

Revolution and Counterrevolution

International Studies in Social History

*General Editor: Marcel van der Linden,
International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam*

Trade Unions, Immigration and Immigrants in Europe 1960–1993

Edited by Rinus Penninx and Judith Roosblad

Class and Other Identities

Edited by Lex Heerma van Voss and Marcel van der Linden

Rebellious Families

Edited by Jan Kok

Experiencing Wages

Edited by Peter Scholliers and Leonard Schwarz

The Imaginary Revolution

Michael Seidman

**REVOLUTION AND
COUNTERREVOLUTION**
Class Struggle in a Moscow Metal Factory

Kevin Murphy



Berghahn Books
NEW YORK • OXFORD

First published in 2005 by

Berghahn Books

www.BerghahnBooks.com

© 2005 Kevin Murphy

Reprinted in 2007

All rights reserved. Except for the quotation of short passages for the purposes of criticism and review, no part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system now known or to be invented, without written permission of the publisher.

Berghahn Books and the author would like to thank Europe-Asia Studies for permission to use the author's article in Chapter 5.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Murphy, Kevin (Kevin Joseph), Ph.D.

Revolution and counterrevolution : class struggle in a Moscow metal factory / by Kevin Murphy.
p. cm. -- (International studies in social history)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-57181-429-9 (alk. paper)

1. Working class--Soviet Union--History. 2. Labor--Soviet Union--History. 3. Social classes--Soviet Union--History. 4. Social conflict--Soviet Union--History. 5. Soviet Union--Social conditions--1917-1945. 6. Moskovskia metallurgicheskie zavod "Serp i molot". I. Title. II. Series.

HD8526.M79 2005

947.084'1--dc22

2004055430

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library.

Printed in Canada on acid-free paper.

CONTENTS

Archives	vi
Glossary of Terms	vii
Acknowledgements	ix
Introduction	1
1 The Emerging Working-Class Movement	9
2 Revolution and Collective Action, Civil War and Personal Survival	43
3 Class Conflict during the New Economic Policy	82
4 Everyday Life under Developing Stalinism	122
5 Catalysts for Dissent: Opposition Groups and Tendencies	155
6 The Stalinist Counterrevolution: Production for Production's Sake	186
Conclusion: Revolution versus Counterrevolution	224

ARCHIVES

Gosudarstvennyi archiv Rossiiskoi federatsii (GARF)
State Archive of the Russian Federation

Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi archiv ekonomiki (RGAE)
Russian State Archive of the Economy

Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi archiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI)
Russian State Archive of Social-Political History

Tsentr khraneniia dokumentov molodezhnykh organizatsii (TsKhDMO)
Center for Preservation of Records of Youth Organizations (to be merged
with RGASPI)

Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv g. Moskv (RGIAGM)
Russian State Historical Archive of Moscow

Tsentrāl'nyi Munitsipal'nyi archiv Moskv (TsMAM)
Central Municipal Archive of Moscow

Tsentrāl'nyi arkhiv obshchestvennykh dvizhenii Moskv (TsAODM)
Central Archive of Social Movements of Moscow

Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Moskovskoi oblasti (RGAMO) Central
State Archive of Moscow Oblast

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<i>brak</i>	defective output
<i>bedniak</i>	poor peasant
<i>khozraschet</i>	commercial cost accounting
<i>kolkhoz</i>	collective farm
<i>kulak</i>	rich peasant
Left SR	Left Socialist Revolutionary Party
MK	Moscow Committee of the Communist Party
MKG	Moscow City Party Committee
MKK	Moscow Control Commission of the Communist Party
MOPR	International Aid Society for Revolution Fighters
Narkomtrud	People's Commissariat of Labor
NEP	New Economic Policy
NKVD	People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs
Okhrana	Tsarist secret police
OGPU	Unified State Political Administration; political police
<i>otkhodnik</i>	peasant engaged in seasonal labor
<i>pud</i>	approximately 36 pounds
<i>raikom</i>	District Committee of the Communist Party
<i>subbotnik</i>	Voluntary workday
RSDLP	Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party
Rabkrin	Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate
RKK	Rates Conflict Commission
<i>samokritika</i>	self-criticism
<i>seredniak</i>	middle peasant

<i>sovkhoz</i>	state farm
<i>smychka</i>	link between town and country
SR	Socialist Revolutionary Party
Sovnarknom	Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarknom)
TNB	Norm Setting Bureau
Vesenkha	Supreme Council of the National Economy
VTsSPS	All-Union Central Trade Union Council
VKP(b)	All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)
VLKSM	All-Union Leninist Communist Youth League (the Komsomol)
VTsIK	All Union Central Executive Committee of Soviets
TsK	Central Committee of the Communist Party
TsKK	Central Control Commission of Communist Party
Zhenotdel	Women's Section of the Communist Party
ZRK	Closed Workers' Cooperative

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have aided me during the course of this project. I owe much of the strength of the study which follows to being in the right place at the right time, and surrounded by so much expertise, dedication to scholarship, and pure talent. I owe a special thanks to the peerless dissertation committee that supervised this project in the Comparative History Program at Brandeis University. I am grateful for their thoughtful comments and advice over a long and, at times, difficult process of research and writing. Gregory Freeze, the preeminent social historian of Russian and Soviet society, first suggested a systematic factory study and insisted that I pursue rigorously any and all archival materials, challenges which I have done my best to pursue. Donald Filtzer, the indisputable authority on the Soviet working class, made special arrangements to act as an outside reader and repeatedly inquired about the status of my “final” revisions of the manuscript. Without Don's friendship and belief in the importance of my project this book would never have seen the light of day. Antony Polonsky acted as committee chair and continued to offer encouragement long after his institutional relationship with the project had ended.

Among Antony's many words of wisdom, the most fortuitous was his suggestion that I contact Berghahn Books. Having heard a litany of horror stories from first-time authors who have published elsewhere, I have to say that I am absolutely elated with the professionalism and generosity with which my work has been handled by everyone at Berghahn Books and the Institute for Social History in Amsterdam. I thank Marion Berghahn for her advice and her patience during an extended delay after the birth of my son Peter. Catherine Kirby meticulously copy edited the entire manuscript and Christine Marciniak did a remarkable job typesetting the book. Vivian Berghahn and Michael Dempsey responded promptly to a seemingly endless string of inquiries I posed about the mysterious production process, which turns out to have been not quite as mysterious as I had imagined. Andrew Esson deployed his considerable artistic talent in designing a cover that does credit to the story it introduces. Marcel van der Linden's enthusiastic com-

ments reassured me that my work was important enough to reach a wider audience beyond Russian specialists, and Kristina Graaff developed a marketing strategy to make sure that this would happen. Two anonymous readers offered very constructive and detailed criticisms. I hope that I have done their suggestions justice.

The American Council of Teachers of Russian and the Comparative History Program at Brandeis University sponsored several of my trips to Russia. Numerous scholars offered thoughtful comments on parts of this manuscript. I owe a special thanks to Brian Kelly, whose scholarship in American labor history sets a high standard and whose close reading of this study improved it immeasurably, and to Jan Plamper, Frank Schauff, Michael David Fox, Sally Boniece, Wendy Goldman, and Jeffery Rossman for their many suggestions. My colleagues at the University of Massachusetts at Boston—Lester Bartson and Esther Kingston-Mann—generously offered their encouragement and advice.

This project involved five lengthy research trips to Moscow, none of which would have been possible—or productive—without the help and support offered by many historians, archivists, friends, and family. I offer special thanks to the Moscow archive expert, Leonid Wientraub, a dear friend without whom this project would have been impossible. I also want to thank Lena Drozdova, Marina Dobronovskaia, and all of the many archivists who generously assisted me during my visits. Andrei Sokolov kindly pointed me in the right direction during my first trip to Moscow. Alexei Gusev and Simon Pirani challenged many of my assumptions about the Russian Revolution and repeatedly reminded me about the importance of critical, non-dogmatic Marxism. Philip Gerstein reviewed literally hundreds of my Russian translations. I also want to thank Bob Dahlgren, Kaveh Afrasiabi, James and Jodi Murphy, and Cathy and George Woods for their friendship. James and Else Murphy gave me the freedom to pursue my dreams. Oksana and Peter gave me their love and tolerated the long hours it took to finally finish this book.

Last, but not least, I want to acknowledge the intellectual and personal contributions of the many international socialists I worked with over a period of fifteen years, from whom I have learned much. For revolutionary socialists, the problem of understanding the fate of Russian Revolution has always meant far more than it has for the small community of academics who have grappled with it intellectually. The “Russian Question” remains, even after the collapse of Stalinism, one of the central issues that those who seek to change the world must confront and answer. How was a movement based on egalitarianism and freedom transformed into a system based on exploitation and repression? In many ways this book is my answer to questions that I started to ask as a teenager sneaking into the stacks of Princeton’s Firestone Library. I will not feign neutrality on the two topics that frame the Russian Revolution: October and Stalinism. There is no doubt in my mind that the Marxists got it right. Leon Trotsky and Tony Cliff provided the theoretical groundwork for much of my understanding of the Russian Revolution, while Victor Serge acted as the “conscience” of the Revolution by giving it such an

inspirational and principled voice. I especially want to thank Brian Kelly, Ahmed Shawki, David Crouch, Mike Haynes, Alpna Mehta, John Charlton, Sebastian Budgen, and Bill Roberts for helping me keep things in perspective over the last ten years. If this book offers even just a few insights for those actively involved in fighting for a better world, then my efforts will have been worth it.

kevinj.murphy@umb.edu
January 2005

In Memory of
James Harold Murphy II

INTRODUCTION

The opening of the archives of the former Soviet Union has altered fundamentally the study of the most globally significant social upheaval of the twentieth century, presenting historians of the Russian Revolution with both exciting opportunities and awesome challenges. The “hidden transcript” of the sentiments and actions of ordinary people, which social historians in Western Europe and North America have labored so painstakingly to recover in recent years,¹ has until now been left almost entirely unexamined in Soviet historiography. Archival limitations compelled even the most diligent and objective historians to reconcile themselves to a predominantly top-down view of the Soviet state’s attempt to realize changing goals and priorities. The availability of new sources means that it is now possible, for the first time, to measure the reliability of prevailing historiography against an empirically grounded reconstruction of working-class life in the revolutionary era.

The astounding variety and volume of newly accessible primary materials that focus on the working class is not accidental. Not just Soviet authorities, but all contemporary contestants recognized the combativeness and potential power of Russian workers in the early twentieth century. *Revolution and Counterrevolution* attempts to fill a long-vacant gap in the study of the Russian working class by providing the first systematic, archival-driven study to span the revolutionary era. It examines that period through the prism of a single strategically important factory, tracing the fluctuations in shop floor activism and bringing the voices of workers themselves to bear on the central questions about the character of the Russian Revolution and the origins of the Stalinist system.

For the better part of the last fifty years, the historiography of the Russian Revolution was inextricably bound up in the all-consuming confrontation known as the Cold War. The stakes in that debate were extremely high: its outcome would determine not merely the ascendancy of one or another school of scholarly thought, but also the ideological legitimacy of each of the two preeminent world powers. Western scholarship was dominated by what Stephen Cohen has aptly termed the “continuity thesis,” which posited an

Notes for this section begin on page 7.

uncomplicated, natural evolution from early Bolshevik organizational practice to the Gulags. These accounts typically began by holding up Lenin's *What Is to Be Done?* as an embryonic dictatorial blueprint, fully developed well before the Revolution. From here it was but a short step to the assertion that a conspiratorial minority had seized power in 1917 through a coup d'état, monopolized the state for its own purposes, and created the totalitarian party-state. Through iron discipline and brutal terror, the Bolsheviks subsequently prevailed in the Civil War of 1918-1921, but the exhausted victors were forced to retreat temporarily during the New Economic Policy (NEP, 1921-1928). Driven by ideological zealotry, the thesis concludes, the totalitarian machine then proceeded to pulverize society. State-imposed collectivization, forced rapid industrialization, and mass terror are thus viewed as organic elements in an inevitable process driven by the Bolsheviks' inner totalitarian logic.²

For its part, the Soviet academy took up the gauntlet thrown down by critics of the USSR, mirroring Western efforts in the battle to construct a usable past. Lewis Siegelbaum and Ronald Suny have characterized the Soviet academy's glowing, uncomplicated rendering of the past as the "Immaculate Conceptualization" of the Soviet working class.³ The depiction of the steady and heroic march of the Soviet people from 1917 toward Communism under the leadership of the party was an inverted image of the "Original Sin" version put forward by Western academics. Soviet scholars advanced linear accounts purged of contingency, in which alternative political strategies and possibilities were trivialized or completely ignored, and which depicted ordinary Soviet citizens as passive followers of the dictates of an unerring party.

Few issues in Soviet historiography have been more contested than that of working-class attitudes toward the evolution of the Stalinist system. "It would be hard to imagine an interpretive controversy with the opposing sides farther apart," Stephen Kotkin has argued, noting that historians depict "either disgruntled workers who despised the regime or contented workers who applauded it."⁴ As the government claimed to rule in the name of the proletariat, questions about the relationship between the state and the working class encompass issues crucial to an understanding of Soviet society. How did a movement that promised thoroughgoing social equality transform into its opposite—a system of exploitation and repression? Why did the most unruly proletariat of the century come to tolerate the ascendancy of a political and economic system that, by every conceivable measure, proved antagonistic to working-class interests?

Scholarly responses to these problems have been framed by the ideological imperatives of the Cold War rather than by a thorough analysis of archival sources. An integral component of the continuity thesis is the mass "Red Terror." While most of the historiography on terror focuses on the 1930s, even studies of early Soviet labor have attempted to explain the demise of working-class militancy by echoing continuity arguments with grossly inflated estimates about early state repression, concentration camps, and coercion.⁵

Rejecting Cold War-inspired paradigms, many "revisionist" scholars of the 1980s leaned too far in the opposite direction, naively repeating argu-

ments by Soviet historians and inflating the level of support for Stalinism. While historians could draw on a mountain of empirical data to prove popular participation during the epochal events of 1917,⁶ several historians rather clumsily tried to do the same for Stalin's "revolution." Attempts to demonstrate such popular support legitimized a revisionist version of the continuity thesis, positing that various Stalinist campaigns were indeed "radical," that they authentically had reflected popular aspirations.⁷ This "revisionist" body of work—constructed, like the scholarship it targeted, on scant archival evidence of workers' sentiments—has left a lasting impression on the field, particularly among U.S. scholars.⁸ Yet fifteen years after the doors to the archives swung wide open, not a single source-driven study has supported either of the contending speculative arguments—that workers were either terrorized by the early Soviet state or impressed with Stalinism.

More recently, the postmodern (or linguistic) trend has challenged both the meaning and utility of class as an analytical method for understanding the past. At its inception, as Alex Callinicos has shown, postmodernism reflected the failed aspirations of the French New Left and the rightward drift of many former Marxists who had rejected class as the fundamental division in society. The refusal to ground societal power relations within the class structures of capitalism not only led postmodernists to pessimistic conclusions about the future, but also made it harder to attribute any coherence to the past. While postmodernism cloaks itself in a veneer of sophistication, it offers no new tools for historians.⁹ In a summary of recent trends in European labor history, Lex Heerma van Voss and Marcel van der Linden similarly situate the rise of postmodernism within the right shift in European and American politics in the 1980s and 1990s. While the optimism of the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s inspired a generation of historians to reconstruct "history from below" by exploring the actions and recovering the voices of working people, a sharp decline in labor's fortunes over the next two decades created the context for the pessimism that permeates much of the postmodern vision. While van Voss and van der Linden criticize the postmodern drift for its retreat from overarching interpretations and argue for a return to the "Grand Narrative" to explain the past, they applaud the call to integrate gender, religion, ethnicity, and non-workplace experience into the fabric of working-class history.¹⁰ Indeed, the need for serious attention to the many-sided complexity of working-class experience is now almost universally accepted among labor historians, though this consensus cannot be attributed to the postmodernist mantra.

The postmodern turn came rather belatedly to Soviet labor studies, occurring almost simultaneously with the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the opening of its archives. At a conference in 1990, prominent labor historians asserted that the new methodology would offer qualitative advances over the previously dominant social history. Several scholars claimed that a more textured view of Russian and Soviet labor could be drawn if historians turned away from their concern with class formation and class conflict in the factories and instead shifted their focus to workers' lives outside the workplace. The linguistic influence inspired a call for close inves-

tigation of the “language of class” and to reduce class to merely one of many “contested” identities.¹¹

Several works demonstrate that postmodernism provides neither the theoretical framework nor the methodical tools necessary to address the larger interpretive questions about the Soviet working class. In his *Magnetic Mountain*, Steven Kotkin has the confidence to address these issues, but his study of “power at the micro-level” is tainted by the postmodernist proclivity to view language as the source of power relations, with workers “speaking Bolshevik.” In his conclusion Kotkin cites a 1931 visitor to Magnitogorsk who recalled the piled corpses of starved peasants who had frozen to death after being forced to live in tents during the winter, and later wrote, “The cemetery grew faster than the steel works.” Hostile to a materialist explanation for the rise of Stalinism, however, Kotkin concludes with a bizarre and indefensible assertion on the same page that the regime’s self-congratulatory claim that “the recognized evils of capitalism” had been overcome “was available to quell even the deepest doubts” among workers.¹² Like Kotkin, David Hoffman crudely associates Stalinism with socialism, asserting that the industrialization of the 1930s “represented a moment of truth for the Bolshevik Revolution—a Marxist revolution in an overwhelmingly peasant country.” Yet Hoffman largely avoids theoretical questions about Stalinism, focusing instead on reconstructing the “social identity” of peasant in-migrants to Moscow, attempting to do so by incorporating a mere handful of archival workers’ quotations.¹³ Matthew Payne’s more serious monograph on the construction of the Turksib railway includes a chronicle of brutal attacks perpetrated by ethnic Russians against Kazhakh workers. Payne takes the “equal opportunity” approach to identity fetishism to absurd levels, protesting that, “Race should not be privileged above other fundamental divisions in the Soviet working class, such as peasant worker versus urban worker or Stakhanovite versus the ‘selfish workers.’” Yet Payne’s own evidence shows that race *was* the most divisive issue—certainly more significant than tensions caused by the Stakhanov movement that only started seven years later. At a loss to explain the dynamic of the ethnic tensions that he describes, Payne offers only the tautological assertion that the racism surged on Turksib because of “a crisis of identity.”¹⁴

Several pre-archival studies point the way toward an approach that moves beyond the simplistic Cold War stereotypes and the profound confusion of postmodernism. These works frame the evolution of Stalinism as a process aimed at whittling away the power workers had won in 1917. E.H. Carr and R.W. Davies detail the intensification of the labor process in their seminal—but frequently overlooked—study of Soviet society during NEP. Rather than state repression, strike actions were avoided by trade union intervention, as over six million workers turned to arbitration in industrial disputes. Chris Ward’s study of cotton workers shows that in 1923 the regime was “more than willing to accommodate itself to the workforce,” but later, “as the 1920s drew to a close, there was a move away from compromises and toward something resembling mobilization on the part of the government.” Michal Reiman posits that the change in state policy “cannot be understood without

considering the profound social, political, and economic crisis that erupted at the very height of NEP.” The state response entailed bringing together “forces that were to become the vehicles of extremist solutions” and required a ruling social stratum, “separated from the people and hostilely disposed toward it.” Moreover, Reiman rejects the absurd identification of Stalinism with socialism: “These two systems of ideas are not only different; in many respects they are diametrically opposed.” In the most compelling scholarly study to date, Donald Filtzer argues that Stalinism arose against the backdrop of an increasingly divided and apolitical working class. Preoccupied with personal survival, workers found the means to subvert and challenge the state, but they did so on less favorable and less overtly confrontational terms than previously.¹⁵

Revolution and Counterrevolution attempts to build on the strengths of the rich but limited pre-archival studies that have avoided the crude Cold War methodology. Rather than picking and choosing anecdotal data to reconstruct events, a systematic archival study of a strategically important metal factory restricts the selection of source materials and minimizes the issue of bias. The central role of the factory in Soviet society has encouraged several Western historians to follow the example set by Soviet scholars.¹⁶ It was in their workplaces that Russian workers forged an unprecedented sense of class solidarity and power; here that socialists succeeded in infusing the labor movement with revolutionary politics; and here that both Tsarist and Soviet authorities focused their social engineering efforts. Moreover, the Soviet factory was much more than just a place of employment—it lay at the very heart of workers’ civic life. As Kenneth Straus has argued, the Soviet factory acted as the community-organizing center for food and housing distribution, as well as workers’ leisure activities.¹⁷

Because the party and the state devoted extraordinary effort, over a long period of time, to winning the hearts and minds of rank-and-file metalworkers, the Hammer and Sickle Factory¹⁸ (Guzhon or Moscow Metalworks Company for the pre-Soviet period) provides a potentially unequalled source base for a case history of workers’ attitudes toward the Revolution and their acquiescence in or support for the development of Stalinism. Central Committee members spoke regularly at the plant, the party produced one of the earliest factory newspapers, and metalworkers located in a high-priority industry in the political center enjoyed considerable material advantages compared to their counterparts in other industries and locales. If Soviet workers generally exhibited a sense of “terror” in their relations with the state in early Soviet society, or later volunteered their support for Stalinism, one would reasonably expect that evidence of such sentiments could be found in the largest metal factory in the capital.

A rich and diverse document base provides the foundation for the most extensive archival study of the Russian working class during the Revolutionary era. Three factory-specific collections in the Central Archive of Social Movements of Moscow (TsAODM), the Central Municipal Archive of Moscow (TsMAM), and the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) offer an unparalleled source base for a view of worker-state relations. For the

prerevolutionary period, Tsarist secret police (Okhrana), factory inspector, management, and owners' association reports and announcements are utilized, supplemented with pertinent material from workers' autobiographies. For 1917, management, press reports, factory committee, union, and party records illustrate the general trajectory of events, with workers' memoirs employed as supplementary material when their general accuracy can be verified in contemporary sources. Factory and shop-level union and party minutes offer a largely untapped view of workers' discussions, grievances, and activity for the early revolutionary period through NEP, along with factory announcements and anonymous notes to speakers. Soviet, party, and union summaries (*svodki*) are included but not emphasized in reconstructing events during the 1920s.¹⁹ All historians who study the period after 1928 will encounter a source problem that mirrors the repressive descent of the regime. While open and vibrant discussion on various issues was the norm during the early revolutionary period, the state's most ardent loyalists at the factory level later attempted to curb public pronouncements against state policies, and were largely successful in doing so. *Svodki* and factory newspaper (*Martenovka*) articles offer invaluable insights on workers' dissent, the effects of intimidation campaigns, and party corruption at the grassroots level.

The book is chronological for the pre-revolutionary, revolutionary, and First Five-Year Plan, and thematic for the NEP period. The focus on NEP is intentional: this was the golden era for documentary evidence about Soviet society, precisely because lively and animated voices from below could still be heard. This was also the period in which Stalinism clashed head-on with the ideals of 1917. Extensive evidence shows that the late NEP rift between state and society extended beyond class conflict (Chapter 3) to developments in diverse areas of workers' day-to-day lives (Chapter 4), and formal opposition politics (Chapter 5).

Every historian must choose which questions to ask and what topics are most important, even when the arena of study is a single factory. Marxism provides the theoretical framework for understanding the contours of the Russian Revolution and Stalinism. The simple but pithy passage from the first page of the *Communist Manifesto* about class struggle is utilized because a grasp of the dynamics of "now hidden, now open fight" between exploiter and exploited is absolutely critical to understanding both Russian and Soviet society. The continual conflict between employers and workers over the surplus value produced by labor included disputes over work hours, wages, and the intensity of work, but also less overtly economic issues such as benefits to women, religious holidays, and workers' behavior inside and outside the workplace. At times labor grievances took on a political dimension—particularly during 1917 when class conflict escalated into class warfare. The multiple issues over which workers' desires and state priorities clashed are examined in the context of a constantly changing relationship between rank-and-file workers and the state. The explicit emphasis on workers' grievances and their willingness or unwillingness to challenge management and regime is viewed as integral to the development (and later demise) of the proletariat as a class "for itself." Class unity and the decline—later

absence—of this solidarity are treated as the central historical problems of the Russian Revolution.

Stalinism is defined in this monograph as the long-term trend and interest of the state bureaucracy as it developed into an exploitative class in opposition to the proletariat.²⁰ While the Marxist analysis provides the most convincing framework for understanding the political economy of the Soviet Union, very little systematic archival work has been done from any perspective to explain the advent of Stalinism in the factories and the role of the working class during the transformation. *Revolution and Counterrevolution* aims, therefore, to plot a new course in the study of Soviet working-class history—one that avoids both the condescension of Cold War historiography and the incoherence offered by the linguistic turn.

Notes

1. The notion of the “hidden transcript” was pioneered by James C. Scott in his *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, 1985) and has been applied with positive effect in the fields of American labor and African-American history. See, for example, Robin G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Depression* (Chapel Hill, 1990).
2. Stephen Cohen, *Rethinking the Soviet Experience: Politics and History Since 1917* (New York, 1985), 1-74.
3. Lewis Siegelbaum and Ronald Suny, “Class Backwards? In Search of the Soviet Working Class” in *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity*, Siegelbaum and Suny eds. (Ithaca, NY, 1994), 13. I.I. Mints, *Istoriia velikogo oktiabria*, 3 vols. (Moscow, 1967-1973).
4. Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization* (Berkeley, 1995), 199-200.
5. For example, Jonathan Aves in *Workers against Lenin: Labor Protest and the Bolshevik Dictatorship* (New York, 1996) argues that workers’ grievances during the Civil War were based on the state’s coercive labor strategy, rather than on the material conditions attendant to near-total economic collapse. Similarly, Diane Koenker in “Labor Relations in Socialist Russia: Class Values and Production Values in the Printers’ Union, 1917-1921,” in *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity*, 192, contends that while workers “might engage in ‘stoppages,’ by 1921 a ‘strike’ was a serious political act and punished accordingly,” and asserts, that the socialism that emerged from the Civil War “relied on the power of the state agencies—the Cheka and the concentration camp—to ensure adherence to its centrally defined goals and policies.” Andrew Pospelovsky, in “Strikes During the NEP,” *Revolutionary Russia*, 10, 1 (June 1997), notes that after 1922 reports of worker arrests were rare but suggests that it is “likely that leading shop-floor organizers were arrested in the general roundups of ‘anti-Soviet’ elements, Socialist Revolutionaries, Mensheviks, and ‘members’ of other political parties.”
6. David Mandel, *The Petrograd Workers and the Soviet Seizure of Power* (London, 1984); S.A. Smith, *Red Petrograd: Revolution in the Factories 1917-1918* (Cambridge, 1983); Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power: The Revolution of 1917 in Petrograd* (New York, 1976); Diane Koenker, *Moscow Workers and the 1917 Revolution* (Princeton, 1981).
7. William Chase in *Workers, Society, and the Soviet State: Labor and Life in Moscow, 1918-1929* (Urbana, Ill., 1987) 299, claims that in 1928-1929 “the party and workers, especially

- urban workers, reformed the old alliance of 1917-1918.” Arch Getty in *Origins of the Great Purges: The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933-1938* (Cambridge, 1985), 206, asserts popular support for the purges, which was a “radical, even hysterical, reaction to bureaucracy.” Lynne Viola, in *The Best Fathers and Sons of the Fatherland: Workers in the Vanguard of Collectivization* (Oxford, 1987), 215, argues that in the countryside it was “the most active supporters of the revolution from among the working class” who “helped to implement the Stalin revolution.” Sheila Fitzpatrick in “Cultural Revolution as Class War,” *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931* (Bloomington, 1978), 25, asserts a positive response to Stalinist rhetoric, particularly among Komsomol members whom she describes as “enthusiasts of Cultural Revolution.”
8. David Shearer, in *Industry, State, and Society in Stalin's Russia, 1926-1934* (Ithaca, NY, 1996), 14, claims that Stalin was able “to draw on significant working class support” for an alliance whose existence is now an “increasingly accepted view.”
 9. Alex Callinicos, *Against Postmodernism: A Marxist Critique* (Cambridge, 1989).
 10. Lex Heerma van Voss and Marcel van der Linden eds., Introduction to *Class and Other Identities: Gender, Religion and Ethnicity in the Writing of European Labour History* (New York, 2002).
 11. Siegelbaum and Suny, “Class Backwards? In Search of the Soviet Working Class” in *Making Workers Soviet*.
 12. Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*, 198-237, 359.
 13. David Hoffman, *Peasant Metropolis: Social Identities in Moscow, 1929-1941* (Ithaca, 1994), 36-40, 61, 116, 124, 197, 198.
 14. Matthew J. Payne, *Stalin's Railroad: Turksib and the Building of Socialism* (Pittsburgh, 2001), 126-155.
 15. E.H. Carr and R.W. Davies, *Foundations of a Planned Economy* (London, 1969), 1:545; Chris Ward, *Russia's Cotton Workers and the New Economic Policy* (Cambridge, 1990), 261; Michal Reiman, *The Birth of Stalinism* (Bloomington, 1987), 115-122; Donald Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and Stalinist Industrialization* (New York, 1988).
 16. S. Kostiuhenko et al. *Istoriia kirovskogo zavoda (1917-1945)*, (Moscow 1966). Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*; Clayton Black, “Manufacturing Communists: ‘Krasnyi Putilovets’ and the Politics of Soviet Industrialization, 1923-1932” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, 1996).
 17. Kenneth M. Straus, *Factory and Community in Stalin's Russia* (Pittsburgh, 1997).
 18. The common English translation of “serp i molot” is used throughout the text but is reversed—the literal translation is “sickle and hammer.”
 19. On *svodki* as sources, see Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia* (Cambridge, 1997), 1-19.
 20. Tony Cliff, *Russia: A Marxist Analysis* (London, 1955).

THE EMERGING WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT

“Find the ones at the factory who are the worst scoundrels and
who set the tone for others.”

—Mayor’s office memorandum to Okhrana, June 1912

Iulii Petrovich Guzhon, the largest shareholder of the Moscow Metalworks and president of the Moscow Society of Factory and Mill Owners (MSFMO), addressed the society’s annual convention in March 1913. The French-born industrial mogul congratulated his colleagues for their steadfast unity and for “creating for themselves a conception of the might of the industrial corporation that could not be ignored.” The most important responsibility for the group’s newest members, he reminded them, was guarding “the prestige of that might.”¹

Guzhon’s confident posturing caught the attention of one of the factory owners’ principal adversaries. Ten days later, in the pages of *Pravda*, the Bolshevik leader Vladimir Ilyich Lenin described the presentation as “full of arrogance” and “reminiscent of the speech of some army clerk.” In their annual report, the owners had expressed concern over the “frequency of the demonstration strikes, which happen one after another, and the unusual variety and difference in the importance of motives for which workers considered it necessary to interrupt work.” Significantly, the report detected “not only a considerable thickening of the political atmosphere, but also the decline of factory discipline.” In response, industrialists resolved to adopt “severe measures,” including the imposition of fines, the retraction of bonuses and—in extreme cases—lockouts. Increasing Russia’s industrial output, they resolved, “urgently demands the raising of factory discipline to the high level at which it stands in the Western European countries.” Although “the factory owners wish to raise ‘discipline’ to the ‘Western’ level,” Lenin retorted, they showed no such proclivity for “raising the ‘political atmosphere’ to the same level.”²

Despite the employers' acknowledgment that they faced renewed labor militancy, the 1912 statistics compiled by the owners showed that they had been slightly more successful at defeating economic strikes. Lenin countered that in comparison to the previous year, most of the 1912 stoppages were *offensive* actions in which workers had fought for improved conditions, and in which a new sense of determination was evident, with workers willing to stay out for longer periods of time. "You are wrong, you gentlemen who own the factories! Even in the economic sense, to say nothing of the political strikes, the workers' gains are terrifying."³

The intransigence evident in the perspectives of Guzhon and Russian capital on one side and Lenin and the newly reawakened workers' movement on the other is indicative of the deep social rift that had developed in the years before the war. Leopold Haimson has shown that, far from being diverted from the path of gradual and peaceful reform by the war, prerevolutionary Russian society was racked with widespread urban unrest and mounting class confrontation. Socialists intervened in these developments, playing "a significant catalytic role" in the revival of working-class militancy, particularly evident in the activity of the Bolsheviks in St. Petersburg.⁴ This notion of chronic "social instability" exacerbated by the conscious intervention of revolutionaries can be extended to describe most of the first third of the twentieth century.

A survey of developments in Guzhon's metal factory prior to 1917 reveals a number of key aspects in the evolution of the workers' movement. First, how did the volatile shifts in the political climate change the confidence and mood of the workers and management? Second, a variety of workplace institutions (legal—including Tsarist and management, semi-legal, and illegal) competed for labor support. To what extent did these bodies gain workers' trust and participation? Third, the workers' movement eventually overcame many obstacles and imposed an ethos of solidarity upon a workforce divided by multiple and overlapping loyalties. What factors contributed to weakening these divisions and forging unity among employees against their employer and, conversely, what caused these sectional differences to be reinforced?

Background

Guzhon's huge metalworks epitomized the main features of Russian industrial development, embodying the striking contradictions that flowed from the autocracy's late, halfhearted conversion to modernization. By the time industrialization finally began to sink deep roots in Russian soil in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the country's political and economic backwardness meant that manufacturing developed, according to Leon Trotsky, in a "combined and uneven" manner, incorporating some of the most modern aspects of capitalism, such as huge industrial enterprises, side by side with the most backward elements.

Under military pressure from its wealthier European rivals, the Tsarist state had extracted a far greater relative portion of the people's wealth than its

competitors in the West (a feature that would later characterize Soviet society as well), which extended the longevity of a stagnant and brutal feudal regime and imposed harsh impoverishment on its subjects. The absence of an indigenous nascent bourgeoisie meant that the state and foreign capital played unusually prominent roles. Russian society made up for its late conversion to industry with an astounding pace of growth, doubling between 1905 and 1914. Moreover, Russian industry diverged from the path of incremental development that had been evident earlier in Europe, where industry developed from small artisans' workshops to slightly larger enterprises and eventually large industrial factories. Russia largely skipped the intermediary stage: by the start of the war, nearly half of Russian enterprises employed more than a thousand workers. Significantly, however, Lenin's quip about the flagrant discrepancy between economic dynamism and political stagnation in prewar Russia exposed one of the critical features of Russia's industrial evolution. Political advances clearly did not match economic development: workers labored twelve hours a day and were regarded legally as peasants excluded from even token participation in Russian civil society. The exceptional concentration of industrial workers in colossal enterprises; the failure of political reforms; the intense character of government persecution; and the impulsiveness of an unruly proletariat all combined to produce an extraordinary level of political strikes with the potential to shake Russian society to its core.⁵

The importance of machine building, railways, and armaments placed metal production at the center of Russia's industrial revolution. By 1917, the metal industry employed more than 60 percent of St. Petersburg's four hundred thousand workers. Moscow industry was more diverse, yet even in "calico" Moscow (so-called because of the predominance of textiles) fifty-seven thousand metal workers outnumbered textile workers by seven thousand by 1917. Government war contracts drove the 40 percent expansion of Moscow's industry. By 1917 Moscow had two hundred thousand industrial workers, over half employed in enterprises of more than five hundred workers.⁶

The son of a French merchant who owned a silk factory in Moscow, Iulii Petrovich Guzhon had invested his family fortune in Russia's burgeoning metal market. Arriving in Moscow in 1871, Guzhon worked alongside his brother to construct and then manage a nail factory. In 1883 he opened the Moscow Metalworks, employing two hundred workers in a rolled metal shop. A voracious demand for metal and the ready availability of a large pool of cheap labor permitted Guzhon to expand his enterprise during the economic boom of the late nineteenth century. Employing two thousand workers by 1900, it was the largest metal factory in Moscow, and through its operation Guzhon reaped nearly a million rubles in profit a year.⁷

Guzhon's values personified both the paternalism and intransigence of Russian corporate liberalism. Among the Moscow industrial community, he was considered an enlightened industrialist—assisting workers in need, setting up a workers' cooperative, helping workers construct dachas, allowing regular church services in the plant, and offering his employees a three-year technical course.⁸ In 1895 the factory opened a school for workers' children because, Guzhon asserted, "if workers know that education for their chil-