of the second all-union Conference of Scientific Workers in 1927. 'We cannot achieve everything with our apparatus alone. We must switch over to the public [*obshchestvennost'*] and in the full sense of the word become a civil [*obshchestvennuiu*] organisation.' Kameneva even articulated goals for VOKS in a backward-looking vocabulary that may have echoed the wishes of many non-Party cultural and scientific figures: 'We imagine [cultural] ties to mean the restoration of those old connections which were established before the war and revolution and which we must help to restore.'[52]

[50] For more on these points, see David-Fox, 'Showcases, Fronts, and Boomerangs', and 'The Fellow- Travelers Revisited: The "Cultured West" Through Soviet Eyes', *Journal of Modern History*, forthcoming.

[51] 'Kameneva O. D. V NKID, Otdel Zapada, tov. Aleksandrovskomu', no exact date, prob. June 1924, GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, ed. khr., 37, l. 39–40.

[52] 'Stenogramma soveshchaniia VOKS'a Prezidium i Sekretariatom 2–go Vsesoiuznogo S'ezda Nauchnykh rabotnikov, 2/II-27 g.' GARF f. 5283, op. 8, ed. khr. 31, l. 8–9, 5. To restore pre-war scientific ties was one of the goals that at least one academic administrator called on VOKS to facilitate;

This startling and frankly non-Bolshevik statement, made at a public gathering of the scholarly elite, deserves close scrutiny for the clues it offers to Kameneva's outlook and agendas. On the one hand, it suggests that instrumentalism was often the twin, and not the antipode, of the 'winning over' mode, as Kameneva was clearly saying what her audience would like to hear. She would be highly unlikely to make such statements to her Party comrades. Indeed, for high Party deliberations, indications that she was combating or manipulating the intelligentsia would play much better. However, it would be too simple to conclude that, by stressing the restoration of cultural ties, Kameneva was merely mouthing empty phrases. In the same 1927 meeting of scientific workers, for example, Kameneva also sounded some other themes that appeared dear to her heart: the need to inform 'our broad masses' about foreign countries as well as about the achievements of Soviet power made in the last nine years. These two goals appeared to be mutually reinforcing, for they were tied to Kameneva's (and VOKS's) preoccupation abroad with 'cultured' and technologically advanced countries of western Europe and to an 'enlightenment' and culturalist mission at home.[53] It was not enough to know that the Soviet Union was encircled by capitalist countries, she wrote in a VOKS publication in 1926; the masses must have 'clear and precise' information on 'how one capitalist country differs from another'.[54] Clearly, bringing knowledge of the Western world to the masses would help them acquire 'consciousness'. Tellingly, one of Kameneva's few published books was an edited volume on 'cultural work' to improve manners and sanitation in workers' canteens.[55] In 1927, a stress on VOKS's organisation of unpaid 'social work' (*obshchestvennaia rabota*) with the 'masses' was not necessarily something the scientific elite was eager to hear. Kameneva nonetheless touted (along with her blandishments about helping the scientific intelligentsia) VOKS's volunteer work. This, of course, was increasingly prominent in Party cultural agendas towards the late 1920s. Another piece of the puzzle potentially relevant to Kameneva's attitudes and outlook can be found in one of her earlier private letters to Chicherin, whose agency played a crucial role in VOKS affairs. Kameneva expressed great satisfaction that 'our scientific circles' were so willing to participate in official Soviet cultural diplomacy, adding that this would 'make a great impression' abroad and raise our 'prestige'.[56] In other words, instrumental manipulation and 'genuine' co-operation with the intelligentsia, as well as official

see 'N. Iakovlev. Uchenyi sekretar. Nauchno-Issledovatel'stogo Instituta sravnitel'noi istorii literatur i iazykov Zapada i Vostoka pri FON LGU. V Komissiiu tov. Narmanova (po opredelenii form raboty po kul'turnoi svaizi s za-granitsei', 1924, GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, d. 31, l. 69–71.

[53] In 1924, the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs even proposed naming VOKS a 'Society for Cultural Relations with the West'. See 'Postanovlenie kollegii NKID to 8–go dekabria s. g. [1924]. Ob organizatsii komissii Zagran. Pomoshchi (otnoshenie t. Kamenevoi)', GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, d. 31, l. 3.

[54] O. D. Kameneva, 'Ot redaktsii', *Zapad i Vostok. Sbornik Vsesoiuznogo Obshchestva kul'turnykh sviazi s zagranitsei* (Moscow, 1926), 5–6.

[55] O. D. Kameneva, ed. *V pomosh' kul'trabote v rabochem stolovii* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1926), discussed in Michael David-Fox, 'What is Cultural Revolution?' *Russian Review*, 58 (April 1999), 192–4.

[56] 'O. Kameneva. Narodnomu komissaru po Inostrannym Delam tov. T. V. Chicherinu, [illeg.] dekabria 1923', GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, ed. khr. 37, l. 145–147.

and personal agendas in Party–intelligentsia relations, are often impossible fully to disaggregate.

VOKS's turn to the intelligentsia led to a noticeable shift in its activities by the late 1920s. In 1927–8 VOKS moved to emphasise the work of its 'sections' in various disciplines and areas of culture and science, which we have seen that Kameneva from the first viewed as the most 'civil' part of VOKS. Lunacharskii, the commissar of enlightenment, compiled a list of sympathetic non-Party intellectuals who were well known abroad, and their participation was solicited. By 1929 there were sections in literature, pedagogy, agronomy, transport, medicine, ethnography, law and chemistry, followed by a scientific–technical section once technology moved to the forefront of Party concern. These groups participated in VOKS's foreign publication programme, participated in supplying the 'societies of friends' with recommended cultural activities and publications. They also organised lectures and helped received the foreign visitors.[57] VOKS had become an unusual, hybrid institution, combining Party, state, secret police, foreign policy, cultural and, finally, civic functions.[58]

Contagions of class and foreignness: changing landmarks of the 1930s

The events of Stalin's Great Break after 1928 irrevocably changed VOKS's relationships with the intelligentsia and the nature of VOKS itself. In the mid-1920s there had been constant challenges to what Kameneva – in a way that could have easily come under fire on theoretical grounds from other Bolsheviks – tended to call VOKS's 'purely' cultural operations abroad. By referring to pure culture, she was invoking VOKS's official orientation toward non-communist cultural elites. She was also drawing a distinction within the Soviet system for dealing with the outside world, between VOKS and 'political' organisations (such as the Comintern and trade unions) and 'economic' organs (such as commissariats and foreign trade apparatus).[59] However, such distinctions, always problematic in both theory and practice for many different strands of Bolshevism, were increasingly untenable in conditions of the all-out 'socialist offensive'. Among the aspects of VOKS's work that came under notably increased fire in the late 1920s were its mission to focus on 'bourgeois' (non-communist and non-proletarian) social groups at home and abroad and its separate status as a society, whose fictive autonomy nevertheless imposed

[57] For an example, see 'Literaturnaia sektsiia. VOKS', undated plan, 1929. GARF f. 5283, op. 1, ed. khr. 131, l. 35.

[58] For a perestroika-era treatment that focuses on VOKS's short-lived opening to *obshchestvennost'*, see N. V. Kiseleva, *Iz istorii bor'by sovetskoi obshchestvennosti za proryv kul'turnoi blokady SSSR (VOKS: seredina 20–x – nachalo 30–x godov)* (Rostov-na-Donu: Idatel'stvo Rostovskogo Universiteta, 1991).

[59] As late as March 1929 Kameneva stated, in a meeting with representatives of economic organs, 'after all, functions were strictly delineated [in the foreign affairs apparatus]: the Central Council of Trade Unions [VtsSPS, in charge of receiving workers' delegations] carries out politics, economics was the affair of one of the planning or economic organisations, and we deal with culture in its pure form, insofar as culture in general is above politics or economics'. 'Soveshchanie, 30.III.29 g.', GARF f. R-5283, op. 1, d. 20, l. 22.

some restrictions in crafting its messages. Also under attack were VOKS's earlier attempts to provide convincing, if not neutral, information that was not obviously political propaganda.

Like everybody else, VOKS adapted itself to the upsurge in militance at the outset of the first Five-Year Plan. The new orientation was reflected in VOKS's obligatory 'production plan' for 1929–30, which now divided its tasks into 'political' and 'cultural' parts. The former included 'organising public opinion in capitalist countries to the benefit of the Soviet Union', while the latter included neutralising and 'paralysing' a 'part of the bourgeoisie to a significant degree in the event of any foreign-policy complications'.[60]

Kameneva, who had managed to survive the downfall of both her brother and her husband, was removed from her position in late 1929, pushed aside along with a great number of the leading Party cultural figures and authorities of the 1920s. The exact circumstances of her removal are still unknown, but she left VOKS at precisely the same time that the leading figures of Lunacharskii's Narkompros were swept from office. This suggests that Kameneva's independent standing in the party and neutrality in its internal struggles were sufficient to avoid her removal in 1927 or 1928 as a consequence of her relationship to the excommunicated leaders Trotskii and Kamenev. Rather, she appears to have fallen victim to the new militancy on the 'cultural front'.

To be sure, Kameneva had attempted to swim with the tide. In a public speech in December 1928, for example, she asserted that 'VOKS's peaceful programme assumes an exclusively militant significance'. One of the last substantive records of a VOKS meeting under her leadership, however, on 4 July 1929, finds her warily warning against recent trends or a radical transformation of VOKS's mission. 'We do not need to become a quasi-Comintern,' she said. The notion that VOKS was a 'masked Comintern' was but the lies of the Western press; 'our orientation towards objective information . . . often hammers things in harder than agitation'.[61]

At the same time, however, the burgeoning upheaval at the end of the 1920s, as elsewhere, soon led to major restructuring. VOKS was purged, like other state institutions, and seventeen workers, including six Party members, were removed. Many of the organisation's most trusted collaborators in both the Party and non-Party intelligentsia, such as Lunacharskii and Ol'denburg, were also removed from their posts in this period.[62] VOKS's importance in foreign work insulated it to a certain extent from the upheaval on the domestic cultural front. Unlike, for example, Nadezhda Krupskaia's Glavpolitprosvet, the Main Committee on Political Enlightenment, it may have appeared too important to be liquidated, although Kameneva made reference in 1929 to several previous attempts to eliminate

[60] 'Proizvodstvennyi plan raboty VOKS' a na 1929–1930', stamped Aug. 1929, GARF f. 5283, op. 1, d. 100, l. 118–160, here l. 118.

[61] Untitled theses of VOKS report, GARF f. 5283, op. 1, d. 100, l. 2; 'Stenogramma zasedaniia VOKSa ot 4/VII-1929', *ibid.*, l. 18–61, here l. 21.

[62] Kiseleva, *Iz istorii*, 142.

VOKS.[63] Certainly, the Great Break made a collaborative relationship with the non-Party intelligentsia at home suspect at best, and the 'left turn' abroad made an orientation towards cultural elites abroad (rather than proletarians or communists) a liability. In late 1929, for example, one VOKS report called for a reorientation abroad towards 'broad organisations of the labouring intelligentsia', and towards 'other societies' besides the societies of friends, that were 'more radical and closer to us in social composition'.[64] Unlike the period of the Great Purges, when VOKS's weakness was its very contacts abroad in a period of spy-mania, during the Great Break it was largely its association with 'bourgeois specialists' that represented a damaging political liability. Domestically, this meant that VOKS's relationships with the intelligentsia were inevitably altered.

This is why the trials of specialist 'wreckers' of 1928–30 hit VOKS so hard. Co-operative association with the social stratum that had spawned these supposed saboteurs tainted VOKS itself. In particular, the so-called Industrial Party trial of engineers, which came at the height of the Great Break upheaval in 1930, changed the entire nature of VOKS publications. VOKS whipped up an extensive campaign to persuade foreigners of the dangers of foreign military intervention. This campaign not only linked VOKS publications about Soviet culture much more directly to immediate foreign policy goals, but changed their entire tone to what was called 'a militant and politically sharpened character' of propaganda. For VOKS 1930 was a year of radical transformation, as it became preoccupied with the 'mobilisation of the Soviet public (*obshchestvennost'*)' in this campaign. First and foremost, this meant lining up signatures of prominent cultural figures on propagandistic declarations for dissemination abroad. It also implied guaranteeing attendance at VOKS meetings for the purpose of unanimous votes in favour of resolutions on the danger of foreign intervention and sabotage.[65] A mass mailing about one such meeting, on 23 November 1930, noted that the 'Industrial Party'(Prompartiia) show trial gave 'Soviet scholars and artists one more occasion to show their relationship to Soviet power'. In 'this critical hour', it warned ominously, 'we call on you . . . to understand that any speaking out in favour of wreckers is objectively a blow against the construction of socialism'. VOKS instructed its regional affiliates to struggle against 'apolitical' and 'neutral' attitudes among the intelligentsia. Since demonstrating the threat of intervention to 'foreign public opinion (*obshchestvennost'*)' was also one of the main goals in the campaign, this milestone in VOKS's history is suggestive of an overlooked phenomenon in Soviet history: cross-fertilisation of internal and external cultural missions and approaches to the intelligentsia.[66]

[63] 'Mezhvedomstvennoe soveshchanie organizatsii, vedushchikh zagranitsu rabotu, 30.III.29 g.', GARF f. R- 5283, op. 1a, ed. Khr. 20, l. 10 ob.

[64] Untitled plan by VOKS Biuro Referentury, Sept. 1929, GARF f. 5283, op. 1, ed. khr. 124, l. 18.

[65] In the mid-1920s the party developed the practice of using non-govnermental organisations and societies for manifestos and campaigns, and by the late 1920s many 'mass organisations' took on new functions in aiding the collectivisation and industrialisation drives. See Il'ina, *Obshchesetvennye organizatsii*, 139–40.

[66] 'Poiasnenie povestki dnia dlia mitinga, sozyvaemogo VOKS'om 23 noiabria 1930 g. v TsEKUBU', GARF f. 283, op. 1, ed. khr. 139, l. 16; 'Protokol komissii po rabote VOKS v sviazi s

Indeed, the juggling inside VOKS of internal and external pressures was brought out poignantly by the new head of the society, Petrov, in a VOKS general assembly in 1930. With tortuous reasoning, Petrov attempted to justify VOKS's now controversial catering to the 'cultured intelligentsia'. As he put it, 'we need to learn to manoeuvre. From the point of view of the *participant* in our general system of socialist construction, each of our manoeuvres might seem like opportunism . . . [But it is not opportunism because] in our work *inside* the country an attack on bourgeois culture is characteristic.'[67] The inference was that outside the USSR, VOKS was masking its true face (just as hidden enemies were masked inside the country), and just like those hidden enemies, VOKS needed to be conspiratorial and manipulative. This logic, so embedded in the political culture of masking and unmasking of Great Break vintage, could not but help reconfigure the theory and practice of VOKS's work with the intelligentsia.

Three far-reaching developments in the 1930s further affected the complex relationship between VOKS and the intelligentsia that has been described in this paper. First, in the midst of the Great Break upheaval, the 'sectional' forms of work faded away as a VOKS priority and were eliminated in a reorganisation of the mid-1930s. In their stead, VOKS's territorial 'sectors' became the centrepiece of the institution, and their priority was the gathering of information on cultural trends in individual foreign countries (*referentura*) through VOKS's own reporters (*referenty*).[68] As one recent Russian historian of cultural exchanges writes, 'the direct link with *obshchestvennost'* was lost', and the more purely statist form VOKS took 'did not aid in the establishment of direct contacts between figures in science and art'.[69] Second, in keeping with far-reaching political trends, VOKS's decisions about any Soviet participation in events or initiatives abroad became entirely dependent on high-level Central Committee sanction. The talented writer–diplomat Arosev, despite close personal ties to Molotov and Ezhov, was hampered at every turn as head of VOKS by the need to clear the smallest decisions through the Party apparat.[70] Finally, with

protsessom "Prompartii" ot 20.XI.30', *ibid.*, l. 3–4; 'Otchet po kampanii VOKS protiv interventsii za period s 20 noiabria po 20 ianvaria s. g.', *ibid.*, l. 108–111; untitled circular to all VOKS sections on Promparty campaign, 26 Nov. 1930, *ibid.*, l. 29;'Plan provedeniia kampanii s protsessom "Prompartii", no date, 1931, *ibid.*, l. 54. A telling, if extraordinary example of how VOKS's official-statist mobilisation of *obshchestvennost'* developed after this is the period immediately following the Nazi–Soviet Pact of 1939, when VOKS organised writers, artists and composers to demonstrate cultural friendship with the fascist former foe. See Golubev et al., *Rossiia i Zapad*, 213.

[67] 'Protokol soveshchaniia otvetstvennykh rabotnikov VOKS o rabote VOKS v sviazi s nadvigaiusheisia voennoi opasnost'iu ot 19 noiabria 1930', *ibid.*, l. 1–2.

[68] Kiseleva, *Iz istorii*, 113–14; Golubev and Nevezhin, 'VOKS v 1930–1940-e gody'; 'Polozhenie o referenture VOKS s febral' 1929', GARF f. 5283, op. 1, ed. khr. 123, l. 1, 2–3. On the expansion of *referentura* in 1930–31, see 'Protokol zasedaniia Biuro Pravleniia [VOKS] sovmestno s Biuro OVS ot 28 dekabria 1930 g.', GARF f. 5283, op. 1, d. 193, l. 2.

[69] V. I. Fokin, *Mezhdunarodnyi kul'turnyi obmen i SSSR v 20–30 gody* (St Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Sankt- Peterburgskogo Universiteta, 1999), 132–3.

[70] For example, 'A. Arosev. TsK VKP(b). Tov. Andreevu. Kopiia t. Angarovu. 14/XII-36 g.', GARF f. R- 5283, op. 1a, d. 308, l. 142–43; Arosev to Andreev and Ezhov, 7 March 1937, GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, d. 335, l. 8. On VOKS's dependence on the Central Committee's Kul'tprop, see 'Biuro predsedatelia VOKS. N. Kuliabko. TsK VKP(b) – tov. Stetskomu, A.I. 1 ianvaria 1935', GARF f.

the spy-mania of the Great Purges, in which all elites suffered disproportionately from accusations of international treason, a wave of xenophobia hit VOKS from within and from without. As the noose slowly tightened around Arosev's neck, truckloads of books received from abroad were removed from the VOKS library and burned. Paralysing waves of suspicion beat down on the heads of VOKS employees because of their contacts with foreigners. By the end of the 1930s, 'VOKS's activities were completely disorganised, and the USSR's international cultural relations had practically ceased to exist.'[71] Everything that had from the time of its founding made VOKS a sought-after arbiter of international contacts, helping to turn international travel and access to world culture into a staple of Party–intelligentsia patronage, had now become its greatest liability.

R-5283, op. 1a, d. 276, l. 1–2. On Arosev's dependence on NKVD, NKID and TsK approvals, see 'A. Arosev. Pred. VOKS. Predsedateliu Soveta Narodnykh komissarov – t. Molotovu V. M. 13 fevralia 1935', RGASPI f. 56, op. 1, d. 1013, l. 1–2; Arosev's correspondence with TsK secretary A. A. Andreev, Jan.-Dec. 1936, in GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, d. 308. On Arosev's increasing apprehensions and isolation in the period from 1936 to his arrest, Aroseva, *Bez grima*, 75 and *passim*.

[71] Fokin, *Mezhdunarodnyi*, 133. On arrests, secret police investigations and book-burning at VOKS during the Great Purges, see GARF f. R-5283, op. 1a, d. 307; 'Zav. Sekretnoi Chast'iu VOKS (Kusesar). 9–I Otdel GUGB NKVD t. Poliakovu. 23/VII-37', *ibid.*, d. 335, l. 41, also l. 15, 30–32, 37–38, 46, 47, 52.

'Most Respected Comrade . . .': Patrons, Clients, Brokers and Unofficial Networks in the Stalinist Music World

KIRIL TOMOFF

In the 1930s and 1940s an elaborate bureaucratic apparatus emerged to administer the production and performance of music in the Soviet Union. Aspiring musicians were trained in music schools, academies and prestigious conservatories that were overseen by one government institution. Opera singers and some orchestral musicians were channelled into state opera and ballet theatres that were overseen by another government institution. Instrumental soloists, other orchestral musicians, choral singers and touring variety show musicians were steered into a system of philharmonics, radio music ensembles and a concert tour association where they were overseen by yet another government institution. And composers and musicologists were concentrated in a progressively more prestigious and powerful professional organisation, the Union of Soviet Composers. The task of co-ordinating the activities of all these groups fell to an ever-evolving cultural oversight department in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.[1]

This elaborate bureaucratic apparatus was intended to serve two very basic tasks: to administer the production of Soviet music and to provide for the material wellbeing of the musicians who produced and performed that music. For the second of these two tasks, a subsidiary system of material support grew up within this

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[1] The government body for the oversight of musical academies and conservatories was the Committee (later, Ministry) of Higher Education; for musical theatres it was the Chief Musical Theatres Administration (GUMT) of the Committee on Artistic Affairs (VKI); for the philharmonics and free-standing orchestras and choirs, the VKI's Chief Administration of Musical Institutions (GUMU); and for touring soloists, it was the Concert Tour Association (Gastrol'biuro). The party oversight department changed its name and configuration over time. Alternately, it was the Administration (or Department) of Propaganda and Agitation (UPA/OPA), the Department of Artistic Literature and the Arts (OKhLI), and the Department of Science and the Arts (ONK).

apparatus. The professional music body oversaw its own funding institution, Muzfond. Performance musicians were housed, fed, supplied and eventually supported in their retirement through their theatre or performance institution and its chapter of the arts trade union Rabis. Yet another government committee decided on the distribution of the most lucrative material rewards offered to artists during the Stalin period, the Stalin Prize.[2]

Taken together, the government bureaucracy and these material support bodies formed an official institutional system. However, this official system never adequately accomplished its allotted tasks. In order to understand how music was actually produced in the Soviet Union and how musicians met their material needs, a whole continuum of informal but endemic personalised practices and relationships must be explored. In this paper, I identify a cast of characters who played unofficial roles within and around the official music bureaucracy. I trace the range of informal activities in which patrons, clients and brokers engaged while they negotiated the elaborate bureaucratic system. I argue that isolated personalised relationships and sometimes entire unofficial networks facilitated – on a case by case basis – individuals' attempts to work their way through bureaucratic channels. I also argue that the existence of unofficial networks was a continual cause for concern and a source of suspicion among those outside each particular network. During periodic crackdowns on music institutions, the perception that some of these networks were controlled by suspect groups – formalists, cosmopolitans, or Jews, depending on the campaign – caused them to become lightning-rods for attacks. What was an endemic informal component of the complex system of administering the production and performance of music was also thus a critical element of one of the most sinister aspects of the same system – campaigns designed to expunge undesirable music and musicians.

Almost by definition, evidence of unofficial activity is difficult to come by in archives organised according to an official bureaucracy and its administrative divisions, as are those of Soviet institutions. Luckily for researchers, however, the very fact that the requests spawned by individual, personal relationships found bureaucratic resolutions leaves traces that we can follow and from which we can draw conclusions. Oral history, casual conversations with participants and memoirs are also valuable tools that provide clues about how to identify and interpret evidence about personalised interaction and unofficial networks. Still, this article should be read with this caveat in mind: it is not an attempt to catalogue all of the informal behaviour in which musicians and politicians engaged during the Stalin period. Rather, it attempts to describe specific types of unofficial activity – patronage and brokerage – and to analyse the significance of such personalised, individual interactions in the context of the bureaucratic system with which they were intertwined.

[2] Muzfond, established in late 1939, was the Composers' Union's analogue to the more famous Litfond. Rabis, in turn, was overseen by the VTsSPS, the All-USSR Central Council of Trade Unions – a government body. The work of the Committee on Stalin Prizes was also thoroughly checked by the Central Committee apparatus.

The earliest studies of patronage in the Soviet Union focused on its role in determining personnel selection in the political realm. Only recently have scholars begun to examine patronage as one element of a more pervasive phenomenon: the proliferation of individualised, personal relationships within a formally but inefficiently bureaucratised society. These later works either address patronage from a primarily theoretical standpoint, positing a neo-traditional paradigm to explain personal connections in Soviet society, or concentrate on the role of patronage as a component of an unofficial cultural value system. Some Russian scholars have also drawn attention to the role of patronage in settling professional conflicts, especially in academic circles.[3] All of these studies define patronage as an ongoing, hierarchical relationship in which patrons occupy a more powerful position in a society and exchange their assistance for loyalty, feelings of noblesse oblige and so forth. This paper attempts to provide a detailed examination of the role of patronage and brokerage within one specific group, tying together its crucial role in both the professional, productive realm and the allocative, material realm of the state bureaucracy's interaction with music professionals. In that sense, it seeks to synthesise many of these earlier viewpoints and provide a key to understanding the operative underlying assumptions that allowed unofficial networks to function in both professional and allocative contexts.

This article's attention to informal networks also contributes to our understanding of Soviet cultural life and the relationship between politics and artistic production in the Soviet Union. Most studies of Soviet music and musical life have focused primarily on the deleterious influence of political intervention in musical affairs and especially the struggles of prominent composers such as Dmitrii Shostakovich to cope with that intervention.[4] This article does not focus generally

[3] For a few studies of political patronage, see T. H. Rigby *et al.*, eds., *Leadership Selection and Patron-Client Relations in the USSR and Yugoslavia* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), and John Willerton, *Patronage and Politics in the USSR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). For neo-traditionalism see Ken Jowitt, *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), especially 121–58; and (for China) Andrew G. Walder, *Communist Neo-traditionalism: Work and Authority in Chinese Industry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). For a general discussion of patron–client relations among the creative intelligentsia, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Intelligentsia and Power: Client–Patron Relations in Stalin's Russia', in M. Hildermeier and E. Müller-Luckner, eds., *Stalinismus vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. Neue Wege der Forschung / Stalinism before the Second World War. New Avenues of Research* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998), 35–53. For closely related *blat*, see Alena Ledeneva, *Russia's Economy of Favors: Blat, Networking and Informal Exchange* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). For a view of *blat* and patronage that only partially accepts the neo-traditionalist line, see Fitzpatrick, 'Patronage and Blat in Stalin's Russia', paper presented to Russian and Soviet Studies Workshop, 1998. For the studies of patronage in professional contexts, see N. Krementsov, *Stalinist Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997) and D. A. Aleksandrov, 'The Historical Anthropology of Science in Russia', *Russian Studies in History*, 34, 2 (1995), 62–91.

[4] The most notable exception to this generalisation is Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia, 1917–1981*, enl. ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983). For a few representative examples of the more typical literature on music, see the following: Gerald Abraham, *Essays on Russian and East European Music* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985); Juri Jelagin, *Taming of the Arts*, trans. N. Wreden (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1951); Stanley D. Krebs, *Soviet Composers and the Development of Soviet Music* (New York: Norton, 1970); A. O. Olkhovsky, *Music under the Soviets: The Agony of an Art* (New York: Praeger, 1955); and Larry Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed Russian Avant-Garde, 1900–1929* (Westport, CT.:

on the multi-faceted relationship between music and politics. Instead, it seeks to give a detailed analysis of one of the crucial ways in which the spheres of politics and artistic production intersected – through the personalised interaction of the individuals who operated within the two spheres. Historians and musicologists have long been aware of the intelligentsia circles and informal social connections that emerged before the Revolution to form the bases of the unofficial networks described in this paper, but the networks that operated in the music world have not been the subject of systematic investigation.

Throughout this discussion, I refer to 'unofficial networks' and 'informal interactions' which I juxtapose with 'official' bureaucratic procedures. However, the line between 'official' and 'unofficial' interventions is severely blurred by the fact that the Party, officially and by design, always reserved the right to intervene in the normal functioning of the government bureaucracy. This power to intervene at any moment encouraged people to appeal to Party figures in a variety of different capacities, as clients, as supplicants, as fellow Party members, and so forth. This confusion renders my distinction between the two somewhat artificial. In some cases the 'unofficial' surely helped to constitute the 'official' as personalised relationships profoundly affected how bureaucratic institutions were formed.[5] In fact, I argue that the crucial figure of the broker literally straddled the line, officialising the unofficial while linking the fields of politics and musical production. Despite these reservations, I think that the terms provide a useful shorthand for differentiating between the regular, orderly, impersonal operation of established bureaucratic procedures and the personalised, individual interventions that helped certain musicians navigate that bureaucracy more successfully.

Power and authority: patrons and clients in professional disputes

Professional disputes were one of the most important areas in which composers and other musicians attempted to bend or subvert the rules and regulations which were established by the bureaucracy. Although much less common than others, the use of unofficial networks to decide professional disputes was the type of unofficial activity that most profoundly affected the production of music in the Soviet Union. The following case demonstrates how patronage could influence who decided how music would be composed. Such details in this example and the ones that follow it are provided to emphasise the dynamic relationships and explicit struggles that patronage interventions in professional disputes often encompassed.

Greenwood, 1994). On Prokofiev and Shostakovich, see especially Harlow Robinson, *Prokofiev: A Biography* (New York: Viking, 1987); Rosamund Bartlett, ed., *Shostakovich in Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); David Fanning, ed., *Shostakovich Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Allan Ho and Dmitry Feofanov, *Shostakovich Reconsidered* (New York: Toccata Press, 1998); and Elizabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[5] Barbara Walker makes the case for this constructive relationship between patron-client ties and the birth of the bureaucratic apparatus in her article in this issue.

In early 1936, S. S. Prokofiev decided to write a cantata based on quotations from the works of Lenin. He approached the newly formed Committee on Artistic Affairs (VKI) to get approval for his text before continuing with the composition. It was in his meetings with VKI bureaucrats and P. M. Kerzhentsev, the head of the VKI himself, that a professional conflict arose.[6] In the course of two personal meetings with Kerzhentsev, Prokofiev insisted on using a text comprising exclusively and entirely Lenin quotes. Kerzhentsev was completely against the idea, arguing that it was unacceptable to use quotations that would inevitably be 'gathered accidentally and not at all organically connected'. In the opinion of the VKI, such a use of Lenin's words, especially in a vocal composition 'cannot be justified either politically or artistically'.

At the same time, Kerzhentsev did not want to discourage the talented Prokofiev from writing a cantata on such an exalted theme. Consequently, he did not forbid Prokofiev from using certain selected quotations in the course of the musical development of the cantata. He suggested that Prokofiev reconsider his plans and incorporate material written by Soviet poets into the cantata's text. Prokofiev was categorically opposed to that suggestion, and he left the meeting agreeing only to think about it and return with a new plan. For his part, Kerzhentsev called the head of music programming at the Radio Committee and told him to put off signing a contract with Prokofiev for the cantata until such time as a specific text had been approved.[7]

At some point after his two meetings with Kerzhentsev, Prokofiev turned to a patron, Tukhachevskii, to ask him to intervene and settle the dispute in his favour.[8] Although the specific nature and wording of Prokofiev's request remain a mystery, Tukhachevskii assented and took the issue to Stalin's second-in-command, V. I. Molotov, essentially fighting Kerzhentsev tooth and nail the whole way. When Kerzhentsev learned that Tukhachevskii planned to intervene on behalf of Prokofiev, he sent a pre-emptive memo of his own to Molotov, explaining the VKI position, forwarding him a copy of Prokofiev's composition plan, and asking Molotov not to give in to Tukhachevskii.[9]

Kerzhentsev's preemptive tactic failed. Almost two weeks later, Molotov

[6] P. M. Kerzhentsev was the founding head of the Committee on Artistic Affairs, which he led in 1936–8. A long-time party activist and disciplinarian, he advocated direct political intervention in the arts. For an argument that he was the single most important politician for cultural affairs at this time, see Leonid Maksimenkov, *Sumbur vmesto muzyki: Stalinskaia kul'turnaia revoliutsiia, 1936–1938* (Moscow: Iuridicheskaia kniga, 1997).

[7] Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstv (Russian State Archive of Literature and Arts, henceforth RGALI), f. 962, op. 10s, d. 9, l. 4 (secret memo from Kerzhentsev to Molotov, 4 May 1936).

[8] In the early and mid-1930s M. N. Tukhachevskii was a powerful and influential military leader known to take a personal interest in musicians and composers. For evidence that he patronised Shostakovich, see Solomon Volkov, *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich as related to and edited by Solomon Volkov*, trans. A. W. Bouis (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 88. Tukhachevskii was tortured and killed during the purge of the military command in 1938.

[9] RGALI, f. 962, op. 10s, d. 9, l. 4. For the composition plan, see RGALI, f. 962, op. 10s, d. 9, ll. 6–7.

returned both Kerzhentsev's memo and Prokofiev's composition plan with the following instruction: 'I order you to withdraw your objection to the draft of the composer Prokofiev and to permit him *himself* to decide the question of the Lenin cantata.'[10] Prokofiev had successfully utilised his personal connection with Tukhachevskii, and Tukhachevskii's access to Molotov, to override the VKI's opposition to his professional plans.

So what does this example suggest about composers' utilisation of patronage for purely professional disputes? First, it outlines the parameters of the dynamic structure in which this sort of patronage operated. In this dispute, as in virtually all other professional interventions in the realm of music there were three basic actors: (i) a client (Prokofiev) with a complaint directed against (ii) a bureaucratic institution (VKI) whose administrative practices interfered with the client's professional desires; and (iii) a patron (Tukhachevskii and Molotov) to whom the client could appeal to intervene on his behalf. The operative, but deeply submerged, cultural constructs that governed the interaction were political power and professional creative authority. In this case, the crucial audience which granted authority was a potential patron, a powerful politician.

In order to clarify this process, the dynamic relationship between political power and creative authority implicit in professional patronage must be further dissected. In the Soviet Union, the distribution of power was extremely hierarchical, and all of the actors in a typical patronage transaction could be assigned a relative location in a hierarchy of power. Near the top of the hierarchy stood the patron, a politician whose power derived from his proximity to the apex of political power. The middle of the hierarchy was occupied by the bureaucratic institution's representatives, whose administrative power derived both from that vested in them by more powerful political figures or institutions and from the rules and regulations of their institution. At the bottom of the hierarchy lay the client, often a prominent musician, but one who had little or no institutional or political power.

In order for patronage to be successful, the client had to convince the patron that he (the client) had more creative authority than the institution whose regulations stood in his way. By soliciting a patron's intervention, clients called for the imposition of political power on the sphere of artistic production in the hope that the patron would see fit to invert the relative power of the clients and the government body. This particular example illustrates a clear-cut case in which that inversion is not in doubt. Prokofiev was a celebrated composer of universally acknowledged talent who had recently been persuaded back to the Soviet Union from a life abroad. His adversary, Kerzhentsev, was an administrator currently in favour, but his success in the political arena failed to translate into a creative authority that surpassed Prokofiev's. Neither Molotov (the operative patron) nor Tukhachevskii (a military leader whose areas of expertise were far from the realms of culture) had pretensions to artistic authority, but their political power enabled

[10] *Ibid.*, pencil notation in the margin of l. 4, dated 17 May 1936 and signed V. Molotov. Molotov's emphasis.

them to draw and enforce distinctions in the creative authority of those below them in the hierarchy of power. By doing so, they both acknowledged and reproduced their client's authority in the professional realm. Such an example shows how the currency of cultural authority was both minted and tendered at the border between the political and musical fields.

An unsuccessful attempt to use patronage for intervention in a quasi-professional dispute illustrates this point just as clearly as Prokofiev's successful effort. In April 1944 one of the most popular jazz musicians in the Soviet Union, Leonid Utesov, challenged the Committee on Stalin Prizes. Utesov was rumoured to have been a favourite entertainer at Stalin's legendary parties, and he attempted to utilise that personal connection to the *vozhd'* to advance his professional status with a Stalin Prize. He wrote a letter,[11] framing his request as a personal matter that had 'social and political significance,' and arguing that the highest honour in the arts was being awarded the title 'Stalin Prize Laureate', something for which all artists strove. The possibility of receiving a Stalin Prize was a continuing stimulus to scholars and artists. Unfortunately, popular entertainers were not included on the list of those eligible for consideration, and although Utesov did not presume to suggest that any such stars were yet worthy of the high honour, he argued that the possibility would spur them to greater heights.

As an example of the great possibilities that *estrada* (variety music) stars embodied, Utesov cited their contribution to the war effort, noting that they were the main constituents of the concert brigades that served at the front and behind the lines with, as Utesov argued, more portability even than film. Of the 460,000 concert performances before the Red Army and Navy up to that point in the war, nearly 300,000 had been given by *estrada* performers. The 'broad masses love *estrada*, the Red Army loves it', Utesov wrote, and he could no longer put up with the 'insulting' treatment of the genre at the hands of the arts administration. Before he got carried away, Utesov caught himself, apologised for not being able to explain fully the complexities of the issue in such a short letter, and explained that he did not want to presume to waste Stalin's valuable time. 'Just please help Soviet *estrada*,' he concluded.

This appeal contains the elements of the beginning of a professional intervention, though of course it was more complicated when Stalin was involved. Certainly the power hierarchy described above was intact. Stalin, the potential patron, was the apex of political power in the Soviet Union. Utesov had none. The institution in the middle, this time, was the Committee on Stalin Prizes, the governmental institution whose only reason for being was to decide who should be awarded Stalin Prizes. Although popular, Utesov did not have anywhere near the professional authority that Prokofiev enjoyed. On the other hand, the Committee on Stalin

[11] Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'noi i politicheskoi istorii (Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, henceforth RGASPI), f. 17, op. 125, d. 234, l. 37 (Utesov to Stalin, 18 April 1944) and Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossisikii Federatsii (State Archive of the Russian Federation, henceforth GARF), f. 5446, op. 46, d. 2421, l. 146 (same). RGASPI is the former Party archive, known as RTsKhIDNI until it absorbed the Komsomol archive in 1999.

Prizes was the government institution with the most professional authority in the arts. In fact, the Stalin Prize Committee was essentially an official institutionalisation of creative authority, the enshrinement in power of otherwise dispersed artistic experts. Like Prokofiev, each of its individual members had great professional authority and no power (outside their institutional position), but the institution itself enjoyed both. Still, if Stalin so decided, Utesov's demand could have been fulfilled. Stalin did not.

He decided to have others look into the situation more carefully, apparently without giving them even a hint of support for Utesov. It is even possible that the appeal never actually reached Stalin. The notation on the memo itself is from Molotov, who sent it to M. B. Khrapchenko, head of the VKI, for further information.[12] Khrapchenko's response indicated that *estrada* performers were not excluded from consideration in the deliberations of the Committee on Stalin Prizes, and came under a new category that had only been created a year earlier – concert performance.[13] Unfortunately for the *estrada* performers, only one of them, S. V. Obraztsov, was even considered, and his candidacy lost out to others. At the same time, Khrapchenko emphasised that *estrada* was a powerful musical genre, popular and important to the war effort. He suggested awarding the best performers with orders and medals as a stimulus to their continued creative efforts. Molotov heavily emphasised the information about *estrada*'s eligibility, suggesting that he considered the original issue settled. He also emphasised the paragraph recommending orders and medals, suggesting that he thought the idea was worth pursuing. In fact, he passed the memo on to the Central Committee's cultural oversight committee for further review.[14]

A month later, the issue was still being tossed around from high-level committee to high-level committee. In the last remaining memo associated with Utesov's original request, the government apparatus declared the matter settled, or at least requiring no further action on their part. The Party Central Committee apparatus would make the final decision during their review of the Stalin Prize Committee's final recommendations.[15] When the Stalin Prize recipients were named, *estrada* performers were not in their number.[16] Utesov's appeal was dead. He had failed to

[12] Ibid., marginal notation dated 18 April 1944. Khrapchenko replaced Kerzhentsev's successor, A. I. Nazarov, in 1939.

[13] RGASPI, f. 17, op. 125, d. 234, l. 38 (VKI memo dated 21 April 1944 from Khrapchenko to Molotov) and GARF, f. 5446, op. 46, d. 2421, l. 147 (same). The concert performance category was created by a SNK SSSR resolution dated 13 March 1943. For discussion of the performance awards that predates Utesov's appeal, see RGASPI, f. 17, op. 125, d. 233, ll. 28–29, 35–36 (Khrapchenko to Stalin and Molotov, 1 April 1944). The discussion did not involve *estrada* performers.

[14] RGASPI, f. 17, op. 125, d. 234, l. 38 (VKI memo dated 21 April 1944 from Khrapchenko to Molotov), marginal notation. Molotov's emphasis appears only in the RGASPI copy.

[15] GARF, f. 5446, op. 46, d. 2421, l. 148 (memo from Tepferov to Vyshinskii, 15 May 1944). In a marginal notation, Vyshinskii objected to calling the matter 'closed', suggesting that it was merely set aside pending the TsK decision.

[16] The final decision was not announced until after the war, on 26 January 1946, when prizes were given for both 1943 and 1944. The decision was reprinted in *Izvestiia* of 27 January and in *Sobranie postanovlenii i rasporiazhenii Pravitel'stva SSSR* 1946, 3 (15 March); 50–1.

convince either Stalin or Molotov that his own creative opinion was more authoritative than the collected opinion of the Committee on Stalin Prizes with which he disagreed.[17]

The fluid, interdependent relationship of power and authority suggested by these detailed examples is significant in two ways. First, it underlines the importance to music professionals of establishing their authority in the eyes of politically powerful potential patrons. It reveals that the most official of figures formed a crucial unofficial audience. In fact, patrons necessarily had to be able to wear both unofficial and official hats in order for the process to function.

Second, it explains the relatively rare occurrence of professional patronage in the realm of music, unlike the thoroughly competitive and politicised patron–client ties that Nikolai Krementsov discovered in biology. Here, two competing professional groups found highly placed political patrons to whom they could systematically turn for support and whose political struggles profoundly influenced appointments to professional and research positions, journal editorial boards, and so forth.[18] The operative element in determining the success of a patronage intervention in music was not political wrangling, but a lower-level combination of professional authority and political power. In music, the phenomenon was probably limited to specific prominent performers and composers such as Prokofiev, D. D. Shostakovich (who was patronised by Tukhachevskii until the latter's execution), I. O. Dunaevskii (the popular song, operetta, and musical composer) and just a few others. The VKI and especially the Stalin Prize Committee were invested with sufficient creative authority that it was only a rare individual who could convince politicians that their individual creative judgement was better than that of the relevant bureaucratic administration's leadership.

These two cases, one successful and one unsuccessful, reveal the underlying operative relationship between authority and power that governed musicians' use of patronage for intervention in professional disputes, but they certainly do not demonstrate the range of professional conflicts in which patronage intervention played an important role. Performance musicians, artistic directors of performance ensembles and opera singers used patrons to increase their press coverage, land better roles, and so forth.[19]

In these examples it is not always clear that the relationship between the

[17] For another unsuccessful appeal in the popular music field, see RGASPI, f. 17, op. 133, d. 368, ll. 91–98 (August–September 1952). These are materials relating to an unsuccessful patronage request from the composer Muradeli and poet Mikhalkov to Stalin's secretary, A. N. Poskrebyshev, about a song on which they collaborated. The request was sent to up to G. M. Malenkov, one of the Soviet Union's three most powerful politicians, then down to the TsK apparatus, which rebuffed it by passing it back without comment to the SSK and VKI for expert evaluation. In other words, the unofficial channel simply fed the request back into the bureaucratic process without supporting it.

[18] Krementsov, *Stalinist Science*, especially 80–2.

[19] For examples see RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 238, ll. 37–38 (appeal from Moiseev to Stalin complaining about lack of press coverage, March-April 1949); and RGASPI, f. 17, op. 133, d. 328, ll. 173–76 (appeal from Gaidai (operatic soprano) to Stalin asking for help landing a role in the opera *Bogdan Khmel'nitskii*, June 1951). To Stalin, Gaidai was a supplicant, not a client, but she appealed to Stalin only after her regular patron abandoned her.

musician and the politician fits a formal definition of patronage as an ongoing personal relationship. Because of the scattered nature of data about informal networks, researchers cannot always be certain that an incident for which there is data is not a single isolated interaction. This uncertainty could potentially undermine an argument that isolated patronage from other sorts of informal relationships. Consequently, it is important to think of patronage, strictly defined, as merely one type of relationship on a continuum of personalised interactions. The following example illustrates just how amorphous were the boundaries between these types of relationships.

Four days after the Central Committee issued its resolution attacking formalism in music in February 1948, the theatre censorship organisation, Glavrepertkom, released a decree which officially suppressed the performance of a number of works by the extremely prominent composers mentioned in the Central Committee resolution. Among those suppressed were eight pieces by Shostakovich, seven by Prokofiev, two by N. Ia. Miaskovskii and one by A. I. Khachaturian.[20] This decree, the only one of its kind, remained in force for just over a year, when it was revoked by order of the Council of Ministers in March 1949. The Council of Ministers not only revoked the Glavrepertkom decision, but even issued a reprimand to Glavrepertkom for enacting what was described as an 'illegal decree'.[21]

The circumstances surrounding the decision to revoke the Glavrepertkom decree are fundamentally related to the operation of a personalised process that does not fit easily into one slot in the continuum of informal relationships. In early 1949 two conductors based in the United States (the Russian émigré S. Kusevitsky and Arturo Toscanini) invited Shostakovich there to participate in a series of concerts in which he would appear as a piano soloist in connection with the Congress for Peace in New York. The organisation administering international cultural ties (VOKS) saw the invitation as a great propaganda opportunity, and as a chance to raise money and the prestige of the Council of American–Soviet Friendship. Top Soviet decision makers clearly agreed.[22] However, Shostakovich had already foreseen a problem with his participation, so he approached the Central Committee apparatus with his concern. Most of the works in the repertoire of the conductors involved had been suppressed by Glavrepertkom. Consequently, he wrote a letter asking that his participation as a performer be limited to chamber music and closing with a couple of requests of a more personal nature: that his wife be allowed to accompany him and that he be fitted for a tail suit for his US appearances.[23]

[20] RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 335, ll. 14–15 (Prikaz #17 Glavnogo upravleniia po kontrol'iu za zrelishchami i repertuarom VKI ot 14 February 1948). Overall forty-two works by thirteen composers were suppressed, a number which did not include the actual object of the attack, V. I. Muradeli's opera, *Great Friendship*.

[21] RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 335, l. 13 (Sovet ministrov SSSR Rasporiazhenie #3179r, 16 March 1949).

[22] RGASPI, f. 82, op. 2, d. 1019, l. 6 (Secret VOKS memo from A. Denisov to Molotov, 18 March 1949).

[23] RGASPI, f. 82, op. 2, d. 1019, ll. 4–5 (Shostakovich letter to L. F. Il'ichev, 7 March 1949). Il'ichev was a bureaucrat in the Central Committee's cultural administration apparatus.

When he turned to the Central Committee, Shostakovich basically activated a mechanism that blurs the boundaries between the official and unofficial. He approached a member of the Central Committee's cultural administration apparatus, L. F. Il'ichev. Although Il'ichev was certainly a sufficiently high-ranking politician to be a potential patron, there is nothing in either the language of Shostakovich's appeal nor the lore surrounding his relationship with Soviet power to suggest that he had an ongoing personal relationship with the Party bureaucrat. Consequently, his appeal can hardly be described as patronage. On the other hand, he did not approach the Central Committee through official channels such as VOKS or the Committee on Artistic Affairs. He did not even utilise semi-official channels by, for example, having the head of the Composers' Union bring his concern to the Central Committee's attention. His request, therefore, must be considered primarily personal.

What happened next demonstrates how intimately connected bureaucratic and personalised operations sometimes were. Il'ichev sent the memo to Molotov, who apparently requested more information from the relevant government institutions, VOKS and the Committee on Artistic Affairs (VKI).[24] The day after receiving confirmation that Glavrepertkom had indeed suppressed a number of Shostakovich's pieces, Molotov sent Shostakovich's letter (but not the VKI confirmation) to Stalin to familiarise him with the situation. He also sent copies to virtually all other top politicians: Beria, Malenkov, Mikoian, Kaganovich, Bulganin, and Kosygin.[25]

The denouement of this interaction has long been part of the lore surrounding Shostakovich and his relationship with Soviet power. In his memoir, the composer G. S. Frid relates his version of the event, recounted to him by Shostakovich while the two travelled to the composers' working resort some time later. Shostakovich first received a telephone call from Poskrebyshev, Stalin's secretary. He was out when the call arrived, but Poskrebyshev called again. As soon as he had made contact with Shostakovich, Poskrebyshev transferred the call to Stalin, who asked Shostakovich to explain his refusal to go to the United States and perform, for example, his Eighth Symphony. Shostakovich explained that the Eighth Symphony had been suppressed, and Stalin thundered, 'by whom?'[26] Within days, so goes the

[24] See the responses of those institutions: RGASPI, f. 82, op. 2, d. 1019, l. 6 (VOKS) and RGASPI, f. 82, op. 2, d. 950, l. 113 (VKI memo from Bespalov to Molotov, 15 March 1949).

[25] RGASPI, f. 82, op. 2, d. 1019, l. 3 (Molotov to Stalin, 16 March 1949). The whole circle of top politicians was probably kept informed – and Stalin may even have been involved – primarily because the issue involved high-profile international travel and contact, decisions about which were always at least confirmed by the Politburo throughout the postwar period.

[26] G. S. Frid, *Dorogoi ranenoi pamiati* (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1994), 274–5. Frid reports that everyone had assumed that the list of suppressed works had been drawn up by Stalin himself, although he acknowledges that that might not have been the case, as it most probably was not. In *ibid.*, 276, Frid tentatively dates the exchange as taking place in 1951, but the conversation must have been related to the events documented here. For other versions of the story, see Wilson, *Shostakovich*, 212–13 (interview with Iu. A. Levitin whose work was also blacklisted until the revocation of the Glavrepertkom decree); Tikhon Khrennikov, *Tak eto bylo: Tikhon Khrennikov o vremeni i o sebe* (Moscow: Muzyka, 1994), 133; and Volkov, *Testimony*, 147–8. The lore speaks of Shostakovich refusing to travel to the United States rather than suggesting that he only perform in concerts of his chamber music.

lore, the 'black list' of suppressed pieces disappeared. As we now know, the Glavrepertkom decision was revoked the same day that Molotov forwarded Shostakovich's letter to Stalin, probably initiating the phone calls. The way was clear for Shostakovich to appear in the United States.

So what does this incident reveal about patronage? First, it should be kept in mind that this was an unusual circumstance, one in which the politicians involved saw an important propaganda opportunity on the international stage, and in the United States no less. Second, although the individuals were all certainly acquainted with one another and had long-term relationships, their interactions were more sporadic and antagonistic than regular and supportive. And third, the actual interactions straddle the boundaries between official and unofficial. Still, examples of this whole slippery incident can be reduced to the same parameters as the more clear-cut professional patronage described in this section. Here too, in a conflict between an individual musician and a government bureaucracy with at least a claim to jurisdiction over one aspect of the production of music, the decisive underlying factor was the relationship between hierarchical power and creative authority. Shostakovich's cultural authority derived from his international prestige and the propaganda advantage that the Soviet Union could achieve by exhibiting him abroad. The crucial authority-granting audience was a powerful decision-maker (Stalin), but his decision reflected the implicit authority bestowed by an altogether different audience: the international music-following public. In the end, whether the authority derived from professional accomplishment or from potential international prestige, Stalin decided that Shostakovich had greater professional authority than had Glavrepertkom as a bureaucratic institution. Stalin's decision also significantly increased Shostakovich's own prestige, as the multiple retelling of the story and its subsequent heroic coloration so eloquently demonstrate.

The authority of the artist and the power of the politician were taken very seriously, and those who abused their connections by promoting themselves beyond socially supportable levels or by using them to bully subordinates could find themselves officially reprimanded and cut off from the unofficial network. Such was the case with the ballet librettist A. P. Abolimov, who was disciplined for abusing his official position and personal connections in late 1949. At the time, Abolimov was the head of the Group on the Arts in the bureaucratic apparatus of the Council of Ministers. He was accused of abusing the power derived from his official appointment to flood Moscow's ballet theatres with productions based on his poorly written librettos, creating artificial excitement before the openings of his ballets, and cowing any who opposed him by flaunting his personal contacts and threatening to call for K. E. Voroshilov's intervention.[27]

A joint investigative commission of the Central Committee culture department and the Party's Control Commission consulted experts from the Composers' Union

[27] A long-time close associate of Stalin and the one-time head of the Soviet military, in 1949, Voroshilov held a number of posts, including chief of the Bureau of Culture in the Council of Ministers.

and opera and ballet theatres, all of whom testified that Abolimov was incompetent. His librettos were based on existing literature, often co-written, and always completely reworked by composers and choreographers. In other words, Abolimov did not enjoy any professional authority. Furthermore, the accusations of his abuse of power and flaunting of unofficial connections to promote himself were also confirmed, and the investigators concluded that he had indeed violated the norms of proper conduct for a Party member and government official and characterised his conduct in strong language: 'anti-Party behaviour'.[28] This condemnation implicitly reaffirmed the ideal relationship between creative authority and political power. Political power was supposed to support and promote superior creative authority, and if that creative authority was considered insufficient in professional circles, it tarnished the reputation of the patron.

Patronage and material support: the broker

So far, this paper has focused on how individual musicians utilised patronage and other unofficial networks to negotiate the official bureaucracy for the administration of musical activity in conflicts with the government's arts administration institutions. However, musicians used unofficial networks much more frequently when they attempted to navigate the bureaucratic channels through which their material needs were addressed. Providing the material bases for creative work was one of the bureaucracy's most basic tasks, but goods were always too scarce to supply everyone who was legally entitled to receive them. Consequently, some sort of unofficial assistance was often needed before individuals could obtain what they sought. Though not as directly related to the production of music as the professional disputes discussed so far, patronage appeals for material support played an extremely important role in the lives of composers, musicologists and other musicians.

The character who was most prominent in material support patronage was the broker,[29] a middleman in a partly official, partly unofficial interaction. Even more than other unofficial exchanges, brokerage was inextricably intertwined with the official bureaucratic system. In fact, the broker can be conceptualised as the main point of connection between the official and unofficial, a figure who rendered official the otherwise unofficial activities that supported cultural production, if not the cultural production itself. Brokers straddled the cultural and political fields because they had relevant authority in both.

Often, a crucial source of this dual authority was the key institutional post that a broker held. Brokers were members of the Orgkom or Secretariat of the Composers' Union, the directors of conservatories and higher middle schools, or the artistic directors of opera and ballet theatres. Their institutional appointments gave them

[28] RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 234, ll. 92–101 (report from Tarasov and Byshov (Otvet.kontroler KPK pri TsK VKP(b)) to Suslov and Shkiriatov (zam.pred KPK pri TsK VKP(b)), archived on 31 October 1949). The conclusion is on page 101.

[29] I borrow the term 'broker' from Sheila Fitzpatrick; for her patronage typology, see Fitzpatrick, 'Intelligentsia and Power', especially pp. 44–5.

access to potentially powerful politicians, and they used that access to pass along – and endorse – requests from individual members of their respective institutions, or from friends and colleagues. But their brokerage did not follow the patterns of impersonal bureaucratic practice. One of the essential characteristics of the brokerage interaction was its exceptional, often individualistic nature. By giving a personalised transaction an institutional stamp of approval, brokers dissolved the already illusory border between official and unofficial.

The most prominent broker in the postwar Stalinist music world was T. N. Khrennikov, general secretary of the Composers' Union from 1948 until the very end of the Soviet period. Almost immediately upon assuming his official post, Khrennikov had to act as broker for his predecessors and colleagues alike. From preserving their right to keep a car to saving them from expulsion from the Composers' Union, Khrennikov's brokerage was a significant point of articulation between the fields of resource allocation, party politics and music production.[30]

Before the Second World War, Khrennikov was primarily known as a young and talented composer, primarily of popular songs, film music and lyric opera.[31] During the war, he travelled with the Soviet army during its final push to Berlin, thus gaining an important association with the soldier at the front.[32] After the war, Khrennikov gradually came to represent a loosely defined populist artistic position within the professional organisation, and he was named to the Orgkom in spring 1946.[33] Young, talented, with experience at the front and a penchant for writing popular, accessible music, Khrennikov was an understandable choice to head the Composers' Union after the Party intervention that shook the professional organisation in February 1948.

Once he was chosen to head the Composers' Union, Khrennikov was propelled into the realm of high politics, with a host of new associates in the Central Committee apparatus, figures that included everyone from A. A. Zhdanov (the architect of the *Zhdanovshchina*, a series of ideological interventions into the Soviet arts that took place between 1946 and 1948) to D. M. Shepilov (head of the Central Committee department that oversaw culture) to B. M. Iarustovskii (the ranking music expert in that department).[34] He was also suddenly the chief spokesman for the professional organisation, supported by a number of composers and musicologists who had more experience negotiating the overlap between the two fields.

[30] For Khrennikov's intervention to save R. M. Glier's right to keep a car immediately after Khrennikov replaced Glier at the helm of the Composers' Union (SSK), see RGALI, f. 2085, op. 1, d. 1209, l. 71 (letter dated 19 March 1948 from Khrennikov to E. D. Sagerashvili). For Khrennikov's efforts to prevent politically motivated expulsions from the SSK, see the section on 'Protection', below.

[31] Before the war, Khrennikov's opera *V buriu* (Into the Storm) was the subject of heated debate about the future of Soviet opera, Khrennikov, *Tak eto bylo*,65–78. His 'March of the Artillerymen', written for the 1944 film *Shest' chasov vechera posle voiny* (Six o'clock in the evening after the war) was a huge success at home and behind the lines.

[32] See Khrennikov, *Tak eto bylo*, 79–91.

[33] RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 139, ll. 13–13ob. (*Protokol #5 zasedaniia Prezidiuma Orgkomiteta SSK SSSR*, 11 March 1946), pts. 3–4 and RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 139, l. 14 (*Protokol #6 zasedaniia Prezidiuma Orgkomiteta SSK SSSR*, 5 April 1946), pt. 1.

[34] Khrennikov, *Tak eto bylo*, 126–7, 130.

Most prominent among these was V. A. Belyi, whom Khrennikov credits with helping him to negotiate the tricky line between public condemnation of disciplined professionals and private protection of those same colleagues in the early days of his tenure atop the professional organisation.[35]

As Khrennikov gained experience in his new position, however, he discovered that there were definite limits to his authority. Two anecdotes from Khrennikov's memoirs serve to illustrate this point. The first demonstrates that in the realm of party politics and the Central Committee apparatus, Khrennikov's authority in the music realm was relatively secure from external attack, even when that attack was vitriolic and politically literate. At the height of the antisemitic anti-cosmopolitanism campaign that terrorised the intellectual community from 1949, M. A. Suslov, one of the most prominent members of the Central Committee leadership, summoned Khrennikov and showed him a denunciation that had been sent to the Central Committee. The denunciation adroitly used the attack language of anti-cosmopolitanism and fingered Khrennikov as the linchpin of a Jewish conspiracy that through his Jewish wife manipulated his administration of the Composers' Union. Rather than acting on the denunciation, Suslov merely passed it on to Khrennikov with the droll remark, 'here you go, read it and see how the people you interact with write about you'.[36]

The second anecdote demonstrates that once Khrennikov strayed outside the rather circumscribed realm of cultural production even to other personnel selection areas, he was on considerably shakier ground. Sometime in the early 1950s, Khrennikov invited a previous head of the Park of Culture to serve in the Composers' Union's administrative apparatus. The woman in question had been married to a Yugoslav communist, and after the Soviet split with Yugoslavia, she had been denied permission to live in Moscow. In order to hire her, Khrennikov had to intervene and personally obtain permission for her to return to Moscow. He did so. Shortly thereafter, he was summoned by the head of the arts department in the Central Committee apparatus, B. S. Riurikov. Riurikov reprimanded him and informed him in threatening terms that he was not to petition for 'such people' in the future. Only the fact that he had recently been favoured by Stalin rendered him temporarily untouchable.[37] These two episodes demonstrate that Khrennikov's authority in the political realm was limited to the field of his professional expertise and the professionals who constituted that field.[38] Still, it was his limited connection

[35] Khrennikov, *Tak eto bylo*, 126, 134–5. Belyi was a composer best known for his well-constructed vocal music. He was one of the few outgoing members of the Composers' Union leadership in 1948 who was not under public fire, and he put his nearly decade-long leadership experience at Khrennikov's disposal.

[36] Khrennikov, *Tak eto bylo*, p. 136. Though Khrennikov self-consciously refrains from mentioning the author of the denunciation, it was probably penned by one A. S. Ogolevets. For more on the relationship between Khrennikov and Ogolevets, see the section on 'Protection,' below.

[37] Khrennikov, *Tak eto bylo*, 137–38.

[38] At least in the Stalin period, therefore, Khrennikov can only be seen as a limited analogue to the patron who is at the centre of György Péteri's study of patronage in Hungarian economics, Istvan Friss. Friss operated more or less freely in the political realm, jockeying among his colleagues to protect (even

with both realms that allowed Khrennikov to serve as a broker for his clients and colleagues (see further below).

Here, it is important to recall that although brokerage authority in the music field was probably most concentrated in the person of Khrennikov after 1948, other members of the Orgkom or Secretariat both before and after 1948 could act quite effectively as brokers, opening as they did personalised channels for musicians to negotiate requests relating to their material world. For example, musicians used patrons and brokers to help them acquire or recover pianos and cars.[39] However, by far the most common and significant type of request was related to the acquisition of an apartment in the situation of an endemic and acute housing shortage. An early example of a brokerage interaction for improved living conditions is the following, in which a group of conservatory professors brokered an unofficial network to improve the housing of a gifted young student.

In April 1939, R. M. Glier (head of the Composers' Union), A. B. Gol'denveizer (a prominent piano professor) and N. Ia. Miaskovskii (the leading composer of the pre-revolutionary generation) wrote to Molotov about the living conditions of Lenia Brumberg, a gifted student in the piano and composition departments of the Moscow State Conservatory's ten-year music school. They complained that Brumberg lived with his family in damp, partly underground quarters that affected his work and endangered his health. They asked that Molotov help the Brumbergs acquire a small, three-room apartment in order to establish 'normal' living conditions for the gifted boy.[40] They also included a report on the young Brumberg's living conditions which appears to have been submitted to them by the boy's parents in order to lay out the family's miserable accommodation and the detrimental effect of these circumstances on their son. The family occupied a room of 17 sq m in a collective apartment which housed sixteen people in a total of 37 sq m. The apartment was dark, dirty, smelly, damp, noisy and infested with vermin. The only possible place to put a piano was too close to the stove for safety, so they were refused an instrument. The boy simply could not study normally and often suffered from headaches and nervousness which his parents attributed to the living conditions.[41]

through purge) the economists who were his clients, from whom he maintained a professional distance. On the other hand, Khrennikov operated more or less freely in the professional realm, but his ability to manoeuvre in the political sphere was significantly curtailed. See György Péteri's article in this issue.

[39] For examples, see GARF, f. 5446, op. 48, d. 2176, ll. 109–13, 120–23 (material relating to an Orgkom SSK attempt to broker the distribution of 50 pianos captured during the war, March-April 1946); GARF, f. 5446, op. 49, d. 2829, ll. 156–59 (material relating to Glier's attempt to enlist Voroshilov's support to acquire 75 additional pianos in 1947–8, Nov.–Dec. 1947); and GARF, f. 5446, op. 47, d. 2168, ll. 35–38, 78 (material relating to two composers and an opera singer receiving or recovering cars, two through patronage (Molotov patronising Lisitsian and Dzerzhinskii, whose car was requisitioned during the war), and one through an equally unofficial but less personalised supplicant appeal with the same result (Bogoslovskii), May–June 1945).

[40] GARF, f. 5446, op. 23, d. 1808, l. 139 (Glier, Gol'denveizer, and Miaskovskii to Molotov, 14 April 1939).

[41] GARF, f. 5446, op. 23, d. 1808, l. 138 (Svedeniia o zhilishchnykh usloviiakh, v kotorykh nakhoditsia Lenia Brumberg, undated, signed by E. Brumberg).

The Brumbergs also reported that they had turned to both the editorial board of the official government newspaper (*Izvestiia*) and the Committee on Artistic Affairs for help in acquiring more reasonable living conditions. Both of these institutions, probably the parents' employers, had indeed supported their request and advanced their case before the Moscow City Government (Mossovet), which was in charge of distributing housing. Unfortunately, their request had been denied by Mossovet in early April.[42] In other words, the parents had exhausted all the official channels available to them before turning to the conservatory professors as brokers.

Though it took the better part of a year, the unofficial channel seems to have worked. In early May 1939 the administrative department of the top government institution sent two memos to Mossovet asking for improvement in Lenia Brumberg's living conditions.[43] These initial requests seem to have met with passive Mossovet resistance (i.e. they ignored the request), but in November the administrative department followed up with a concluding memo instructing the Committee on Artistic Affairs to follow through with appropriate measures, thus presumably empowering them to push the request through Mossovet or to implement a missing Mossovet decree that granted the Brumberg family better housing.[44] Little Lenia's health problems associated with his time living in a Moscow basement did not permanently hinder his career. In the years that followed he matured into a prominent pianist, studying with Goldenveizer, Neigauz and Shostakovich and eventually assuming a professorship in piano at the prestigious Gnesin Institute. He emigrated to Austria in 1981 and assumed a position on the piano faculty of the Conservatory of the City of Vienna.[45]

Students were not the only ones who used brokers to help them to negotiate the official channels through which they sought improvement in their living conditions. Even very prominent musicians sometimes turned to brokers, though in such cases the brokers often spoke more as representatives of collective opinion than as individuals exploiting their personal ties to politicians, though that personalised aspect was never absent. The following example illustrates how a collective group of brokers helped a piano professor at the Conservatory improve his housing allotment by implicitly presenting a request on behalf of the music community.

In October 1946 a group of brokers consisting of eleven prominent musicians, including the de facto head of the Composers' Union, the Director of the Moscow Conservatory and several acclaimed performers and music professors, sent a letter to Voroshilov on behalf of G. G. Neigauz, head of a piano department at the

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] GARF, f. 5446, op. 23, d. 1808, l. 140 (Vypiska to Mossovet, 7 May 1939) and l. 141 (memo from Bol'shakov (Upravlenie delami SNK SSSR) to Mossovet (Pronin), 10 May 1939). A copy of the latter was sent to Glier to keep him informed about the progress of the case.

[44] GARF, f. 5446, op. 23, d. 1808, l. 142 (memo from M. Khlomov (Upravlenie delami SNK SSSR) to Khrapchenko (VKI), 22 Nov. 1939). A copy of this memo, too, was sent to Glier. The final resolution is not documented in these sources, but it is most likely that the VKI finally managed to resettle the Brumbergs.

[45] See 'Leonid Brumberg', http://www.musikseminar.music.at/pers/brumberg_l.html; my thanks to Alison Smith for pointing me to this site.

Conservatory. The brokers described the genesis and nature of Neigauz's housing problem. In 1936, he was given his own three-room apartment in which his family of five could live and in which a separate room could be maintained for musical studies. When Neigauz was evacuated during the war and employed by the Sverdlovsk Conservatory, one of the rooms of his apartment was allocated to someone else. When he returned from evacuation in July 1944, Neigauz found himself in virtually intolerable circumstances which completely disrupted his work. Before providing the outrageous details, the brokers then briefly sketched the importance of Neigauz's scholarly, creative and pedagogical activity and pointed out his success in training world class pianists, including Emil Gilels, Sviatoslav Richter and several others. Then, they provided the details of his housing woes:

> The difficulty of Professor G. G. Neigauz's situation is aggravated by the fact that the individual who has been settled into the indicated room not only disturbs his peace but even disrupts his work in insulting and incomprehensible ways. Suffice it to say that during the preparation for a concert on 1 November of this year, the piano playing was cut off by pounding on the door and the screeches of the inhabitant: 'Stop that drumming immediately.' Such incidents form a whole system.

After painting this brief but clearly unacceptable picture, the brokers also described Neigauz's efforts to resolve his problem through bureaucratic channels. After all, he had been allocated the entire apartment and should have been able to have the insulting neighbour evicted. In fact, he had already received some form of official success: on 1 July Mossovet had issued an order that the encroacher be resettled. However, three and a half months had passed, and the character was still there.[46]

At this point in their appeal, the brokers implicitly cast themselves as representatives of an even broader community, suggesting that honouring their request was necessary for the continued advancement of Soviet musical performance:

> In the interests of the further development of our country's musical arts and the preparation of musical performers, we consider ourselves obliged to ask you to take measures to return to Professor G. G. Neigauz the room that was seized from him, or to resettle him into a different individual apartment. If you consider it necessary to receive more complete information about this matter, we would like to ask you to invite Professor G. G. Neigauz in for a personal conversation. We are sure that our request will not be put aside without proper attention.

As though to emphasise further their unified, but non-institutionally affiliated opinion, the brokers signed the letter with their titles but without the typically obligatory institutional affiliations.[47]

Not surprisingly, the brokers' appeal was successful. A few days after they received the original letter, bureaucrats in Voroshilov's office reported back to him on the case, summarising the appeal and recommending that the collective letter be

[46] GARF, f. 5446, op. 48, d. 2181, l. 43 (letter to Voroshilov, 17 Oct. 1946).

[47] *Ibid.*, l. 42 (this file is paginated backwards). The letter was signed by Shebalin, Khachaturian, Raiskii, Gedike, Nechaev, Feinberg, Knushevitskii, Erdeli, Mostras, Gol'denveizer, and Nemenova-Lunts.

sent to Mossovet with instructions to restore Neigauz's rights to the occupied room. Voroshilov agreed, a curt note was dispatched to Mossovet along with a copy of the brokers' letter, and the brokers themselves were informed of the positive decision.[48]

This incident suggests the role that this type of non-institutional collective brokerage played in the arts administration system. It also illustrates how blurred the boundaries between hierarchical and more collegial unofficial support networks were and demonstrates how they often overlapped. This was a personal request about a specific individual's problems. In that sense, the whole incident was fundamentally particularised, just like all the other examples of unofficial networks provided so far. The locus of the particularised interaction, however, was primarily within the musical community. All the brokers and Neigauz himself were members of the Soviet musical elite. When they mobilised their authority to help one of their colleagues, they acted as an elite network of mutual support that was not internally hierarchically differentiated. Still, the final appeal activated a relationship that was just as hierarchical as other examples set out in this paper because it again brought the powerful Voroshilov into the negotiation.

The language of this appeal also suggests another important feature of these hierarchical unofficial networks. The brokers' statement of their concerns in their request and their de-institutionalised self-identifications cast them as personal representatives of more general opinion within a broader music community (*muzykal'naia obshchestvennost'*). In that sense, the brokers were a collective manifestation of difficult-to-assess public opinion. Acceding to their request was critical to the Party's efforts to cast itself as the arbiter of taste and the official representative, the very embodiment, of public opinion.

A growing historical literature on letter-writing in the Soviet Union suggests that letters – supplicant appeals to politicians, complaints to newspaper editors and so forth – were important sources of information about the popular reception of Party policies.[49] Though clearly related to this much more anonymous phenomenon, the information that clients, or in this case brokers, provided was characteristically different in one of two ways. First, the brokers were experts, qualified representatives of a select group in society on which their opinions were authoritative. Since they themselves were not random letter-writers but known personalities, politicians could much more easily convert the information that brokers provided into information about sentiments in the group that they represented.

Second, less applicable in this case but closely related, clients could provide patrons with accurate information about their institutional surroundings. Accurate

[48] GARF, f. 5446, op. 48, d. 2181, l. 44 (memo from Tepferov and Abolimov to Voroshilov, 23 Oct. 1946). A handwritten note dated 31 Oct. 1946 indicates that Shebalin was informed of Voroshilov's decision. The decision itself was typed on the bottom of the 23 Oct. memo as well.

[49] For examples of the literature on letters, see Fitzpatrick, 'Supplicants and Citizens: Public Letter-Writing in Soviet Russia in the 1930s', *Slavic Review*, 55, 1 (Spring 1996), 78–105; and the special issue, *Russian History*, 24, 1–2 (1997). See also Sarah Davies, *Public Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda, and Dissent, 1934–1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), which compares some intercepted letters with NKVD reports as different sources of information.

information was hard to come by in an environment in which subordinates often concealed crucial information from decision-makers, especially if it was not good news. This exchange of information for support was an important element of the reciprocity required of a patronage relationship. Although this exchange was undoubtedly more important in spheres other than music, the rhetorical form of patronage requests in the arts world includes an offer of information sufficiently often to suggest that it was an important, widespread phenomenon.[50] Because of their own institutional leadership positions, brokers were often an important conduit of information from the meek to the mighty as well as distributors of favours and goods from the political elite to the musician, composer, musicologist and so forth. Furthermore, protecting the sources of that information, in conjunction with the overall conditions of scarcity, helped patrons to justify their personalised interventions into bureaucratic processes.

Turning to a broker was not the only unofficial channel that musicians used in their pursuit of improved living conditions. Some skipped the broker and appealed directly to the politician, sometimes as a patron, sometimes simply with a supplicant appeal. A spectacular case of such a direct patronage appeal suggests that those who did not need to use brokers when seeking to expedite their attempts to acquire new housing were indeed primarily prominent performance musicians. Of course, not everyone had access to such powerful patrons, so it is no surprise that only the most famous musicians could skip the broker. The world renowned pianist Emil Gilels was one who could. His postwar appeal to Voroshilov illustrates several things about the mechanism of material assistance patronage. Even more emphatically, it emphasises yet again the endemic nature of the acute housing shortage.

In November 1947 Gilels sent a short request in a familiar tone to Voroshilov. Gilels emphasised that his living conditions were seriously inhibiting his continued creative activity. For several years he and his wife (a composer) had been living in one room of a communal apartment with another woman, who occupied the *kommunalka*'s other two rooms. Such living conditions prevented his wife from finding the minimal conditions for her work and in general disturbed the daily regimen that Gilels considered necessary for his own work as a concert pianist and teacher at the Moscow Conservatory. Since their neighbour had just been allocated her own apartment, Gilels asked that Voroshilov help him obtain the entire collective apartment.[51]

The response to this first letter remains a mystery, but five days later Gilels sent another one. In the second letter, he was slightly more formal in tone and related more details about his regimen and creative responsibilities. Rather than describing the details of his living conditions, he simply noted that living in a communal apartment precluded the minimal living conditions, quiet and calm that were required at home to support his and his wife's creative activities. Rather than asking

[50] For a couple of chronologically spaced examples, see the following: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 114, d. 305, ll. 118–19 (Kirshon to Kaganovich and Stalin, archived 31 May 1932) and RGASPI, f. 17, op. 133, d. 396, ll. 87–91 (Solov'eva to Mikhailov, 13 Feb. 1953).

[51] GARF, f. 5446, op. 49, d. 2835, l. 164 (letter from Gilels to Voroshilov, 18 Nov. 1947).

again for the whole communal apartment, Gilels asked Voroshilov to help them acquire their own individual apartment.[52]

Again, explanations of what happened in the five days between these two requests are necessarily speculative. Perhaps Gilels learned that the space in the communal apartment had already been reallocated. More probably, a member of Voroshilov's staff – or even Voroshilov himself – may have communicated directly with Gilels and explained how he could make his request more useful when it re-entered bureaucratic channels. The latter scenario would explain the more formal tone, the lengthier list of Gilels's musical activities, and the change to a request for an individual apartment. (Presumably it was much easier simply to assign him a new apartment than to change the status of his apartment in a communal building.) In any event, that the letters followed one after the other in such a short time strongly suggests that much of this interaction occurred without documentation in face-to-face conversation or on the telephone. Especially with the increasingly broad distribution of telephones in elite circles, the details of these personalised interactions become increasingly difficult to document. However, they were so intertwined with the bureaucracy that some document trail often remains, as in this case.

Gilels's second request was more successful than his abortive first attempt. Three days after Voroshilov received the letter, his secretary reported back to him about a quick further investigation of Gilels's living conditions. In his report, the secretary mentioned that the Committee on Artistic Affairs also supported the request, and he included a draft letter from Voroshilov to Mossovet.[53] The draft memo to Mossovet called Gilels 'our most outstanding pianist', listed his titles and international triumphs, and politely asked the head of Mossovet to look into the situation and give him an individual apartment in one of the new housing buildings. It concluded with all but an order: 'I support this request very much.' Voroshilov approved the draft memo, and the issue was transferred to Mossovet.[54]

The range of unofficial networks that musicians used for material support was much broader than the range of unofficial professional support networks discussed in the first section of this paper. In those interactions, the underlying cultural logic depended on the relationship between political power and professional authority. But what was the underlying logic of the unofficial interactions which were utilised for material support? One last housing example, besides demonstrating yet another type of collective brokerage interaction, suggests part of that logic.

In April 1947 the Orgkom of the Composers' Union acted as brokers for an administrative worker in the Composers' Union's system of institutions. They wrote to Voroshilov on behalf of one A. K. Shchepalin, the director of Muzfond's service centre for music publishing and production institutions. Shchepalin and his family of four (two of whom were students at the Moscow State Conservatory) had

[52] GARF, f. 5446, op. 49, d. 2835, l. 165 (letter from Gilels to Voroshilov, 23 Nov. 1947).

[53] GARF, f. 5446, op. 49, d. 2835, l. 166 (memo from Abolimov to Voroshilov, 26 Nov. 1947). The VKI support was attributed to Surin.

[54] GARF, f. 5446, op. 49, d. 2835, l. 167 (draft memo from Voroshilov to Popov, 26 Nov. 1947). The memo was actually sent to Popov on 27 Nov.

been evicted from their temporary housing because of fire hazards associated with construction of a new theatre building, since when their living conditions had become extremely precarious and they literally ended up on the streets. Since Shchepalin was a valued and experienced worker, the Composers' Union did not want to lose his services, which they would do if his family were soon not given housing in Moscow.[55]

Voroshilov's response, a note to G. M. Popov, head of Mossovet, was so succinctly eloquent about the logic underlying brokerage that it is worth quoting in full:

> When the best people from the musical–artistic world sign an appeal, it is somehow no good not to honour their request, especially since it touches on a third individual and one who isn't all that mighty. But at the same time, what can I do, how can I not turn to you, knowing that you really might not be able to do very much to help. All the same, what can be done, G. M.?[56]

What could be done was to assign the Shchepalins new housing, which officially took place ten days later.[57] Of course, in the face of such a request from Voroshilov, Popov had little choice but to figure out a way to find housing for Shchepalin and his family. The successful resolution in this case, however, is not the point.

The point is the set of assumptions that underpin Voroshilov's informal note to Popov. First, he referred to the brokers as 'the best people from the musical–artistic world', alluding to the authority that they embodied. Second, he noted that it was 'somehow no good not to honour their request', as though such characters inherently deserved the best that Soviet society could offer. That Voroshilov assumed that musicians should be so privileged was an implicit acknowledgment of the authority of culture in Soviet society. Third, Voroshilov implicitly endorsed others acting as he did – using his superior power to help the deserving (for whatever reason), but less fortunate. The brokers' appeal was particularly convincing precisely because they were looking out for someone in a less prestigious and powerful position than they, just as Voroshilov was. In this sense, Voroshilov endorsed the whole notion of an unofficial *network*, which included not only patrons and clients but also middlemen. Finally, Voroshilov acknowledged that these unofficial networks disrupted the bureaucratic distribution of scarce commodities, in this case apartments. He knew that suddenly assigning housing to Shchepalin would mean not assigning it to someone else, but he still asked Popov to do what he could.

On one level, the unofficial network for material support was governed by the

[55] GARF, f. 5446, op. 54, d. 41, l. 191 (copy of an SSK/Muzfond SSSR memo from Prezidium Orgkoma SSK SSSR to Voroshilov, 8 April 1947). The letter was signed by Glier, Shostakovich, Muradeli, Novikov and Shaporin.

[56] *Ibid.*, marginal notation, dated 9 April 1947 and signed by Voroshilov. 'G. M.' is short for 'Georgii Mikhailovich', Popov's name and patronymic. Popov was head of Mossovet, 1944–50 and First Secretary of the Moscow oblast' and city party committees, 1945–9.

[57] *Ibid.*, marginal notation. Shchepalin was assigned housing by Protokol Mossoveta # 794, 19 April 1947.

same rough scheme as patronage interventions in professional conflicts: individuals with authority appealed to other individuals with power, who disrupted or overturned a bureaucratic decision. However, after that most general similarity, these two types of processes diverge. The authority in this case is not relevant to the situation under consideration. The Orgkom, for example, if they knew anything at all, certainly knew less about housing distribution than Popov. Furthermore, the individual and the government institution were rarely in direct conflict in cases where patrons intervened to provide material support. In each of the examples noted here, the clients (or supplicants) were legally entitled to that which they requested. There was no antagonism between the bureaucracy and the individual; rather, the patron instructed a relatively disinterested bureaucracy to find a resolution in favour of the individual more quickly than would have happened if the regular bureaucratic process had been allowed to run its course. Again, these sorts of unofficial networks were born of pervasive conditions of shortage.

Of course, the fact that there was little conflict between the bureaucracy and the individual does not mean that the process was entirely divested of antagonism. Those whose voices we do not hear in these stories (unless they are pounding on the door) were undoubtedly very angry about these interventions. After all, for everyone whose squatter was evicted, there was an evicted squatter, and for everyone who jumped the housing queue, there was someone else who lost their place in that queue. In fact, it was partially this process that gave the Stalinist system its reputation for arbitrariness and capriciousness.

The dark side: real and imagined networks under attack

The successful operation of unofficial networks helped the bureaucratic system fulfil its two primary tasks: administering the production of music and supplying musicians with the material support they needed to continue to produce music. Though inseparably and even constitutively intertwined with the bureaucracy, informal networks were just unofficial enough to be a continuing source of suspicion or resentment. Understanding the corollaries of this suspicion and resentment is crucial to explaining how the successive campaigns against perceived formalists, cosmopolitans and Jews unfolded in the music world. Political elites worried that scarce resources were being swallowed uncontrollably by shadowy groupings within the music profession, and musicians without access to unofficial networks resented those who received the special treatment that being plugged into a network provided. This suspicion by the political elites and resentment of colleagues and peers combined to make unofficial networks – real and imagined – lightning-rods for attack during successive campaigns in the postwar Stalinist period.

In the broad sweep of Soviet history, the most celebrated attacks on hidden unofficial networks took place during the Great Terror of the late 1930s. Undoubtedly, many of those attacks were groundless, paranoid and motivated by fear. However, they did take a specific form. Rhetorically, they were attempts to uncover, or unmask, corrupt and counter-revolutionary underground rings of spies,

wreckers and other 'enemies of the people'. That the paranoia took this specific form indicates that unofficial networks similar to those already discussed in this article were a source of suspicion and resentment long before the war. In fact, some historians have carefully illustrated how local elites formed circles that were destroyed – and their members executed – during the Terror.[58]

Postwar Stalinism was characterised by a series of Party-led campaigns that kept tensions high. From 1946 to 1948, the *Zhdanovshchina* consisted of several ideologically motivated interventions in successive fields of the arts and scholarship. Beginning in 1947 but accelerating significantly in 1949, a series of antisemitic, anti-foreign campaigns known as 'anti-cosmopolitanism' overlapped and then supplanted the *Zhdanovshchnina*, finally culminating in the infamous Doctors' Plot which alone among these campaigns may have been gearing up to something similar to the Terror.[59] Although none reached the intensity or scope of the more famous purges of the 1930s, these campaigns provided the locations for attacks against unofficial networks both from political elites and from within the institutions under attack.

The political elites' suspicion of unofficial networks within the music profession was most clearly reflected during the aftermath of the brouhaha in 1948. In June 1948 the Council of Ministers empowered the Ministry of Finance to conduct a review of the financial practices of Muzfond, the Composers' Union's affiliated financial institution. In mid-June A. Kosygin submitted the ministry's report, which reflects deep suspicion about the 'small group of composers, the majority of whom are formalists' who controlled the distribution of Muzfond's resources. According to the Ministry of Finance, over 40 per cent of Muzfond's loans in 1947 were given to members of the leadership committees of Muzfond and the Composers' Union, both of which had recently been changed. Kosygin could have explained this lopsided distribution in any number of ways. The most straightforward would have been just to label it corruption. The people holding the purse strings simply reached into the purse more frequently than anyone else. A more generous explanation might have tied inequitable distribution to an honest evaluation of musical products. Those in power not surprisingly liked their own music and that of their close colleagues better than others', and they funded it accordingly. Such a reading would have been overly generous, for after 1944 the self-proclaimed purpose of Muzfond loans was to provide material assistance to the needy, not to reward artistic merit. However, Kosygin offered an explanation based neither on straightforward corruption nor on the generous terms of creative agreement.

Instead, he saw an illegal conspiracy in which formalists sought to undermine the health of Soviet music and get rich on the state's money while they were at it. To demonstrate that this conspiracy existed, Kosygin first provided data about large loans that were drawn by a few composers mentioned in the Central Committee resolution. He singled out Prokofiev, Muradeli, Popov and Khachaturian as

[58] See for example, James R. Harris, *The Great Urals: Regionalism and the Evolution of the Soviet System, 1917–1937* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), ch. 6, 'The Terror'.

[59] On the Doctors' Plot, see G. V. Kostyrchenko, *Out of the Red Shadows: Anti-Semitism in Stalin's Russia* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1995), 248–305.

beneficiaries of particularly large loans and then suggested that allocating such loans to prominent composers undermined Muzfond's basic task, 'facilitating the creative activities of the broad masses of composers'. And there was more.

According to Kosygin, the distribution of Muzfond monies was not just inequitable, it was downright illegal. He noted that Muzfond leaders were illegally publishing the works of a group of formalist composers, paying them inflated royalties, and then allowing the published materials to sit unsold in Muzfond's music stores. Even worse, they violated long-standing laws about publishing contracts, paying advances for works that were never completed and never published. After providing details about specific instances of various composers signing multiple agreements with different organisations for the same piece, Kosygin intimated that the Muzfond leaders were even illegally subsidising a few privileged composers' personal cars. The resulting picture was one of a corrupt group of formalists conspiring to undermine Muzfond's fundamental task of promoting Soviet music and using it instead to steal state money.[60]

On the basis of his report, Kosygin also submitted a draft resolution to the Council of Ministers. The language of the resolution concisely summarises his findings and emphasises the suspicion of the concealed unofficial network, in this case, of formalists:

> On the basis of the investigation conducted by the Ministry of Finance, the Council of Ministers notes that Muzfond did not ensure the fulfilment of the basic tasks required of it – support of the creative activity of the broad masses of composers and the service of their everyday needs. The leadership of Muzfond paid attention primarily to servicing a small group of composers with formalist proclivities which were condemned in the 10 February 1948 Central Committee resolution on V. Muradeli's opera *Velikaia druzhba*. Funds which were received by Muzfond were squandered on concealed extra-budgetary and illegal expenditures both by the Muzfond leaders themselves and by the Orgkom of the Composers' Union, on payments to individual composers in illegal amounts, on payments of inflated royalties and the formation of huge debts for individual members of Muzfond, mainly the leadership workers of Muzfond and the Composers' Union themselves . . . The Orgkom of the All-USSR Composers' Union did not direct or correct the work of Muzfond, instead using it only as an additional source for concealment of their unplanned expenditures.[61]

It is crucial to notice the draft resolution's repeated insistence that the financial impropriety was perpetrated by Muzfond leaders to benefit themselves and their fellow formalists at the expense of 'the broad masses' of other composers. Even more important, Kosygin insisted on calling the financial impropriety 'illegal'. He

[60] RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 233, ll. 39–41 (copy of a report from A. Kosygin (MinFin SSSR) to Biuro SM SSSR, 14 June 1948)). The letter was forwarded to the Composers' Union, and the new leadership was given five days to respond (RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 233, l. 38 (memo from Chadaev (SM SSSR) to VKI (Lebedev) and SSK SSSR (Asaf'ev), 20 June 1948)), which they failed to do (RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 233, l. 52 (memo from Chadaev to Asaf'ev, 30 June 1948)). The composers who were accused of receiving inflated payments for reworking old pieces or of signing multiple contracts for the same work were Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Dzerzhinskii and Muradeli. The composers whose cars were being 'illegally' subsidised were Glier, Khachaturian, and Shostakovich.

[61] RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 233, ll. 42–43 (copy of a draft Postanovlenie SM SSSR, submitted by Kosygin (MinFin SSSR)).

sought to expand the attack on formalists from the already accomplished disciplinary action to a new level where formalists would be liable to arrest and prosecution. This is not simply a condemnation of discredited leadership, it is also an attempt to implicate that leadership in the concealment of a subversive unofficial network.

On the basis of these findings, the Ministry of Finance suggested implementing four measures to remedy the problems. The measures would limit Muzfond's resources by tampering with the levels and distribution of royalties collected from musical performances, re-examine Muzfond's primary responsibilities, and entreat the new Composers' Union leadership to keep a more careful eye on Muzfond's activities.[62] With very few changes, Kosygin's draft resolution was enacted by the Council of Ministers in early August. By accepting Kosygin's draft, the highest organ of government basically endorsed Kosygin's vision.

However, that endorsement was not unqualified. One of the two changes introduced in the final version was a significant relaxation of the rhetoric: the characterisation of the amount of money that was loaned to individual composers was changed from 'illegal' to 'significant'.[63] This retreat allowed the Council of Ministers to break up the unofficial circle that it thought controlled Muzfond without forcing it to prosecute the country's leading, and recently disciplined, composers. The change in leadership that had happened earlier in the year was implicitly deemed sufficient. The political elites may have been suspicious of unofficial networks, and they may have tried to shut down those that they did not oversee, but, at least in this case, they saw no need to destroy the individual members of those networks or to expand the campaign against formalists from disciplining them to arresting them.

During the anti-cosmopolitan campaign that followed within the year, rank-and-file musicians were not so generous. In arts institution after arts institution, disgruntled musicians wrote to the Central Committee reporting on the sinister networks – invariably run by Jews – that they thought were controlling their institution and excluding them personally. Although these networks were either completely imagined or the descriptions of them were profoundly distorted by antisemitism, they all demonstrate one or both of two things. They illustrate how pervasive was the belief in unofficial networks, and they express resentment about the advantages that using those unofficial networks provided.

One of the best examples of these antisemitic attacks on unofficial networks was provided by one Sokolov, a Russian song composer from Sverdlovsk who wrote to the Central Committee and to the All-USSR Radio Committee to denounce a network of Jews which he thought controlled the content and distribution of Soviet popular music. Sokolov explicitly condemned the unofficial, nationality-based network that connected various individuals in official positions. His letter was phrased as an addition to the transcript of a discussion on mass songs that the

[62] *Ibid.*, l. 43.

[63] RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 233, ll. 61–61ob. (SM SSSR Postanovlenie #2917, 2 Aug. 1948).

Composers' Union held in April 1949.[64] Sokolov argued that Soviet popular music was written by two groups of composers, those who used Russian musical materials, and those who used Jewish musical materials, which Sokolov conflated with Western popular music, including jazz. According to the imaginative Sokolov, the popular songs based on these 'Jewish intonations' had long dominated the Soviet popular music scene and even infected healthy Russian songs with Western intonations 'because all channels of popularisation are controlled by Jewish representatives'.

Sokolov then carefully surveyed the radio, the publishing house and the Composers' Union's mass music section to try to demonstrate that each was controlled by Jews. Thus the 'leadership of musical programming of the Radio Committee was entirely in Jewish hands, under the leadership of M. A. Grinberg'.[65] And who did Grinberg popularise? M. I. Blanter and I. O. Dunaevskii, two Jews (who also happened to have been two of the most popular song composers since the 1930s). Sokolov complained further that even after Grinberg was fired, radio programming remained in the hands of a Jew (Ia. S. Solodukho) who had been defended by the Composers' Union, on the initiative of none other than Blanter. Sokolov thought that the roots of this 'mutual assistance' were clear. His solution: 'It is essential that Solodukho – be committed to the earth.'

This bloodthirsty vindictiveness was not extended to any other figures in the sinister network that Sokolov described, but he did repeatedly emphasise that he was struggling against a whole informal, but effective, network. Dunaevskii was thus accused of using his influence in the publishing apparatus to promote the 'doubtful' work of a young composer named Ostrovskii, 'the young hope of the Jews', because a song written by Ostrovskii was published by Muzgiz despite receiving a negative evaluation from the Composers' Union. Not that the Union itself was any better. Blanter had recently begun 'exerting his influence' on B. M. Terent'ev, the head of the Mass Music Section of the Union, by driving him around in his car and in general showing him a good time. As a result, the Composers' Union had defended Solodukho at the Radio Committee, and 'preserved a Jewish platform on the radio'. Even Khrennikov was suspect because of his Jewish wife, who Sokolov imagined to be exerting influence behind the scenes. And the orchestra conductor V. N. Knushevitskii had been roped into the network by Dunaevskii and Blanter through 'the pleasures of money and spirits'. And under Terent'ev's traitorous influence, a 'synagogue' had taken over the mass song section.[66]

The most striking thing about this letter is its virulent antisemitism; however, it also provides insight into a possible unofficial network, the behaviours associated

[64] For a stenogram of the actual discussion, see RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 381 (Stenogramma diskussii po temu 'Sovetskaia massovaia pesnia i obrazy nashei sovremennosti', first day, 12 April 1949) and RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 383 (Stenogramma . . ., second day, 14 April 1949).

[65] M. A. Grinberg had long been the head of the musical programming section on the VRK; in fact, he was fired during this campaign.

[66] GARF, f. 6903, op. 1, d. 284, ll. 70a–75 (letter from Sokolov to Puzin (VRK); and 'Dopolnenie k stenogrammam disputa o massovoi pesne v SSK Aprel' 1949', 25 April 1949).

with it and the resentment that it engendered. Although Jewish composers were particularly prominent in the popular music field, the actual ethnic make-up of unofficial networks is not at issue here, and the control that Sokolov thought the network exerted over the production of popular music was obviously exaggerated. Still, the more sober features of the network that Sokolov described are worth noting. It was more wide-ranging than most of those discussed so far, extending as it did from the Composers' Union to the Radio Committee to the Soviet Union's main musical publisher. Though Sokolov ignored or did not see the hierarchical element of this network, it was clearly there. Composers' personal contacts with various officials (which Terent'ev basically was) or more influential composers (such as Dunaevskii) helped to get their songs played and published. The success that those contacts provided was a clear source of resentment to those left out of the network. But the resentment did not stop at the professional problems that were ostensibly the reason for Sokolov's complaint. The social network that Sokolov described – the cars, the money, the booze, even the Jewish wife – were crucial to maintaining and expanding the network. They also further excluded the antisemite from Sverdlovsk, who took the opportunity of the campaign against cosmopolitans to attack the network.

Sokolov was not the only one whose antisemitism overlapped with attacks on unofficial networks during the anti-cosmopolitanism campaign.[67] However, not all such attacks had antisemitic content.[68] One final example both demonstrates the ubiquity of unofficial networks and gives a glimpse of how complicated their interaction could be, especially when one was under attack. In February 1953 Z. G. Solov'eva, a soloist at the Stanislavskii and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theatre in Moscow wrote a personal letter to the powerful politician N. A. Mikhailov, a member of the Secretariat. After twice indicating that she was turning to Mikhailov for support in a personal capacity, Solov'eva ran through a list of official and unofficial channels that she had already exhausted before appealing to him. She had sought to address the matter with the Party organisation in her theatre, with the Moscow Committee on Artistic Affairs, with her local trade union and its

[67] See for example, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 133, d. 396, ll. 53–6 (anonymous letter to TsK VKP(b), early 1953, and memo from Iarustovskii to Obshchii otdel Sekretariata, 27 Feb. 1953). This anonymous attack on supposedly Jewish-controlled networks at the Leningrad Philharmonic drew limited attention in the TsK apparatus, not explicitly for its attack on Jews but because of the unofficial network. See also RGASPI, f. 17, op. 133, d. 396, ll. 117–18 (letter from V. Antonov to Khrushchev, 6 March 1953; memo from Kruzhkov and Tarasov to Khrushchev, 11 March 1953). This attack on the Jewish domination of the State Symphony Orchestra of the USSR was precipitated by its performance at Stalin's funeral, which Antonov (actually probably a pseudonym) thought was profoundly inappropriate. It was completely rebuffed by the TsK apparatus as simply wrong: while Antonov claimed that the orchestra comprised 95 per cent Jews, OKhLI reported that composition by nationality was actually 59 per cent Russian and only 36 per cent Jewish.

[68] For another example of an attack on an unofficial network that is not connected with antisemitism during the anti-cosmopolitanism campaign, see RGASPI, f. 17, op. 133, d. 328, ll. 177–88 (July 1951–March 1952), materials relating to an anonymous letter about corruption in Ukrainian arts institutions which accuses leaders of dividing creative workers into 'theirs' and 'others', promoting 'theirs', and repeatedly slighting the 'others', of whom the writer is one.

regional governing body (Rabis), with the All-USSR Committee on Artistic Affairs (VKI), and finally with the Central Committee cultural apparatus. Not having received the desired result and still convinced that her personal troubles reflected broader problems in the development of opera in the Soviet Union, she finally appealed to Mikhailov.

Her problem: 'recently in the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theatre, where I work, top management has formed a dismal atmosphere of despotism, the suppression of criticism, rotten mutual protection circles, sycophancy'. Rather than training young talent according to Stanislavsky's traditional methods, Solov'eva complained, young singers were being promoted by these unofficial networks and their associated arbitrariness and toadyism based on 'commercial rather than artistic goals'.[69] The complaint about a policy problem with personal implications thus started as a typical attack on sinister unofficial networks.

Once she began to relate the more personal aspects of the problem, however, Solov'eva also provided a glimpse of the unofficial network of which she was a part, a network of which she obviously expected Mikhailov to approve. After three years of fighting for Stanislavsky's traditional training methods, Solov'eva had been fired from her position at the theatre during the summer of 1952. In order to have herself reinstated, she activated her own unofficial network, which she labelled 'the intervention of society [*vmeshatelst'vo obshchestvennosti*]'. That intervention was actually a combination of patronage and brokerage. She turned to Party members who were former workers at the Dinamo factory in Moscow, where she had worked before entering the opera world. These old contacts then took her case to Shkiriatov (a highly placed politician) through whose intervention she was returned to her position in the creative troupe of the musical theatre. After a lengthy discussion of the continued importance of Stanislavsky's training method, she asked Mikhailov for a personal meeting, thus attempting to extend her own unofficial network to further heights of power which it had not yet reached – and to resolve the dispute with the theatre's administration in her favour.[70]

In the end, Solov'eva won the battle for the support of Stanislavsky's training method but lost the struggle for her own position at the theatre. The Central Committee apparatus endorsed the theatre management's policy of promoting young talent and supported a plan to transfer Solov'eva to a different opera theatre.[71]

This affair provides useful information about the interaction of different unofficial networks during a professional struggle. Even if we treat sceptically Solov'eva's characterisation of the 'despotic mutual protection circle' that was headed by the music theatre's management, it is extremely likely that some unofficial groupings and personal relationships were in fact governing the theatre's creative and personnel

[69] RGASPI, f. 17, op. 133, d. 396, ll. 87–88 (letter from Z. G. Solov'eva to Mikhailov, 13 Feb. 1953). The whole letter is ll. 87–91.

[70] *Ibid.*, ll. 88–91.

[71] RGASPI, f. 17, op. 133, d. 396, ll. 96–97 (OKhLI memo from Kruzhkov and Tarasov to Mikhailov, 2 March 1953). Her good service duly noted, Solov'eva was transferred to another musical theatre, scarcely the result she desired.

decisions, deciding who would sing what roles in which new productions and so forth. Excluded by this unofficial network, Solov'eva turned to a series of different sorts of channels: the official local channels (the Party cell and her trade union chapters), the official government channels (the VKI and Moscow Committee on Artistic Affairs), relatively official extra-governmental channels (Rabis and the Central Committee cultural apparatus), and finally, her own very unofficial channel comprising powerful friends that she had made twenty years earlier while working at the Dinamo factory. This rich example provides a glimpse into the pervasiveness and complexity of unofficial networks in the arts.

Protection

Informal networks and patronage connections drew the suspicion of political elites and the resentment of colleagues, but they could also provide a measure of security. In fact, it is a celebrated fact that strikingly few musicians, compared with writers or poets for example, were arrested or excluded from their professional organisation during the postwar ideological campaigns and associated attacks on sinister networks. Patrons could protect clients who were under attack, even during the most heated campaigns. In the Composers' Union, very effective protection was provided most frequently by the head of the Union, Tikhon Khrennikov, whose emergence and status as a broker are described above.

The most fully documented example of this sort of protection occurred during the early stages of the anti-cosmopolitan campaign in 1949. Since the pronouncement that initiated the campaign was directed against theatre critics, the obvious targets for analogous attack in the Composers' Union were musicologists and music critics. In fact, those attacks did happen, both in print and in internal discussions. However, no musicologist was actually kicked out of the Composers' Union in 1949, a surprising fact considering the havoc that the anti-cosmopolitan campaign wreaked in other fields. As the following example demonstrates, musicologists remained in the Union simply because Khrennikov acted as a broker who interceded on their behalf and convinced the Central Committee apparatus that they should remain members of the professional organisation.

Talk of excluding two musicologists, S. I. Shlifshtein and A. S. Ogolevets, from the Composers' Union began as early as February 1949.[72] One of them, Ogolevets, immediately began seeking personal ways in which to pre-empt that as yet unmade decision. In February he wrote a letter to Malenkov in which he mentioned talk of throwing him out of the Union and then launched into a counter-attack against both an old nemesis (fellow musicologist A. I. Shaverdian) and the broker who would soon save his career (Khrennikov). There is no evidence that Malenkov reacted to this letter at all, but Ogolevets shortly thereafter turned to the editors of the arts newspaper, *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, to ask them to publish a letter which argued that his orientation toward music theory had always been correct but that he had

[72] RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 243, ll. 29–30 (Ogolevets to Malenkov, 27 Feb. 1949).

made serious mistakes. He once again admitted to the ideological shortcomings that a 1947 professional discussion of his works had revealed and concluded by recommitting himself to the fight for Soviet music.[73] Again, there is no evidence that this second letter elicited any response either. Unlike the prolific letter writer Ogolevets, between February and May Shlifshtein appears to have been silent.

Then, on 18 May 1949, the Composers' Union Secretary M. Chulaki wrote to Malenkov with an official request to exclude Shlifshtein and Ogolevets from the Composers' Union. In his lengthy letter, Chulaki accused them both of cosmopolitanism and formalism, and noted that Shlifshtein was trained as a pianist so that his musicological writings had a dilettantish quality. He also referred to the 1947 discussion about Ogolevets and the latter's problematic professional conduct, and concluded that both had been sufficiently discredited to warrant removal from the Composers' Union.[74]

The same day, Shlifshtein sent his own two pleas to remain in the professional body. In a short letter to Malenkov, he admitted the mistake of supporting Shostakovich and Prokofiev (the basis of the charge that he was a formalist), and noted that he had already suffered – he and his family had been without any means of material support for half a year, since the first rumblings of his possible removal from the Union. The letter was a straightforward plea to be allowed to continue his one wish: putting his strength and knowledge at the disposal of Soviet national musical culture.[75] As with the earlier Ogolevets appeals, there is no evidence that this request evoked any response. The same was true of Shlifshtein's second letter, a much longer appeal to D. M. Shepilov, the head of the Central Committee's cultural oversight department. Though longer and with many more details about his creative life, the gist of the second letter was the same: he had made mistakes but earnestly wanted to remain within the professional community.[76]

None of these appeals in and of themselves would have been likely to be sufficient to save the professional lives of Shlifshtein or Ogolevets from utter ruin. However, they were saved when Khrennikov intervened with his own letter to Malenkov a few months later. In September, Khrennikov explained that the two musicologists had been alienated from the life of the Union, thus suggesting that they no longer posed a threat, and were busily reconstructing themselves. In short, it would be best and most productive to allow them to stay in the professional organisation. Consequently, he asked to withdraw Chulaki's earlier memo calling for their exclusion.[77]

This brokerage intervention was critical. Two weeks later, a bureaucrat in the Central Committee apparatus summarised the whole affair for Malenkov. He noted

[73] RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 243, ll. 31–33 (Ogolevets to *Sovetskoe iskusstvo* editors, 6 April 1949).

[74] RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 243, ll. 22–28 (SSK SSSR letter from Chulaki to Malenkov, 18 May 1949). The next day, Malenkov passed the issue down to Shepilov.

[75] RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 243, l. 20 (Shlifshtein to Malenkov, 18 May 1949).

[76] RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 243, ll. 21–21ob. (Shlifshtein to Shepilov, 18 May 1949).

[77] RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 243, l. 34 (SSK SSSR memo from Khrennikov to Malenkov, 13 Sept. 1949).

that the two musicologists had both admitted their mistakes and had been excluded from active work in the Composers' Union. More importantly, Khrennikov noted that they were reconstructing themselves and again becoming useful for the development of Soviet music. The culture department agreed with Khrennikov's assessment, and their careers were saved.[78]

Khrennikov's role as a broker in this example is worthy of particular attention. Since these documents have been preserved in the Central Committee's archives, they do not include traces of communication between Khrennikov and the two musicologists. It is extremely unlikely that they did not both discuss their cases with Khrennikov in the four months between the Chulaki memo and Khrennikov's intervention to get it retracted. On the other hand, Ogolevets in particular did not have a congenial personal relationship with Khrennikov, as his aggressive April letter made abundantly clear. It is as likely that Khrennikov intervened on principle to save threatened Union members as it is that he did so because of a special personal relationship with the two individuals in question. Consequently, his intervention combines personalised action and a position of institutional significance that characterises virtually all brokerage activity.

Not all unofficial appeals for protection were successful. During the aftermath of the anti-cosmopolitan campaign in the early 1950s, the prominent conductor N. S. Golovanov and operatic tenor I. S. Kozlovskii attempted to intervene on behalf of the former head of musical broadcasting at the Radio Committee, M. A. Grinberg. They considered him a valued leader in musical and theatrical circles and thought that the attacks on him were unhealthy and should be stopped in order to facilitate a return to more normal and productive work.[79] Presumably after speaking to someone in the Central Committee apparatus, the two performers quietly withdrew their request, and Grinberg was thrown out of the Composers' Union shortly thereafter.[80] In some cases, the attacks had gone too far to be overturned.[81]

Conclusion

During the Stalin period, Soviet composers, musicologists and other musicians lived and worked in a world that was structured by bureaucratic institutions and organisations. From their student years to retirement, their professional lives were governed by governmental arts institutions, and their material existence was to be

[78] RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 243, l. 36 (Kruzhkov to Malenkov, 26 Sept. 1949). The memo was archived the same day, suggesting that Malenkov considered the issue settled.

[79] RGASPI, f. 17, op. 133, d. 323, l. 216 (undated appeal from Golovanov and Kozlovskii to Malenkov).

[80] *Ibid.*, marginal notations dated 8 Aug. 1951 (request withdrawn) and 3 Nov. 1951 ('remove from Composers' Union').

[81] For another example of an unsuccessful appeal, see RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 244, ll. 33–35 (letter from L. Mazel' to Voroshilov, 6 March 1949; memo from Shepilov to Voroshilov, 26 March 1949). In this exchange Mazel' sought to avoid being fired from his teaching positions at the Conservatory and Gnesin Institute after being denounced for evaluating Shostakovich's music too positively. Shepilov's memo simply reported that he had been fired and his appeal should be left unanswered.

taken care of by the financial organisations that those institutions controlled. However, this system was profoundly inefficient, incapable of successfully accomplishing its two fundamental tasks: administering the production of music and guaranteeing the material wellbeing of the musicians who created it. When musicians encountered extreme difficulties while negotiating these bureaucratic institutions, they looked for special individual assistance from those who were more powerful; former teachers, friends or highly situated acquaintances, either trumping the bureaucracy with their own creative authority or trading information, loyalty or reflected creative success for that help. Born of inefficiency and encouraged by the Party's longstanding, self-proclaimed right to intervene to correct any bureaucratic shortcoming, unofficial networks permeated the bureaucratic system.

Pervasive though they were, unofficial networks did not operate according to regular rules or procedures. Rather, virtually every interaction was an independent, individual, often personalised, event. Still, it is possible to discern a series of patterns within these unofficial networks, a set of categories of interactions, each with its underlying sets of governing principles and cultural assumptions or agreements. The most professionally significant and spectacular unofficial category was the patronage intervention during a professional conflict. Available only to a few extremely authoritative individuals, the success of patronage in a professional dispute was determined by the interaction of hierarchical power and creative authority. To succeed, musicians needed to demonstrate to a powerful potential ally that their bureaucratic antagonist's creative authority was dwarfed by their own, whether it derived from professional or international acclaim.

Much more pervasive but less spectacular was the series of personal connections that musicians used to acquire material support, most frequently an apartment. They appealed directly to a patron or used brokers, patronage middlemen who straddled the official and unofficial systems, rendering official the unofficial through their institutional posts or speaking authoritatively on behalf of a respected segment of society. Musicians relied on powerful politicians' sense that music was an important cultural product, and that the material conditions of those who produced it should be such as to ensure their ability to focus on their creative work. They should have an apartment, a piano, and perhaps some other reasonable comforts, and if unofficial interventions were necessary to provide that material state, so be it.

Because they subverted or manipulated bureaucratic procedures, unofficial networks were the targets of suspicion and resentment. They and those who comprised them became lightning-rods for attack during the succession of disciplinary campaigns against formalists, cosmopolitans and Jews. Attacks against real or imagined sinister networks demonstrated how ubiquitous and powerful people thought unofficial networks were, both at the apex of power and within an institution. Understanding unofficial networks as objects of attack, therefore, is critical to understanding one of the salient features of the Stalinist system – the cyclical campaigns to purge Soviet arts and organisations of undesired characteristics and characters. But it was sometimes the protection provided by just such an unofficial network that could save a potential victim from professional ruin.

Contacts: Social Dynamics in the Czechoslovak State-Socialist Art World

MARUŠKA SVAŠEK

Art worlds and the importance of contacts

In 1992 and 1993 I conducted fieldwork in the Czech Republic, examining the interplay of political and professional power struggles within the Czechoslovak art world during the state-socialist period and the initial two years of democracy following the Velvet Revolution. Interviews conducted with over one hundred people[1] as well as extensive archival research[2] revealed that to be able to work and develop their professional careers, artists were forced to rely heavily on well-positioned contacts both within and outside the Czechoslovak art world.[3]

In this article, the term 'art world' is based on a definition introduced by the art sociologist Howard Becker in 1982. According to this, the creation of art works are themselves dependent on, and their contents influenced by, the various day-to-day forms of co-operation within a particular 'world'.

> The routine of interaction is what constitutes the art world's existence, so questions of definition can generally be resolved by looking at who actually does what with whom.[4]

In the context of the highly politicised Czechoslovak art world, the notion of 'routine' is itself somewhat problematic, since it suggests a rather straightforward,

I should like to thank György Péteri, Petr Skalník, Olga Skalníková, Justin l'Anson-Sparks and the anonymous peer-reviewer for their helpful critical comments and suggestions.

[1] I mainly talked with artists, art historians and people who had worked in different art institutes, associations, galleries, museums, academies and at the Ministry of Culture.

[2] The archives of the National Gallery and the Museum of Applied Art in Prague.

[3] In the past decades many sociologists, anthropologists, and art historians have stressed that art is not created by isolated, artistic individuals (a rather historically specific Romantic notion based on the notion of the lonely, suffering artist) but that it is produced in a wider context of production, distribution and consumption. Various scholars have demonstrated that the supportive activities of gallery owners, critics, commercial sponsors and individuals involved in the commissioning and purchase of art are crucial to this process. Howard S. Becker *Art Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); Ton Bevers, ed., *De Kunstwereld. Produktie, distributie en receptie in the wereld van kunst en cultuur* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1993); Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984 [1979]); Maruška Svašek, 'Art, Myth and Power: Introduction' *Focaal. Journal of Anthropology*, 29 (1997), 7–23; Vera Zolberg, *Constructing a Sociology of Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[4] Becker, *Art Worlds*, 161–2.

regular and habitual procedure. By contrast with the West, however, this article highlights how in the Soviet bloc the political conditions of the period often meant that social interaction, within a large group or simply at the level of bar-room chatter, was a potentially dangerous affair. Acquiring, extending and using contacts for one's own benefit or on someone else's behalf could be equally dangerous. In the pursuit of a successful career people were, however, forced to take all manner of risks, ranging from bribing civil servants to dealing with politically 'suspect' individuals.

The positions held by specific social actors within the art world at specific periods were also liable to sudden unforseeable changes, making the course of an individual's career highly unpredictable. Between 1948 and 1989 the communist regime underwent several major transformations. For the main part these periods can be divided up as follows: Stalinism (1948–56), de-Stalinisation (1957–67), 'communism with a human face' (1968), and normalisation (1969–89). Over the span of these forty-one years the Czechoslovak art world was forced to adapt to the political changes occuring within the ruling Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPCz) either by implementing corresponding internal political changes of its own – which often included carrying out self-inflicted purges and shifting their allegiance to new political overlords – or by seeking '*protekce*' from politicians whose power was sufficient to leave them unaffected by the changes.

This article analyses a number of social practices which helped individual artists to develop successful careers in spite of, or thanks to, the political volitility of the time. It does not aim to present a complete picture of social dynamics within the state-socialist art world,[5] but instead limits itself to investigating a small number of practices which were widely used by artists and critics under communism. The analysis pays particular attention to the role of (i) friendship, (ii) political favours, (iii) professional nepotism; and (iv) bribery.

The paper also examines the emic concept of '*protekce*', and its importance to the development of specific kinds of discourses on the politics of contacts. It will be argued that this concept covers a wider-than-expected semantic field which has generated both strong moral views about the incommensurability of politics and professionalism, as well as amoral views which consider the various forms of '*protekce*', notably friendship, political favours, professional nepotism and bribery, as nothing more than the 'currency' of the period.

In the final section the role of 'democracy' and 'freedom' will briefly be examined from both a practical and abstract point of view in response to Becker's

[5] For more information on social dynamics in the Czechoslovak state-socialist art world, see Maruška Svašek, 'Styles, Struggles, and Careers. An Ethnography of the Czech Art World, 1948–1992', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Amsterdam (1996); Maruška Svašek, 'Gossip and Power Struggle in the Post-Communist Art World', *Focaal. Journal of Anthropology*, theme issue on 'Visual Art, Myth and Power' (Maruška Svašek and G. van Beek, eds.), 29 (May 1997), 101–22; Maruška Svašek, 'The Politics of Artistic Identity. The Czech Art World in the 1950s and 1960s', *Contemporary European History*, 6, 3 (1997), 383–403; Maruška Svašek, 'From the Zoo into the Jungle. Social Hierarchies in the Czech Art World before and after 1989', in H. Ganzeboom, ed., *Transformation Processes in Eastern Europe* (Amsterdam: NWO, 1998), 191–210.

belief that totalitarian regimes cannot partake in discourses of patronage common to Western democracies because of the lack of freedom imposed on their citizens.

Patronage and art patronage

Before focusing on the importance of contacts in the Czechoslovak art world, the strengths and weaknesses of the anthropological concept of 'patronage', used for the purpose of analysing social dynamics in a state-socialist professional milieu should first be discussed. Likewise, Becker's central assumptions concerning the phenomenon of art patronage within oppressive political systems also needs to be scrutinised. Contrary to his belief that state-socialism left little or no room for individual manoeuvre or for the production of worthwhile 'art', this paper seeks to argue that we can only understand the complexities of 'worlds' within state-controlled societies by focusing not only on government and institutional politics, but also on the behaviour of socially and politically situated individuals.

Anthropological definitions of patronage: vertical contacts

In the 1970s, social anthropologists introduced the concept of 'patronage' to analyse vertical social relationships in feudal societies and caste systems.[6] Their analyses mainly focused on what seemed to be rather stable 'patron–client' hierarchies in which powerless 'clients' worked for and maintained varying degrees of social obedience and outward signs of respect toward powerful 'patrons', in return for social or political protection and favours.

At a recent conference on 'patronage in state-socialist societies' at the University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, many participants considered the concept of patronage to be essential for creating a more accurate model of how political and professional dynamics functioned within the context of such societies, emphasising that a fixed and clearly defined definition would first have to be agreed upon if it were to be used as a tool for cross-cultural comparison. There is, however, always the danger that if a concept is too rigidly defined prior to the research it is to be used for, it will ultimately prove counter-productive, and may result in a reductionist, and hence oversimplified misinterpretation of complex socio-historical processes.[7]

[6] See for example S. N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, 'Patron–Client Relations as a Model Structuring Social Exchange', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 22 (1980), 42–77; and S. W. Schmidt *et al.*, eds., *Friends, Followers, and Factions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

[7] Any narration of the past is an interpretation and consequently all historiographies and ethnographies select and simplify. This process of simplification and selection, however, must be logically related to the regularities and the irregularities of specific historical cases and not, by definition, to fixed assumptions of rigid theoretical concepts. I am certainly not doubting the value of a comparative study in which patronage is loosely defined (leaving it up to the authors to narrow down the definition and introduce other perspectives), and which examines vertical social relations as part of a dynamic field that also includes other relations. Even if the different analyses are based on distinct definitions and concepts, it is still possible to take a comparative perspective and to draw valuable

A number of respected anthropologists have made precisely this point with regard to the term 'patronage', stressing that it often overemphasises the significance of vertical social ties at the expense of, or partial disregard for, horizontal ties in the form of group solidarity and co-operation between colleagues.[8] In most hierarchical socio-historical contexts, loyalties between elite factions as well as between groups of subordinates do indeed exist, manifesting themselves in different social and political arenas. In such cases, the conventional concept of patronage is unable to encompass all the complexities at hand. In the spirit of Wittgenstein's telling insight that the rules of a game may sometimes be 'changed by the game itself', scholars should allow themselves the analytical freedom to extend the definition of patronage so as to take into account potential paradoxes and idiosyncrasies specific to their research, rather than potentially compromising their data in an attempt to stay within the limits of their pre-defined concept. Research should also aim to point out the negative limits of the 'patronage method' and what it excludes, as much as the beneficial areas it encompasses.

With this in mind, this article aims to deal not only with vertical interactions, which have always been the main focus of the patronage method, but also with horizontal interactions. The frequency of political change within the Czechoslovak art world led to a situation in which individuals' vertical and horizontal relationships alternated so often within the course of a single decade, that the individuals affected often developed relations and practices based on horizontal camaraderie, even though at any given moment their relationship was, technically speaking, likely to have been of a vertical character.

Institutional support in oppressive political systems: the role of individuals

Becker used the perspective of patronage to examine the support of art production and artists by institutions, assuming a relationship of inequality between the two:[9]

> a patronage system makes an immediate connection between what the patron wants and understands, and what the artist does. Patrons pay and they dictate – not every note or brush

conclusions. 'Comparison for comparison's sake', however, does not necessarily generate profound historical insights.

[8] John Gledhill, *Power and its Disguises: anthropological perspectives on politics* (London and Boulder, CO: Pluto, 1994), 125; James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 61–2.

[9] In general, research into art patronage has mainly examined art production and consumption in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Baroque period, times when religious and political power-holders commissioned artists to produce specific art works. See Judith Balfe, ed., *Paying the Piper. Causes and Consequences of Art Patronage* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters. A Study in the Relations between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque* (London: Phaidon, 1963); Bram Kempers, *Painting, Power, and Patronage: The Rise of the Professional Artist in the Italian Renaissance* (London: Penguin, 1994). In a recent study, the Dutch sociologist Erik Hitters used the perspective of art patronage to analyse contemporary forms of individual and institutional art support in the Netherlands. See Erik Hitters *Patronen van patronage. mecenaat, protectoraat en markt in de kunstwereld* (Utrecht: Uitgeverij: Jan van Arkel, 1996).

stroke, but the broad outlines and the matters that concern them. They choose artists who provide what they want.[10]

Becker believes that the supporting agency influences not only the number of works artists produce but also their final content. With respect to art patronage in oppressive political systems, he claims that:

> Government patronage [of art] . . . differs with the character of the regime . . . In some countries . . . the state maintains as a matter of course a monopoly over all forms of communication and enterprise. One might then describe the art as a state-controlled industry rather than speak of state patronage.[11]

By pitting the concept of 'industry' against that of 'patronage', Becker is proposing that there is no room within state-socialist societies for the complexities normally associated with Western democratic forms of government patronage, or with the sort of support regularly given by wealthy art lovers and cognoscenti to individual artists. By claiming that oppressive regimes have a monopoly over 'all forms of communication and enterprise', he is inferring that artistic creativity, and therefore the very possibility of creating art at all, is highly questionable, if not impossible. However, Becker's view of an impersonal political machine operating, metaphorically speaking, as a sort of art factory, in no way does justice to the experiences of individuals within the Czechoslovak art world.

From 1948 to 1989, art policy was decided upon by central government and Party institutions. Ministers of culture were officially responsible for the affairs of all museums and galleries, and other art distributors and outlets. These policies were then handed down to the Art Union, where they were then transmuted into practice by a myriad of government mandarins and other intermediaries who were significantly empowered by the bureaucracy and corruption endemic to the process, and thus often enabled to effect varying degrees of change. Given the inherent shortcomings of the process of regulation, the bureaucratic links between institutions and the readiness of indivuduals to give government directives a freer or alternative interpretation, the state did not enjoy the omnipotent domination over artists which it would have liked, and which many Western onlookers, including Becker, believed it did indeed wield.

Becker's view, like that of many others, is wrongly based on an overly simple view of 'the oppressive state' as an impersonal political machine which is both omnipresent and omnipotent. His perspective disregards complex processes of dominance and resistance continuously at play in politically censored art worlds, and fails to acknowledge the activities of critical individuals who manoeuvre within it.[12]

[10] Becker, *Art Worlds*, 103.

[11] *Ibid.*, 107.

[12] Becker's perspective reinforces the stereotypical Western image of oppressive political systems as ahistorical, propaganda-producing power machines, a perspective that was inherent to Cold War discourse. It represented the Eastern bloc as an evil political machine operated by a collective of party robots that collectively suppressed the fearful, powerless masses. Such images show that the Cold War atmosphere influenced sociological and artistic discourses, not only in the Eastern bloc countries, but also in the West.

Similarly, his approach also lacks an historical perspective which acknowledges that individuals embedded at certain moments within vertical relationships may also share certain horizontal loyalties stemming from long-term friendships, a shared academic pre-communist background, views on professional issues such as artistic quality, or as a result of vertical role reversals. It should also be noted that these factors are perhaps more intense in small, highly homogeneous countries such as the then Czechoslovakia, where the art world was many times smaller than that of the neighbouring Soviet Union.

It is also important to remember that the myriad government mandarins and intermediaries were not always, as their own regime preferred them to be, faceless aparatchiks, but individuals with personal and professional networks of their own, which on occasion may not only have provided a framework and inspiration for what they considered professionally and personally worthwhile in life, but may also have provided financial renumeration, received in return for dishing out favours or doing work on the side, an aspect of life which was omnipresent in communist societies, and which persists to this day despite political change and the return to democracy.

The politics of friendship

After the communist takeover in February 1948 Czechoslovak society was restructured in line with Stalinist policies in the Soviet Union. As part of those far-reaching political changes the Czechoslovak art world was to undergo the first of many transformations.[13] Henceforth the re-formed Ministry of Information was officially to propagate the policy, ideals and aesthetics of socialist realism by 'waging a war against bourgeois cosmopolitanism and formalism which is suffocating the life-sources of our nation with its non-national and cultural terrorism'.[14] To achieve its new aims, all art unions, clubs and associations were banned and, to the surprise of many left-wing artists who had jubilantly joined the CPCz, avant garde styles such as symbolism, surrealism, cubism and abstraction were also rejected on the grounds that they were both spawned by, and reinforced, the ideals of the bourgeoisie.[15]

Artists and art historians who wished to continue in their respective professions were required to register as members of the new communist Union of Czechoslovak

[13] See Svašek, *Styles, Struggles, and Careers* (1996), chs. 2 and 3; Svašek, 'The Politics of Artistic Identity', 385–8 .

[14] Václav Jícha, 'Na Novou Cestu', *Výtvárné umění*, 1 (1951), 1.

[15] In general, left-wing artists and intellectuals believed avant garde values and communist norms to be compatible. The well-known art critic and promotor of cubism Vincenc Kramář suggested that the Czechoslovak Communist Party tolerated artistic diversity, and accepted avant garde art (*Kulturně–politický program KSČ a výtvarné umění* (Prague: Svoboda, 1946)). The proclaimed aim was not to impose strict rules which would limit artistic freedom, but to make art accessible to all people. In the programme, Kramář described avant-garde art as 'an art which the Nazis called "perverted" ' and he added that 'that fact alone makes it recommendable'. In his view, ' "incomprehensible" and "formalist" art of the progressive artists . . . opposed the spirit of the bourgeoisie and capitalism', and thus supported communist ideology, Kramář, *Kulturně–politický program*, 23–4.

Visual Artists (*Svaz československých výtvarných umělců*), and to produce only ideologically sound works.[16] Increasing numbers of 'bourgeois traitors' became the victims of political purges, and the early 1950s saw the persecution of thousands of intellectuals.[17] Under this new reign of terror, most artists and art historians understandably ceased to express their criticism openly. With political informers lying in wait at every corner, the prospect of making new friends or acquaintances became an increasingly risky business, hence old and well-established friendships became extremely valuable, both personally and professionally.

As already mentioned, from the perspective of power and prestige, friendship ties can often be regarded as both horizontal and vertical, or as interchangeable. While equality and reciprocity may be considered essential features of friendship, friends are also often engaged in small-scale power games of their own. They may well compete for the same commissions or jobs, or make alliances elsewhere which challenge, undermine, or even supersede the 'special relationship'. In different stages of life, moving in different social circles, friends may choose either to strengthen their existing ties, or to discontinue them. Similarly, they may climb or descend distinct social, political and professional ladders, thereby transforming a more equal horizontal relationship into one that is overtly vertical and characterised by power difference. As already mentioned, political volatility in the Czechoslovak art world led to frequent role inversions. As a result, relationships often simultaneously comprised a combination of vertical and horizontal values.

The case of Jiří Kotalík

The following example is archetypal of many such cases which arose during this period, all of which highlight the importance of friendship as a substitute for more open and democratic forms of job solicitation and upward mobility. This is not to suppose that the use of friendship and nepotism were not common before. Such practices were, and are, common enough in Western democracies, and were likely to have been common enough during the democratic First Republic. It should, however, be emphasised that in many institutions in Czechoslovakia during the Stalinist period, for the reasons already outlined, foremost among them the fear of political terror, 'friendship' was rapidly becoming one of the only safe 'tradeable assets' for advancing one's career. By contrast, degrees obtained from prestigious universities and academies *before* the 1948 coup, as well as formerly impressive curricula vitae, lengthy publication lists, prestigious exhibitions, impressive gallery

[16] Vlastimil Tetiva, *české malířství a sochařství 2. poloviny 20 stol.* (Hluboká nad Vltavou: Alšova Jihočeská Galerie, 1991), 39.

[17] See Sharon L. Wolchik, *Czechoslovakia in Transition. Politics, Economics, and Society* (London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1991), 24; Vladimír Bína 'Cultuur en cultuurbeleid in Tsjechoslowakije', *Boekmancahier*, 2, 6 (1990), 345; Jiří Pelikan, 'De oppositiebeweging in Tsjechoslowakije', in Anet Bleich *et al.*, *Stalinisme en destalinisatie. Verslag van het Amsterdamse congres* (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 1981), 108.

sales, extensive experience in a particular field or simply fame, were just as likely to be a hindrance as an asset in the new communist scheme of things.

Jiří Kotalík (1920–1996) was a former member of the avant garde art group Skupina 42, which was secretly established during the Nazi occupation.[18] Like many of his friends he became a member of the CPCz soon after the Soviet liberation in 1945.[19] Prior to the coup in 1948 he had worked as an advisor at the Ministry of Information, and was in charge of maintaining international cultural contacts. In this ambassadorial capacity he had been able to establish a wide range of contacts with colleagues throughout western Europe.[20]

Being a known supporter of the avant garde, however, Kotalík lost his post at the Ministry in 1948, and was forced to find work at the publishing house Topičova in Prague. His son Jiří T. Kotalík stated in 1997 that unlike some of his friends, his father had become 'persona non grata'. Consequently, Kotalík left the country's cultural capital for Slovakia in 1950, to teach art history at the academy in Bratislava. As a way of describing the marginalisation of bourgeois intellectuals, in particular of her husband, Kotalík's wife used the then common expression 'put on ice' (*sěl k ledu*).

In Slovakia, albeit in a more limited form, Kotalík was in fact able to continue his professional career, thanks to the efforts of friends and his outward willingness to work within the limits of political censorship. As part of his demonstration of allegiance to the Party, he completed his doctoral thesis in 1952 on the life and works of Miloš Jiránek, a Czech painter who was respected by the art world's cogniscenti, and more importantly, had been prescribed a place in the Party's politically censored artistic canon.

In spite of his peripheral position, Kotalík maintained close contact with most of his communist friends from Skupina 42, as well as from the other outlawed art clubs and associations, just as he had previously done during the country's wartime occupation by Germany. For their part, his friends kept him abreast of the changes in Prague, and of what strategies and proposals were likely to succeed with which individuals. With the help of his friends he also acquired quite prestigious

[18] The members of Group 42 were František Gross, František Hudeček, Karel Lhoták, Karel Souček, Jan Kotík, Jan Smetana, L. Zívr, M. Hák, Jiří Chalupecký, and Jiří Kotalík. They took their inspiration from styles which had been rejected by the Nazi occupiers, such as cubism, futurism, constructivism, and new objectivity (see Tetiva *České malířství a sochářství 2*; Hana Mandysová 'Skupina 42', in Jiří Vykoukal, ed., *Záznam nejrozmanitějších factorů* (Prague: Narodní galerie, 1993), 15–26.

[19] When I asked Kotalík's wife to characterise her husband's political standpoint during the first post-war years, she argued that he had been a 'Masarykovec' and a 'Salon Bolshevik' at the same time. On the one hand, brought up in the cultural sphere of the First Republic (symbolised by Masaryk, Hus and the Sokol movement), he strongly approved of nationalist and humanist values. On the other hand, shocked by the 1938 betrayal at Munich, and influenced by the popularity of the Soviet liberators, he was attracted by communist thought. In 1946 he became member of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, according to his wife 'against the will of his father, but influenced by his friends'. The architect Otakar Nový, who was one of Kotalík's friends, told me in 1997: 'Before the war, I was a social-democrat just like Kotalík. [After the war] we thought that we could build our own socialism, partly influenced by Masaryk's ideas. Well, the Russians soon made an end to that.'

[20] In 1947 for example, he had met the art critic Herbert Read in London.

comissions, and was able to continue writing the annual speeches for the chairmen of the art union between 1949 and 1956, together with his politically much more acceptable friend, Otakar Nový.

Many of his friends urged him to demonstrate even more outward conformity to the official party line, so that he could be fully 'rehabilitated', and once again resume an influential position at the heart of the art world in Prague. In their view, this was the only pragmatic way in which an individual could influence Stalinist art policy.

The truth behind this pragmatic approach had to some degree already been borne out by the influence his speech writing had had on art union policy. According to Otakar Nový, writing the speeches was 'like trying to dance between eggshells without breaking them. We wrote speeches for the chairmen Karel Straník, Bohumir Dvorský, Karel Pokorný, and Karel Souček. We did not include any references to the so-called Socialist Realist method, or to the Soviet examples. Instead we included words about the traditions of our modern artists, and the masters of avant garde art. It was risky stuff'.[21]

A key friendship which had become increasingly vertical within the communist system was Kotalík's relationship with Antonin Novotný, who was well on the road to becoming a prominent politician. Years later, in 1957, he was to become President of the Republic. Prior to this, however, as a more junior politician, Novotný had agreed to use his influence within the Party to bring Kotalík in from the cold, and personally to vouch for his ideological credentials.

Although the case of Novotný represents a more extreme example of the benefits reaped from a horizontal relationship turned vertical, many other less powerful friendships, often both horizontal as well as vertical, played a crucial role in reviving Kotalík's career. As with Kotalík, many contemporaries who had lost power and authority in the art world as a result of the political upheaval, similarly resorted to seeking help from former friends and friendly contacts with an attitude of self-professed solidarity, an attitude most readily acknowledged by those who benefited from it:

> We formed a so-called circle of defence which meant that we stood back to back in an attempt to ensure that nobody fell; to help collectively all those friends who were in danger. That was the principle by which our avant garde group stood from start to finish.[22]

Thanks to friendly support and intervention, Kotalík was able to return to Prague in 1953, and was fully rehabilitated. He later became one of the most influential art historians of the communist era.

Becker's description of a communist art world as a 'state-controlled industry', where the state maintains a 'monopoly over all forms of communication and enterprise', would suggest that art production in the Czechoslovak art world was little more than a conveyor-belt of soulless art works, as part of which aesthetic

[21] Otakar Nový, 'Architektonické aspekty', in *Historik umění Jiří Kotalík* (Prague: Galerie Paideia, 1995), 21.

[22] The informal group consisted of about seventy people who had all been part of the interwar or wartime avant garde, including the artists Broz, Arnost Paderlík, Jan Smetana, Vizner, and Pelc.

preferences and individual artistic inspiration were ridden over roughshod in the interests of an ideologically operated system of supply and demand.

This image of a soulless state, or monolithic government structure grinding down the individual will of artists and intellectuals was frequently used by the victims themselves. In an open letter to President Gustav Husák in 1976, the then dissident playwright, Václav Havel, wrote:

> For fear of being prevented from continuing their work . . . many scientists and artists voice their support for ideas they never believed in; they write things they don't agree with or know to be false; they join officially sponsored organisations and take part in activities which they disdain, or they themselves mutilate and deform their own work.[23]

In this climate some contemporaries, friends and previously friendly contacts did choose to betray each other, either by denouncing each other's work or more commonly by keeping silent and failing openly to voice their support. As an example of this, the sculptor Josef Klimeš recalled how his former professor Jan Lauda had failed to support him in the 1950s. As a famous communist professor at the Academy of Fine Arts from 1945 to 1959, Lauda commissioned Klimeš and five other up-and-coming sculptors to produce sculptures for the Czechoslovak stand at the World Exhibition in Brussels in 1955. Shortly after completing his commission, the government censors discovered that Klimeš's elder brother had emigrated to Canada following the communist takeover in 1948, and as a result barred him from travelling to Brussels for the official opening of the exhibition. Klimeš was added to the government's list of personae non gratae and was quickly excluded from the circle of young sculptors 'patronised' by Lauda, who was well placed to be able to further their careers. 'He simply pushed me aside', said Klimeš. 'The Party no doubt held him responsible for the "mistake" of including me in the first place. He must have been worried for his own position because I was now regarded as a potential enemy of the state.'

Censorship, self-censorship and political favours

If fear and threats of 'violence' were often sufficient to neutralise the activities of ardent dissident artists, then at the other end of the spectrum friendly coercion and ideological self-censorship, coupled with financial and potentially prestigious awards, were the tools employed for keeping co-operative artists on board. These co-operative artists not only received well-paid commisions and access to prestigious exhibitions, but were often also rewarded with important posts within the Art Union and its selection committees. This allowed them to support each others' careers further, by means of what many considered nepotism.

Josef Klimeš, who in spite of earlier political setbacks continued to work successfully as a sculptor, entered a competition for a new commission in the 1980s. The selection committee was headed by Jan Hána, a communist sculptor who held

[23] Václav Havel, 'Letter to Dr. Gustáv Husák, General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party', in *Living in Truth* (London and Boston: Faber & Faber (1986 [1976]), 57.

a high post within the Art Union, and who had good contacts with a number of powerful politicians.[24] Klimeš recalled the time he spent standing outside the committee room awaiting their decision. At one point, two committee members whom he regarded as personal friends left the room on the pretext of going to the toilet. In fact they wanted to let Klimeš know what was what. 'Even though Hána admits that your work is the best, he won't give you the commission,' they told him. The decision was politically motivated and the commission was given to an artist, who unlike Klimeš, was a Party member.

In the light of this example there would appear to be little or no ground for opposing Becker's view of a communist art world as a sort of soulless factory, undeserving of artistic title, and taking no responsibility for the sterile quality of art it produced so long as the political and ideological criteria created by the central government and art union were fulfilled. Ironically however, individuals such as Kotalík and Klimeš, who both used similar language to describe the overbearing political domination of the Party and its desire to create an art industry solely for ideological purposes, nevertheless believed that they succeeded within the system, with which they co-operated and thereby supported, in championing aesthetic preferences which they had chosen of their own free will. Just as on the occasion when Klimeš was unjustly refused a commission, so on many other occasions friends interceded successfully to secure a fair chance for him, thereby allowing him to continue working as a professional artist. This was – although less often – also the case for artists whose work was, according to official aesthetics, more radical than that of Klimeš, such as Jiří Seifert (see below).

Professional favouritism

Within the Czech art world – which in spite of all its shortcomings continued to function – artists, art critics and historians all felt there was room for manoeuvre, as, with varying degrees of compromise, they could pursue the artistic goals they set themselves. Their claims to having achieved varying degrees of artistic freedom finds an interesting parallel in the 'freedom' which Becker, as noted earlier affords artists working within a Western democratic system of state patronage:

> a patronage system makes an immediate connection between what the patron wants and understands, and what the artist does. Patrons pay and they dictate – *not every note or brush stroke*, but the broad outlines and the matters that concern them.[25]

In the context of the Czechoslovak art world, the freedom of 'every note and every brushstroke' can be extended to include the freedom acquired by individuals within the Art Union, who as 'surrogate patrons' acting in quiet discordance with the regime's central policy, were able to bend the rules to include their own aesthetic

[24] Hána led the Prague Academy of Art at the time of the Velvet Revolution. He was fired and replaced by the non-conformist multi-media artist Milan Knížák. Svašek, 'Gossip and Power Struggle', 29 (1997), 101–22.

[25] Becker, *Art Worlds*, 103, emphasis added.

preferences. This practice was of course reinforced when Union officials, art critics, art historians and the artists themselves knowingly shared those same aesthetic preferences, often having belonged to, or still belonging to, circles and clubs which were officially outlawed.

The strategic use of power and contacts by individuals who believed in professional, apolitical standards also took place within the system of institutional patronage. One such example, given by many different artists and art historians, involved once again the art historian Jiří Kotalík, who oversaw the purchase policy of the Národní Galerie (National Gallery) during the normalisation period. Kotalík had been appointed director of the National Gallery in 1967, at a time of increasing liberalisation.[26] In his position as director he had a direct influence on the state purchase of art works, and was able to apply professional and aesthetic (as opposed to political) criteria.[27]

In 1967 and 1968, during the brief period of liberalisation, the pressure to buy ideologically correct art works decreased and there was less need for friendly intercession by 'patrons' such as Kotalík.[28] In August 1968, however, the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact forces put an end to the Prague Spring. Initially, the relatively liberal art policy remained unchanged, and the art world preserved its autonomy. By the end of 1969, however, when the pro-Soviet politician Gustav Husák[29] publically denounced Dubček's reform programme and announced a policy of 'normalisation', all spheres of society, including the art world, were slowly brought back under strict political control.[30]

In an attempt to resist the total re-politicisation of the official Czechoslovak art world, Kotalík began to operate in what Czechoslovaks have called the 'grey zone' (*Šedá zona*), 'the space between the official Socialist culture and the underground'.[31] As confirmed by art purchase records in the archives of the National Gallery, Kotalík did succeed in purchasing a limited number of works which were banned from official exhibitions. The art historian Jaroslav Rataj recounted one such occasion, when Kotalík had purchased some conceptual works by the sculptor Jiří Seifert:

[26] According to his wife, he was given this prestigious position because it was known that he had never actively supported socialist realism or fervently propagated Stalinism. Kotalík's party membership, however, must certainly have helped him to appease the hardline policymakers who occupied powerful positions in the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

[27] Svašek, *Styles, Struggles, and Careers*, 248.

[28] Purchase committees favoured postwar avant garde artists whose existentialist and abstract works had been banned during the 1950s. In 1967 and 1968, the National Gallery bought for example works by Bedřich Dlouhý, Karel Malich, Karel Nepraš, and Hugo Demartini.

[29] In April 1968 Husák was appointed First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and from May 1971 until December 1987 he occupied the position of General Secretary. From May 1975 to December 1989 he was President of the Republic.

[30] In the 1970s and the 1980s, the gap between politically controlled, state-supported culture and the activities of non-conforming 'independent' artists was wider than in any other communist country. See Jacques Rupnik, *The Other Europe* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1990), 209.

[31] Milena Slavická and Marcela Pánková, 'Zakázané umění', special issue of *Výtvarné umění*, 49 (1996).

Jiří Kotalík was the director of the National Gallery. I knew him because he'd been director of the Art Academy between 1960 and 1967. He put me on a purchase committee which bought sculptures for the National Gallery. I remember that the sculptor and director of the School of Applied Arts Jan Šimota, the sculptor Josef Malejovsky and other conservatives like that also sat on the committee . . . I remember that among the art works which we had to decide about were works by artists who were not allowed to exhibit. The people from the National Gallery weren't stupid. There were, for example, works by Seifert called 'Packages' [*Balíky*]. They were packages of stones tied up with rope. Well, for Šimota and the other conservatives this was totally unacceptable. But Procházka, head of the department, wanted to buy them. So I told him, 'Vašek, don't put it on the programme now, leave it till later on when Šimota won't be here.' Well, at a certain moment Šimota and Malejovsky went out to go to the toilet and before they got back we'd bought all of Seifert's works. And they didn't know about it. It was quickly decided by vote, and when they returned, Seifert's work had already been taken away, it was no longer there. And afterwards they signed the protocol without reading what had been bought.

The paradox of the official purchase of unofficial art can be explained by the fact that a number of employees in the official art world, such as Kotalík, disagreed with the ban on the purchase of non-conformist art works. They sat on committees which made decisions about the purchase of art works for the National and the Regional Galleries. As a rule the committees included around ten art historians and artists. The artists were Art Union members who occupied influential positions in the Union and the art educational system. Most of them carried the title of 'Meritorious Artist' or 'National Artist', and worked in a figurative style. The art historians were employees either of the Art Union, the Fund, the National Gallery, one of the regional galleries, or of an art school or university. The art historian Nad'a Řeháková (1945), who worked from 1968 to 1988 in the Regional Gallery in Liberec,[32] recounted:

To tell you the truth, as far as art theoreticians were concerned, there were plenty of renowned art historians on the purchase committees. Unfortunately the harm was done by the artists who also sat on the committees. It was a certain type of 'correct' artist, National Artist and Meritorious Artist, who understandably had a very negative attitude towards the purchase of [works by] progressive artists and artists of the new generation.

Such artists included, according to her, the likes of František Jiroudek, and the sculptor professor Malejovský who both worked at the Academy. Art historians who supported non-conformist, 'progressive' works, and were aware of each other's attitudes, were able to purchase certain works by coming to agreements prior to committee meetings. In Řeháková's words:

It's true that they sometimes also bought [non-conformist] art . . . but it took a lot of guts, and I would add *the snakelike tactics of the academician Kotalík*. In Liberec I myself bought contemporary art of high quality, although, I must admit, not in any great quantity. (emphasis added)

[32] The Aleš Gallery in Hluboká nad Vltavou was the first to buy works by young non-conformist artists. In the 1980s the galleries in Liberec, Louny, Karlovy Vary, Roudnice nad Labem and Cheb followed their example. Ivan Neumann and Alena Potučková, 'Česka spojka. O generaci sedmdesatych let', in Jiri Vykoukal, ed., *Zaznam nejrozmanitejsich faktoru. Ceske malířstvi 2. Poloviny 20. Stoleti ze sbirek galerie* (Prague: Narodni galerie, 1993), 61.

Some works by the artists and twin sisters Květa and Jitka Válová (1922–), who were not allowed to exhibit, were also purchased. Jitka Válová commented:

> Sometimes we did sell works. There were some decent people in the regional galleries. The chairmen [of the purchase committees] were always from the Art Union's central committee and were Party members. They always bought drinks, and when they got drunk and went home early, the committee members stayed behind and bought works from artists like us. It was risky, but it wasn't controlled well. So we sold some works, but only a few. The regional galleries bought more than the National Gallery in Prague. The National Gallery was better watched. The regional galleries were more peripheral, so it was easier to get them drunk.

Even though professional favouritism did take place, as the examples clearly show and the National Gallery archives confirm, the purchase of unofficial works was limited. On checking the names of artists who had taught during the 1980s at the Prague Academy of Fine Arts (many of them Meritorious or National Artists), and comparing them with those who replaced them after the Velvet Revolution (all of them known as unofficial artists during the normalisation period), there was no doubt that the number of unofficial works was much lower than the number of official works purchased.

Bribery

Given that the regime, as already stressed, was riddled with corruption, nepotism, incompetence and bureaucracy, it should come as no surprise to learn that its grand plans, whether they were to double pig-iron production, quadruple agricultural output, or to have artists create only ideologically pure works, were all similarly flawed. Where government policies failed to function alternative systems often flourished, operated by black-marketeers in the economic sector, malleable or corrupt individuals in the political sector, or by individuals and groups with agendas of their own in other areas of everyday life.

Operating within the cracks of the official system, artists and art historians also sought to enhance their own and other people's career chances by giving or taking bribes. Under communism bribery was commonplace. Due to the over-centralised planned economy and the lack of competition many goods and services were scarce. The employees who worked in state firms and shops, and who had access to scarce goods, fuelled the black market. Similarly, people who worked in ministries and other bureaucratic institutions would often be much more helpful once they were bribed. People stole all manner of items from state factories and enterprises which they used themselves or exchanged for scarce goods and services. Formal and informal economies were closely interlinked, and bribery was regarded as part of everyday life. The expression 'if you don't steal from the state, you steal from your family' was viewed as an alternative political slogan.

Artists themselves often used bribery where they could, as a strategy to acquire well-paid commissions. One sculptor explained how he and many of his colleagues used to bribe architects who had places on selection committees:

Architects were basically civil servants. They only got something like 3000 crowns a month. By contrast, sculptors were one of the few professional groups that could work freelance, and they could set their own price. A sculptor could get 200,000 to 300,000 crowns for a sculpture. Of course individual contacts were important, and the architect made sure that the sculptor he worked with would give him a certain percentage of what the commission was worth. Officially this was condemned but it was common practice.[33]

Bribery was also used to gain access to the Prague Academy of Fine Arts. One artist, who was widely praised for his talent, recalled how, in the 1980s, he had failed for three consecutive years to gain a place. In desperation, and accompanied by his father, he went to see one of the Academy teachers to ask for an explanation. The latter had decided to tell him the truth, and explained that none of the staff doubted his talent. Personally, he had argued, he would have been more than happy to accept him as a student, but that he had been black-listed 'from high up' because of 'political considerations'. Up until the communist takeover in 1948 the boy's grandfather had owned a furniture factory in Moravia, and his family had been classed as 'bourgeois'. There appeared to be no redress. The boy's father, however, remembered that when he was in the army as a conscript, he had once done a 'favour' for a fellow soldier who now occupied an influential position at one of the ministeries. The 'fellow soldier' was subsequently bribed, and the following year the boy was accepted by the Academy's selection committee.

One painting teacher who worked at the Academy of Art before the Velvet Revolution noted that some teachers accepted bribes directly from parents who wanted to secure a place for their children at the school. 'The parents would pay a certain amount, and the teacher would simply accept the student in his studio.' Every year, the Academy also received a list with the names of about ten children whose parents were politically powerful. These children were accepted at the school without question. 'That doesn't mean that they all lacked talent', the art teacher commented. 'They weren't all idiots, some were actually quite good.'

Using contacts: the notion of *protekce*

One of the concepts that was used by numerous artists and art historians to explain how the the art world functioned under communism was *'protekce'*. The term provides an interesting insight into the complex dynamics of social life in the state-socialist art world, and into the ways in which different people valued and interpreted various social strategies.

The multi-volume Czech dictionary *Slovník spisovného jayzka českého* defines *'protekce'* as 'the support by an influential person, used to gain advantages', as 'intercession', and as the practice of carrying out 'favours' on someone's behalf.[34] *Velký česko-anglický slovník* translates the word as a social activity, namely as

[33] The artist continued by saying that 'every sculptor paid up. But then again it began to work against the good sculptors because bad sculptors learned quickly and began to offer the architects up to 50 per cent. So they rather co-operated with second-rate sculptors. We call that "ocasní",' referring to the expression 'ocáskovat někomu', meaning 'to suck up to a person' or 'to lick somebody's arse'.

'patronage', 'favouritism', 'string-pulling', or as an entity, a type of social role and relationship, a sort of special 'friend'.[35] 'You had to find some *protekce*' was a common expression under communism. A related term was the adverb '*protekční*', which could be used to describe a 'specially favoured' person, especially a pupil or an employee who was 'befriended' by someone who had more authority. The fact that '*protekce*' could be used both to signify the activity of patronage, as well as to apply to the actual 'patron', reveals how significant personal contacts were in the oppressive state-socialist system.

It is important to note that 'friend', in this context, was a broad category which included anything from a real friend who reinforced friendship through acts of loyalty, to a person who simply expected a large bribe in return for his help. The term '*protekcionář*' refered to a string-puller in a less favourable way, implying that such an individual was both a 'nepotist' and an 'abuser of friendships'. Interesting parallels can be found in other societies and historical periods. Guy Fitch Lytle noted that in Renaissance Europe, ' "friendship" could be both the synonym and the antithesis of "patronage" '.[36]

Moral implicatons: politics versus professionalism

Numerous Czechoslovaks claim that '*protekce*' was most of all used as a negative term. According to them, the phenomenon demonstrated the lack of morality in an over-politicised society in which professional standards had lost their value. When talking about specific instances of *protekce*, some artists would fervently deny that they had ever made use of such a form of 'patronage'. As pointed out earlier, the number of students whom the Prague Academy of Fine Arts could accept each year had been limited, and parents had used connections to secure a place for their children.[37] Jan Smetana, a painter who had started working at the Academy in 1967, claimed in 1992 that he had refused to give in to such pressures.

MS: I was told that when somebody had a friend high up in the political hierarchy who had a daughter or a son who wanted to study at the Academy, there was pressure to accept them . . .

JS: There were such pressures. I think it was just part of life, it was not exceptional, but it depended on the teachers, on the staff, to what extent they wanted to or could resist the pressure. I really don't have a bad conscience. I didn't have bad students [in my *atelier*] who got a place through *protekce* or political pressure. I chose them solely for their talent or for the quality of their work.

[34] 'Podpora vlivné osoby užitá k získání něj. výhody apod.; přímluva, přízeň' B. Havránka, ed., *Slovník spisovného jayzka českého* (Prague: Academia, 1989).

[35] Ivan Poldauf, *Velký česko-anglický slovník.* (Čelákovice: WD Publications, 1996), 633.

[36] Guy Fitch Lytle 'Friendship and Patronage in Renaissance Europe', in F. W. Kent *et al.*, eds., *Patronage, Art, and Society in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 47.

[37] Favouritism was made all the easier by the organisational structure of the Academy. Throughout their study, art students studied in a particular *atelier*, which was led by one particular artist who selected students on the basis of the entrance examination. This procedure made it fairly easy to favour particular candidates, especially because the number of promising candidates was always considerably higher than the number who could be accepted.

The reference to a 'bad conscience' clearly demonstrates that *protekce* was often associated with behaviour considered to be immoral.

One sculptor who admitted that he had enjoyed the advantages of *protekce* agreed that the concept did have a slightly 'immoral connotation'.[38] He argued that in an ideal world the quality of an artist's work should be a deciding factor, but also pointed out that state-socialism had not been an ideal system, and that this had justified 'slightly immoral' behaviour. He considered such practices as being the currency of the period, and recited various ways in which he had managed to get help from 'higher up' in order to sell works and get commissions, describing his half-secretive acts as clever strategies thanks to which he had 'outwitted' the state.[39] According to him and many others I spoke to, the reality of state-socialism had made it necessary to find ways around the crippling bureaucracy and the limiting system of state censorship. This had made *protekce* into an acceptable form of behaviour.

Blurring the boundaries between friendship, favouritism and bribery

Specific discourses of *protekce* blurred the boundaries between friendship, political favouritism, professional favouritism and bribery. A board game created after the Velvet Revolution, called *Building the Stalin Monument*,[40] emphasised that under state-socialism it had been hard to draw a neat line between string-pulling and straightforward corruption. One of the instruction cards given to players when they land on a particular space, reads: 'You have been appointed leader of the School Union. For the *protekce* of the steelworks' director's son, accept a favour of 10,000 crowns.' Another card refers to the widely used practice of bribery: 'You need to make sure that your child can continue his education. Pay a bribe of 3,000 crowns to the Regional Secretary.'

When I discussed the issue of *protekce* with the anthropologist Olga Skalníková, she emphasised that the term did not necessarily bear the negative connotations of bribery and misuse of power. In her view the term was also used to express the relationship between 'master' and 'protégé', which she defined as a person who had certain professional qualities, and who was therefore supported by a more influential friend or colleague.[41]

[38] 'Mirně nemravního, mirně občansku nefér . . . trošku.'

[39] See Petr Skalnik, ed., *Outwitting the State* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1989). When talking about 'outwitting the state', Czechs often compared themselves with the famous literary character of 'the Good Soldier Švejk' who continually fooled his superiors. In the context of the state socialist system, references to Švejk signified 'hidden resistance'. See Ladislav Holy, *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation. National Identity and the Post-Communist Social Transformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 25. See also James Scott (1990), *Domination and the Art of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press).

[40] The game, a humourous account of life before the Velvet Revolution, was produced by the Prague publishing house Paseka in 1990. In the course of the game, as they throw dice and walk around the board, players must earn money and buy 'blocks' with which to build the Stalin Monument. See Justin l'Anson-Sparks and Maruška Svašek '"Post-Communist Personality Cults": The Limits of Humour and Play', *Etnofoor*, 12, 2 (1999), 117–31.

The polysemantic character of the concept was stretched even further. Some artists emphasised that *protekce* could be a heroic deed because willing patrons risked being blacklisted themselves. When asked for a typical example of *protekce*, the sculptor Klimeš recalled the disappointing experience of losing the support of his teacher Pokorný. 'It would have been *protekce*', he argued, 'if Pokorný had continued to regard me as a friend, and would have taken me to the Ministery of Foreign Affairs, telling them: "Comrades, this is a decent person who has done nothing against the state. I guarantee that he won't do any harm." That would have been *protekce*. But instead, he cut me off. He didn't have the guts.'

In this last instance it is clear that *protekce* is a term also used, within the art world at least, to indicate a specific form of patronage. In the case of Klimeš, his former teacher was in effect an extension of the state patronage system, having access as he did to state funds, which he could use to support young artists whose work he personally considered worthwhile. The elasticity of the concept of *protekce* reflects the many different ways in which contacts were used to find or give support and improve career possibilities. At the same time, it generated different moral evaluations of specific cases of 'string-pulling'.

Conclusion

This article has dealt with the strategic making and breaking of contacts in the state-socialist Czechoslovak art world. I have argued that the conventional concept of patronage cannot fully explain the motives behind the use of contacts, because its focus is limited to exploring vertical relationships between 'powerless' and 'powerful' social actors. Instead, it is necessary to take a wider and more dynamic view, and to look at the interplay of vertical and horizontal processes.

This article has also set out to highlight the fact that the patronage perspective is as applicable to the pre-1989 Czechoslovak art world as it is to other *capitalist* art worlds examined by the likes of Becker and others. In claiming that state-socialist governments cannot have a system of patronage comparable with that of the West, due to the former's 'monopoly on all forms of communication', there is in Becker's thesis an unspoken argument which would suggest that patronage cannot exist without some form of 'artistic freedom'. This argument is itself highly challengable, but even if it is accepted it has already been noted that with hindsight, many artists, critics and art historians believed they had enjoyed sufficient freedom to produce works of a decent professional standard before the Velvet Revolution as much as afterwards.

In his *Art Worlds*, Becker highlights in numerous cases the friction that exists between, on the one hand, individual artists and their championed aesthetics and, on the other, national galleries and museums which have money, power and a well-established canon of their own chosen aesthetics. These examples would appear to reveal one of the important dynamics behind the American art world; by virtue of

[41] Personal conversation, May 2000.

the fact that individual artists refuse wholly to 'subjugate' themselves to the preferred values of these institutions, good or 'alternative' art is produced. This can only happen, as Becker is at pains to point out, because the Western art world is so complex that no individual Western state, no matter how well-funded and powerful its museums and galleries might be, can have 'a monopoly on all forms of communication'. One such example cited by Becker involves artists supporting the pacifist movement during the Vietnam war whose art was in part championed because it was considered unacceptable for display in mainstream national galleries. In a similar vein he also cites the example of the Rockefeller exhibition which sought to promote the American dream at the cost of exposing America's social ills, but which in fact served to inspire the production of art works based on an opposing discourse.

So too in Czechoslovakia the values promulgated by state museums and galleries, while sometimes inspiring what some would consider worthwhile art, also inspired dissidents and non-dissidents alike to maintain their own aesthetic integrity, and to produce non-conformist art works. As already mentioned, artists believed that they enjoyed sufficient freedom to be 'artists', and to champion particular 'unacceptable' aesthetic values, sometimes even within the state system. Although this freedom may have come about as much by the incompetence of government or bureaucracy, or by accident, as by the strategies and efforts of individuals, it should not detract from the fact that the Czechoslovak art world enjoyed, albeit in a more limited form, similar complexities of value and art production as in the West. This clearly demonstrates, that, contrary to Becker's claim, patronage is a highly relevant topic in the investigation of state-socialist art worlds.

The article has also aimed to highlight that within the context of state-socialism, a number of particular social practices were vital to the development of artists' careers. In an atmosphere of distrust and fear, cultivating former friendships was extremely important. Friends helped each other to deal with the changing realities of centralisation and censorship, and ties of friendship also helped to consolidate or undermine the Party's authority. When political transformations affected the power structure of the art world, horizontal connections between some friends were intermittently verticalised, first in favour of one then in favour of the other. This generated a 'grey zone' between the social spheres of domination and dissent.

Friends also helped each other to acquire good positions and commisions, and tried to exercise their influence when a 'befriended colleague' was in danger of being earmarked as a bourgeois traitor. This, in spite of the fact that they then also ran the risk of being accused of conspiring against the state.

The practices of political favouritism and bribery also represented a means of securing important positions. Artists and art historians who wanted to advance their careers often became Party members and sought out like-minded people who could use their political influence, as well as bribery, for some commonly respected end. The use of political favours and bribery, however, sometimes began even before an artist had made any artistic acquaintances at all, when they were used by his or her parents to acquire a place at the Academy of Fine Art. Connections with influential

colleagues and politicians could be just as vital if an individual wanted to be eligible for a position in the Art Union or the National or regional galleries. Those who managed to acquire influential positions in key institutions had to demonstrate their loyalty to the Party, especially during the 1950s, 1970s, and 1980s.

Professional favouritism was used by some artists and Party members with influential positions in the art world to resist official censorship, to increase artistic autonomy and to aid friends. In this respect some Party members who, outwardly at least, represented official state policy, were actually engaged in 'anti-state activities'. This demonstrates again that Becker's view of art production under oppressive regimes is wrongly based on the false assumption of total control. The reality of social and political life in state-socialist Czechoslovakia included both autonomising and politicising tendencies.

The Czechoslovak case clearly demonstrates that even in highly centralised socialist systems, government patronage cannot take place without the active participation of individuals, be they civil servants shaping public policies in specific institutions, or social actors operating in the wings. In the Czechoslovak context people attempted to support artists by reinterpreting, or directly ignoring, institutional policies which were intended to control specific groups and resources. In so doing they championed artists and artistic styles of their own choosing. This process was not restricted to a small group of cultural crusaders or dissidents, but was more widespread, often involving powerfully positioned professionals who were prepared to resist the politicisation of the art world at the risk of damaging their own careers.

The polysemantic interpretations of the term '*protekce*' also served to highlight the complexities of the social and professional life of Czech artists. On the one hand the discourse of *protekce* generated strong moral arguments about the incommensurability of politics and professionalism, while on the other, people used it to express their acceptance of the inescapable politicisation of art, defining *protekce* as a form of social behaviour in which the distinctions between acts of friendship, political favouritism, professional favouritism and bribery were often blurred.

Individual artists and art historians interpreted specific acts of *protekce* in different ways, depending on their own particular social position and disposition. What was simply an act of friendship to one person, could be seen as a beneficial form of patronage by another, or a case of political nepotism by yet someone else.

'Cultural Bosses' as Patrons and Clients: the Functioning of the Soviet Creative Unions in the Postwar Period

VERA TOLZ

At the Nineteenth Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in June 1988, the writer, Yurii Bondarev, spoke passionately in favour of the preservation of the traditional Soviet system of government, alleging that democracy 'posed a mortal danger to the most gifted, creative people ever since the judges in democratic Athens sentenced Socrates to die.'[1] Bondarev spoke in the name of a group of cultural figures who in 1987 emerged as a focus of staunch opposition to Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms. In justifying their position these people argued that the reformed Soviet Union and Western democracies could never provide the same support for the development of culture as the Soviet government had done.

These outspoken opponents of Gorbachev's reforms occupied top administrative posts in the four 'creative Unions' – the Unions of Soviet Writers and Russian Writers, Soviet Artists and Soviet Composers. The USSR Unions were set up in 1932–34 to manage cultural activities and were joined by the RSFSR Writers' Union in 1958[2]. The leaders of the Unions consistently praised the role of these organisations in the development of Soviet and Russian culture. Significantly, not only Gorbachev's critics but even the most outspoken reformers among cultural figures were in favour of the preservation of the creative Unions at the time when the USSR was disintegrating. Few members of the Unions agreed with the two readers of the main Soviet newspaper for cultural affairs, *Sovetskaia kul'tura*, whose letter of 7 June 1988 called for the disbanding of the USSR Writers' Union as it reflected 'the spirit and the word of Stalinist authoritarianism'.

The highly critical attitude of many leaders of the creative Unions towards

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[1] *Literatumaia Rossiia*, 27 (1988), 5–6.

[2] The Russian Republican branch of the Soviet Writers' Union was created in 1958 as a conservative balance to the Moscow branch. The latter had been established in 1955 and was joined by many liberal writers.

Gorbachev's liberalising reforms and the defence of the Unions as institutions by the majority of their rank-and-file members, including liberal reformers, indicate that the simple dichotomy – passive intelligentsia versus the repressive regime – is not a satisfactory tool for the analysis of the relationship between the Soviet party-state and cultural figures.[3] Some scholars have already been arguing for a long time that, in fact, prominent cultural figures exercised significant influence on the course of Soviet cultural life. Moreover, speaking about the 1930s, Sheila Fitzpatrick argued that top Party and state officials often acted as patrons of individual cultural figures and that the cultural intelligentsia as a group was allotted a privileged position in society. The Unions provided the framework for the distribution of these privileges.[4]

This article seeks to clarify the reasons for the fierce opposition to Gorbachev's reforms on the part of the leaders of the creative Unions and, especially, for their open defence of the Stalinist system at a time when it was publicly attacked in the most influential mass media and by the Party General Secretary himself. In particular, conservative cultural figures recalled with nostalgia the postwar years. In the period of glasnost, the liberal media portrayed those years as the time of devastating ideological campaigns in the cultural sphere – *zhdanovshchina* and the onslaught on 'rootless cosmopolitans'. Yet the Unions' leaders had good reasons to see that particular period as their golden age. It was in the late 1940s and the early 1950s that they finalised the attainment of their broadest powers, including tight control over the production and distribution of – as well as the reward for – literary and artistic work. Their strengthening of control over the professions went hand in hand with better securing their status as one of the most privileged groups of Soviet society in material terms. In this period 'cultural bosses' acquired unprecedented financial and professional power vis-à-vis rank-and-file members of their professions. Such inequality in the distribution of power and wealth among members of the creative professions, rather than the ideological and political repression of the regime, became the main source of grievance on the part of rank-and-file writers, artists and musicians.

This article starts by analysing the activities of the Unions' leaders during *perestroika*. It goes on to show when and how the leaders' powers – which became threatened by Gorbachev's liberalising reforms – had been acquired. It then discusses

[3] This is not to deny that repressions and party-directed ideological campaigns played a crucial role in shaping Soviet cultural life. For new material on this subject see A. V. Blum, *Za kulisami 'Ministerstva Pravdy.' Tainaia istoriia sovetskoi tsenzury, 1917–1929* (St. Petersburg: Blitz, 1994); D. L. Babichenko, *Pisateli i tsenzura. Sovetskaia literatura 1940kh godov pod politicheskim kontrolem TsK* (Moscow: Terra, 1994); *idem, Istoriia sovetskoi politicheskoi tsenzury. Dokumenty i kommentarii* (Moscow: Terra, 1997).

[4] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 89–114; *eadem*, 'Intelligentsia and Power. Client–Patron Relations in Stalin's Russia', in M. Hildermeier and E. Muller-Luckner, eds., *Stalinismus vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. Neue Wege der Forschung* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1998), 35–53; *eadem, The Cultural Front. Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 216–37. See also Serhy Yekelchyk, '*Diktat* and Dialogue in Stalinist Culture: Staging Patriotic Historical Opera in Soviet Ukraine, 1936–1954', *Slavic Review*, 59, 3 (Fall 2000), 597–624; John and Carol Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1990), xii.

the impact of the postwar changes in the functioning of the creative Unions on the attitude towards the Soviet regime on the part of the Soviet cultural intelligentsia at large. In conclusion, the article analyses the rationale behind the policies of the political leadership towards the intelligentsia in the postwar period.

Leaders of the creative Unions in opposition to *perestroika*

As early as March 1987 a meeting of the secretariat of the board of the RSFSR Writers' Union turned into the first prominent public manifestation of opposition to perestroika.[5] The organisers of the meeting, the chairman of the RSFSR Union, Sergei Mikhalkov, and his deputy Bondarev were also members of the secretariat of the USSR Writers' Union – the main government body of the Union since 1946.[6] (In 1990, Mikhalkov was elected chairman of the USSR Writers' Union, whereas Bondarev took over the chairmanship of the RSFSR branch.)

After that this group of writers, as well as a number of leading members of the Unions of Soviet Artists and Composers; including sculptor Viacheslav Klykov, singer Liudmila Zykina and composer Tikhon Khrennikov, made public speeches and published letters in the press sharply condemning *perestroika*. In 1990, when the main organ of the USSR Writers' Union *Literaturnaia gazeta* cut its ties with the Union, the Union's secretariat ruled that another newspaper be set up, which could better reflect the views of the Union's leadership than had *Literaturnaia gazeta* in the previous few years. That was the newspaper *Den'*, whose editors defined it as an organ of 'spiritual opposition' to the Gorbachev–Yeltsin regime.[7] The leaders of the creative Unions published numerous appeals to the army, the KGB, 'true Communists' and other 'patriots' to 'save' the USSR from the 'occupational forces' of Gorbachev's and Yeltsin's governments. Among these appeals the pride of place belongs to the so-called *A Word to the People* (*Slovo k narodu*), published in *Sovetskaia Rossiia* on 23 July 1991. *A Word* warned that enemies of Russia, who were kowtowing before the West, had taken power in Moscow and it called on all patriotic forces to defend the motherland. The authors of *A Word* were later accused by the main architect of glasnost policy, Politburo member Aleksandr Yakovlev, of laying 'the ideological foundation for the putsch' (in August 1991).[8] This accusation was due to the participation of two of the signatories of *A Word* in the Emergency Committee which put Gorbachev under house arrest, and to the fact that the

[5] Julia Wishnevsky, '*Nash sovremennik* Provides Focus for "Opposition Party"', *RFE/RL Research Report* (20 Jan. 1989). See also Catherine Theimer Nepomnyashchy, 'Perestroika and the Soviet Creative Unions,' in John O. Norman, ed., *New Perspectives on Russian and Soviet Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1994).

[6] According to the Unions' statutes, between congresses relatively large executive boards of up to a hundred members were supposed to supervise the day-to-day activities of the Unions. In reality, in the 1930s and during the war, the much smaller presidiums, consisting of a third of the boards' members, were the real loci of decision-making and executive authority. The increase in the powers of the secretariats in the postwar period meant further centralisation of decision-making in the unions.

[7] Julia Wishnevsky, 'Cultural Politics in 1991', *RFE/RL Research Report* (20 Dec. 1991), 7–11.

[8] *Ibid.*, 9.

Emergency Committee's own programme document *An Appeal to the Soviet People* was almost identical in its message to A Word. Moreover, on 20 August the secretariat of the USSR Writers' Union, under the leadership of Mikhalkov, gave support, albeit an oral one, to the Emergency Committee at the time when its fortunes seemed to be on the wane.[9] On 23 August 1991 Mikhalkov, Aleksandr Prokhanov, Yurii Verchenko, Nikolai Gorbachev and other veteran leaders who had controlled the Union for decades were expelled from the secretariat for siding with the 'putschists'.[10]

Although some members of the 'spiritual opposition' probably genuinely objected for ideological reasons to Gorbachev's attempts to introduce some elements of democracy and pluralism into the USSR's political system, a threat to the corporate interests of the group in question seemed to provide a stronger motivation. When during the first public manifestation of the writers' opposition in March 1987 Bondarev called on the secretariat of the board of the RSFSR Writers' Union to launch 'a new battle of Stalingrad' against Gorbachev's reforms, his main enemies to be annihilated were editors of literary journals recently appointed by Aleksandr Yakovlev, who, rather than continuing to publish Bondarev, Mikhalkov and others, gave the pages of the journals under their auspices to previously banned authors.

Another threat posed by *perestroika* was that of multi-candidate elections. From 1934 onwards, members of boards of the creative Unions had been elected en bloc by acclamation without any discussion. Then the board members selected the members of presidiums and secretariats. Such a system made members of the governing bodies of the Unions feel secure in their posts. Genuine elections could destroy this security. Indeed, in May 1986 the Union of Soviet Cinematographers held multi-candidate elections to the position of the Union's chairman; as a result the semi-dissident film director Elem Klimov was elected instead of Sergei Bondarchuk, who had hitherto been the Party favourite. (In fact, the Union of Cinematographers was somewhat different from the Unions of Writers, Artists and Composers. The first was set up in the wake of Nikita Khrushchev's liberalisation in 1965 and did not have any Stalinist nucleus in its leadership as did the other unions, whose origins went back to the 1930s.) In contrast to what happened in the Union of Cinematographers, the leaderships of the three oldest Unions managed to withstand a threat of free elections up until the end of the Soviet period. As mentioned earlier, Mikhalkov lost his post as chairman of the USSR Writers' Union only in September 1991, and Khrennikov, chairman of the Union of Composers since 1948,[11] was reelected at the age of 78 as the Union's co-chairman in March 1991. Falsification of results in favour of Khrennikov by the Union's secretariat was reported in the media.[12] However, the threat of losing posts through

[9] *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 34 (1991), 9.

[10] *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 7 Sept. 1991.

[11] Khrennikov's candidacy for the chairmanship of the Union was apparently selected by Stalin personally (see Tikhon Khrennikov, 'Sud'ba chelovecheskaia', in T. Tolchanova and M. Lozhnikov, eds., *I primknuvshii k nim Shepilov* (Moscow: Zvonnitsa-MG, 1998), 146.

[12] *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 9 April 1991.

free elections was there, and it was precisely in reaction to it that Bondarev made his statement about democracy being an enemy of true talent which is quoted at the beginning of this article.

The 1990 USSR press law was another blow to the power of the leadership of the writers' Unions. This law required every periodical and newspaper to re-register with the local authorities and to identify its 'founder' (*'uchreditel'*). Collectives of employees of periodicals were allowed to register as 'founders'. The question of the founder was important, as, according to the law, it was the founders' right to appoint and dismiss chief editors, determine editorial policy and control revenues. Upon the adoption of the law by the Soviet parliament, the majority of literary journals and newspapers, including *Literaturnaia gazeta*, freed themselves from the auspices of the Writers' Union and proclaimed themselves to be independent, with collectives of employees registered as founders. Such a move affected not only the Writers' Union but also some other organisations which had hitherto controlled periodicals as well. Yet only the Writers' Union initiated legal procedures against the periodicals in question and pursued their cases with great vigour. (The Writers' Union eventually lost those cases.) In explaining their position, the leaders of the Union admitted that they were worried about the loss of the revenues which these periodicals used to raise for the Union, as well as about the loss of their hitherto unlimited access to the pages of those periodicals.[13]

Although at times admitting that material interests to some extent shaped their attitude to Gorbachev's reforms, the Unions' leaders far more often cited ideological reasons for their opposition. In opposing *perestroika*, these cultural figures articulated their own ideology. The latter was hardly innovative. Despite a highly negative image of Stalin in the official Soviet discourse of the late 1980s and early 1990s, these people did not hide their commitment to Stalinism. In describing the ideological position of the newspaper *Den'*, Prokhanov said in August 1991 that it united, among others, those who were committed to Stalinism.[14] Particularly striking was the similarity of the rhetoric of the critics of *perestroika* to that of the ideological campaigns of the postwar period. Indeed, as in the late Stalin period, Gorbachev's critics began to accuse their opponents of 'rootless cosmopolitanism', combining those accusations with antisemitism, anti-Western hysteria and rabid Russian nationalism, which included the proclamation of the superiority of everything Russian over everything foreign. As was the case in the late 1940s to early 1950s, the word 'patriot' began to be used regularly to signify 'a true Russian'. The latter was to be contrasted with 'anti-patriot' – a person with a pro-Western orientation, suspected of not being a Russian.[15]

The similarity of statements by the Unions' leaders to those of Stalin's

[13] Julia Wishnevsky, 'Press Law Makes Trouble for Writers' Union', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 2 (Nov. 1990), 19–22.

[14] *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 15 Aug. 1991.

[15] For a detailed description of the anti-cosmopolitan campaign and an analysis of its rhetoric, see K. Azadovskii and B. Egorov, 'Kosmopolity', *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 36, 2 (1999), 83–135.

anti-cosmopolitan campaign of the late 1940s and early 1950s has already been noted.[16] What has not been noted is that those in charge of the creative professions had good reasons to remember the postwar period in a particularly positive light. It was in that period that the powers of the leaders of the creative Unions were fully defined. It was those powers that were under threat, and it was only natural that in defending those powers the Unions' leaders began to look back to the period of their 'origin'.

The postwar period and the functioning of creative professions

Scholars tend to emphasise the importance of the 1930s as the time when the cultural intelligentsia secured its highly privileged position. In April 1932 the Party Central Committee issued a resolution 'On the Restructuring of Literary and Artistic Organisations', which resulted in the establishment of the three creative Unions – of Soviet Writers, Artists[17] and Composers – which merged a variety of hitherto existing literary and artistic groups. Henceforth Party control of culture was conducted largely through the Unions. Although the resolution reminded cultural figures of their obligation to serve the regime, it also indicated the Party leadership's deference to high culture. Following the creation of the Unions, members of the cultural intelligentsia started to receive better material rewards for their professional activities than the rest of society. Fitzpatrick hypothesised that in the mid-1930s the right to a prosperous life (*zazhitochania zhizn'*) was officially recognised and, simultaneously, the concept of *kul'turnost'* (being cultured) was put forward, which argued that a higher level of education entitled people to a more prosperous way of life, hitherto condemned as 'bourgeois'.[18] Such ideological changes had a direct impact on the lives of Soviet cultural figures. Indeed, contemporaries noted a drastic change in their way of life in the second half of the 1930s. Those members of the Russian intelligentsia who traditionally held materialistic interests in contempt left us with bitter satirical depictions of the new 'Soviet intelligentsia' and its attitude towards material values. Nadezhda Mandel'shtam recalled in her memoirs that when

[16] See, for instance, Walter Laqueur, *Black Hundred. The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), and Vera Tolz, 'The Radical Right in Post-Communist Russian Politics', in Peter H. Merkl and Leonard Weinberg, eds., *The Revival of Right-Wing Extremism in the Nineties* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 179–85. Some scholars, however, seem to miss the strong connection between the arguments of Russian nationalists in Gorbachev's period and the propaganda of the anti-cosmopolitan campaign; they trace extreme Russian nationalist ideas of the *glasnost'* period only back to the period of the mid-1960s–early 1970s, when, following Khrushchev's death, such literary journals as *Nash sovremennik* and *Molodaia gvardiia* started to preach rabid Russian nationalism (see, for instance, Yitzhak M. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia. Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State 1953–1991* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

[17] The decision to set up the USSR Union of Artists was taken in 1932; however, that Union was fully established only in 1957 when its first congress was held. Until 1957, only the Organisational Committee of the Union had existed as well as the Moscow Union of Soviet Artists.

[18] Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 90–3. See also Catriona Kelly and Vadim Volkov, 'Directed Desires: *Kul'turnost'* and Consumption', in Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd, eds., *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881–1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 295.

she and her husband, the poet Osip Mandel'shtam, 'left Moscow for exile [1934], the writers had not yet become a privileged caste, but now [in 1937] they were putting down roots and figuring out ways of keeping their privileges'. Seeing apartments in the newly built complex for writers in Lavrushinskii pereulok in the centre of Moscow, she observed that the writers 'had gone wild at having so much money for the first time in their lives'.[19] Further insights left by a contemporary can be found in Mikhail Bulgakov's novels *The Master and Margarita* and *The Theatrical Novel.*

Mentioning that, due to shortages, an entitlement to privileges through being a member of the Soviet intelligentsia did not automatically result in obtaining required goods and services, Fitzpatrick argued that, by the late 1930s, within the cultural elite itself a certain hierarchy of privileged access had been created. However, she did not detail the mechanics of the creation and functioning of such a hierarchy. Other scholars clarified the issue by mentioning that in each 'creative' profession there tended to be people who sat on the governing bodies of the Unions – executive boards, presidiums and secretariats. These were the main beneficiaries of the new system of reward.[20]

The above-mentioned accounts leave an impression that the Soviet cultural elite turned into a highly privileged caste in the late 1930s and that the leaderships of the Unions also turned into a separate subgroup during that time. As will be shown below, such accounts are not entirely accurate. The postwar years were more significant than the 1930s as a time when top administrators of the creative unions and a few other famous cultural figures joined the highest ranks of the state elite. The postwar years were also a crucial period in shaping the relationship between the Party-state leadership and the leadership of the creative Unions, on the one hand, and between the latter and the rank-and-file members of the Unions, on the other.

Documents from the fund of the USSR Council of People's Commissars/ Council of Ministers in the State Archive of the Russian Federation clarify the dynamics of the relationship between state/Party officials and cultural figures in the period from the late 1930s to 1953. First, these documents indicate that there was a significant difference in the type of contacts which cultural figures enjoyed with top state/Party officials in the postwar period as compared with the 1930s. Second, they indicate that the system of the distribution of power and privileges among members of the Unions, which was to survive virtually intact until the late 1980s, took final shape only in the late 1940s.

The majority of the 1930s documents concerning 'material support' for the cultural intelligentsia detail the establishment of facilities for professional and leisure use, such as clubs, retreats, restaurants and medical centres, for a wide circle of members of the newly established creative Unions.[21] In the 1930s, even well-

[19] Nadezhda Mandelstam, *Hope against Hope. A Memoir* (London: Collins and Harvill Press, 1971), 278.

[20] Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union.*

[21] See for instance, Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossisikii Federatsii (State Archive of the Russian Federation, henceforth GARF), fund 5446, op. 22, delo 1445 'On the Material Support of Composers for the period from 12 April to 20 September 1938'.

established cultural personalities in Moscow tended to address their requests for material benefits to top executives in their Unions rather than directly to Party/state officials. Thus, when the construction of dachas for writers in the settlement of Peredelkino near Moscow began in 1935 and it turned out that certain writers such as Marietta Shaginian and Vladimir Zazubrin had built considerably bigger houses than the government had originally paid for, they lobbied the leadership of the Writers' Union for more money. Their expectation was that the leadership of the Union would attempt to extract from the Council of People's Commissars additional funds to finish the construction. The Union's leadership, however, turned down the request from the writers, arguing that all the extra spending should come out of their own pockets.[22] Only in isolated instances would individual artists and writers send requests of a purely materialistic nature directly to Party/state officials, bypassing the Unions. Requests to top political leaders of the country, particularly to Viacheslav Molotov in his capacity as chairman of Sovnarkom, were normally sent by people in charge of cultural institutions, who, to use Fitzpatrick's expression, acted as 'brokers' on behalf of their subordinates.[23] All in all, the 1930s was the period when the most significant change from the past was a considerable expansion of services and facilities, which, at least in theory, all members of the newly created Unions were entitled to use. Within the 'creative' professions separate hierarchies of privileged access were only beginning to emerge.

In the late 1930s the USSR Commissariat of Finances attempted to impose rigid limits on the creative unions' spending. The Commissariat virtually never met in full any requests from the Unions for funding; in 1938 it attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to transfer the responsibility of financing local writers' organisations from republican and regional governments to the Literary Fund of the USSR Writers' Union; the same year, the Commissariat refused to provide funds for the Writers' Union unless the Council of People's Commissars reconfirmed its decision of September 1934 to finance the organisation from the state budget.[24] As could be expected, during the war requests from the creative unions were rare and modest, usually asking for the means required to restore destroyed theatres, museums and libraries.[25]

[22] GARF, fund 5446, op. 22, delo 1780, ll. 5 and 9.

[23] See, for instance, letters sent in 1938 by the Writers' Union Secretary V. Stavsky to Sovnarkom, asking for additional funds to finance medical treatment and other provisions for the Union's members (GARF, fund 5446, op. 22, delo 1787, ll. 1–5). See also a letter, written in Dec. 1937 to Molotov by the director of the Hermitage museum in Leningrad, I. Orbeli, who argued that salaries of the museum's employees should be raised to make them similar to those of employees in other great (*velikie*) cultural institutions of the country such as the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow (GARF, fund 5446, op. 22, delo 1419). See also a letter of 27 Dec. 1937 from the director of the Bolshoi Theatre to Sovnarkom asking to allocate flats to leading ballet dancers (GARF, fund 5446, op. 22, 1415, ll. 2–13).

[24] GARF, fund 5446, op. 22, delo 1776, l. 3, on the Commissariat of Finances refusing to meet the Writers' Union's requests for funding in full; op. 22, delo 1779, ll. 2–9 on the Commissariat's suggestion that Litfond should finance republican and regional writers' organisations; op. 22, delo 1776, l. 4–5 on the Commissariat asking for another confirmation by Sovnarkom that the Writers' Union should be financed by the state.

[25] See for instance, 'Perepiska po delam Souizov Pisatelei, Khudozhnikov i Kompozitorov' in 1944, GARF, fund 5446, op. 46, delo 2432; op. 46, delo 2427, l. 1 with a letter of 16 Dec. 1943 by the

The period from 1946 to Stalin's death in 1953 is described in scholarly literature as the time that 'witnessed the loss of the modest room to manoeuvre that writers had gained during the war years',[26] as 'the darkest period of state interference in artistic and scientific realms'.[27] But documents on cultural matters from the fund of the USSR Council of People's Commissars/Council of Ministers in the State Archive of the Russian Federation indicate that campaigns aimed at tightening ideological control over the intelligentsia were not the only trend in the relationship between the Party/state and members of the creative professions in that period. The period also witnessed the considerable increase, as compared with the 1930s and the war years, in demand on the Party/state by cultural figures to provide them with various benefits and privileges. More importantly, top administrators of the Unions managed to broaden their power over the functioning of the creative professions and, paradoxically, to increase their autonomy from the Party/state.

In the postwar period, requests to top state/Party officials by leaders of cultural institutions on behalf of their subordinates began to represent only a small number of the documents concerning 'material support' for the cultural intelligentsia. Instead, we find a stream of personal requests – large as well as pathetically small – addressed directly to Stalin as chairman of Sovnarkom or his deputies by individual cultural figures of different ranks. The following selection of examples can give us an idea of the situation.

There are many requests from individual cultural figures to the leadership of Sovnarkom/Council of Ministers to provide them with cars, either on the grounds that public transport did not work well in the immediate postwar period, or because cars obtained in the 1930s were donated for the war effort in 1941. Thus, in a letter dated 21 June 1945 to deputy head of Sovnarkom Molotov, Academician Konstantin Skrobanskii complained: 'Using public transport is tiresome for me. In addition, having a car will let me regularly use my dacha in the countryside. Please help.' The same file contains a similar request from the Leningrad actor Iurii Iur'ev.[28] In November 1945 the famous writer Kornei Chukovskii sent a letter to the Sovnarkom also asking to be provided with a car. To strengthen his case, Chukovskii wrote: 'All my immediate neighbours in Peredelkino (Konstantin Simonov, N. Pogodin, P. Pavlenko, Valentin Kataev and others) have got cars at their dachas.' In February 1949, the Kievan artist Kh. Pumipenko asked Molotov to help him buy an engine and other spare parts for his boat.[29]

Another type of request concerned help for the restoration of property devastated during the war. On 21 May 1945 Sergei Mikhalkov wrote to Molotov asking for

director of the Kirov Theatre of Opera and Ballet in Leningrad to the Sovnarkom asking for money to buy shoes for the theatre's employees.

[26] Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union*, 63.

[27] Loren R. Graham, *Science and Philosophy in the Soviet Union* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 18. See also Elena Zubkova, *Poslevoennoe obshchestvo: politika i povsednevnost', 1945–1953* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2000), 181–7.

[28] GARF, fund 5446, op. 47, delo 2735,ll. 1–2.

[29] GRARF, fund 5446, op. 51, delo 2982, l. 98.

help in reconstructing his dacha on the grounds that only by appealing directly to a top government official did he have a chance of getting the necessary materials.[30] Such a famous actor as Vasilii Kachalov and singer Valeriia Barsova even attached a list of materials they required to restore their dachas, which included nails and light bulbs.[31] In turn, in late 1945, another group of actors asked deputy chairman of Sovnarkom Aleksei Kosygin to make sure that they were supplied with enamelled baths and lavatory pans for their apartments.[32] And a group of leading ballet dancers, including Galina Ulanova and Maia Plisetskaia, asked Stalin personally to arrange government support for building their apartment block in the centre of Moscow.[33]

Thus, in the postwar period, the number of requests for material benefits sent directly to Party/state officials by individual artists and writers was on a different scale compared with the 1930s. These requests were clearly stimulated by the deprivation of the postwar period. But they also revealed the cultural elite's feeling of being entitled to a certain standard of living which had been shattered by the war and which they wanted to restore as quickly as possible. As a rule, the authors of the requests stated their titles, awards and other achievements in an effort to strengthen their case.

The attitude of Party/state officials to these requests naturally varied. Even in the 1930s there were not enough goods to satisfy all those who, by virtue of belonging to the Soviet intelligentsia, were entitled to them. In the postwar years, shortages became even more acute, whereas the demands of cultural figures increased. Thus, the competition for privileged access intensified. Two main criteria clearly determined whether the requests meet with success or failure – fame and residence in the centre (Moscow and Leningrad). In most cases, the two were combined. The speed with which the requests from famous persons were treated can provoke nothing but astonishment. For instance, on 5 May 1952 the writer Fedor Gladkov wrote to the Council of Ministers requesting a two-room apartment in Moscow for his son. The Council's favourable resolution was issued on 9 May and the Moscow city soviet allocated a particular apartment on 28 June.[34] However, not everyone was so fortunate. Whereas luminaries from Moscow and Leningrad all received the requested cars, light bulbs and baths, the above-mentioned Ukrainian actor was refused spare parts for his boat.

Indeed, in the postwar period cultural figures from the provinces complained to the Party/state leadership to the effect that, as the main bulk of resources was concentrated in Moscow and Leningrad, they were left in an inferior position.[35]

[30] GARF, fund 5446, op. 47, delo 2168, ll. 55–7.

[31] GARF, fund 5446, op. 47, delo 2166, l. 29.

[32] *Ibid.*, l. 32.

[33] GARF, fund 5446, op. 86, delo 2440, l. 32.

[34] GARF, fund 5446, op. 86, delo 2439, l. 95–99. In contrast, in the 1930s requests from cultural institutions were processed much more slowly. For instance, a request from the Bolshoi Theatre for flats for its leading ballet dancers in Dec. 1937 was first dealt with in April 1938 (GARF, fund 5446, op. 22, delo 1415, ll. 3–12).

[35] Archival documents reveal that whereas in the 1930s the cultural intelligentsia in Moscow and Leningrad became a highly privileged group, the situation of their colleagues in the provinces often

Thus, in 1951 the artistic director of the Drogobuzhskii regional philharmonic orchestra in Ukraine wrote directly to Stalin: 'One needs to admit openly that the All-Union Committee for Artistic Matters is largely concerned with managing artistic affairs in Moscow and Leningrad and knows nothing about what is happening in Simferopol' and Astrakhan'.' The author of the letter was also of the opinion that the Committee was solely concerned with financial and material matters and was not interested in the ideological side of work. He noted that especially 'in western Ukraine and Belarus there are serious ideological problems on the cultural front', but the Committee completely neglected the area.[36]

In addition to the fact that during the postwar period individual cultural figures were busy lobbying political leaders for help to restore and further improve their way of life which had been shattered by the war, another development which took place in that period proved to be extremely significant for the relationship between the Party and the cultural intelligentsia and within the ranks of the cultural intelligentsia itself. This was the finalisation of control by the Unions' leaders over the functioning of the creative professions and their ability to secure a highly privileged material position for themselves, the maintenance of which no longer required regular appeals to top Party/state officials.

From the late 1940s onwards, members of the secretariats of the creative Unions began to lobby the government in order to secure their higher material rewards in the form of very high salaries. The new benefits were to be connected to a particular position, whose occupant would change with time, rather than to be justified by the personal achievement of an individual cultural figure and/or determined by the strength of his personal connection with a certain Party/state official. Another request was for the introduction of a sharp differentiation in fees paid for different types of cultural product. At the same time, members of the secretariats and boards tried to ensure that they would have a virtual monopoly in the generation of products falling into the most highly rewarded category.

Thus in 1948 leading administrators in the Unions of Soviet Writers and Composers lobbied the government for the approval of specially determined salaries for themselves. These salaries were much higher than had so far been paid. In April 1948 the Council of Ministers approved fifteen such salaries (*personal'nye oklady*) for 'leading workers of the Union of Soviet Composers' and in November the number of people entitled to such salaries increased to twenty-five.[37] In May 1948 a number of people in top administrative positions in the Soviet Writers' Union were allotted the same privilege. These requests were processed smoothly.

Another request proved to be more controversial. In 1947 the leadership of the Union of Composers appealed to the Council of Ministers complaining that the

remained abysmally bad. See for instance, documents for 1938 on the living conditions of actors in Karaganda (GARF, fund 5446, op. 22, 1413, ll. 1–3) and in Izhevsk (GARF, fund 5446, op. 22, 1407, ll. 41–3). In both instances, Sovnarkom responded to complaints with a vague promise to consider the situation in the next fiscal year.

[36] GARF, fund 5446, op. 81, delo 2634, ll. 186–96.

[37] GARF fund 5446, op. 50, delo 4266, ll. 73–80, 116, 121.

system established in 1934, under which the Committee for Artistic Matters at the Council of People's Commissars/Council of Ministers set identical rewards, 'without taking into account the ideological and artistic value of the works', was wrong and had to be changed. A new system was in order, which would stimulate the creation of large-scale operas, ballets and dramatic works. In the view of the authors of the appeal, these genres were automatically of the highest ideological and artistic value. Works in other genres could also be assessed ideologically and artistically and be classified as belonging to one of the three categories – outstanding (*vydaiushchiesia*), good and satisfactory. Depending on the category, an author would receive a relevant reward. The power to classify the work would belong to the leadership of the Union.[38] The documents show that initially the USSR Ministry of Finances spoke against such pay differentiations and in particular opposed a sharp increase in rewards for large-scale musical work. It referred to a 16 September 1946 resolution of the Council of Ministers banning any direct or indirect increases in salaries and wages. However, the leadership of the Union eventually won the backing of the Council of Ministers, which in May 1950 signed a resolution introducing the differentiation in pay.

In 1949 a similar request was put forward by the leadership of the organisational committee (*orgkomitet*) of the Union of Soviet Artists. It suggested that 'outstanding works of art', especially portraits and statues of Party leaders, should be 'rewarded at a higher level'. Again, after some hesitation and debate over whether a more unified system of reward as had existed from 1934 onwards was more justified, on 22 April 1949 the Council of Ministers signed a resolution favouring the request and dividing works of art into the three categories described.[39] The introduction of a differentiated pay scale for literary works was discussed at a meeting between Stalin, Molotov and Andrei Zhdanov and a group of leaders of the Writers Union in May 1947. Significantly, at the meeting, Stalin supported the idea of introducing a new system of reward in the face of the opposition of the Finance Ministry.[40]

The execution of portraits and statues of Party leaders normally took place in response to orders (*zakazy*) from the government. Members of the Artists' Union's *orgkomitet* decided to ensure the maxim material reward for their work by monopolising control over government orders. In November 1950, two leading sculptors, Evgenii Vychetich and S. S. Valerius, submitted for consideration by the Council of Ministers a draft resolution on 'the establishment of a state creative sculpture studio under the auspices of the Committee for Artistic Matters' to carry out the most important government orders for the execution of statues of Party leaders. Needless to say the two sculptors saw themselves as being in charge of the studio. The Council of Ministers found the idea of a studio worthy of consideration but argued that, if a positive response was given, there should be several such studios

[38] GARF fund 5446, op. 81, delo 2639, l. 145–6 and op. 50, delo 4266, ll. 31–54.

[39] GARF fund 5446, op. 80, delo 2621, ll. 27–32, 62.

[40] K. Simonov, *Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniia. Razmyshleniia o I.V. Staline* (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), 108.

rather than one. According to the Council, the original proposal indicated that 'Vychetich is for monopoly without competition'.[41] Indeed he was. However, the creation of several studios did not introduce much competition. They were all controlled by members of the Union's *orgkomitet* and, according to rank-and-file artists, gave the Union's leaders greater power to exploit them.[42] Similarly, in the sphere of literature it was in the late 1940s that members of the secretariat of the Soviet Writers' Union established full control over editorial boards of periodicals and editorial councils of literary publishing houses.[43]

In sum, for the cultural figures who became top administrators in the Unions the period between 1946 and the early 1950s was not 'the darkest period of state interference' in their activities. Instead, it was the period when they themselves acquired very broad powers to control cultural production as well as the distribution of benefits and privileges among members of their professions. These cultural figures consolidated their positions as members of the highest state elite. No wonder that for some less fortunate members of the creative professions, as the above-mentioned artistic director of the Drogobuzhskii regional philharmonic orchestra, it seemed that for the Party/state leadership the satisfaction of the demands of top cultural figures for privilege and power took precedence over ideological matters.

The reaction of the rank and file

By the late 1940s the organisation of cultural activities took shape, in which professional success and failure, as well as the material wellbeing of the majority of the rank and file in the creative professions were determined not so much by the dictatorship of the Party, but by the dictatorship of the Unions' secretariats. In order to advance their careers and at times simply to maintain a very basic existence, ordinary members had to seek patronage from top leaders of the Unions. Such a situation was strongly resented by many ordinary members of the Unions and they sought Party/state intervention (usually unsuccessfully) to reduce the powers of the Unions' leaders.

The criticism of the powers of the Unions' leaders first surfaced in 1938. In that year the Politburo issued an unpublished resolution on the abuse of privileges which indicated that the Party was concerned that the Soviet intelligentsia was becoming corrupted.[44] Throughout Soviet history, ordinary citizens regularly used official campaigns to undermine the positions of those whom they resented or with whom they competed, alerting the political leadership to the fact that their adversaries were allegedly guilty of what the Party was campaigning against. Cultural figures were no exception. Thus, in 1938, the Soviet press reflected objections voiced by a number of writers over the fact that individual members of the presidium of the Writers' Union had concentrated too much power in their hands and were trying to use this

41 GARF fund 5446, op. 81, delo 2634, ll. 71–81.
42 GARF fund 5446, op. 87, delo 1548, 27.
43 GARF, fund 5456, op. 87, delo 1306, l. 83.
44 Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 106.

power to increase their privileges.[45] However, those early complaints were made against individual cultural figures rather than against the whole system of the functioning of the Unions. Similarly, the anti-cosmopolitan campaign of the postwar period was used by some rank-and-file members of the creative Unions to attack the Unions' leaders, accusing them of being of Jewish origin and of wanting to undermine Soviet cultural life by the unjust distribution of money and other material rewards.[46]

Even greater discontent over the position of the Union leaders was articulated after the Nineteenth Party Congress in October 1952 and the subsequent death of Stalin. At the Congress, the Central Committee secretary and Politburo member Georgii Malenkov, appointed by Stalin to deliver the main report, argued, in relation to economy, that the practice of concealing shortcomings should be stopped and that criticism and self-criticism should be encouraged to combat mismanagement.[47] Malenkov's speech marked the beginning of a new campaign against mismanagement in various institutions, including those in the cultural world. Plenums held by the secretariats/*orgkomitet* of the creative Unions in the aftermath of the Party Congress heard leading members of the Unions criticised for the abuse of power. In the first months of 1953, the press mounted a campaign against 'bureaucrats' in the creative Unions who were accused of using their positions to protect their own interests and establish control over the distribution of and reward for cultural production.[48] The press reports give an impression of a campaign orchestrated and controlled from above, simply aimed at further increasing Party control over the functioning of the Unions. However, archival material presents a somewhat different picture. It seems that the press reports in fact adequately reflected the frustrations of rank and file members of the creative Unions, who effectively used the opportunities opened up by Malenkov's speech to ensure the discussion of issues which they, for some time, had been finding extremely disturbing. In fact, as will be shown later, the Party and government leadership failed to take any significant measures in response to the criticism 'from below' unleashed by the official campaign against mismanagement.

Although they used political accusations fashionable at the time, rank-and-file complainants of that period offered a more sophisticated analysis of the super-privileged position of the Unions' leaders than merely accusing various individuals of being political saboteurs of Soviet cultural life as had been the case in the past. They managed to offer a critical appraisal of the system of the distribution of power

[45] Jack F. Matlock Jr., 'The "Governing Organs" of the Union of Soviet Writers', *American Slavonic and East European Review*, 15 (Oct. 1956), 393.

[46] See Kiril Tomoff's article in this issue.

[47] Scholars have argued that the Nineteenth Party Congress indicated a pressure for reform in the highest echelons of the party. Thus, in fact, de-Stalinisation had began before Stalin's death. See Yoram Gorlizki, 'Party Revivalism and the Death of Stalin', *Slavic Review*, 54, 1 (Spring 1995), 1–22.

[48] For a detailed discussion of the press campaign against the leaders of the Orgkomitet of the Union of Soviet Artists, see Susan Emily Reid, 'Destalinisation and the Remodernisation of Soviet Art: The Search for a Contemporary Realism,' Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1996, 114–22.

and privileges itself within the creative professions. Thus in June 1953, a Moscow painter, Vladimir Gaposhkin, wrote a letter to the Party leaders Malenkov and Klement Voroshilov and to the Minister of Culture P. K. Ponomarenko with complaints about the extent of the powers of Vychetich, Dmitrii Nalbandian, Aleksandr Gerasimov, M. G. Manizer, Nikolai Tomskii, Georgii Motovilov and several other artists. Gaposhkin emphasised that all of them were members of the *orgkomitet* of the Union of Soviet Artists. They were the main beneficiaries of the introduction of a highly differentiated reward system for artistic work, as it was they who were most active in creating statues and painting portraits of Party leaders. They were also the main beneficiaries of the creation of the studios of the Committee for Artistic Matters, discussed above. Gaposhkin complained that these artists 'intercepted all main state government orders', exploited young artists, forced female artists into unwanted sexual relationships and, in effect, 'turned their studios into large private business enterprises'. They created 'large personal apparatuses, including managers (*upravliaiushchie*), solicitors (*iuristy*), many artists, sculptors, architects, technical support staff, etc.'. Some Union leaders completely ceased to do any work themselves, but instead put their names on the product executed by hired personnel, whose pay they themselves determined, keeping it to an absolute minimum.[49] Gaposhkin maintained that the whole atmosphere in the Union was more appropriate to a capitalist rather than socialist society, as leaders of the Union were often called 'bosses,' whereas artists whom they hired were referred to as 'negroes'. In order to survive under such conditions, many artists, particularly those who were young, 'had to develop not their artistic talents' but talents for securing influential patrons, commercialism and dodginess (*lovkachestvo*).[50]

At approximately the same time a similar letter was sent by the poet Il'ia Sel'vinskii to Malenkov, complaining about the situation in the USSR Writers' Union. In the 1930s Sel'vinskii, a very well known, prolific poet, became a member of the emerging privileged cultural elite and together with a selected group of literary figures received a luxury apartment in Lavrushinskii pereulok. But with the increasing differentiation in the distribution of privileges and power in the 1940s, Sel'vinskii, who did not belong to the secretariat or any other ruling body of the Writers' Union, began to lose out and he deeply resented the situation. Describing the functioning of the Writers' Union, Sel'vinskii observed: 'Its atmosphere is far from the refreshing atmosphere of a creative contest (*tvorcheskoe sorevnovanie*) of masters of socialist culture; in fact this is the atmosphere of open bourgeois competition [*burzhuaznaia konkurentsiia*]'. He further complained that members of the Union secretariat, whom he called 'literary bosses', 'control and manage everything [*zapravliaiut*]' in the Writers' Union. They sat on the editorial boards of the journals and publishing houses and on the committees for the Stalin prize. 'With a few exceptions, the core of the secretariat of the Soviet Writers' Union acts as a literary concern which wants to strangle its non-organised competitors'. It became

[49] GARF, fund 5446, op. 87, delo 1306, l. 21.
[50] *Ibid.*

impossible to publish critical reviews of these people's work. Instead their product, and that alone, was constantly advertised in the Soviet media. According to Sel'vinskii, because poets writing on peasant themes were strongly represented in the secretariat, only those rank and file poets who explored the same theme could flourish. 'All other trends in poetry are strangled.' The Soviet Writers' Union, in its existing form, turned into an obstacle in the way of the development of Soviet literature, Sel'vinskii concluded. He was not afraid to name the culprit of this situation – the CPSU Central Committee Department for Agitation and Propaganda, which from the 1940s onwards began 'to single out a dozen of writers with connections [*so sviaziami*] and turned them into literary bosses, putting them in charge of all spheres of literary work'.[51] Using the fashionable political jargon of the time, Sel'vinskii urged the Party/state leadership to launch a struggle against 'personality cults' which leaders of the Union managed to create around themselves.

Despite the fact that the complaints were part of the campaign orchestrated by the Party leadership, little was done to curb the powers of 'cultural bosses'. Investigations were usually launched and pages of reports were produced analysing the situation in the Unions. Reports acknowledged the validity of some accusations and indicated particular concern on the part of the Party over the ability of some cultural figures to establish powerful groups, factions and networks which, in fact, tightly controlled creative professions, without necessarily relying on the guidance of the Party.[52] Yet, little, if anything, was ever done to change the situation. Apart from arrests or dismissals of individual members, procedures which the political leadership in most cases did not want to practise against well-established cultural figures, no mechanism existed for addressing problems in the Unions identified by complainants from below. Even if the validity of the complaints was acknowledged, a request to investigate the situation and take the necessary measures (*priniat' mery*) was normally addressed to leaders of the Unions themselves, that is, to the very objects of criticism. Thus a report prepared by the RSFSR Ministry of the State Control for the USSR Council of Ministers concerning Gaposhkin's complaint reiterated the complainant's wording and accused the 'bosses' of the artistic world of 'using hired labour.' It also stated that 'from their top positions of authority in the creative unions, they ['cultural bosses'] subverted socialist principles in organising the work of the majority of artists and sculptors in order to remove obstacles in the way of their excessive personal enrichment.'[53] After the Council had acknowledged that Gaposhkin's complaint raised serious issues, the Ministry of State Control sent a letter demanding an investigation to none other but the chairman of the board of the Soviet Union of Artists.[54] He was hardly an impartial person fit to conduct such an investigation.

The powers and privileges of the members of the governing organs of the Unions, as described by Gaposhkin and Sel'visnkii, continued to provoke criticism

[51] *Ibid.*, ll. 53–4.
[52] GARF, fund 5446, op. 87, delo 1306, ll. 20–6.
[53] *Ibid.*, l. 21.
[54] *Ibid.*, ll. 24–6.

from rank and file artists,[55] becoming one of the most important themes of debate among cultural figures in the *perestroika* period. In 1986, the newspaper of the Moscow branch of the USSR Writers' Union, *Moskovskii literator*, published an article under the title 'Are the Writers Happy?' (*Dovol'ny li pisateli?*).[56] Although acknowledging that most members of the Union enjoyed privileges unavailable to ordinary Soviet people, the article maintained that the majority of writers were in fact very unhappy. This stemmed primarily from the fact that some writers, namely those in the leading administrative posts, enjoyed incomparably more benefits and power than rank and file members of the Unions and in effect exercised monopolistic control over literary publishing in the USSR. What annoyed most writers was not so much that on behalf of the Party the Unions' leaders prevented the publication of works by dissident writers, but that the their own works dominated the Soviet publishing industry and literary periodicals regardless of their artistic merit, and that they controlled the distribution of financial rewards and other material benefits to members of the intelligentsia. Rather than wanting to abolish the generously funded Unions, their liberal members who supported Gorbachev's reforms often simply wanted to take the administration of those Unions into their own hands and make the governing organs of the Unions more accountable to rank-and-file members. That this was the case can be seen from the activities of the 'Writers for *Perestroika*' Committee (popularly known as the April Committee). It was set up in 1989 by a small group of writers from Moscow. Its immense popularity among rank and file writers (within the first four days of its existence, it acquired 322 members) stemmed from the fact that the committee's chairman, the writer Anatolii Pristavkin, well known for his anti-Stalinist novel *A Small Golden Cloud Spent the Night*, announced that he had no intention of disbanding the Writers' Union. On the contrary, the main aim of his organisation was to deprive 'cultural bosses' of their monopoly of power and make the Writers' Union more responsive to the needs of its rank and file members.[57]

Conclusions

Why did the Soviet political leadership allot to a small group of cultural figures such broad powers and privileges? As Sel'vinskii's letter indicates, some rank and file members of creative professions believed that it reflected a conscious move on the part of the Party leadership. Sel'vinskii might have been right. Stalin told the President of the Academy of Sciences, V. Komarov, during their meeting at the end of the war that 'the Soviet intelligentsia, through its creative work, made a valuable contribution to the defeat of [our] enemy'.[58] Therefore, a reward for the contribution, acknowledged by the leader, was to be expected. Indeed, there is evidence that

[55] For the attack on the privileges from the tribune of the Second Congress of Soviet Writers, see Matlock, '"Governing Organs"', 394.

[56] *Moskovskii literator*, 28 Nov. 1986.

[57] Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union*, 230–2.

[58] Quoted in Nikolai Krementsov, *Stalinist Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 99.

in 1947 Stalin firmly sided with members of the cultural elite, when they requested new powers and privileges, against the Ministry of Finance, which opposed the innovations.[59] Selected representatives of all groups of the Soviet intelligentsia seemed to have benefited. Thus, the postwar period witnessed a significant increase in the powers and privileges of members of the presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences and of directors of academic institutes. The new powers and privileges were very similar to those acquired by the leaders of the creative Unions.[60] According to Nikolai Krementsov, by 1948 the powers of the academic institutes' directors were such that they were often able to use ideologically motivated meetings organised throughout the Academy following the August 1948 session of VASKHNIL to reaffirm their own control over academia and to achieve 'institutional and disciplinary expansion'.[61] It is therefore not surprising that in the period of *perestroika*, many members of the presidium of the Academy of Sciences behaved in a way similar to members of the secretariats of the creative Unions. In August 1991, 'The Academy's leaders were . . . along with the conservative heads of the Writers' Union, among the very few intellectuals in the dying Soviet Union who sided with the old order'.[62]

It seems that what happened with top representatives of the cultural and scientific intelligentsia in the postwar period was part of what Vera Dunham called the 'Big Deal' between the Party/state leadership and some segments of Soviet society.[63] She observed that, in the postwar period, harsh ideological and political crackdown was not the only policy pursued by the state. Repression was accompanied by attempts to court those groups in society whom the regime saw as important partners in the rebuilding of the country. Dunham identified one particular group, which she described as 'middle-class' professionals, particularly engineers, doctors and middle-level administrators. She described these people as being 'below the top officials and the cultural elite, yet above the world of plain clerks and factory workers, of farm labourers and salesgirls.'[64] However, it seems that, in fact, members of the cultural elite who occupied top administrative posts in relevant organisations also participated in the deal. This deal proved to be a great success – the administrative apex of the creative professions turned out to be among the strongest supporters of the regime and of Stalin's policies, even at the time when these policies began to be attacked by the new leadership of the Communist Party. Indeed, for members of the ruling bodies of the Unions, the postwar years were remembered not for the harsh ideological crackdown but as the golden age when they finalised their immense

[59] See Simonov, *Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniia*, 108–9.

[60] *Ibid.*, 99–100.

[61] *Ibid.*, 225–6, 280–5.

[62] Loren R. Graham, 'How Willing Are Scientists to Reform Their Own Institutions?' in Michael David-Fox and Gyorgy Peteri, eds., *Academia in Upheaval. Origins, Transfers, and Transformations of the Communist Academic Regime in Russia and East Central Europe* (Westport: Bergin and Garvey, 2001), 255–274, 267.

[63] Vera S. Dunham, *In Stalin's Time. Middle-class Values in Soviet Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 3–23.

[64] *Ibid.*, 5.

powers and privileges and, in effect, obtained considerable autonomy from the Party. But, from the point of view of the regime's stability, there was a serious downside to the policy of allowing selected members of the cultural intelligentsia to join the highest ranks of the state elite. The powers and privileges of 'cultural bosses' antagonised ordinary members of the intelligentsia and stimulated, among other things, their opposition towards the Soviet system.

Kruzhok Culture: The Meaning of Patronage in the Early Soviet Literary World

BARBARA WALKER

This article approaches the topic of patronage among the early Soviet literary intelligentsia from an anthropological point of view. I am exploring the place of patronage in Soviet history as part of a broader ethnographic phenomenon that I call the 'circle culture', or '*kruzhok* culture', of the Russian intelligentsia. *Kruzhok* culture originated in the somewhat informal and haphazard institutional life of the pre-Revolutionary educated elite, and consisted of a complex pattern of networking and clientelist behaviour which centred on the intelligentsia circle or *kruzhok*. By looking at patronage among the early Soviet literary intelligentsia through the prism of pre-Revolutionary *kruzhok* culture, one catches a glimpse of some new paradigms in the history of Soviet state–intelligentsia relations, and can see how patronage as a deeply rooted cultural phenomenon has had a major impact on that history.

For one thing, this approach shows that the literary intelligentsia had a great deal more control in establishing a relationship with the early Soviet state than has generally been recognised. Russian intellectuals have typically been seen as being submissive, collaborative or reactive, if not apt to flee entirely in the face of an oppressive Soviet state.[1] But by exploring the state–intelligentsia relationship through the prism of *kruzhok* culture one sees that, due to their networking and clientelistic activities, writers actually had a great deal of agency in establishing that relationship and indeed had a considerable impact on the process of early Soviet

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[1] See for example Christopher Read, *Culture and Power in Revolutionary Russia: The Intelligentsia and the Transition from Tsarism to Communism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 57–93. Three consecutive subheadings of his chapter 'The Intelligentsia in War and Revolution' are 'Anti-Bolshevik Activism', 'Passive Resistance, Passive Collaboration' and 'Active Collaboration'. Read's terminology limits our conceptual model not only through its focus on intelligentsia reaction to the state, as opposed to intelligentsia agency, but also leaves us with a strong moral judgement which may not be helpful in enabling us to understand the complex nature of the state–intelligentsia relationship. Subtler discussions of the intelligentsia relationship with the state have appeared more recently, such as Katerina Clark's *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), as well as Sheila Fitzpatrick's *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992) esp. 238–56; both works ascribe to the intelligentsia a greater degree of agency in establishing their relationship with the Soviet state than does Read. Neither work, however, suggests quite the type or the high degree of agency proposed in this article.

state formation itself. Instead of viewing state–intelligentsia relations in terms of the familiar 'soft' and 'hard' lines of the Soviet state towards intellectuals during the first decade or so of its existence,[2] one sees underlying the political brouhaha of those 'lines' the long, strong, relatively steady development of a relationship between literary intellectuals and the state, whereby intellectuals pressed constantly for a growing wealth of welfare and privileges through clientelist networking activity, and the state shaped itself in such a way as to accommodate those demands.

Ultimately the growing wealth of welfare and privileges, administered through the expanding state bureaucracy, led to the foundation of what could be called a 'social contract' between literary intellectuals and the state, whereby the state offered a welfare system of economic support in return for political acceptance.[3] In this article I should like to try calling this phenomenon a 'patronage contract', as this agreement between state and subjects may well have had less to do with a general sense of mutual political agreement, and more to do with personal loyalty to given individuals with state-based power. I should like to argue further that in many ways the formation of this 'patronage contract' can be seen as providing a solution to a long-standing problem – reaching back to the mid-nineteenth century – of how members of the Russian educated elite, among them writers, were to achieve professional and economic advancement. For market relations were anathema to them as a social group, and they greatly preferred networking their way to economic resources and social advancement over selling themselves in a capitalist market.

There was also one very important side-effect of this process: the formation of the Soviet cult of personality. Usually the cult phenomenon is most closely associated with the names of Vladimir Ilych Lenin[4] and of Joseph Stalin, who was accused of having created such a cult in Nikita Khrushchev's Secret Speech of 1956. But my exploration of patronage as an ethnographic phenomenon reveals the far deeper origins of the personality cult in pre-Revolutionary *kruzhok* culture, and its integration into state politics in the early Soviet period. There was already a pattern of cult formation around certain individuals in the pre-Revolutionary period who served aspiring intellectuals – including writers – as social, intellectual and economic

[2] The roots of this debate over the 'soft' and 'hard' lines in Soviet high culture are to be found in an early struggle in Soviet historiography between those who believed that Stalin was responsible for distorting the essentially good socialist system that had been established by Lenin (e.g. Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949)), and those who believed that responsibility for the evils of the Soviet system are to be placed at Lenin's door (e.g. Leonard Shapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (New York: Random House, 1959)). In her 1974 article 'The Soft Line on Culture and Its Enemies' (now re-published in Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front*), Sheila Fitzpatrick took up the issue by demonstrating a radical break in cultural policy in 1928, which seems to support Deutscher's point of view, while Christopher Read has adopted Shapiro's position by showing how repression of intellectual life began with the Civil War (Read, *Culture and Power in Revolutionary Russia*, ix–x).

[3] Vera Dunham was among the first to introduce the notion of a Soviet social contract, in her *In Stalin's Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990). In this paper I am proposing an earlier date for the emergence of such a contract, with specific reference only to Soviet writers and the state.

[4] See Nina Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives: the Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).

patrons of a very distinctive sort. Writers continued to seek out such patronage figures in the early Soviet era, but there was now a difference: the individuals who could offer substantial patronage in the new Soviet system were those who had gained access to newly bureaucratised state resources. Personality cults now began to form around these state-based patron figures, who came to represent a number of competing cults/factions/client chains. It can be illuminating to view the nasty political struggles of the late 1920s and early 1930s as a series of battles among various client chains from which Stalin, as the most effective manipulator of state-based patronage of them all, emerged victorious.

The research I am presenting in this article focuses primarily on two particular cult/patron figures who operated at two different levels of power in early Soviet history. One was the well-known author Maxim Gorky, the realist author of lower-class origins with revolutionary tendencies; the second is the less well-known modernist poet and artist Maximilian Voloshin. Both individuals emerged as significant social and economic patrons in the pre-Revolutionary era and re-emerged in the Soviet era as particularly talented manipulators of state-based patronage in the interest of those they chose to aid. Gorky's reach extended to the very heights of Soviet power as he sought to gain access to state-controlled resources for his clients. Voloshin functioned more as an intermediate figure whose extensive personal archive sheds a remarkable light on the prevalence of networking and clientelism at all levels of power during the Civil War and the New Economic Policy (NEP). I will also refer to several other intriguing cult/patron figures of either the pre-Revolutionary or the Soviet era or both, including Valery Bryusov as well as Mikhail Gershenzon, Anatoly Lunacharsky, Nikolai Bukharin and, very briefly, Stalin himself.

Pre-Revolutionary *kruzhok* culture: an overview

From the mid-nineteenth century onward, many intellectuals including writers faced a kind of economic cultural Catch-22. The earliest of the intelligentsia had come from the gentry class, and their aristocratic disdain for money, the market and mercantile activities left a deep imprint on intelligentsia economic culture. Their dislike of the market as a means of regulating intellectual activities coincided with similar feelings among two other significant groups who by the mid-nineteenth century began to enter the intelligentsia: the *raznochintsy* clergymen's sons who found market relations to be spiritually and morally unsatisfactory,[5] and professionals, who made up a large part of Russia's emerging educated elite, but who like professionals throughout much of the West were engaged in developing a non-market service identity during this period.[6] Thus a negative or at any rate ambivalent

[5] Laurie Manchester, 'The Secularisation of the Search for Salvation: the Self-Fashioning of Orthodox Clergymen's Sons in Late Imperial Russia', *Slavic Review*, 57, 1 (Spring 1998), 50–76.

[6] Kendall Bailes, 'Reflections on Russian Professions', in Harley Balzer, ed., *Russia's Missing Middle Class: The Professions in Russian History* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 39–54. Bailes draws extensively on the work of Harold Perkin in drawing a comparison between Western and Russian

attitude towards the market was nurtured among several different groups of the growing educated elite in the second half of the nineteenth century.[7]

This was certainly the case among those who engaged in literary activity. 'Why do you need money, or stupid literary fame? It's better to write something good with conviction and passion', wrote gentry novelist Lev Tolstoy;[8] and, according to another writer, N. V. Shelgunov, 'literature should not earn one's daily bread. One should earn that in some other fashion'.[9] Maxim Gorky called writers who catered to popular taste and made money out of it 'speculators in popularity, adventurers, those who look on authorship as easy seasonal labour'.[10] In these sentiments lay a terrible quandary for non-gentry, poverty-stricken literary intellectuals who were beginning move upwards due to their new access to the tsarist system of higher education: writing was a significant means of advancing themselves and their families – but they were supposed to do it out of a sense of love, duty and service, rather than for the cold hard cash that would pay for food, shelter and education for their children.

Money they had to have to pay their bills, but there was more than one way of getting hold of it in the complex economic system of late imperial Russia; and the way that may have seemed least offensive was through personalised networking and clientelism, for the purpose of gaining access not only to publication opportunities but also to day jobs and charitable or professional funding. This preserved them to some extent from the exploitative impersonality, as many saw it, of market relations. Thus a kind of informal clientelism became an integral part of the great expansion of literary and intellectual life in fin-de-siècle Russia. Like so many other seemingly pre-modern phenomena in Russian history, networking and clientelism were nurtured by modernity. This seems to have taken place against a background of the growing power of the personal in the tsarist state, as the highly personal style of Tsar Nicholas II had an impact on the workings of the state bureaucracy. Far from diminishing in the face of Russian economic development, the importance of patronage appears to have been growing at the end of the imperial period.[11]

But patronage in the world of the literary elite was not the simple system that it

professionals: Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780–1880* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969); and *idem*, *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880* (London: Routledge, 1989).

[7] For another perspective on the discomfort of some European intellectuals with capitalism during these years see Martin J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850–1980* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

[8] From B. Eikhenbaum, *Molodoi Tolstoi* (Berlin: 1922), 85. Cited in A. I. Reitblat, 'Literaturnyi gonorar v Rossii XIX-nachala XX v. (K postanovke problemy)', *Knizhnoe delo v Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XIX-nachale XX veka, vyp. 3: Sobranie nauchnykh trudov*, ed. V. E. Kel'ner (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennaia Publichnaia Biblioteka im. M. E. Saltykova-Shchedrina, 1986), 135.

[9] V. Shelgunov, 'Literaturnaia sobstvennost' '. *Sovremennik*, 3 (1862), S. 238. Cited in A. I. Reitblat, 'Literaturnyi gonorar v Rossii XIX-nachala XX v.', 135.

[10] M. Teleshov, 'Vospominaniia o Maksime Gor'kom', in *M. Gor'kii v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1955), 189.

[11] See Daniel Orlovsky, 'Political Clientelism in Russia: the Historical Perspective', in T. H. Rigby and Bohdan Harasyiw, eds., *Leadership Selection and Patron-Client Relations in the USSR and Yugoslavia* (London: Allan & Unwin, 1983), 174–99.

had been back in the 1830s, when, according to memoirist Pavel Annenkov, 'Patronage had become the basic motif in criticism, the guideline for evaluating men and works. Patronage distributed positions in literature in exactly the same way that it did in the government administration: it promoted [certain] people to the rank and title of "talents" . . . and several times even saw fit simply to appoint "geniuses" . . .'[12] Since that time the expansion of education, of literacy and of publication opportunities had greatly increased the complexity of economic and professional relations among literati. The direct vertical lines of patronage relations had been blurred – but by no means eradicated – by an increasing number of horizontal, more egalitarian networking relations among intellectuals which often manifested themselves in the formation of informal circles, or *kruzhki*, of mutual support and assistance. The system of patronage was being re-contextualised in terms of the *kruzhok*, and working it involved grasping the principles of a highly complex system of cultural norms.

Before turning to the case studies, I should like to outline some of the general principles on which participants in pre-Revolutionary *kruzhok* culture tended to draw.[13] Most important, the games of *kruzhok* culture took place in the domestic sphere, where, due to autocratic fear of and restrictions on public group activity, most circle life took place. This was the case even as much of the rest of educated Europe moved into an increasingly open world of cafés and other public spaces toward the end of the century: members of the Russian educated elite were staying at home and entertaining themselves with domestic poetry readings, theatrical presentations and musical evenings, all of which were focal activities of *kruzhok* life.[14] The impact of the structures of domestic life on *kruzhok* culture was therefore considerable – in particular the structures of gender and generational power. Central to *kruzhok* life was the power of that individual who dominates domestic life in a patriarchal system: the father.

Certain men played an enormous role in literary life in a multitude of ways. Such individuals above all facilitated the networking and clientelism that were both the essence of *kruzhok* life and central to the success of literary life. This they accomplished first of all by providing the most important economic foundations of *kruzhok* life: meeting places. In other words, some of the most successful male figures were those who had the physical means to invite people into their domestic space and to furnish them with food, drink and entertainment. In the late nineteenth century it was easier for those with substantial wealth (often aristocrats and

[12] P. V. Annenkov, *The Extraordinary Decade: Literary Memoirs*, trans. Arthur Mendel (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968), 7–8.

[13] The information on pre-Revolutionary *kruzhok* culture presented here is a summary of material presented in my dissertation, Barbara Walker, 'Maximilian Voloshin's "House of the Poet": Intelligentsia Social Organisation and Culture in Early Twentieth-Century Russia', Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, (1994).

[14] For a beautiful article illuminating the stay-at-home qualities of Russian intellectual life see James M. Curtis, 'A Place for Us: *Embourgeoisment* and the Art of Konstantin Korovin', in Edith Clowes, Samuel Kassow and James West, eds., *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 325–42.

sometimes merchants) to play the host, but as they moved into the twentieth century, the less wealthy with ambitions to host popular circles learned to make do with the support of an intimately associated woman, sometimes wife or mother, sometimes favorite female servant, to replace the servants of the aristocracy. (Here we find the origins of the hard-working intelligentsia hostess of the Soviet period.) Such women could also play significant social roles. A healthy male–female partnership underlay some of the most prominent literary and intellectual circles.

But the successful host and circle leader needed to provide far more than mere physical surroundings, important though those were. He needed also to maintain socially and emotionally comfortable circumstances for his guests by preserving harmony among a notoriously quarrelsome group of people. The importance of this reached far beyond mere domestic comfort, although that is where it began. Circle harmony was extremely important for the successful functioning of Russian literary life, heavily dependent as it was on the circle as its primary institution not only for networking but also for establishing journals, presses, anthologies and so on. The circle represented the interface between private and public life among the intelligentsia – it was a conduit from family intimacy to the wider world of Russian national public discourse. If a literary circle fell apart due to personal tension, it could well threaten the continued existence of a publishing venture, or some other form of public literary self-realisation. Thus the importance of a leading personality who had the qualities needed to bring people together with the sense of a common goal, to encourage harmonious interactions and to soothe quarrels, was very considerable.

A successful circle leader could also do much to further the professional lives of those who joined his circle by facilitating their own networking activities, introducing them to editors and others with power in the literary world, giving them intellectual advice and as often as not providing direct economic support by inviting them into his own home for extended periods of time, feeding them and so on. *Kruzhok* leaders could be very significant mentors to the hungry young writers who were trying to break into the literary profession and to advance within it. Another important role of such figures was to network with those wealthier than themselves (usually merchants and aristocrats, even the tsar himself) for concrete economic patronage of intellectual endeavours (often publications), around which young writers and thinkers could group themselves. Finally, it also served them well to be able to control and manipulate two significant and intertwined elements of late imperial *kruzhok* culture: gossip and theatricality. The powerful intelligentsia oral tradition of gossip was a vital but double-edged tool for building networks; it could increase the prestige of given circles and circle leaders, but could also contribute to circle fragmentation if it were not controlled. Theatricality was also an important part of *kruzhok* culture, as circles formed the background for numerous semi-private jokes, masquerades and domestic theatricals which helped to consolidate given circles/networks by creating a sense of insiders and outsiders.

Circle leaders were vital to the successful functioning of intellectual life in an ambitious world where things were accomplished through weak institutions built

on personal relations, and this was generally understood. The circle leaders could quickly become the objects of cults of adoration in late imperial Russia, whose main traces now lie in the production of an intelligentsia memoir genre which I call the 'contemporaries memoir' (*vospominaniia sovremennikov*). These memoirs reveal the ways in which such individuals came to be mythologised, as their virtues were extolled with lavish enthusiasm. They also hint at the anxieties of the period, as in the concern about quarrelling and social fragmentation which is revealed in memoirists' focus on the harmonious, peace-making qualities of leadership figures.[15]

Kruzhok leaders were not patrons in the classic economic sense of providing mere financial support to intellectual endeavour. Rather, they were skilful organisers of intelligentsia social, professional and emotional life – charismatic fathers, disciplinarians and mentors. Essential to intellectual life and to ambitious young aspirants to intellectual life, their role would not disappear in the early Soviet period, but rather would re-emerge transformed.

Maximilian Voloshin, Maxim Gorky and Valery Bryusov

The primary case studies discussed in this article are the personality cult figures of Maximilian Voloshin and Maxim Gorky – and an intriguing pre-Revolutionary *kruzhok* leadership figure who due to his patronage activities might have attained his own personality cult, but who for reasons which cast light on the nature of personality cult formation never did so. Voloshin and Gorky were in many ways very different from one another: Gorky was a successful realist author with immense national and indeed international popularity; Voloshin was a comparatively unsuccessful modernist poet. Yet what they shared was a remarkable ability to rise in the weakly institutionalised society of the late imperial intelligentsia, gaining as well the adoration of many of their contemporaries. The third figure was the modernist poet, editor and critic Valery Bryusov, who also rose to great influence in the context of *kruzhok* culture – but who never really won the kind of hagiographic attention that Gorky and Voloshin did.

The modernist Maximilian Voloshin[16] emerged early in the 1900s as a figure with particularly effective circle and network skills. He gained enormous popularity in modernist circles due to his charm and to his effective peace-making activities. As Andrei Bely, author of the novel *Petersburg*, would write of him later: 'Voloshin was essential to Moscow in those years: without him, the smoother of sharp corners, I don't know how the sharpening of opinions would have ended up: between "us" and our malevolent mockers; in Symbolist demonstrations he was precisely speaking

[15] For an extensive discussion of the intelligentsia 'contemporaries' memoir genre, see Barbara Walker, 'On Reading Soviet Memoirs: A History of the "Contemporaries" Genre as an Institution of Russian Intelligentsia Culture from the 1790s to the 1970s', *Russian Review*, 59 (July 2000), 327–52.

[16] The following information about Maximilian Voloshin has been presented at greater length in my dissertation, 'Maximilian Voloshin's "House of the Poet"'. For an introduction to the life and work of Voloshin, see Vladimir Kupchenko, *Stranstvie Maksimiliana Voloshina* (St Petersburg: Logos, 1996).

a placard with the inscription "angel of peace" '.[17] Voloshin was also much loved because of his attention to the women and children who were very often a part of domestically based circle life. As he moved into the second decade of the century, Voloshin established himself as a kind of feminist mentor of several young female poets at a time when women were just beginning to break into modernist publications. Twentieth-century poet Marina Tsvetaeva was his most famous protégée; using her and several others as a kind of core following, Voloshin (with the help of his well-organised and pragmatic mother) established an enormously popular circle of writers, artists, musicians, scientists and others, which met at his home in the Crimean dacha settlement of Koktebel' every summer. He built up the prestige of this circle through a really extraordinary talent for creating a community through economic networking and social sensitivity. Ultimately he established a whole little world of theatricality, gossip and myth-making, which functioned to bind together the members of his circle.[18]

Maxim Gorky's activities in the late imperial period were on a grander scale. They involved participating in and running numerous intelligentsia organisations, from domestic literary circles to publishing houses to his school for revolutionary workers at Capri, all of them drawing to a greater or lesser degree on the principles of *kruzhok* culture. His association with the literary circle Sreda is perhaps most familiar to us; this was a group of fairly well-known realist writers whom Gorky supported by serving as father figure, mentor and disciplinarian (scolding them for drinking too much, for example), often referring to them as his children.[19] He too was a highly theatrical fellow, as photographs of him reveal: his romantic Russian costume inspired such enthusiastic imitation among his followers that they came to be known as the '*podmaksimki*'.[20] Gorky was a phenomenal provider and manipulator of patronage for those circles whose activities he supported. The Social Democrats had occasion to know this as he managed to obtain enormous sums for them from such merchant-patrons as Saava Morozov.[21] On a lesser scale, he was also renowned for his personal economic patronage of numerous struggling young students and writers to whom he would offer stipends, at times inviting them into his own home and domestic circle to live for extended periods.[22]

The economic patronage and networking activities of Valery Bryusov, too, were absolutely vital to the Russian modernist literary world – far more so, indeed, than

[17] Andrei Bely, *Nachalo Veka* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1991), 254.

[18] 'Max belonged to another set of laws than the human ones, and when we fell into his orbit we invariably fell under his set of laws. Max himself was the planet. And when we revolved around him we were revolving in some other large circle together with him around a luminary that we did not know' (Marina Tsvetaeva, 'Zhivoe o zhivom', in Vladimir Kupchenko and Zakhar Davydov, eds., *Vospominaniia o Maksimiliane Voloshine* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1990), 236.)

[19] See Mary Louise Zoe, 'Redefining the Intellectual's Role: Maxim Gorky and the *Sreda* Circle', in Clowes *et al.*, *Between Tsar and People*, 288–307.

[20] Zoe, 'Redefining the Intellectual's Role', 295. According to Zoe, '*podmaksimski*' were 'a type of mushroom that glows under a "maksim" tree'.

[21] Bertram Wolfe, *The Bridge and the Abyss: The Troubled Friendship of Maxim Gorky and V. I. Lenin* (New York: Praeger, 1967), 24.

[22] For example: S. Skitalets, 'Maksim Gor'kii', in *M. Gor'kii v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov*, 161.

Voloshin's. And yet he never became the object of cult adoration that both of the other men did. He was a master networker, extraordinarily capable of gaining serious patronage for modernist publications (such as *Vesy*), and of running a great variety of literary and cultural circle-institutions (such as the *Moskovskii Literaturnyi-khudozhestvennyi Kruzhok*). Yet the memoirs that have been written about him – far fewer than about either Voloshin or for Gorky – generally lack the adulatory tone typical of so many examples of the 'contemporaries' memoir genre. Some are indeed profoundly negative, castigating him for a lack of supportiveness and in general for a lack of charm.[23] This seems in part to be the consequence of his highly confrontational personality. He would seem to have been the very last person to encourage harmony among Russian intellectuals, and viewed himself as ever ordering his ideological troops into battle rather than as facilitating harmonious circle life. Andrei Bely compared him directly with Voloshin in terms of this quality. Whereas Voloshin was a kind of 'angel of peace', Bely wrote, 'Valery Bryusov on the other hand was more of a placard with the inscription "devil"; M. Voloshin "smoothed", Bryusov "sharpened" corners; Bryusov gained his ends in a dry guttural voice like the scream of a carrion-crow; "Max" Voloshin, ruddy and pink with a voice liquid like pink oil, oiled our ears . . .'[24] Furthermore, as a somewhat harsh and exacting critic, Bryusov does not seem to have taken grateful protégés under his wing as both Voloshin and Gorky did – individuals who might later have thought, spoken and written of him as grateful clients/protégés, thereby building up a cult.

The re-emergence of *Kruzhok* culture in the Soviet period

In the years of revolution and civil war, life became exceedingly hard for Russian intellectuals. The greatest difficulty – as it was for all in that time and place – was sheer physical survival: finding food, shelter, clothing, medical aid. Perhaps the most vivid literary rendition of that period in the history of Russian intellectual life is Evgeny Zamyatin's short story 'The Cave', in which he depicts the primitive chaos of a collapsed social and economic system, as despairing intellectuals burn their books and furniture for warmth.[25] Under these circumstances, literary folk grasped frantically at any means of gaining access to the resources that they needed to survive, and the means with which they were most familiar – indeed almost the only means they had – were the tools of *kruzhok* culture: networking and clientelism.

The Bolsheviks for a number of reasons quickly proved susceptible to being accosted by networkers. The young Soviet state was busily engaged in seizing and

[23] See for example Marina Tsvetaeva's memoir of him excerpted and translated in *The Diary of Valery Bryusov*, ed. trans., and intro. by Joan Delaney Grossman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

[24] Andrei Bely, *Nachalo Veka*, 250.

[25] Evgeny Zamyatin, 'The Cave', in *The Dragon: Fifteen Stories*, trans. Mirra Ginsburg (New York: Random House, 1966).

bureaucratising the national wealth – including just those things that hungry intellectuals needed to survive, such as food and housing. But how were these resources to be redistributed? Under the chaotic circumstances of the years of War Communism, often far out on the fringes of power as they captured one area after another during the Civil War, unsure of whom to trust, the Bolsheviks too turned quickly to the familiar old patterns of networking and patronage. They could be receptive to the demands of those with old, primary ties, with secondary ties (those who knew someone who knew someone in the newly evolving bureaucracy), and also, as documents reveal, they could be receptive to the demands of those who were good at what is called the dyadic encounter, in which the supplicant makes a personal, emotional appeal to obtain what he or she needs. Some of their patronage was of course ideologically based – but the ideology of the supplicant was not always easy to determine, and was not always the central issue. While outspoken anti-Bolshevism did an aspiring networker no good at all, there were plenty of non-Bolsheviks who networked with real success during this period.

From out of the chaos arose a number of individuals who possessed strong networking talents, and who were thus peculiarly capable of surviving it and indeed of emerging from it with enhanced status and power. One of those was Maximilian Voloshin, as his remarkable personal archive, supplemented by numerous memoirs, reveals. Master networker that he was, he easily grasped the importance of making contact with those in the burgeoning state bureaucracy who could help him by offering access to those resources under their control. As well as drawing extensively on pre-Revolutionary primary and secondary ties for aid, he proved a phenomenal manipulator of the dyadic approach. Ranging across the countryside during the Civil War he skilfully approached both Reds and Whites for aid and protection, filling his pockets with what one memoirist (Ivan Bunin) has called 'life-saving bits of paper' which served to introduce him to potentially threatening strangers and to allow him free passage in military zones.[26]

With the consolidation of Bolshevik power, Voloshin quickly discovered that the best way to get the material things he needed to survive was to find some role or other for himself in the new bureaucracy (although he was no Bolshevik, and indeed found considerable support among the Whites in the Crimea until they were driven out). Official bureaucratic designation gave him access to all sorts of privileges essential to survival, from free meals to free train travel. Bureaucratic roles for which he was found acceptable (often by personal friends and acquaintances) included being head of one department of the Literary Section of the Crimean Bureau of Narkompros, an organiser of children's colonies in Koktebel' and the Theodosia uezd, and archivist for the Theodosia uezd.[27] The reason that we know of this development and its significance is the presence in his archive of a number of *udostovereniia*, or identity documents given to those who cast their lot with the young Soviet bureaucracy, which by virtue of establishing bureaucratic identity

[26] Ivan Bunin, *Memories and Portraits*, trans. Vera Traill and Robin Chancellor (London: John Lehman, 1951), 144.

[27] Institut Russkoi Literatury (IRLI) Pushkinskii dom f. 562 op. 4 d. 14, 15, 41; f. 562 op. 3 d. 72.

gave access to material resources. Thus we find in Voloshin's extensive archive in St Petersburg a number of such documents, such as the following 'mandate' given to him by virtue of his identity as head of the Art Section of Narkompros in Theodosia: 'The Art Section requests all Soviet institutions to whom this might apply to provide, *vne ocheredi* [without having to stand in line], M. A. Voloshin with horses, . . . passes and tickets for use in the line of duty, and living space.'[28] His bureaucratic identities made him eligible for state rations too, desperately needed at a time of famine.

Other talented networkers soon discovered the value of a bureaucratic identity as well, and a number of them began to make their way into the machinery of the state. One such individual was Valery Bryusov, again no dedicated Bolshevik but willing to take on the trappings at least of revolution by joining the Party. He took on several different bureaucratic roles, including head of the Library Department of Narkompros, head of the Literary Department of Narkompros, and head of the Department of Artistic Education of Glavprofobra, to name only a few.[29] Another interesting figure (discussed below) was writer and historian Mikhail Gershenzon, who worked for the Literary Department of Narkompros, as well as for Glavarkhiv.[30] Maxim Gorky, with his personal ties to the greatest patron and soon-to-be cult figure of them all, Vladimir Lenin, rapidly became engaged in actually establishing state institutions wherein he had enormous influence. Such institutions included the publishing house *Vsemirnaia literatura*; numerous Houses of Art, Writers and Scholars, all serving as group living premises for homeless intellectuals, and above all the intelligentsia welfare organisation TsKubu, or *Tsentral'naia Kommissiia po Ulucheniu Byta Uchyonykh*.

A number of these rising individuals used their organisational and networking skills, as well as their bureaucratic status, to aid other intellectuals. Thus Voloshin arranged for state rations for many of the starving intellectuals in the Crimea (this involved not only obtaining and distributing rations, but also ensuring that the intellectuals filled out the paperwork that entitled them to such state privileges).[31] Gershenzon provided a great deal of personal aid to such colleagues as Vladislav Khodasevich, who would later write of him: 'Those who lived in Moscow through the hardest years – eighteen, nineteen, twenty – will never forget what a good comrade Gershenzon turned out to be . . . Many owe him a great deal . . . Speaking for myself . . . Gershenzon obtained work and money for me; Gershenzon and no other took care of my affairs [*khlopotal po moim delam*; the verb *khlopotat'* typically refers to making bureaucratic arrangements, a process which often involves going from one office to another] when I travelled to the Crimea.'[32] For someone like

[28] IRLI Pushkinskii dom f. 562 op. 4 d. 3 p. 8.

[29] *Russkie pisateli, 1800–1917: Biograficheskii slovar'*, ed. P. A. Nikolaev (Moscow: NVP FIANIT, 1992), 337.

[30] *Ibid.*, 557.

[31] IRLI Pushkinskii dom f. 562 op. 3 d. 18 p. 4.

[32] Vladimir Khodasevich, *'Nekrolpol' ' i drugie vospominaniia* (Moscow: Zhurnal *'Nashe nasledie'*, 1992), 121–2.

Gorky, with his enormous ambitions to preserve Russian cultural life, the opportunity to help others (at least those he found worthy) was the primary reason for engaging in the state bureaucracy. In this he was supported by Lenin, who was impelled by the somewhat dour conviction that like it or not, the Bolsheviks needed the old Russian intelligentsia for its socialist project. All the institutions that Gorky founded in one way or another provided a variety of welfare and privileges for intellectuals, and Gorky became deeply and personally involved in doling those things out.[33] Bryusov too was able to extend a helping hand to fellow members of the literary intelligentsia, but perhaps due to his characteristically impersonal (if not hostile) approach, he did not always do so. The extent to which intellectuals were coming to rely on such figures is hinted at in an irate memoir by the poet Marina Tsevateva about Bryusov's failure to help her out when he could have done so as a consequence of his bureaucratic status.[34]

Certain of these budding state-based patron figures rapidly became linked with particular circles and networks of clients. This was to some extent connected to the resurgence of the *kruzhok* or circle form in the early Soviet period. If in the pre-Revolutionary period the circle had been the means by which many writers attained access to the sphere of public discourse, as well as to professional development, so they seized upon it in the early Soviet period for similar purposes. But the sphere of public discourse was now increasingly controlled by the Bolsheviks, as was access to resources and to professional development. Thus to pursue the normal purpose of the literary intelligentsia circle under these circumstances was to turn to the state. And so many of them did so; a number of circles seem to have been formed with the precise goal of going to the state for financial backing of various sorts.[35]

Against this general background of the reconstitution of circle life, certain patron figures became responsible for certain circles. In Voloshin's case, this involved a resurrection of his pre-Revolutionary dacha circle. In order to accomplish this, he had first of all to preserve his domestic space – his home in the Crimea – from Bolshevik requisition. Many intellectuals were unable to avoid the seizure of their homes and other property, but through astute networking Voloshin managed to

[33] See for example his involvement in TsKubu: Institut Mirovoi Literatury (IMLI) Arkhiv Gor'kogo Bio 15/137, 15/7/15/11.

[34] Again, see Marina Tsvetaeva's memoir of him excerpted and translated in Joan Delaney Grossman, *The Diary of Valery Bryusov*. It *appears* that Bryusov rejected Tsvetaeva's manuscript for ideological reasons (p. 171).

[35] For detailed financial appeals of literary circles to LITO Narkompros during 1920, see Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiskoi Federatsii (GARF) f. 2306 op. 22 d. 27. Here are appeals for money to provide circles with meeting space, the means to offer public readings and discussions, and to support their own literary labours. Many such appeals seem to have been successful; there are also notes from LITO meetings (chaired by Valery Bryusov!) recording decisions to offer substantial funds in response to such appeals. Of course one side-effect of engaging in such a relationship with the state may well have been that official registration with the police was necessary, and the police as well as the NKVD (secret police) took very careful notice of the financial workings of such organisations. For NKVD anxiety about the financial operations of a variety of intellectual circles, see GARF f. 393 op. 43 d. 24; GARF f. 393 op. 77 d. 256, 257. Apparently one of the problems from the NKVD point of view was that because of the privileged status of such organisations, some people (presumably not writers) began to use them as fronts for real money-making operations such as beer halls.

obtain the personal intervention of Anatoly Lunacharsky, whom he had not so coincidentally known in Paris, before the Revolution. Thus in 1924 he received the following *udostoverenie*: 'The writer and artist Maximilian Voloshin is under the patronage [*pod pokrovitel'stvom*] of the government of the USSR. His house in Koktebel', studio, library and archive, as state treasures, are not subject to requisition without the agreement of Narkompros USSR . . .'[36] This document was signed by Lunacharsky himself. Voloshin now proceeded to fill his home with old and new intelligentsia friends as summer visitors. But he did not let it go at that, but rather attempted to justify this course, and his continued possession of his home, by proposing that his circle be viewed as in itself a state-supported institution, like many other circles of the time. He 'contributed' it to the state as what in retrospect may be described as a kind of early *Dom otdykha*, or Soviet rest home for intellectuals.[37] Thus he could offer his premises and its comforts to summer visitors (read his friends, admirers and clients), who could stay with him free of charge – courtesy of the Soviet state. Before the Revolution he had had to charge members of his circle for staying in his home, due to his financially straitened condition. This market relationship had long rankled,[38] and the new, state-based arrangement was in certain ways culturally and emotionally preferable.

The circle patronised most enthusiastically by Maxim Gorky was the Serapion Brothers, a young literary group whose upwardly mobile members would eventually prove to be among the most influential individuals in the course of Soviet literary history. The Serapions represented to Gorky the hope of creating a new Soviet literary intelligentsia which would produce inspired, high quality literature in support of socialism. He first took them under his wing of bureaucratised patronage during the Civil War by providing them with food and clothing, shelter and a place for circle meetings, mainly in the House of Arts that he had established in St Petersburg.[39] He left for Italy in 1921 and stayed abroad until 1928, but even from afar he watched over them, throwing publication opportunities their way and advertising their abilities.[40] In later years, after his return to the Soviet Union, he was particularly concerned to help them out with health and housing problems[41] –

[36] IRLI Pushkinskii dom f. 562 op. 2 d. 3 p. 29.

[37] See N. Lesina, *Planerskoe (Koktebel')* (Simferopol: Krym, 1969), 19.

[38] Marina Tsvtaeva, *A Captive Spirit: Selected Prose*, trans. J. Marin King (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1980), 48.

[39] See for example *Gorky and his Contemporaries: Memoirs and Letters*, ed. Galina Belaia, trans. Cynthia Carlyle (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1989), 119–64. These pages contain several cult-building memoirs about Gorky by members of the Serapion Brothers which refer repeatedly to his material aid to them in the Civil War years.

[40] For example: Jan.–Feb. 1923 letter from Gorky to Serapion V. Ivanov, asking him to contribute a story to Berlin-based journal *Beseda* (Ar. Gor'kogo PG-rl/17/3/7); 1926 letter from Serapion I. Gruzdev to Gorky saying 'warm thanks from all of us [apparently other Serapions] for your help in getting manuscripts published' (Ar. Gor'kogo KG-P/23/1/17); Dec. 1926 letter from Gorky to P. Kriuchkov urging him to include V. Ivanov in an anthology because he was a good writer (Ar. Gor'kogo KG-P/41a/1/119).

[41] See for example an exchange of letters between Gorky and Zoshchenko in 1930, when Zoshchenko was having trouble with room-mates in a collective living situation. Gorky did all he could to help, and the problem was alleviated (Ar. Gor'kogo KG-P/29/4/2).

both of major concern to intellectuals whose health had often been badly damaged by the long stretch of war and revolution, and who often hated living in the ubiquitous communal apartments. And again, this was usually courtesy of the Soviet state, due to Gorky's status with his own patrons: first Lenin, and later such individuals as Iagoda[42] and probably Stalin.

Not all clients were members of designated 'circles'. Some were themselves members of state institutions; while others were merely strings of unrelated individuals. This certainly applied in the cases of those patrons of intellectuals who were in the process of becoming major Party figures, such as Anatoly Lunacharsky, the Commissar of Enlightenment and Nikolai Bukharin, generally acknowledged as the the most outstanding Party member with the closest ties to the old intelligentsia. Lunacharsky's state-based 'circle' was the Commissariat of Enlightenment, or Narkompros. As Sheila Fitzpatrick once put it, 'Lunacharsky, who could never believe that Narkompros would be the worse for gaining a man of goodwill, or the wife of a comrade, or the destitute granddaughter of a distinguished writer, had the habit of recruiting staff on a personal basis and directing them with letters of introduction to the head of a Narkompros department.'[43] Aside from the role that Narkompros played in offering state-based patronage to numerous intellectual efforts, from teacher education to orchestras, it funnelled numerous state-funded perks to those who worked for it, as several of the intermediate networking figures listed above discovered. It is evident that Bukharin too enjoyed a considerable following.[44] Certainly there were several distinguished authors who relied on him for support, including Il'ia Erenburg[45] and Osip Mandel'shtam.[46]

Like the pre-Revolutionary *kruzhok* leaders, many of these state-based patron figures began to attain cult status, as is revealed by the cult-building 'contemporaries' memoirs that have been written about them. Of Voloshin and Gorky there are numerous grateful published memoirs recording ways in which each man aided memoirists during this period; in Gorky's case a number of them were even written during his lifetime in such a fashion as to indicate that memoiristic adulation was a means of advertising one's political protection in a time of political danger.[47]

[42] Although none of them refer specifically to the Serapion Brothers, Gorky's letters to Iagoda are packed with requests for aid, especially for permission to travel abroad for intellectuals: for Pasternak, his wife and child, for N. Kamenskii, and for M. Sholokhov, for example (Ar. Gor'kogo PG-rl/58/29/4,5). I have not been able to see Gorky's correspondence with Stalin.

[43] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment: Soviet Organisation of Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky, October 1917–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 19.

[44] See Steven Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1973), 216–23. Like Stalin, Bukharin was evidently engaged in placing certain of his followers in positions of state power.

[45] See Erenburg's correspondence with Bukharin, RKhIDNI f. 329 op. 2 d. 4, 157–70.

[46] Consider this commentary by Nadezhda Mandel'shtam on what she called 'transmission belts' of patronage influence: 'I had a conversation with the wife of Yezhov [of the NKVD]. "[Writer Boris] Pil'niak comes to us," she said. "Whom do you go to see?" When I indignantly passed this on to [Osip] M[andel'shtam], he tried to calm me: "Everybody goes to see someone. There's no other way. We go to see Nikolai Ivanovich [Bukharin]."' Nadezhda Mandel'shtam, *Hope Against Hope*, trans. Max Hayward (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 113.

[47] As can be seen in the way that the Serapion Brothers came to make their first major contribution to Gorky's cult: in 1928, the year that Gorky first returned to Russia, and also during the time period

Lunacharsky too became the object of a memoir cult, as numerous grateful clients recorded his aid to them. These, however, remain unpublished – for Lunacharsky would lose the great political struggle looming ahead.[48] As would Nikolai Bukharin, for whom there are few memoirs to be found at all, despite the evidence that he was indeed adulated.[49]

But before they lost, these patron/cult figures and others were instrumental in drawing their many literary (and other intellectual) clients into an ever more intimate economic relationship with the state. And therein lie the foundations of what I wish to call the 'patronage contract', as opposed to a 'social contract'. In the endless begging letters that such figures both wrote and received, and in their endeavours to provide their clients with what they needed, we see the foundations of an agreement about what the state would offer the literary intelligentsia and how the literary intelligentsia would view its obligations to the state. For the response of the state, via these patrons, was to ever expand the bureaucratic system of welfare and privilege. TsKubu increased enormously in size in the early Soviet era;[50] another organisation which offered writers economic support was the new Litfond RSFSR which was established in 1927.[51] All through the excitement of the soft-line 1925 resolution,[52] the emergence of the very hardline Cultural Revolution with its multiple attacks on the old intelligentsia, there is evidence of the essentially steady building up of state-supported property in the interest of the intelligentsia: loan funds, health resorts, holiday dachas, and (by the early 1930s) the great apartment buildings of the educated elite to get them out of the communal apartments.

Of course there was going to be a price to pay; what intellectuals would be expected to offer in return for this welfare and privilege system was loyal clientelistic

that attacks on the Serapion Brothers by the proletarian group RAPP were stepping up, they wrote a whole series of hagiographic memoirs about Gorky and how he aided them. Two such memoirs appeared in *Gor'kii: Sbornik statei i vospominanii o M. Gor'kom*, pod red. I. Gruzdeva [a Serapion Brother] (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1928). Also, two Serapion Brothers contributed to: 'Pisateli o Gor'kom', *Uchitel'skaia gazeta*, 14 (March 30, 1928).

[48] These unpublished memoirs are tucked away in the State Literary Museum. They are full of enthusiastic descriptions of Lunacharsky's material aid and personal generosity with the resources to which he had bureaucratic access (Gosudarstvennyi Literaturnyi Musei (GLM) f. 123 op. 1 d. 107)).

[49] An exception is the kind reference to Bukharin (possibly the first since his downfall) by Erenburg in his Thaw era memoirs. Il'ia Erenburg, *People and Life, 1891–1921*, trans. Anna Bostock and Yvonne Kapp (New York: Knopf, 1962), 46.

[50] An in-house analysis of TsKubu's activities in 1926 makes it clear that, expanding every year following its foundation, TsKubu had laid down a considerable material base, including six sanatoria, a dormitory in Moscow, pensioners' homes in Moscow and Leningrad, and a House of Scholars in Moscow with a library and a cafeteria (Ar. Gor'kogo Bio/16/82/1), not to mention its extensive activities in providing financial support to intellectuals such as Maximilian Voloshin, who received a TsKubu stipend until 1929.

[51] Litfond RSFSR rapidly established its own material foundation. Not only did it give out loans and pensions but also rented dachas in Sochi and Yalta for its members, established Houses of Rest, and by the late 1920s was involved in building some of the great elite apartment buildings for intellectuals. A number of the documents in Litfond's archive touch on the gritty details of building and repair activities. Litfond had its roots in a pre-Revolutionary charitable/welfare organisation for writers; and would in 1934 become the material base for the bureaucratised welfare system of the Soviet Union of Writers (Tsentralnyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Literaturii Iskustva (TsGALI) f. 1824)).

[52] 18 June 1925; *O Politike partii v oblasti khudozhestvennoi literatury.*

service to the state, obviously at the expense of intellectual freedom. But the nature and terms of the contract were not yet fully clear in the late 1920s. Intelligentsia clients may well have preferred networking as a means of gaining economic support over selling their art for filthy lucre, due to that traditional discomfort with market relations. But they may not always have believed that it was the state to which they owed a debt, feeling gratitude instead to those patrons who had aided them. This perception probably contributed to the growth of a multiplicity of personality cults around patron figures during the 1920s.

And this multiplicity contributed to the large-scale revival towards the end of the 1920s (there had been signs of it all along) of another quality of *kruzhok* culture: the tendency towards struggle and factionalisation which had torn apart the pre-Revolutionary literary world (as well as the rest of the intelligentsia). As ever, the struggles were about ideology, theories of art, loyalty to given leadership figures – and now, I believe, for access to patronage and bureaucratically controlled resources as well. The stakes were infinitely higher than they had ever been in the pre-Revolutionary era, because of the state's enormous potential to provide economic support to intellectual life. It was now involved as it had never been in the pre-Revolutionary era. Intellectual squabbles had become the stuff of material survival – even of life and death, as those who had sought to annihilate one another intellectually before the Revolution might now lay their hands on the state tools of physical annihilation.

There was intense discomfort within the literary community about this dangerous state of factionalisation, and the literary community indeed breathed a sigh of relief at the April 1932 Resolution banning all literary circles – and factions – from existence.[53] But the price was a consolidation of patronage. The losers of the struggle included Lunacharsky, who was the patron of Maximilian Voloshin, thus a loser himself, as a number of desperate letters from Voloshin to Lunacharsky in 1929 reveal.[54] Another loser was Bukharin, whose patronage influence, as Mandel'shtam writes, was rapidly diminishing.[55] On the winning side was Maxim Gorky, with his client chain including the Serapion Brothers. Under threat from the quarrelsome RAPP circle in the late 1920s, there was a resurgence in the power of the Serapion Brothers in the early 1930s as they, together with Gorky, engaged in the greatest consolidation of resources in the literary community of all: the formation of the Soviet Union of Writers. Vsevolod Ivanov and Nikolai Tikhonov, for example, both Serapion Brothers, took part in a new '*Material'no-bytovaia*' committee formed in June 1932 (after the April 1932 decree banning all circles from existence) whose task was twofold. First, they were to verify and acquire the property and money of liquidated literary organisations. Second, they were to organise the building of housing for writers, of dachas for writers, of a House of Literature which would

[53] Party Resolution, April 23, 1932, *O perestroike literaturno-khudozhesvennykh organizatsii*. See: *Osnovnye direktivy i zakonodatel'stvo o pechati: sistematicheskii sbornik* (Moscow: Sovetskoe zakonodatel'stvo, 1936), 50.

[54] IRLI Pushkinskii dom f. 562 op. 3 d. 72.

[55] Mandel'shtam, *Hope Against Hope*, 113.

include libraries, an information bureau, a club and offices, and of a kindergarten for the children of writers, among other things. They were also to improve provisioning, to improve medical services and sanatoria, and so forth. All of these projects were to contribute to the formation of the Soviet Writers' Union, over which Gorky was to a great extent presiding.[56]

Gorky had achieved this power for himself and for his clients because he had submitted himself and effectively the literary community to the patronage of the real winner of the patronage shake-up, that great peace-maker and instigator of harmony (of a grim sort), Joseph Stalin. Stalin had proved to be the most effective manipulator of bureaucratised patronage of all, as Isaac Deutscher tells us, and he would have no other patrons before him.[57] There were to be no personality cults other than his own, unless the cult figure was his client (Gorky, for example) or dead (like Alexander Pushkin). The 'patronage contract' was now fully in place, and the terms were clear: it was Stalin to whom writers owed their clientelistic loyalty. Stalin was the master theatrical impresario, presiding over the emergence of the grandiose state images and rituals of his national community; he fully grasped the importance of controlling the partisan and potent gossip of the intelligentsia world, whether written or spoken, and he would use the tools of the state to fulfil something curiously resembling the role of pre-Revolutionary *kruzhok* leader, with the Soviet Union as his own vast circle.[58]

And in many ways the deal that Stalin was offering literary intellectuals, this bureaucratised privilege and welfare system in return for clientelistic loyalty delivered through self-censorship and submission to censorship, may have seemed much more comfortable, culturally speaking, than the capitalist market relations that had so vexed them before the Revolution. The Soviet 'patronage contract' provided them with a solution to what had for several decades in the pre-Revolutionary period seemed an intractable conflict of values and identities. It was not necessarily satisfactory in the long run; the rise of the rebellious Thaw generation in the 1950s would soon reflect growing dissatisfaction among intellectuals with this relationship. But it represented one significant moment in the ongoing struggle of twentieth-century Russians to find a tolerable relationship between themselves and their state.

[56] Protocols of three meetings of the Presidium of the Organizing Committee of the All-Russian Union of Writers, 25 May, 7 June and 10 June, 1932. IRLI Pushkinskii dom f. 521 op. 42. Two of the Serapion Brothers, Nikolai Tikhonov and Konstantin Fedin, would later take prominent positions in the running of the Union.

[57] Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin, A Political Biography*, 2nd edn. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966).

[58] This consolidation of patronage under Stalin may have contributed to the decrease in actual networking activity described by Vera Tolz in '"Cultural Bosses" and the Soviet State: 1945–1953'; my own rather thin research of personal patronage in the 1930s also indicates that those with access to the bureaucratised resources of the Writers' Union did not always respond to patronage demands. With a single major patron and patron chain in control, the importance of personal patronage may have been reduced in the literary world.

Purge and Patronage: Kádár's Counter-revolution and the Field of Economic Research in Hungary, 1957–1958

GYÖRGY PÉTERI

The aim of this article, focusing on the experience of the Institute of Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, is to show the decisive role patronage played in securing continuity and survival when the institute was facing what was probably the mightiest challenge social science research had to face in Hungary after Stalin's death: the purges[1] hitting a number of cultural fields in the course of the Kádárist restoration after the revolution of 1956. The phenomena of purge (or attempts to impose political–ideological restrictions and regimentation) and patronage tended to go hand in hand: indeed, purges created the very typical situation within which patronage (protection) was in dire demand.[2] Purge and patronage were not only two interwoven threads in the tapestry of academic life under communist rule, but they could also be (and often were) meted out by the very same hands. This seemingly paradoxical coincidence, as we shall see with the help of the case related below, is deeply rooted in the dialectics of patronage under state-socialist conditions.

The legacy of thaw, frost and revolution, 1953–6

During the two and a half years between Stalin's death and the revolution of 1956, Hungarian economic research experienced what could rightly be described as a veritable resurrection. The most important organisational and intellectual elements

[1] In this article, the notion of *purge* includes not only the terror exercised through the political police and the apparatus of criminal 'justice' (arrests, prison and death sentences), but also the practices used by the counter-revolutionary Party and state apparatuses in an attempt to intimidate and regiment various social groups, among them the academic intelligentsia. Thus it includes 'organisational measures' (including the dissolution of unions, collegial bodies of industrial democracy, and professional/artistic organisations), disciplinary procedures in workplaces and party organisations, dismissals or 'transfers to other positions', exclusion from the party, forced 'self-criticism' in the workplace and/or publicly, etc.

[2] As Sheila Fitzpatrick's thoughtful essay suggests, one of the main uses of patronage from the clients' perspective was protection, for 'Stalin's Russia was a dangerous place to live in. Insecurity and the ever-present danger of a major personal calamity were a fact of life in the elites as much as (perhaps more than) lower social strata'. ('Intelligentsia and Power. Client–Patron Relations in Stalin's Russia', in Manfred Hildermeier, ed., *Stalinism before the Second World War. New Avenues of Research* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1998), 52.

of this revival were the establishment of the Institute of Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1954/55); the replacement of the *Hungarian-Soviet Economic Review* (*Magyar-Szovjet Közgazdasági Szemle*), a periodical based predominantly on translations of Soviet articles, with *Közgazdasági Szemle* (*Economic Review*) carrying primarily works of Hungarian economists (1954) and the successful launching of the empiricist research programme which oriented and inspired scholarly work at the Institute of Economics.[3]

After the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in February 1956, developments appeared to have gained irresistible momentum and it seemed as if the restoration to a considerable extent of academic autonomy and the processes of re-professionalisation in the field were receiving political acceptance and support. A conspicuous indication of this was that not only among the economists themselves, but also among the social-scientific academic elite, and even in higher party circles, by the autumn of 1956 it was generally accepted that the Hungarian Economic Association (which had ceased to function in 1948–9 and was dissolved in 1951) should be (re-)established.[4]

These can rightly be seen as a series of significant advances achieved by the community of research economists after their field emerged from the state of clinical death in which it had been lingering during the years of high Stalinism in Hungary (1948–53). The legacy of the pre-revolutionary and revolutionary era did, however, also include items which within the context of the Kádárist counter-revolutionary repression and consolidation became an incriminating burden for the community of research economists.

[3] For the history of economic research in the period see my 'New Course Economics: the Field of Economic Research in Hungary after Stalin, 1953–56', *Contemporary European History*, 6,3 (Nov. 1997), 295–327, included as Ch. 6 in György Péteri, *Academia and State Socialism* (Boulder, CO and Highland Lakes, NJ: East European Monographs & Atlantic Research & Publications, Inc., 1998). The empiricist research programme yielded a great deal of new knowledge on the working of the socialist economy reported first of all in the articles of the *Közgazdasági Szemle*. But the programme's single most important intellectual achievement, indeed, its archetypical work is János Kornai's 'candidate of economic sciences' thesis defended in Sept. 1956, and published in 1957 as *A gazdaság vezetés túlzott központosítása* (Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó). The book was published in English as *Overcentralisation in Economic Administration: A Critical Analysis Based on the Experience in Hungarian Light Industry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959).

[4] See, e.g., István Friss's intervention in the discussion of the Board meeting of the Second (Historical and Social Sciences) Division of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 8 May 1956, *Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Levéltára* (Archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, hereafter *MTA LT*), Papers of the Second Division, 3/3, p. 2. It was none other than Erzsébet Andics, the infamous Stalinist chief of the Science and Education Division of the communist party's Central Committee, who signed the concrete proposal to (re-)establish the Hungarian Economic Association (Erzsébet Andics, head of the division of science and education in the Central Committee of the Hungarian Workers' Party, to Béla Szalai, Central Committee secretary, 9 Oct. 1956. *Magyar Országos Levéltár* (Hungarian National Archives, hereafter *MOL*) 276. F. 91/92. ö.e.). The Central Committee secretariat did not wish to discuss the proposal until it has received suggestions as to the members of the leading bodies of the Association, which caused a delay long enough to enable other matters (those related to the Revolution of 23 Oct.) to absorb all the attention of the central party apparatus. In the end, the Association was restored in 1959 (Éva B. Szabadkai *et al.*, *Százéves a Magyar Közgazdasági Társaság* (Budapest: Magyar Közgazdasági Társaság, 1994)).

Few research economists had failed to identify themselves even publicly with Imre Nagy's moderate reform policies, the 'New Course', from June 1953 until early 1955. And even fewer were ready to accept or become resigned to the attempts of the Stalinist leadership to regain control from early 1955. Indeed, confrontations between research economists and Rákosi's apparatchiks became rather frequent between March 1955 and October 1956. It was the events of this period that earned the Institute of Economics the well-deserved hatred of Erzsébet Andics, head of the Division for Science and Education in the Central Committee apparatus,[5] manifest in Andics' description of the Institute as a 'purulent abscess'.[6] The contents of the first three issues of the *Közgazdasági Szemle*, at the time the journal of the Institute of Economics, irritated the Stalinist leadership of the MDP so much[7] that Rákosi ordered István Friss, the director of the Institute, to bring detailed publication plans for the next two months and the editors' plans for the second quarter of 1955 before the Central Committee secretariat for approval.[8]

Much of what was seen by Rákosi, Andics and their like as 'rightist deviations and opportunism' in 1955–6 came under attack as 'revisionism' in 1957–8. As a reflection of the issues placed on the agenda by the early phases of intra-Party critique of Stalinist policies, Rákosi proved most sensitive to such economic views of 'rightist deviation' as those maintaining that it was possible to achieve extended reproduction (growth) in private family farming or that the one-sided emphasis prior to 1953 on investments in the development of heavy industry had not only been unnecessary but was also a mistaken and unfortunate political decision. The 1957–8 campaign against revisionism, on the other hand, concentrated on the economists' critique of the state-socialist regime of economic management and on their reform proposals. The empirical study of socialist economic management had been a primary concern of the research economists before the revolution of October 1956. Characteristically, for these communist economists the interest in understanding the working of the socialist economic system was seldom separable from a strong motivation to contribute to the development of more efficient and more democratic forms of central management. Those months even saw initiatives

[5] Andics and her husband, Andor Berei, were both close political friends of Mátyás Rákosi.

[6] Cf. Péteri, *Academia and State Socialism*, 1998, 176. Andics was obviously concerned that the central party apparatus had lost control over the Institute. In Nov. 1955 she wrote a note complaining that the question of academic freedom had been raised on a number of occasions in the Institute and that the economists expressed, explicitly or implicitly, their disagreement with the (economic) policies of the party leaders. She noted that these tendencies met the approval of the leadership of the Institute (i.e., the director, Friss), and she explained 'the emerging political situation' with reference to the fact that 'The composition of the staff of the Institute is far from satisfactory either from a political or from a scientific point of view'. (Confidential, 'Note on Some Problems of the Institute of Economics', Division of Science and Culture, typescript produced in two copies, signed by [head of division] Erzsébet Andics, Budapest, 30 Nov. 1955, *MOL* 276. f. 65. cs. 343. ö.e., fols. 185–187).

[7] 'Three issues have been published by this journal carrying so many [ideological mistakes] that [their] critique would require at least three more issues', said Mátyás Rákosi at the 7 Feb. 1955 meeting of the secretariat of the Central Committee. *MOL* 276. f. 54. cs. 353. ö.e., fol. 28.

[8] For the full documentation of the 7 Feb. 1955, meeting of the secretariat of the Central Committee, see *MOL* 276. f. 54. cs. 353. ö.e., fols. 4–5 and 27–30/a.

towards a comparative study of socialist economic systems, focusing on the Yugoslav experience. On 15 October 1956 several senior members of the Institute of Economics had a day-long meeting with a Yugoslavian colleague, Degovic, who worked hard to quench the thirst of Ferenc Donáth, Péter Erdös, Friss, János Kornai, and Tamás Nagy for information about the way in which central planning, markets and self-managed companies worked within the Yugoslavian model.[9] The Yugoslav variety of socialism was a clear inspiration for early Hungarian thinking on reform, although this became a considerable burden for reform economists after the renewal of the rift between the Soviet bloc and Yugoslavia after November–December 1956.

All the 'mistakes', 'errors', 'sins' and 'crimes' committed by the research economists during thaw and frost were crowned by their participation in the political upheaval during the spring, summer and early autumn of 1956, as well as during the weeks after 23 October. Many of them actively participated in and contributed to the discussions of the Petöfi Circle, the main forum of rebellious communist intellectuals, and they openly sided with anti-Stalinist politics in the meetings of their own party organisation in the Institute as well as in major party *aktíva*-meetings of the Academy of Sciences. They acted, after 23 October, as members of the Revolutionary Council of Intellectuals and the Revolutionary Council of the institute itself. Symptomatic of the uneasy relations between the economists and the emerging regime of János Kádár was the radical fall in the rate of Party membership among the former: while in October 1956, 73 per cent of the Institute of Economics' personnel were members of the Hungarian Workers' Party (MDP), the relative weight of members in Kádár's renamed Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) was only 48 per cent, even as late as January 1958.[10]

The phases of repression

Recent literature divides the history of Kádárist reprisals into four phases. The main objective of the first phase (from 4 November to early December 1956) was to crush armed resistance. Signalling the start of the second phase was the official definition in December, of 'the events in October' as a *counter-revolutionary* uprising. Unarmed resistance and any sort of peaceful protest became the main targets of repression. The period of massive reprisals fell between April 1957 and spring 1959. Indeed, during 1957 the restoration's judicial machinery was so overburdened that they could only process under a third of all the political cases brought. This was an era of executions and long prison sentences. The partial amnesty in 1959 put an end to the worst terror and opened the fourth, concluding phase – lasting from spring 1959 to

[9] 'Degovits elvtárssal 1956. október 15–én tartott konzultáció', minutes, *MOL*, István Friss's papers, 861. f. 30. ö.e. Obviously, this was not the first and only meeting between the researchers of the Institute and the Yugoslav economist.

[10] Report of the MSZMP-organisation of the Institute of Economics [to the division of science and culture of the Central Committee] on the situation of the Institute, *MOL* 288. f. 33/1958. cs. 19. ö.e., 1.

spring 1963 – which was characterised by a degree of restraint and moderation on the part of the victorious regime.[11]

It was the third phase, the period of massive reprisals, that brought the purge of the community of research economists (the Institute of Economics). Of course, they could never feel far from the possibility of fatal misfortune,[12] and were certainly affected, at least mentally, by the wave of harsh sentences meted out by Kádár's courts. However, the particular stream of counter-revolutionary restoration to which they were most exposed seldom yielded death or prison sentences. The research economists were among the main targets of the *anti-revisionist campaign*, and what was at stake, if the worst came to the worst, was their research positions and the political survival of their empiricist research programme.

'Revisionism is the main threat'

The drive against revisionism in economic thought was itself but a part of the anti-revisionist campaign as a whole. The background of the latter had nothing to do with matters intellectual – it was the emerging second rift between Moscow and Belgrade.[13] The *political* conflict over Moscow's imperial methods of handling the crises of the mid-1950s in eastern Europe soon assumed systemic, ideological, and even 'theoretical' clothing, and questions of national communism were central. It was Yugoslav 'self-management', the Yugoslavs' alleged reliance on 'the market forces', and, especially, their critique of the bureaucratic centralism of the Soviet-type regime, that placed matters of economic management on the agenda of the anti-revisionist drive in Hungary – but even in this particular respect the political need to keep the revolution's workers' councils at bay must have been more urgent for Kádár and his apparatchik elite than teaching a lesson to a few economists who were toying with unorthodox ideas about how to improve the poor performance of the socialist economic system.

Although they were relatively early in attacking revisionism in the form of national communism and in identifying revisionism as 'the main threat', the Kádárist political elite seem to have been less than well prepared for a drive against economic revisionism. Indeed, they established a broad net of committees to deliberate onnecessary reforms in the methods of economic management[14] at just about the

[11] György Litván, ed., *The Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Reform, Revolt and Repression 1953–1963* (Harlow and New York: Longman, 1996), 135–37.

[12] Ferenc Donáth, deputy director of the Institute of Economics, was sentenced in the process against 'Imre Nagy and accomplices' to twelve years' imprisonment; Kornai was several times interrogated by the political police on account of his affiliation with mathematician Tamás Lipták, who was also sentenced to a prison term in the so-called 'Mérei-Fekete case'.

[13] A most useful review of this second phase of the Soviet–Yugoslav conflict is Curt Gasteyger, *Die feindlichen Brüder. Jugoslawiens neuer Konflikt mit dem Ostblock 1958: ein Dokumentenband*, Schriftenreihe des Schweizerischen Ost-Instituts, 2 (Bern: Peter Sager, 1960). For a more recent contribution see Zoltán Ripp, 'Hungary's Part in the Soviet–Yugoslav Conflict, 1956–58', *Contemporary European History*, 7, 2 (July 1998), 197–225.

[14] The investigation was organised in ten committees of which nine worked and delivered reports.

time when the East German Party leadership decided to fight 'Gegen die Gefahr der Entwicklung revisionistischer Anschauungen auf dem Gebiet der Politischen Ökonomie'.[15] And if the inspiration from East Germany failed to persuade the Hungarian leaders that they might be out of step with the rest of the 'international communist movement', the latter's own agit-prop watchdogs did in the end manage to bring home to them the problem of incompatibility between (liberalising) economic reforms and a counter-revolutionary restoration.

The first public attacks on economic revisionism appeared in April in the weekly *Gazdasági Figyelő* (*Economic Observer*), which was launched and controlled by the conservative left wing of the Party, and spread into the Party's daily (*Népszabadság*) and its theoretical journal (*Társadalmi Szemle*) as late as June 1957. During 1957 and 1958, Géza Ripp and Endre Molnár – both of them young associates of the agitation and propaganda division (agit-prop) of the Central Committee – distinguished themselves by turning out a great number of articles and even books attacking various aspects of economic revisionism. Old Stalinist intellectuals such as László Háy and Gyula Hevesi, both with long experience from the Moscow emigration, joined in as well. They saw 'revisionism under the guise of new economic mechanism' and they also dug up a great number of 'incriminating' texts from the tumultuous times in 1956. They attacked György Péter, the president of the Central Statistical Bureau, a famous protagonist of economic reforms, and Erik Molnár, director of the Academy's Institute of History (accused of revisionism on account of his views on modern capitalist development), both of them old communists. They also targeted several researchers of the Institute of Economics, especially Kornai, Erdös, and Tamás Nagy.[16]

Hungarian historiography presented the drive against economic revisionism as directly connected with leading Stalinists of the Rákosi era, living in exile in Moscow, who were trying to influence the Party's policies in Budapest, and waiting and preparing for a comeback. One of these was Andor Berei, who sent the manuscript of an article to Budapest dated 24 May 1957, under the title 'Ideological Struggle against Revisionist Economic Views'. Iván T. Berend attaches great

The work of these committees was co-ordinated by yet another, super-ordinated committee (called the Economic Committee) which had thirty members and was chaired by the economist István Varga, who was neither Marxist nor a party member. The committee work went on from 26 Feb. to 24 May 1957, and included practically the whole economic-policy-making elite and a large number of leading academic economists. The complete documentation of the work of these committees can be found in *MOL* XIX-A-60 *Közgazdasági Bizottság*.

[15] This was the title of Robert Neumann's article published in *Einheit*, 12, 2 (Feb. 1957), 157–67. The article, obviously inspired by the recent meeting of the Central Committee of the SEPD launching 'The Struggle Against Bourgeois Ideology and Revisionism', attacked the writings of Behrens, Benary and Kohlmey, the leading East German 'revisionist' economists.

[16] See Iván T. Berend, *Gazdasági útkeresés 1956–1965. A szocialista gazdaság magyarországi modelljének történetéhez*, (Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó Nemzet és emlékezet, 1983), 98–104, published in English as *The Hungarian Economic Reforms 1953–1988* Soviet and East European Studies 70 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). An inspired analysis of the anti-revisionist campaign and its significance is Zoltán Ripp's introductory essay to Magdolna Baráth and Zoltán Ripp, eds., *A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt ideiglenes vezető testületeinek jegyzőkönyvei, IV. kötet, 1957 május 21 – 1957. június 24.* (Budapest: Intera Rt., 1994), 11–12.

importance to this article because, as he explained, it set forth with clarity and consistency the main conservative dogmatic arguments against radical reform proposals and the underlying revisionist economic ideas. To underline the particular significance of this document Berend mentions that 'it was discussed at the request of Jenő Fock by the Provisional Executive [that is Political] Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party'.[17] This point, however, is not substantiated in either the Hungarian or the English version of Berend's book.[18] Berend appears to imply here that the members of the Executive Bureau, the collegium of the highest power within the Party, were impressed by Berei's critique against the economists. As he moves on to what is treated as the culmination of the public anti-revisionist campaign, Friss's lecture delivered to the Political Academy of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party on 20 September 1957, Berend notes that here Friss unequivocally spelled out the official Party line. Like Berei, he suggested the pursuit of a policy of moderate and partial corrections to the system of economic management and rejected, as anti-socialist, the idea of reforming the 'economic mechanism' as a whole. Berend also notes that Friss joined in the discussion and critique of revisionist views among economists, but he also credits Friss with having performed a less summary evaluation (with more nuances) than was usual at the time: Friss did not question that the great majority of economists were sincerely in favour of a planned economy, and he warned against the indiscriminate labelling of people as revisionists, especially as he found evidence of unfounded accusations in the discussions.[19]

In his discussion of Berei's manuscript and Friss's lecture of 1957, Berend has failed to confront some important questions: why did the Executive Bureau decide not to allow the publication of Berei's text? and why did they at the same meeting consent to schedule Friss's lecture (with the preliminary title 'The socialist planned economy and decentralisation') for September, thus allowing three months to elapse before it would be delivered?[20] How were the ambiguities ('nuances' or 'differentiated assessment') in Friss's text of September 1957 to be explained? On the one hand was his apparent readiness to sacrifice the most productive researcher of his Institute, Kornai, by saying that Kornai seemed to reject the socialist economic system as a whole, and on the other hand there was his obvious hesitation to label Péter, Erdös or Tamás Nagy as revisionists.[21]

Relying on Berend's book, Hungarian historians of the period seem to have accepted the suggested continuity between Berei's unpublished article and Friss's lecture.[22] If they found evidence that seemed contrary to Friss's having been an

[17] Berend, *Gazdasági útkeresés*, 94.

[18] Berend identifies no sources and provides no details as to what the members of the Executive Bureau thought about Berei's text.

[19] Berend, *Gazdasági útkeresés*, 104–5.

[20] Baráth and Ripp, *A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt*, 118.

[21] See István Friss, *Népgazdaságunk vezetésének néhány gyakorlati és elméleti kérdéséről*, Az MSZMP Központi Bizottsága Politikai Akadémiája (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1957), 53.

[22] Friss's lecture delivered at the Political Academy is quoted as one of the 'fundamental documents' of the 'ideological–political warfare' against protagonists of economic reforms by László Szamuely in his

ardent Stalinist, they preferred to insinuate his cowardice, his bad (Bolshevik) morals or 'odd amnesia' rather than give him the benefit of the doubt.[23] Discussing the radical reform package which the Party adopted only some six or seven years after Hungary's post-revolutionary *zhdanovschina*, where Friss had to be placed among the *major protagonists* of reforms, Iván Berend makes a rather unconvincing effort to explain how the former arch-enemy of reform went over to the other side: 'it is necessary to point out that a part in the eventual acceptance and victory of the reform line was played by Friss's ability to re-examine his earlier position and give his support to comprehensive reform, clearly in the light of what he had experienced in the previous years'.[24] The problem is that the alleged 're-examination' remains both to be documented and to be explained. We cannot know – if Friss indeed was able to re-examine his earlier position – why the experience of the first six years as head of the division for economic policies in the Central Committee apparatus had not provided sufficient grounds for a re-assessment?

Thus, little doubt or hesitation has been manifest in this literature as to Friss's role in the 'ideological–political warfare' waged against reform economists during the first post-revolutionary years. In Berend's recent memoirs, Friss's image is painted with even darker colours, probably because the contrast there is constituted by Berend's own book[25] published seven years *after* Friss commented on Kornai's and Péter's 'revisionism'.[26]

The drive against economic revisionism certainly placed Friss's Institute of Economics in a very delicate situation – and his September 1957 lecture at the Party's Political Academy seemed to make it considerably worse. It appeared to indicate that the Party's foremost authority on economic–political matters had turned his back on the economists and the research programme of the Institute he himself had created and even that he was ready to join the front line in the drive against the very same economists. Such behaviour by the notorious survivor of the 1930s trials in the Soviet Union and the second most powerful man after Ernö Gerö in economic policy matters during the Rákosi era, seems only too plausible.

What follows offers an alternative account of Friss and his actual role in relation

introductory essay to the collection of articles and documents *A magyar közgazdasági gondolat fejlődése 1954–1978. A szocialista gazdaság mechanizmusának kutatása*, ed. and selected L. Szamuely (Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, 1986), 31. See also Ripp's introductory essay, Baráth and Ripp, *A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspart*, 11–12; and Judit Gelegonya, 'Adalékok a magyar közgazdasági reform-gondolkodás történetéhez. Péter György' doctoral thesis, Budapest University of Economics (1990), 172–8.

[23] Judit Gelegonya found it hard to understand Friss's critique of Tamás Nagy on account of the latter's failure *critically* to assess György Péter's views in his introduction to the former's anthology of articles on economic management which appeared in 1956. 'The speaker in this respect suffered an odd amnesia: he forgot that he could accuse himself [of the same crime], as at about the same time [when the anthology of G. Péter was published], in May 1956, he too failed to be critical of Péter's ideas, [on the contrary] he was basically in agreement with them.' Gelegonya, *Adalékok a magyar*, 177.

[24] Berend, *The Hungarian economic reforms*, 140.

[25] Iván T. Berend, *Gazdaságpolitika az első ötéves terv megindításakor 1948–50* [Economic Policy at the Launching of the First Five Year Plan, 1948–50] (Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, 1964).

[26] Iván T. Berend, *A történelem – ahogyan megéltem* (Budapest: Kulturtrade Kiadó, 1997), 193.

to the economists during those early years of the Kádárist restoration. It argues that Friss was acting as a patron of the research economists and that everything he did in this respect during 1957–8 was intended to provide an *optimal* defence of the economists and of the empiricist research programme of his Institute. To my mind, such an account alone is capable of reconstructing a coherent whole out of the seemingly contradictory bits and pieces that previous historiography has found so hard to handle.

István Friss and the drive against 'revisionist' economists

Comrade Preis. An educated, diligent comrade, loyal to the Party. He always tries, to the best of his abilities, to help the Party. Side by side with these positive characteristics, there are also some great deficiencies which should be fully considered in our political evaluation of him. As a heavy burden, he carries the marks of his bourgeois origins. He has never had an opportunity to participate in the proletarian mass movement, and thus he could never really and solidly become one of the Proletariat. This deficiency of his becomes manifest mainly in that he tends to look at various political or economic questions not always with the eyes of a Communist, not from the Proletarian class point of view. Rather, he would look at these problems in a detached manner, disregarding the interests of the working people, with the eyes of a statistician, or an 'objective' researcher. Therefore, it is in fact embarrassing for him when the Party leadership has to make up its mind over an important question and arrive at a decision.[27]

Born into a Jewish, capitalist middle-class family, István Friss (1903–78) received a good education, including studies at the Berlin Handelshochschule (1922–4) and the London School of Economics and Political Science (1924–5). His membership of the illegal Hungarian Communist Party (KMP) was documented from 1922 on.[28] In the second half of the 1920s he worked as a white-collar worker in his father's factory and participated in the illegal communist movement. In 1928 he became one the editors of *Kommunista*, the illegal newspaper of the KMP. His work in the party led to his being arrested a number of times and serving short prison terms until in 1930 he received a sentence of three and a half year. In 1935 he was instructed and assisted by his party to move to Moscow, where he taught political economy at the Lenin School, and became a member of the central committee of the KMP. Between 1936 and 1940 he was in Prague as a member of a committee of three sent out by the KMP central committee to keep in touch with and supervise the communist movement back in Hungary. In 1940 he fled to Sweden through

[27] Author's translation of German typescript excerpt from Zoltán Szántó, 'Bericht über die Tätigkeit des ZK der KP Ungarns vom März 1937 bis Januar 1938', to Comrade Manuilskii, Secretariat of the Communist International, 1 Feb. 1938, in Friss Papers, *MOL* 861. f. 9. ö.e., with Friss's handwritten note from 28 Dec. 1962 (when he received and saw the extract, probably, for the first time) expressing his surprise and sorrow over the fact that Szántó never informed him personally of his alleged shortcomings. ('Preis' was István Friss's pseudonym in the illegal communist movement.)

[28] Biographical material from Friss's papers held in *MOL*, 861.f., and the biographical introduction to the catalogue of the Friss Papers ('Friss István életrajzi adatai') produced by an archivist at the former Party History Archives of the MSZMP. See also Henrik Vass *et al.*, eds., *Munkásmozgalomtörténeti Lexikon* [Dictionary of the history of workers' movement], 2nd revised and enlarged edn (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1976), 185.

Poland. In 1941 he was back in the USSR and worked, until his return to Hungary in 1945, as a member of the editorial board of Kossuth Radio broadcasting in Hungarian from Moscow to Hungary. From 1945 on, he was always very close to top Party political bodies responsible for economic policy-making. He was a member of the ruling party's Central Committee throughout the period between 1948 and 1978, and from the communist takeover in 1948 until 1954 he was the head of the Division of Economic Policy of the Central Committee apparatus. On 10 October 1954, he was sacked because of his opposition to the New Course policies of Imre Nagy, whereupon he was appointed director of the newly established Institute of Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He was among the top functionaries of Kádár's renewed communist party, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP). From December 1956 to 5 December 1961, he was again head of the Division of Economic Policy (*Államgazdasági Osztály*) of the Central Committee apparatus. Even after that he held various significant positions on committees and other collegial bodies, in the Party and elsewhere, advising or/and supervising economic policy-making.

While Friss was certainly not a simpleton Stalinist apparatchik, there is no denying that he was a Marxist and a communist of conviction and consequence. He felt and exhibited a strong loyalty towards his party and towards what he believed to have been his party's cause. His political and ideological loyalty and his party discipline certainly constituted powerful restraints on both his political and intellectual action and his vision. But the very same characteristics should also be seen as resources that lent him an authority and standing in higher Party circles which few other persons enjoyed.

Much is known about Friss as one of the former Stalinist Party leaders who conducted a rearguard fight during 1954–6 against radical critics of Rákosi's regime and against protagonists of reforms. Friss as a reform communist, on the other hand, is part of the postwar history of Hungarian communism that still remains to be written. Indeed, the idea of Friss as a reform communist would still strike many as hilarious. One explanation for this is, of course, the Janus face (all the ambiguities manifest in the utterances, actions and inaction) of Friss himself. The other lies in the fact that the preoccupation of previous historical research with political and economic matters overshadowed one of the major domains of Friss' activities: the academic. When he lost his position as divisional head in the Central Committee in 1954, Friss had spent six frustrating years as the country's economic policy-maker no. 2. There is no doubt that Friss unconditionally accepted at least one important dimension of the critique exercised by the protagonists of the New Course against the disastrous policies he had stood for: the one that suggested that the Rákosi era's failure on the 'economic front' was a result of the lack of scientific understanding of the economic process under the conditions of socialism. Indeed, Friss had not only accepted this view but he was among the first to draw the necessary pragmatic political lessons from it. It was hardly a coincidence that, when he was removed from the central Party apparatus, he was 'given' the directorship of the new Institute of Economics. Quite probably, Friss himself wished to take care of the Institute

from the preparations for its establishment on. Friss had a (normative) idea about the significance of economic (social science) knowledge in the political process under state socialism, and he had an idea about the causes of the crisis (stagnation) of economic research in Rákosi's Hungary. He came to believe quite firmly that good policy-making could only be based on a solid (scientific) understanding of the social process and that solid scientific social research would not be possible until a clear distinction was made between serious empirical research and the scholastic exegesis of 'classical' texts and until the two genres were separated from one another in institutional terms. Such a separation was crucially important if what Friss believed to be the fundamental criterion of truly scientific practices – *the meticulous study of facts* – was to be restored to its rightful place within the field of economic research. The success of this empiricist research programme presupposed, however, that its practitioners enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy so that they could freely discuss their findings and even critically assess actual policies of various governmental and Party authorities. Similarly, free access to relevant statistical and other data had to be secured for the researchers. The promotion of solid empirical research and genuine professionalism throughout the community of economists did, furthermore, need all the encouragement and protection that a relatively freely developing infrastructure of professional life could offer.[29] The years 1955–6 saw Friss working tirelessly to achieve progress in all the above enumerated issues. Although he was facing mighty opposition, especially on the part of his conservative comrades in the central Party apparatus, he succeeded in making considerable advances, most notably both in asserting and re-asserting the empiricist research programme of his Institute, and in asserting and defending the relative autonomy of policy-oriented empirical research vis-à-vis the ideological (legitimacy-oriented) Marxist-Leninist political economy of socialism. Therefore, while he himself accepted and believed that what 23 October 1956 started off in Hungary was a counter-revolution, he was also determined to protect the achievements of his pre-revolutionary efforts in economics against the excesses of Kádárist restoration.

Friss understood quite well how disastrous the anti-revisionist drive might be for economic research. Where he actually stood in the question of 'economic revisionism' is clearly articulated in his letter of 20 October 1957 to Berei. In it he complies, after a rather long delay, with Berei's request to comment on the latter's article. No copy of Berei's manuscript is to be found among the Friss papers and it is therefore impossible to establish whether the manuscript on which Friss commented was identical to the one presented and discussed in detail by Berend. From Friss's comments it is quite probable that it is the same. Friss started by saying that he was largely in agreement with the article *except* for its polemical/critical sections directed against the allegedly revisionist views of Péter (which obviously constituted the bulk of the ms). In this latter respect, Friss shows in great detail that Berei's debunking 'critique' is based on a systematic misreading and misrepresentation of Péter's texts,

[29] On developments in the field of academic economics during 1954–6 see further G. Péteri, *Academia and State Socialism*, 1998, esp. Ch. 6.

where Berei fails to make the most elementary distinctions such as that between descriptive and normative statements.[30] Friss also objected strongly to Berei's insinuation that Péter's and others' revisionist views were responsibile for most of the gravest problems of the Hungarian economy.

As mentioned previously, Berend emphasised that the Berei article was discussed by the Provisional Executive (Political) Bureau of MSZMP. We know of only one documented occasion when the Provisional Executive Bureau can have discussed the article: the 14 June 1957 meeting. But the matter was obviously a relatively low priority for the Executive Bureau: it was presented as the last (fourteenth) item of the last (ninth) point of the agenda (under the heading 'miscellaneous') and there is no indication that there really was a discussion about the text. The question whether to publish the article in the *Népszabadság* had been considered rather summarily on the basis of Károly Kiss's verbal proposal with the conclusion that 'The Executive Bureau does not regard the publication of Comrade Andor Berei's article by the *Népszabadság* necessary.'[31] This decision might very well have been one promoted eagerly by Friss (who was present at the meeting). Anyway, an article in the Party's daily by one of Rákosi's well-known lieutenants in exile in Moscow was hardly desirable even for those members of the Bureau who had no objection to the content of Berei's writing.

As mentioned previously, the very same meeting of the Bureau decided on the timing of Friss's lecture on 'The socialist planned economy and decentralisation', and scheduled it for September. This implied that Friss would not have to engage in the discussion over economic revisionism for six months after the first attacks in the *Gazdasági Figyelő* appeared. Considering that he was the highest Central Committee apparatchik responsible for economic policies and that members of the agitation and propaganda division of the same apparatus engaged in the fight against economic revisionism as early as March/April, he joined the discussion remarkably late. Indeed, he seems to have waited as long as possible to articulate publicly his own views on the question, probably because he knew that if and when he was no longer able to avoid going public it would be almost impossible for him to avoid damaging his own institute in particular and economic research in general. What Friss was facing here was a genuine 'optimalisation problem': the further he went in defending his economists and the cause of the empiricist research programme by denying and rejecting the leftist agit-prop accusations of revisionism and rightist deviations, the more he would jeopardise his own authority and respectability as a good communist and a loyal Party soldier among the circles of the apparatchik elite. In the end, the legitimacy of his high formal and informal position in the Party hierarchy would be questioned and therewith all the resources he could offer as a patron. On the other hand, the further he went in adopting publicly the position of the leftist agit-prop critique of the economists, the weaker the moral–political

[30] István Friss to Andor Berei, Budapest, 20 Oct. 1957, typescript, copy. *MOL*, István Friss papers, 861. f. 146. ö.e., fos. 27–8.

[31] The protocols of the meeting are included in Baráth and Ripp, eds., 111–19.

ground he would occupy when trying to protect the field from the devastation the very same critique might bring about.

The lecture to the Political Academy

What Friss could do was to find out the optimum combination of these seemingly opposing tactics through a series of trial and error experiments – first, as we saw, he tried to avoid and/or postpone engaging in the public debate. When this was no longer possible and he had to deliver the lecture to the Political Academy, he tried to minimise the concessions made to his opponents. As mentioned earlier, historians of Hungarian (economic) reform ideas and policies noticed that Friss 'wish[ed] to come to a more differentiated assessment'. Apparently, they found this perplexing rather than clarifying as, in the end, the September 1957 lecture was treated by them as sending an 'unequivocal' message to the public to herald the triumph in the Party of the conservative line over reform policies and 'revisionist tendencies' and the silencing of the voice of reform economists. As Berend put it, 'By October 1957 the readers of the *Népszabadság* [where a condensed version of Friss' lecture was published on 2 October] could have been in no doubt about which view had prevailed.'[32]

A fresh look at Friss's text, however, reveals that the reconstruction provided by Berend and, after him, many other scholars is grossly spurious. The second part of Friss's lecture, covering 'theoretical issues', begins with a statement emphasising the considerable developments in economic research after it was freed from the stifling regime of the 'personality cult' (Stalinism), between 1953 and 1956. Friss registered that, after spring 1956, economic debates had tended to merge with the broader social and political debate of the era when even 'the spiritual preparations for the counter-revolution' had played some part. But he hastened to add that in the latter stages no professional economist had been involved:

> The dissemination of anti-Marxist and anti-socialist economic views went on in broad circles. As is well known, when it comes to economic issues everybody is an expert, or everybody would claim to be an expert, and, therefore, the economic critique [of the socialist economic system] was manifest almost everywhere, either in the form of a whispering campaign, or loudly in the various organisations and meetings of the intelligentsia, and in a concentrated manner during the so-called economic debates of the Petöfi Circle where, of course, the great majority of the participants and of those who talked were not economists . . . Nevertheless, the economists should rightly be blamed for having failed, with a few exceptions, to reject and to distance themselves from the various hostile criticisms which could not even pretend to be scientific.[33]

One of the most important features of the rhetoric of this second section of Friss's lecture is that it does *not* undertake to identify directly (detect) and confront 'revisionism' in economics – it was not meant, that is, as a contribution to the purge. Rather, Friss undertakes to (re-)consider individual cases that had by then

[32] Berend, *The Hungarian economic reforms*, 68–9.
[33] Friss, *Népgazdaságunk vezetésének néhány*, 28–9.

become the prime targets of the agit-prop campaign. He thus could in a detached, 'objective', manner consider the evidence presented and judge whether or not the accusations held.

When describing the views of individual economists, especially those of Péter, who were exposed to the heaviest attacks from the agit-prop fundamentalists, Friss deliberately used the expression 'revisionist tendencies' as a distinction from 'revisionism', a fact which should have been clearly pointed out by Berend and other historians of reform communism:

György Péter is not a revisionist. . . . [his first article, published in *Közgazdasági Szemle* in December 1954] has proved to be useful and inspiring, the majority of his ideas presented there are accepted today. But there are some vague, not quite correct, or even contradictory statements [in it] . . . Summing it up: some of György Péter's views have indeed come rather close to revisionism. Thus, there is a certain revisionist tendency in his writings due to the fact that the arguments are not consistent and mature enough. This tendency, although [Péter] himself is not a revisionist, implies the danger of producing revisionism in his or in others' [work].[34]

When it came to two senior members of his own institute, Tamás Nagy and Erdös, Friss rejected outright all accusations of revisionism against them. The only case in which Friss appeared to yield to the anti-revisionist campaign was that of Kornai. Careful reading could, however, even here have revealed some significant nuances:

What the booklet of János Kornai, 'The overcentralisation of economic management' does is basically to assess critically the methods of industrial management that were in force until the end of 1955. His empirical material is taken almost exclusively from the light industries and [he] was careful, in general, not to jump to any conclusion without foundation in his [empirical] material. Underlying the book was his dissertation, and Kornai emphasised during the defence of his dissertation that in his opinion the main danger was 'that we still are inclined to generalise without the requisite evidence and factual grounds'. Yet he wrote in his book that our economic mechanism should be changed, and he defined 'economic mechanism' as 'the totality of methods of economic management, the form of organisation of economic life, the whole machinery of economic activity'. *This can be understood as meaning* that Kornai fully rejects our socialist economic system. As there is no other alternative, he would presumably replace it with capitalism. *If this is what Kornai thinks* [*Ha Kornai így gondolja*], this would be no longer an anti-Marxist view, this would be the open rejection of Marxism.[35]

The first half of this paragraph reasserts the empiricist research programme by praising Kornai for having kept to its basic principles. Indeed, Friss makes his audience see what *might* be wrong with Kornai's book as a direct result of his deviation from the norms of the empiricist programme. But even this latter critical comment is tamed by a few well-placed conditionals, so as to make it obvious for the careful listener and reader that Friss was *not* ready to label Kornai as an anti-Marxist. He gave him not only the benefit of doubt, but also the chance (and encouragement) to dispel the suspicions raised against his work by his Stalinist critics.[36]

[34] *Ibid.*, 42–4 (emphasis added).
[35] *Ibid.*, 44 (emphases added).
[36] This benevolent intention, however, failed to come through to Kornai at the time. Kornai was in

In the conclusion of this section of his lecture, Friss returned to what had probably been his primary concern in connection with the anti-revisionist campaign and what, he felt, needed protection above all: the cause of empirically oriented social science research.

> the struggle against revisionism is necessary, but it is just as necessary to be very careful to whom we mete out the adjective 'revisionist', as we should be very careful with labelling people in general. In the debate [over economic revisionism] some people were accused of revisionism with no reason at all. This style of [political] fighting can easily undermine intellectual courage and research. We are not yet perfectly armed against dogmatism and the danger of oppressing scientific debate and criticism is still real. But we should, under all conditions, support scientific debate and criticism. Let us, therefore, fight against revisionism in such a manner that it should really be revealing, scientifically convincing and worthy of Marxism![37]

To describe Friss's lecture, then, in such a way that it appears as the decisive act concluding, in the favour of old and new Stalinist forces in the Party, the debate on economic reforms and revisionism, is not simply an exaggeration but a breakdown of professional historical interpretation and sound judgement.

The contemporary Kádárist Party bureaucracy, wary of any tendencies challenging what they understood to be the fundamental interests of the restoration of communist power, understood Friss's message better and reacted promptly. Their reaction all but corroborated the view of the reform-communist and reformist historians of the 1980s and 1990s. For those who tend to subscribe to the common image of Friss as a relatively sophisticated but conservative communist, it may come as a surprise that, by the latter half of 1957, his 'credit' with the Central Committee apparatus was low. Only four days before Friss would deliver his lecture at the Political Academy, a leading official at the Soviet embassy in Budapest, V. S. Baikov, had a conversation with József Sándor, chief of the staff of the First Secretary's office, head of the division of party and mass organisations of the Central Committee, and member of the Central Committee of the MSZMP. Sándor told Baikov that the country was in a lamentable economic situation. Then he surprised his Soviet comrade by explaining the economic problems of Hungary like this: 'In my opinion, comrade Sándor said, we won't get out of this [economic] blind alley as long as our economy is led by comrade Friss, who was just as skilful and smart in camouflaging his rightist views under Rákosi as he is today, under Kádár.' Sándor then told his curious contact how Friss protected bourgeois elements 'pretending' to be economic experts at the Ministry of Foreign Trade against the efforts of a high Party functionary to purge the ministry's personnel. After he had assured Baikov that they (the good communists) would take care of those intruders and would 'put

the audience when Friss delivered his lecture in 1957. In my interview with him, Kornai remembered having been shocked, scared and scandalised at the time. According to him, Friss said that he had betrayed Marxism which, during those days when people were hanged for political 'crimes', was like turning him in to the political police. But he also remembered having been encouraged informally publicly to withdraw some of his propositions for that would improve his situation considerably. János Kornai, interview with the author Budapest, 14 May 1987.

[37] Friss, *Népgazdaságunk vezetésének néhány*, 45.

even comrade Friss in his well-deserved place', Sándor concluded by saying that the conditions and, therefore, forms of class war in Hungary had changed since October 1956:

Today, we have to engage in the struggle with those counter-revolutionaries who, after having suffered defeat in the open clashes in October, try to achieve their objectives with more 'sophisticated' means. And exactly these elements receive assistance from a few high functionaries like Friss, who used to belong to the inner circle around Rákosi and who try to find their place today, who are afraid that they will be taken to task for their old mistakes and who would often adopt opportunistic [*elvtelen*] and mostly rightist policies.[38]

If some of the 'centrist' apparatchiks in the Central Committee were only suspicious of Friss before his lecture, the lecture convinced them of Friss's 'rightist opportunism'. The resounding backlash came from none less than the first secretary of the Central Committee, Kádár himself.

On 11 October 1957, at the meeting of the Party organisation of the Central Committee apparatus, Kádár heavily criticised Friss's lecture at the Political Academy. Friss was not present at this meeting but he was informed of it, hearing that Kádár maintained that Friss lacked political courage and was unable to say 'no' or 'yes'. On 13 October Friss wrote a short letter to the members of the Political Bureau of the Party, telling them that he could not stay on at his post if the highest leaders of the Party did not trust him. In the letter, he said,

Already, a few months ago, I had my doubts as to this trust and I alluded to it in front of several members of the P[olitical] B[ureau], saying that it was perhaps not advisable for me to stay in my position [as head of the division of economic policy]. I was more or less reassured by what I was told then. Comrade Kádár's words on Friday, however, brought this question onto the agenda again, and I think it would be good if the PB made a decision promptly as the insecurity [in this matter] will inevitably affect my everyday work.[39]

In his answer Kádár denied that he had given Friss any reason to believe that the Politburo (or Kádár personally) no longer trusted him, and he asked Friss to learn from the critique instead of being excessively sensitive and taking Kádár's words as a declaration of lack of confidence:

You criticised some incorrect economic propositions of György Péter and Tamás Nagy in a public lecture with such indulgence that it made part of our party *aktíva* seriously concerned – this is [regarded to be] a political matter, especially as far as Tamás Nagy is concerned. I do not wish to discuss whether the Hungarian people had anything to gain, worth at least the price of two kilos of stone-powder,[40] on account of the fact that there was and there is an economist called Tamás Nagy active in Hungarian social life. But, I would maintain, the political damage he caused has been pretty considerable.

[38] V. S. Baikov, 'Note of a conversation conducted with comrade József Sándor, head of the Division of Party and Mass Organisations of the MSZMP, member of the CC of the MSZMP, 16 Sept. 1957', Document no III/24 in Éva Gál, András B. Hegedüs, György Litván and János M. Rainer, eds., *A 'Jelcin-dosszié'. Szovjet dokumentumok 1956–ról* (Budapest: Századvég Kiadó & 1956–os Intézet,1993).

[39] Letter to the members of the Political Bureau of the MSZMP, 13 Oct. 1957, *MOL*, István Friss papers, 861. f. 38. ö.e., fol. 2.

[40] 'Stone-powder' seems to have been Kádár's favourite expression at the time in relation to persons or activities he regarded as worthless. He used it frequently, probably because he believed it lent his texts additional popular appeal through its 'folkish humour'.

There is a serious and legitimate concern that, as the normalisation of the situation advances, we tend to consign to oblivion even such things that cannot be forgotten. This applies to György Péter's grave economic mistake closely related to the well-known Yugoslav views worshipping the market [*a piacot fetisizáló nézetek*] which, in my opinion, are harmful for the Yugoslavian economy too. And this applies even more to the totality of activities of people of the kind of Tamás Nagy which I hope the party will never forget.

Although, I am sure, it has not been your intention, the concern has been enhanced by your all too tactful critique exercised in your lecture. I felt it was my duty, also publicly, to still this concern.[41]

Clearly, this was a defeat for Friss, and yet neither his lecture nor his threat to resign were entirely fruitless. He managed to make Kádár declare that he still wanted him in the Central Committee apparatus and he obtained important information regarding the mood in that same apparatus towards him, his Institute and and his economists. This mood made a high-level Party investigation against the Institute of Economics unavoidable, and it was ordered in February 1958. While this, of course, increased the pressure on Friss to yield to the apparatus's wish to revenge the betrayal of the intellectuals (economists), Friss, now strengthened in his position, still had opportunities and the resources to protect his researchers and their research programme.

The higher party investigation into the Institute of Economics

We have relatively little information concerning the background and the administrative history of the Party investigation,[42] This was one of a whole series of Party investigations – the target of one of them was Péter and the Central Bureau of Statistics[43] – which had as their main objective the regimentation of various institutions and the intellectuals working in them.

The Party organisation of the Institute had already been instructed to deliver a report to the Central Committee some time in January 1958.[44] This was probably in preparation for the investigation, because the investigation committee was set up by the division of scientific and cultural affairs of the Central Committee on 8 February 1958.[45] Among the members of the committee were István Antos, Ödön Barla Szabó, László Háy, Árpád Haász, Emil Gulyás, János Keserü, György Lázár, Endre

[41] János Kádár to István Friss, letter, with copies sent to all members and substitute members of the Political Bureau, 15 Oct. 1957, *MOL* István Friss papers, 861. f. 38. ö.e., fols. 3–5.

[42] The higher party investigation had been preceded by the initiative of the party organisation of the fifth district of Budapest to investigate the party life of the Institute of Economics. Their work was then co-ordinated with that of the higher party committee. (László Orbán, 'Note on the investigation of the situation and cadres problems of the Institute of Economics', 8 Feb. 1958, scientific and cultural division, Central Committee, MSZMP, *MOL* 288. f. 33/1958. cs. 19. ö.e.) Even the party investigation into the Central Bureau of Statistics (actually the CBS president, György Péter) was initiated by a district party organisation and was then taken over by higher party organs.

[43] Gelegonya, *Adalékok a magyar*, Ch. 4.5.1.

[44] Report from the leadership of the Institute of Economics party organisation, dated 3 Feb. 1958, *MOL* 288. f. 33/1958. cs. 19. ö.e.

[45] Orbán, 'Note on the investigation'.

Molnár, Sándor Sebes, Aladár Sipos and Gyula Vörös. This was a mixture of people of high position in practical economic life (governmental and Party authorities), from the agit-prop apparatus of the Party, and quite a few with university positions in economics and Marxist-Leninist political economy. István Tömpe, then deputy minister of agriculture – newly transferred from the position of deputy minister of the interior, responsible for political affairs – chaired the committee. He took charge of the counter-revolutionary campaign against the writers and the Writers' Association, which led to the forcible dissolution of the latter.[46]

The investigation had four major phases: first, the committee divided itself into smaller groups to cover various aspects and/or various sections of the Institute; then the groups reported to the chairman, who called a plenary meeting to discuss the findings on the basis of a preliminary version of the committee's report produced by the chairman; the third and decisive phase came when the final committee report was discussed by the secretariat of the Central Committee and the investigation itself was concluded by a resolution of the secretariat. Finally, a meeting was arranged at the Institute of Economics, the main function of which was to provide an opportunity for criticism and self-criticism. The latter, was especially important for those individuals who were singled out by the Party investigation as the worst sinners. Public remorse was expected if one was to receive absolution. It was not enough to repent in front of the meeting of the Institute – one also had to go against one's own and others' revisionist sins in articles published in journals and the daily press.

Had he been only the director of the Institute, Friss would have had no access to the process of investigation until the final report of the investigation committee was prepared and submitted to the Central Committee secretariat. But Friss was well informed of the committee's work from the start, and there are a number of indications that he tried and managed to influence it. The sources reveal his concern with the composition of the committee and its groups and, of course, with the wording of the report and the secretariat's resolution. On 28 February 1958, Friss wrote to László Orbán, head of the Central Committee's division for scientific and cultural affairs,[47] protesting not only at the inclusion of Endre Molnár, an agit-prop functionary of the Central Committee, in the investigation of the general (theory) section of the Institute but also against the focus and method of investigation as conducted by László Háy and Molnár. He objected to Molnár because he was convinced that Molnár had been strongly biased, to the disadvantage of several members of the section. He objected to the interviews which by then Háy and Molnár had conducted with eight members of the section, because they all concentrated on political activities, ignoring the scientific work which, according to

[46] See Éva Standeisky, *Az írók és a hatalom 1956–1963* (Budapest: 1956–os Intézet, 1996), 473.

[47] István Friss to László Orbán, 28 Feb. 1958, copy, István Friss papers, *MOL* 288. f. 33/1958. cs. 19. ö.e. Friss wrote his letter as head of the economic policy division of the Central Committee to another division chief in the same apparatus. He addressed the letter to 'Orbán László elvtársnak, KB Agit. Prop. Osztály', although Orbán at the time was head of the division for scientific and cultural affairs and not of the agitation and propaganda division. Molnár was one of the lower level apparatchiks at the Agit-Prop division.

Friss, should have been the proper subject matter of the investigation. He also found it upsetting that the investigators knew or understood hardly anything of the scholarly work performed by the section. All these deficiencies, made the report of Háy and Molnár's report unacceptable in Friss's eyes.

This letter reveals several aspects of Friss' efforts as a patron to protect his Institute. The mandates of the investigation committee did indeed include the assessment of the professional, scientific work carried out by the Institute, but only as one of six points.[48] One of the questions under this heading which the committee wished to look into was the extent to which the Institute participated in solving the economic problems of the day and contributed to forming the economic policy of the Party. Friss, therefore, not as the director of the Institute, but as the head of the Central Committee's economic policy division, had been consulted and offered access to the process of investigation from its very beginnings. This provided him with the opportunity to try to influence the composition of and the methods applied by the committee and its various groups. He also tried to affect the focus of the whole investigation by strongly emphasising that, according to his understanding, the Institute's professional–scientific work constituted the subject matter of the investigation. This he did, of course, because this is what he hoped would yield the least trouble for the Institute.

Friss had good reasons to fear the possible consequences of Endre Molnár's participation, especially in the investigation of the general (theoretical) section of the Institute. Molnár had by then established himself as one of the most visible agit-prop personalities engaging in the anti-revisionist campaign. László Háy, an old Muscovite Communist who was made rector of the university of economics under Kádár, was also a well-known representative of the conservative wing among Communist Party intellectuals, thanks especially to his central role in establishing and running the economic weekly, *Gazdasági Figyelő*, a major forum for the anti-revisionist attacks. It came as no surprise that, in the whole documentation of the Party investigation, their report on the general section carried the only critical remarks on the Institute's empiricist research programme. They even claimed that there was a causal connection between the 'political distortions' that could be found in works such as Kornai's book and 'the empirical character [of] the analysis of partial problems' typical of the Institute's research programme. They claimed that this programme made it possible for the Institute's researchers to avoid revealing their true ideological and political views as well as making them underrate 'the achievements of the [Marxist-Leninist political] economy of socialism and [adopt the view] . . . that scientific research should be made independent not just of daily political concerns but of politics in general'.[49]

[48] The other five were to assess the situation of the Institute of Economics historically (before, during and after the 'counter-revolution' of 1956); to assess the composition of the Institute's staff (both from the professional and from the political point of view); to assess the present political situation in the Institute; to assess the management of the Institute; and to assess the work of the *Economic Review* (*Közgazdasági Szemle*). Orbán 'Note on the investigation'.

[49] László Háy and Endre Molnár, 'Jelentés a Közgazdaságtudományi Intézet Általános Közgazdasági

The entire Party investigation used a rather strange rhetorical question as their starting point: why, they asked, did the Institute of Economics not enjoy the confidence of the Party (apparatus) any longer? One of the menacing implications of the question was, of course, that an organisation that had not enjoyed the confidence of the Party apparatus *must* have done something profoundly wrong. Normally a question like that should have been posed to members of the Party apparatus. Yet in their report, Háy and Molnár claimed that they had found the answer in the course of their investigation of the general section. They named the critical attitude adopted by the Institute's Party organisation against the old (Stalinist) Party leadership before October 1956 and claimed that, in shaping this attitude, 'voices originating from the group of Imre Nagy' had their role too. During the Revolution of late October and even after 4 November, this critique turned into 'grave political mistakes' and 'wavering', with ramifications in some strata of the Hungarian intelligentsia. On top of all the mistakes, members of the Institute failed to offer reparation by participating in the struggle after 1957 for 'ideological cleansing'[50] and 'political consolidation'. Instead, Háy and Molnár emphasised, the economists in the Institute had shirked the ideological struggle, which only corroborated, among the ranks of the apparatus, the suspicion that the old political 'mistakes' (i.e., political opposition against the Party) were still alive within the Institute.

Háy and Molnár suggested that the Party should take the following measures in order to 'strengthen' the Institute (from the political–ideological point of view). A new director should be appointed who, unlike Friss, could devote all his energies and time to managing the affairs of the Institute with a firm hand. The leaders of the Institute's Party organisation should be replaced by those who would exhibit uncompromising resolution in their ideological and political work and would put a stop to the present leadership's 'pacifism and self-complacence'. They also suggested improving the composition of the Institute's personnel by bringing in reliable, firm [*szilárd*] communists with experience in economic work. On the other hand, members of the Institute who had been 'wavering in theoretical and political issues' and who lacked experience in [practical] economic work, should be transferred to practical economic positions. In this respect they named Kornai, András Nagy, Antal Máriás, and Béla Csendes. In connection with these suggested replacements, however, they stressed that 'it would be better not to touch anyone than to remove only Kornai', meaning that the purge should be massive or else they would run the risk of making a 'martyr' of the prime target, Kornai.

Osztályának helyzetéről' [Report on the situation obtaining in the General Economic Section of the Institute of Economics], 1 Mar. 1958, *MOL* 288. f. 33/1958. cs. 19. ö.e.

[50] I use the word 'cleansing' as a translation of 'tisztázódás' in the Hungarian document. There is no doubt that the Hungarian 'tisztázódás' is more expressive, as its connotations include both a process of moving from 'wrong' to 'correct' ideas, from confusion to clarity, and a process of moving from a situation characterised by impurity towards a situation characterised by purity, i.e., a process that can be promoted by purge. 'Tisztázódás' could thus be correctly rendered as clearance as well as cleansing, or as purge.

Háy and Molnár's suggestions for changes in personnel werey so radical that they implied that Kornai and the others should be prevented from continuing their scholarly careers altogether. This is clearly implied by the logic of their conclusions on Tamás Nagy. They emphasised that, on account of his education and organising capabilities, Nagy was clearly the most appropriate person to lead the general section. While they were aware of the 'grave political mistakes' Nagy committed before, during and immediately after the revolution, they found that his 'present political behaviour' (Nagy wished to become a member of the MSZMP and unconditionally accepted and praised the Party line) did not require his replacement. They then emphatically added that, whatever decision the Party should take over Nagy's fate, 'it would in no way be desirable to make it impossible for Tamás Nagy [to carry on] his research activity in the field of economic science.' There is an obvious preference here for the ideologically oriented political economist[51] as opposed to the empirically and professionally oriented economist.

The first, preliminary version of the investigation committee's 'synthetic' report had obviously been influenced by Friss. The explanation is to be found in his good rapport with those functionaries who were hierarchically close to him and who were entrusted by the top leadership with administering the investigation: István Tömpe and László Orbán.[52] It must have been also helpful for Friss that, while at the lower level there were a number of eager zealots in the Central Committee's agit-prop apparatus (such as Géza Ripp and Endre Molnár), the agit-prop division's leader, István Szirmai, clearly did not wish to become engaged in the campaign against revisionist economists. In fact, the preliminary report signed by István Tömpe[53] follows the pattern of Friss's lecture to the Political Academy in 1957: it talks of 'revisionist tendencies' (but not revisionism) and it makes a sharp distinction between the professional–scientific activities of the Institute and the political activities of individual members during 1956–7. Háy and Molnár's critique of the empiricist research programme failed completely to affect the text of the report. Indeed, an outline of the synthetic report reinforced empiricism as the intellectual foundations of good Marxist economic research, by making it a duty of the communists of the Institute 'To ensure that the members of the Institute remain in close contact with factories, etc., and that their writings are based on detailed and many-sided empirical materials [*munkáikat részletes és sokoldalú tényanyag támassza alá*]'.[54] But the report also indicates that some kind of purge was inevitable, as it

[51] Tamás Nagy was half-jokingly called 'the pope of Hungarian [Marxist-Leninist] political economists' in the 1950s and early 1960s. Even though he should be credited with important contributions to the development, in the 1960s, of Hungarian reform-communist thought, he could never really transcend the limits of the discourse of Marxist-Leninist political economy.

[52] Orbán belonged among the 'internal critics' of Kádár's renewed communist party representing a more 'liberal' shade when it came to practical political measures than György Marosán, Gyula Kállai, Antal Apró or Dezsö Nemes.

[53] István Tömpe, 'Jelentés a Közgazdaságtudományi Intézet munkájáról' [Report on the work of the Institute of Economics], 14 Mar. 1958, *MOL* 288. f. 33/1958. cs. 19. ö.e.

[54] The quoted section did not make it into the final text, probably because the whole document had to be reduced in length.

does incorporate the suggestion that '[research] workers that have been wavering in theoretical and political issues (e.g. Kornai, A[ndrás] Nagy, Máriás) should be redirected to [some practical] economic field'.

Tömpe's preliminary report was discussed at a meeting of the committee and the documents indicate that Friss was present at this discussion. It seems to have been an inconclusive discussion with strongly diverging views and suggestions as to the situation at the Institute and the kind of measures called for. The members of the committee were asked to let the chairman have their views in writing. Emil Gulyás (who was member of the group investigating the agriculture section in the Institute) protested against the report's soft line towards the political and ideological sins the Institute had fostered. On the other hand, he pleaded for calm and restraint when it came to 'organisational measures' (which was a euphemism for sacking and replacing people): 'In general, I would . . . not suggest the removal from the Institute of those people who committed mistakes; however, I would think it proper to mete out Party and work [disciplinary] punishments exactly in order to emphasise the pedagogical message [about the grave nature of the mistakes committed].'[55]

János Keserü, of the division of agriculture of the Central Committee, wrote comments that offer valuable insights into the investigation committee's debate. His letter makes it clear that the main dividing line was between Friss and Molnár. The latter maintained that, typically for the work of the Institute, a group of researchers opposed Marxism-Leninism, albeit temporarily. Friss, on the other hand, maintained that while some members of the Institute had 'incorrect views' and some of their practical–political acts 'served, objectively, the counter-revolution', this did not mean that they opposed Marxism-Leninism. Keserü demanded that the report honestly register how revisionist ideas gained influence and ground within the Institute. On the other hand, he warned against misrepresenting the situation so as to depict the members of the Institute as if they had been conscious enemies of socialism. 'This, perhaps, would not be entirely correct to maintain', Keserü wrote, 'not even about Kornai.' He concluded his comments by emphasising that

> our aim should be to avoid turning these people away from us. We should not obstruct their development, rather we should help them. This cannot be achieved either in the way suggested by comrade Molnár or in the way [preferred by] comrade Friss. I agree with comrade Molnár that the report on the Institute should not embellish the situation . . . I agree with comrade Friss in that we should be careful in drawing our conclusions and also in establishing the facts in an unbiased and very impartial manner. One should not 'deliver a blow to them' [*közéjük csapni*], as comrade Molnár suggests, nor can we treat them as 'innocent sheep' as comrade Friss would wish us to do.[56]

These interventions from the committee members indicate that the tactics of rejecting accusations of revisionist sins could not serve to protect the Institute of

[55] Emil Gulyás, 'Hozzászólás a Közgazdaság Tudományi Intézet munkájáról összeállított jelentés vitájához' [Comment on the report on the work of the Institute of Eocnomics], 24 Mar. 1958, *MOL* 288. f. 33/1958. cs. 19. ö.e.

[56] János Keserü, 'Feljegyzés a Közgazdaságtudományi Intézet munkájáról' [Note on the work of the Institute of Economics], 20 Mar. 1958, *MOL* 288. f. 33/1958. cs. 19. ö.e.

Economics. But they also revealed how the attitude of quite a few members of the committee provided Friss with considerable room for manoeuvre to prevent the worst from happening (massive replacements and/or the dissolution of the Institute).

The final report, dated 16 April 1958, was presented to the secretariat of the Central Committee by the division for scientific and cultural affairs.[57] This text was more critical of the Institute than the earlier, preliminary version. It mentioned critically that the members of the Institute did not engage themselves in the fight against revisionism after the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party; it alluded to revisionist views in [the work of] some members of the Institute, without specifying the latter and their views; it carried a critique of the editorial work performed at the *Közgazdasági Szemle*, singling out the Chief Editor Ferenc Fekete as responsible for the inclusion of 'incorrect' articles, and suggesting that Fekete's 'wavering' had been making it impossible for the journal to adopt the 'communist party spirit and the spirit of uncompromising struggle against bourgeois and revisionist theories'. Háy and Molnár's suggestion that Friss should be replaced by a new director at the Institute had already been discarded by Tömpe's preliminary report. In the final report, Friss's position was reinforced, and his contribution to everything valuable that the Institute achieved was generously acknowledged. The suggested resolutions to be adopted by the secretariat criticised the Institute and its leaders for their sins of commission and omission in relation to the ideology and politics of revisionism; requested them to amend their mistakes by actively and publicly engaging in the struggle against revisionism; and entrusted the director, István Friss, with the task of improving the [social and political] composition of the research personnel at the Institute as well as of the editorial staff of *Közgazdasági Szemle*. However, while they urged strengthening loyalty towards the Party (*pártosság*), they also urged coupling the general theoretical contents of Marxist economics with 'the many-sided and detailed empirical study of partial problems of our economic life', and they confirmed Friss in his position as director and ordered the appointment of a new deputy director to assist him.

All this would have implied some reproach of Friss, even more for the rest of the Institute, and it requested some gestures of political correctness (in the form of a series of Agit-Prop articles against revisionism with sections for self-criticism), but no immediate and demonstrative blood-letting[58] and no retreat from the empiricist research programme of 1954–5. If these conclusions, especially the obligation to replace three of his researchers, struck Friss as hard and severe, he would realise, in the course of the discussion of the secretariat of the Central Committee, that he and

[57] Signed by Sándor Szerényi, deputy head of division, 'Jelentés a Közgazdaságtudományi Intézet munkájáról', 16 Apr. 1958, Tu/487, *MOL* 288. f. 7. cs. 26. ö.e.

[58] The investigation committee agreed not to tie the hands of the Institute's leadership by naming the politically–ideologically most troublesome personalities from the Institute and requesting their removal by a particular deadline. But their understanding was that three researchers 'should be gradually sent away [from the Institute, to "practical economic work"] as and when they can be replaced by new cadres of worker-peasant origins' (Sándor Szerényi's introduction to the 24 Apr. 1958, meeting of the secretariat of the Central Committee, Minutes, *MOL* 288. f. 7. cs. 26. ö.e., p. 2). I believe that this was a compromise solution achieved as a concession granted to Friss.

his patronised Institute could lose considerably more if he continued open resistance.

The bulk of the talking during the 24 April meeting of the Secretariat was done by György Marosán.[59] Marosán began menacingly. He said that he could not accept the report, nor the proposed resolutions, because they tried to whitewash the Institute, which he claimed 'was the centre [*góc*] of the counter-revolution in the economic field in the summer of 1956.'[60] He was also critical of the all too soft treatment handed out to Friss, who carried the main responsibility for the Institute, and he expressed his wish that the Institute was exposed to yet another Party investigation so that one could see for each research worker individually 'what the situation is'.

Sándor Gáspár appeared to be in agreement with Marosán, at least over how to judge the Institute: 'It seems that a lot of people went wrong [*tönkrement*], half or fully. In my opinion, the work has to be started afresh, even if only with fifteen persons, we have to make a tabula rasa. [We should] start again with fifteen such people who are capable of assisting the Party.'[61]

Kádár was not happy with the report either, but he made some gestures of understanding towards the needs of social research under communist rule: he said that he would be happy if researchers were 'loyal to the government and the Hungarian People's Republic', and he would not expect them to agree in all questions of day-to-day policies with the Party.[62] On the other hand, Kádár found the idea of a tabula rasa appealing. He thought that economists who did not believe in centralised economic management, who rejected planning, 'cannot usefully work in a country with planned economy'. He maintained that the investigation should have concentrated on this sort of issue in order to be able to answer the question

whether we should allow the Institute to go on as it is, or we should rather reorganise it completely. The question has several times been raised whether it would not be more

[59] Marosán (1908–) was a leftist social-democratic top leader until 1948. His assistance was crucial in the merger between the communist and the social-democratic parties carried through, on the terms of the former, in 1948. He held senior party and governmental positions until August 1950, when he was arrested together with some other former social-democratic leaders. He was rehabilitated in 1956, and in November he joined Kádár's Revolutionary Worker-Peasant government and the MSZMP. Although keen on distancing himself from the former Stalinist leadership of the country, Marosán was arguably the leading hardliner in the early Kádárist leadership. At the time, he held concurrently the positions of Central Committee secretary responsible for administrative (police, justice and military) affairs, Kádár's deputy in the party, chairman of the executive committee in the Budapest party organisation (from where a number of retaliatory actions against various organisations of Hungarian cultural and intellectual life had their origins), and Minister of State (i.e., deputy prime minister). Marosán deeply mistrusted and disliked 'wavering' intellectuals, and he was probably the most skilful rhetorician of the early Kádár era's worker-demagogy.

[60] Minutes of the 24 Apr. 1958 meeting of the secretariat of the Central Committee, *MOL* 288. f. 7. cs. 26. ö.e., p. 3. Throughout his interventions, Marosán repeatedly used the infamous expression '*revizionista góc*' following the model of Rákosi's right hand in scientific–political matters during 1955–6, Erzsébet Andics (who used to call the Institute '*gennygóc*' – originally a medical expression for the centre or focus of infection, where pus is gathering).

[61] *Ibid.*, 5–6.

[62] *Ibid.*, 6–7.

rational to [re-]start in a new form, with new people, on new bases. It should also be decided whom [of the members of the Institute] we should retain and I don't think of people who agree with the Party in all questions, but of such people who agree with us in such fundamental questions as the planned economy, in which they believe, and the more or less centralised management of the economy, etc. This is now the question. One thing is whether [this Institute is] the basis of some opposition and another thing is whether it gives anything to the country, to the Party. In an Institute like this it might be that for two to three years they would do nothing that would call for their arrest, but at the same time [what they do] gives hardly even the value of five kilos of stone powder to the country. To maintain such an institute for one or two dozen people and to cherish the illusion that we have a scientific institute of economics, would not be correct . . . The question raised by comrade Gáspár is legitimate, the Institute may stay, but we should achieve some sort of a tabula rasa. . . . I could conceive that we retain twenty-three out of sixty scientific researchers and let them work orderly, continuously, and later on we would complement the personnel. This problem has remained unsolved [in the report].[63]

Before Friss joined the discussion, the tabula rasa idea received mild but unexpected opposition from László Háy:

If we analysed [what people did in] 1956, five people could perhaps stay [at the Institute], if we analysed the present situation, perhaps five people should be removed . . . I and comrade Endre Molnár, who looked most critically at the work of the Institute, and who reviewed the general section which, even in the composition of its personnel, is the most objectionable section of the Institute, have come to the conclusion that the wisest course of action would be to retain the great majority of these people, to remove gradually a few people, to strengthen and reorganise the Party leadership [in the Institute], and to clarify all controversial issues. This I can suggest in the best faith.[64]

Árpád Haász was against purges in science and in economics and he spoke against many of the critics of the Institute because, he claimed, they applied norms that could not be fulfilled in any socialist country. He stressed, quite openly and courageously, that differences of (ideological) opinion with scholars could only be solved through scientific debate and persuasion: 'one cannot conduct ideological struggle with heavy artillery'.[65] He also emphasised that a decision to dissolve the Institute would be of grave consequences and one should not believe that serious scholars of economics 'could be [easily] bred from one year to another'.

Friss joined the discussion at a relatively late stage, and he started by reiterating how the Institute's work had been positively received in the other socialist countries and that it concentrated on and carried out solid scientific studies of relevant problems that were on the research agenda of the other socialist countries too. He asked the gathering to consider how young the Institute was. He pleaded that the Institute should not be ordered to sack anyone, as it would create the undesirable appearance that 'those who frankly gave their opinions will be removed from scientific life'. Friss also wanted to confront the members of the Central Committee Secretariat with the possible consequences of a radical 'tabula rasa' solution:

[63] *Ibid.*, 7–8.
[64] *Ibid.*, 10–11.
[65] Speaking against György Marosán. *Ibid.*, 11.

By the complete reorganisation of the Institute, I believe, we would lose a lot, indeed, we would lose much more than if we would start the purge [*tisztítás*] from within . . . it is very hard work bringing up scientific cadres, it takes a lot of time. Of course, it would not be a catastrophe if economic science stoped for a few years, but these few years would mean regressing by two to three years.[66]

Although Haász's and Friss's interventions made Marosán so mightily irritated that he no longer could talk in a consistent and intelligible manner,[67] Kádár's concluding remarks settled a number of hitherto unresolved issues. He wished the resolutions to contain a clear statement of the negative role the Institute played in producing and disseminating 'incorrect views', but on the other hand, he also wanted the revised report and resolutions to let bygones be bygones so long as they did not affect the present life and work of the Institute. He demanded that the surviving remnants of the sinful near-past should be eliminated through internal political work and discussions which should yield both critique and self-critique – a process which might show which researchers would not be able to carry out useful work in the Institute and who should therefore be removed.[68]

These points were to constitute the final resolutions of the Central Committee secretariat,[69] practically obliging the leaders of the Institute to carry out a purge by means of a major and, to a great extent, public campaign of criticism and self-criticism which enabled them to identify those incurable cases that had to leave their posts.

Conclusion: the dialectics of purge and patronage

The final resolutions of the Central Committee secretariat of 24 April 1958 restored Friss to complete control over his Institute, but it did so only on condition that he would bring about the regimentation prescribed by the resolutions. By then, Friss must have understood only too well that, under these particular circumstances, the efficiency of his patronage over the field of economic research was entirely a function of his determination to carry out the purge in the Institute and to discipline his clients in accordance with the expectations of the top Party leadership.

In fact, he can be said to have secured remarkably favourable conditions for this purge. He ensured that the empiricist research programme of the Institute was not 'criminalised' by the resolutions, and he succeeded in maintaining the community of research economists at the Institute of Economics largely intact. The Institute was not dissolved; no massive replacements or other 'tabula rasa' type of 'solutions' were

[66] *Ibid.*, 16.

[67] 'I am so upset because one should not hold it as a gun against me that all the excellent economists agree with this [Marosán probably meant the general understanding Friss referred to that professionally the Institute had done a good job]. I should at least be allowed to say what I want [to say]. My self-esteem is hurt when I am regarded as an economic illiterate.' *Ibid.*, 17.

[68] *Ibid.*, 19–22.

[69] MSZMP KB Titkárság, 'A Titkárság 1958. április 24–i határozata a Közgazdaságtudományi Intézet munkájáról' [The Secretariat's resolutions on the work of the Institute of economics, April 24, 1958], *MOL* 288. f. 7. cs. 26. ö.e.; another copy can be found in *MTA LT*, Rusznyák István Elnöki iratai, 36/2.

imposed by the Central Committee secretariat. Even though his suggested to distinction between 'political' and 'scientific' was rejected, he won the acceptance (thanks to Kádár) of the norm that no 'errors' and 'sins' of the past, but only what could be seen as contemporary opposition and resistance, would be regarded as grounds for retaliation. Last but not least, he successfully regained the initiative and control over the process of integrating with and adapting to the new political conditions.

Undoubtedly, the price to be paid was high and threatened longer-term damage. The Institute had to undergo a painful and humiliating process of 'critique and self-critique'. This included a major meeting of the Institute's personnel where all the main 'sinners' (Tamás Nagy, Erdös, András Nagy, Kornai, Antal, etc.) were allowed (and, indeed, compelled) to carry out self-criticism and/or to declare their faith in the superiority of the socialist, centrally planned economy.[70] The same people were expected publicly to make their own contribution, this time on the 'correct side of the front' to the 'struggle between the revisionist/capitalist and genuine Marxist-Leninist economic ideas'. And so they did: except for András Nagy, all the accused researchers of the Institute did publish one or another (and sometimes several) articles attacking revisionism and/or Western capitalist economic views and stressing the author's faith in Soviet-type socialism.[71] Surely, this wave of political and ideological correctness hardly helped serious economic research and thought. But it did not squeeze the latter out of existence either. The very same people who, during 1958–9, produced those ideologically correct articles, at the same time continued their own research and continued writing and publishing articles and books of genuine scholarly and economic–political importance. Most of these people defended their 'candidate of sciences' thesis in the early 1960s, and participated actively in the new wave of reform politics from 1962–3 on.

The price to be paid also included the fact that Friss dismissed two important colleagues, Kornai and András Nagy.[72] However, he also managed at the same time to arrange immediate transfers for both of them to research positions where they

[70] The meeting took place in the presence of head of Central Committee division László Orbán. 'Jegyzőkönyv a MTA Közgazdaságtudományi Intézet 1958. június 24.-i gyűléséről' [Minutes of the meeting of the Institute of Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, June 24, 1958], *MOL* István Friss papers, 861. f. 77. ö.e., 54 pp.

[71] Examples of this literature of repentance include Péter Erdös, 'Értékkategóriák a szocialista tervgazdaságban', *Közgazdasági Szemle*, 6, 1 (1959); Róbert Hoch, 'Az államelméletben megnyilvánuló jugoszláv revizionista nézetekről', *Közgazdasági Szemle*, 6, 2 (1959); János Kornai, '"Mennyiségi szemlélet" és "gazdaságossági szemlélet". Tapasztalatok a könnyüipar köréboől', *Közgazdasági Szemle*, 6, 10 (1959), esp. 1086–7, where Kornai critiques Pierre [Péter] Kende's '"neoliberal" illusions' and 'scientifically unfounded and biased distortions' [referring to an article of Kende, – 'L'intérêt personnel dans le système d'économie socialiste', *Revue Economique*, May 1959 – where Kende built much of his arguments on Kornai's *Overcentralisation of Economic Administration*]; András Bródy, 'A közgazdasági 'modellek' kérdéséhez', *Közgazdasági Szemle*, 7, 8–9 (1960).

[72] 'A Közgazdaságtudományi Intézet pártszervezetének jelentése a Titkárság és az V. ker. V.B. határozatai óta végzett munkáról' [Report of the Institute's party organisation regarding the work accomplished since the resolutions of the /Central Committee/ Secretariat and of the E/xecutive/ C/ ommittee/ of the /Budapest/ Vth district's /party organisation/], 29 Nov. 1958, *MOL* 288. f. 33/1958. cs. 19. ö.e. This document reported that Kornai, András Nagy, and a third person (Groó) of whom I

could carry on working on the same projects as at the Institute. András Nagy went to the economic studies department of the Ministry of Foreign Trade, where he continued his project on the economics of foreign trade which yielded him, by 1961, the degree of 'candidate of economic sciences'. For Kornai, a research position was found at the Planning Bureau of Light Industries and, later, at the Research Institute of Textile Industries, both of the Ministry of Light Industries. András Nagy returned to the Institute of Economics as a senior research worker in 1973, when Friss was still director. Kornai returned to the Institute at a part-time post as early as 1964 or 1965 – then, in 1967, he was offered a full time position by Friss as the head of the section for mathematical economics.

Finally, there was a personal price to be paid by the patron forced to combine open protection and purge in his tactics of patronage: the price was the bad reputation of a 'conservative communist', ill-will and often even hatred on the part of those whom he wished to assist and protect. And this we should never underestimate: as a patron of social science research under state socialism, Friss was indeed acting like a 'broker between disparate institutional cultures, the agent who actually makes things happen [or prevents them from happening] by virtue of being able to comprehend and authoritatively to speak and interpret such differing idioms as that of politics, bureaucratic administration, various groups of professionals, and various academic and/or artistic fields'.[73] For Friss, this role included an element of tragedy too. While he tended to identify himself as an economist and, of course, wanted dearly to be (and to be seen as) a member of the community of professional economists, the latter tended to see him as a faraway (and high above) representative of another (hostile) world, that of the apparatchiks.[74] It seems that communist patronage was of necessity a project of loneliness and tragic frustration – a genuinely 'unproductive' activity, as it is defined in Marxian economics, brought to life and shaped by the particular conditions of a historical (and, thus, temporary) socio-political formation called socialism. In another world, even Friss could have had a chance to test his own talents as a professional economist. However, even then, he and his colleagues would have needed the support and protection patrons can render. One might hope, though, that there would have been no need for protection by purge.

know little, had already been transferred to other workplaces and that three new, politically reliable colleagues of worker and peasant origins had been employed.

[73] György Péteri, 'Patronage under Social-Democracy and State Socialism: A Comparative Study of Postwar Academic and Artistic Life in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe', theme description for the international workshop held in Trondheim, 13–17 Aug. 1999, accessible at: *http://www.hf.ntnu.no/peecs/PatronPro.htm*

[74] 'I know that Friss tried to protect us. Throughout, he tried to ensure that no one would get fired from the Institute. It was said, he had also exposed himself on our behalf . . . Friss behaved extremely correctly with us and gave expression to his disagreement with our removal [from the Institute]. This was quite clear from what he did [for us] although, of course, he would never tell us anything. After all, he was too loyal to the Party, he kept himself to the [Party] discipline too much openly to oppose a party resolution' (András Nagy in an interview with the author, Budapest, 21 and 27 Dec. 1988).

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