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# Making the Command Economy: Western Historians on Soviet Industrialization

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Like other aspects of Stalinism, Soviet industrialization has seldom been viewed neutrally, but rather has been treated normatively as either a superior form of transition from agrarian to industrial society or as a disastrous and misguided alternative to the proven path of “free enterprise.” In the West, various theoretical conceptualizations have replaced or overlapped one another as popular and political attitudes toward the USSR shifted. Until recently, Soviet commentators viewed the industrial revolution carried out by the Stalinist party/state as an enormous achievement (*dostizhenie*) essential both to the economic and social modernization of the USSR and indispensable for its survival in the face of aggressive enemies to the west and east.

Such a perspective was offered by Mikhail Gorbachev in his speech on Soviet history on the eve of the seventieth anniversary of the October Revolution, where he referred to the Stalinist policy of industrialization – rapid, forced, and disproportionately investing in heavy industry – as “the only possible path in those conditions, even though it was inconceivably difficult for the country and the people.” “In those conditions,” Gorbachev went on, “when the feeling of the threat of imperialist aggression was growing rapidly the Party strengthened its conviction that it was necessary not just to cover but to literally race across, in the shortest possible historical span, the distance from the sledgehammer and the peasant’s wooden plow to a developed industry, without which the entire cause of the Revolution would have inevitably perished.”<sup>1</sup> Not only was industrialization necessary for self-defense, but in the view of Marxist–Leninists, a socialist society was impossible to achieve except on the basis of industrialization. Since both ideology and reality compelled the choice for industrialism, the only legitimate grounds for debate concerned the form in which it was carried out – through the direction of what Gorbachev termed the “administrative-command system.”

Non-Soviet Marxists, from the Mensheviks to Herbert Marcuse, have elaborated alternative analyses that, while accepting the need for industrialization, have highlighted the antagonistic relationship between the directors of the industrialization process and the primary producers. Much of the appeal of the literature inspired by Trotsky came from its identification of an alien stratum (or class) of bureaucrats that exploited the Soviet workers. Here the essentially manipulative and exploitative nature of Stalinist industrialization has been challenged as excessively repressive, unnecessary, and fundamentally anti-Marxist. “In the

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USSR, in our view,” wrote Bruno Rizzi in his particular formulation of the problem, “it is the bureaucrats who are the owners, for it is they who hold power in their hands. It is they who manage the economy, just as was normal with the bourgeoisie. It is they who take the profits, just as do all exploiting classes, who fix wages and prices. I repeat – it is the bureaucrats. The workers count for nothing in the governing of society.”<sup>2</sup> The long and rich debates in the Mensheviks’ emigré journal, *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, between various Trotskyist groups, and between independent Marxists and their liberal/conservative critics were largely carried on without much basic empirical research on the Soviet economy and society and relied on deductions made from underlying theoretical and moral principles. But they were exceptionally influential on those leftist intellectuals who stood precariously between the confident vision of communist parties and the pessimism of the totalitarian school.

For theorists of totalitarianism, like Carl J. Friedrich, Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, and W. W. Rostow, who saw political dominance of all spheres of life as the key to understanding Soviet society, the ruling elite was not only exploitative but malevolently committed to the goal of total control of society. Whatever the specific social makeup of the regime or economic structure, industrialization was an important part of the expansionist state’s relentless takeover of all autonomous space within society and the destruction of the individual. “Soviet industrial expansion. . . destroys traditional bonds, creates a situation of great social mobility, and results in population shifts and the weakening of nationality lines.”<sup>3</sup> Here the draconian labor legislation and the support of the principle of “one-man management” (*edinonachalie*), the state integration of the trade unions, and the breakup of autonomous forms of worker organization, like the *artel* (in which workers pooled resources and wages), were all part of a single unified drive to eliminate all aspects of social independence. Even the directors of industry were controlled by fear: “In its combination of autocratic control from above, party stimulation and police informers, acclamatory participation and popular ritual, the factory in a sense is a small-scale replica of the pattern of controls and of the hierarchy of decision making characteristic of the Soviet Union in general.”<sup>4</sup> In Rostow’s collectively drafted synthesis, *The Dynamics of Soviet Society* (1953), each economic decision was predicated on a careful calculation of how it would contribute to the expansion of the power of the dictator internally and of the USSR internationally. “What is distinctive about the Soviet regime [in contrast to authoritarian regimes like Ataturk’s Turkey] is the extreme priority it accords to the pursuit of the goal of its own power, as opposed to a national program reflecting the aspirations of its citizens.”<sup>5</sup>

For the totalitarian school, now enjoying a revival among post-Soviet intellectuals, state socialism was equivalent to fascism, and the different levels of economic development or the noncapitalist nature of one and the capitalist essence of the other were largely irrelevant, as were the questions of who ruled and who benefited that divided the Marxists. “Such questions as who holds formal title to property, how ‘profits,’ that is to say, rewards, are determined, and whether former owners and decision makers continue to hold positions, provided they conform to the regime’s commands, are of relatively minor significance. What is decisive is the overpowering reality of totalitarian central control by the dictator and his party.”<sup>6</sup>

The long reign of the totalitarian model coincided with the years of the Cold War and its slow thaw, and its emphasis on the similarity between fascism and communism and the

radical difference between capitalist democracies and totalitarianism were ideologically employed in the postwar reconstruction of alliances. The decades of coexistence and detente (1960s–1970s), on the other hand, saw the rise of theories that emphasized the similarity in the overall patterns of development in both East and West. The modernization school and its first cousin, convergence theory, argued that objective determinants such as technology and expertise would lead the Soviet Union toward a future not unlike that of the United States. The optimism of this view was expressed by one of its foremost proponents, Clark Kerr: “The empire of industrialism will embrace the whole world; and such similarities as it decrees will penetrate the outermost points of its sphere of influence and its sphere comes to be universal.”<sup>7</sup> Here technology and the commonality of industrial structures were as determinant as politics in the totalitarian model. Fruitfully, however, the move away from the abstractions of totalitarianism opened the way for important observation and empirical work.

A telling example of the work of the late 1950s–early 1960s was David Granick’s study of Soviet managers.<sup>8</sup> In stark contrast to the politics-dominated totalitarian view, Granick wrote about a much more open system in which bargaining and negotiation took place. Interest-group conflicts exploded the monolithic exercise of power by a single authority from above. Rather than emphasizing the differences between East and West, Granick argued that under the skin American and Soviet managers were brothers. “When one thinks of the underlying constraints common to both the American and Russian industrial systems, it is not really so surprising to find similarities between management practices and environments. In both countries, a rapidly growing, modern industrial structure has been built. Both nations have been dominated by frontier aspirations, with a worship of size, speed, and material success. Both share the common traditions of a European-dominated culture. . . . The list of fundamental differences between the American and Russian ways of life is a long one. . . . but there are also similarities, and one finds them in particular when looking at the ways of administration and business management.”<sup>9</sup> Granick concluded that the managers in Russian industry did not constitute a separate class but were closely allied to Communist party officials, and together they ran the USSR. “The Red Executive is very much an independent business man,” he claimed, and neither the organization man nor the party boss was any longer revolutionary. The thrust of the argument is clearly detentist.

Instead of democracy or dictatorship by an autocratic party boss, the ultimate fate of both East and West was likely to be technocracy, a sharing of power between experts and politicians. Once again, as in totalitarianism, the historical specifics of the Soviet experience were blurred for comparative purposes, and the role of ideology and culture largely eliminated. Moreover the overly optimistic notion that industrialism would more or less inevitably and globally lead to greater equality and democracy was belied by observable trends in many countries where dictatorship, repression, and industrial growth were found to cohabit comfortably. Both the totalitarian model and the convergence model can be seen as conceptual alternatives to Marxism (though, in Marcuse, totalitarianism, convergence, and Marxism all happily coexisted). But all these theoretical schemes, as suggestive as they are in many aspects, failed to explain the peculiarities and anomalies of the Soviet industrial experience. They tended to rush ahead into generalization and theory before the necessary digging into the complexities and contradictions of Soviet actuality had been undertaken.

Yet, all along, economists, sociologists, journalists, some eyewitnesses, and a few historians were supplementing the abstract and flat pictures of theorists and distant analysts. At the time of the Stalinist industrialization drive, for example, a few observers and participants reported to Western readers on the chaos and enthusiasm that attended the First and Second Five-Year Plans. The American engineer, Walter Arnold Rukeyser, and the worker John Scott provided a texture and detail of the events that would soon be lost in more general accounts.<sup>10</sup> In a series of books based on his personal experiences and talks with Soviet citizens, the journalist Maurice Hindus articulated in revealing detail the pain and achievement of the Stalinist revolution.<sup>11</sup>

Until the late 1960s, however, no fundamental research in the field of Soviet industrialization was carried out by professional historians – with the notable exception of E. H. Carr. Written over a span of a quarter-century and buttressed by a massive bibliographic apparatus (which, perforce, did not include Soviet archives), Carr's ten volumes were essentially an account in the grand narrative tradition of how the Communist party transformed itself from a revolutionary movement to a complex administrative structure, simultaneously replacing its chiliastic ambitions for world revolution with a program of national industrial modernization. Since almost everything could be linked in one way or another to these processes, Carr left nothing out. He refracted Soviet economic development, however, through the deliberations, debates, and decrees of the central organs of the party and state. For this reason, in the penultimate volume he referred to the spring of 1929 as “a terminal landmark for the historian of the Soviet Union.” From that time on, he continued, “we know little of the discussions in the inner counsels of the party . . . or of the view taken by any leading Soviet politician other than Stalin. . . . Later, the fog becomes thicker still, and, in spite of a few piecemeal revelations, envelops all Soviet policy in the nineteen-thirties.”<sup>12</sup>

Given his state-centered, policy-oriented approach and the limitations of his sources, Carr's cutoff in 1929 made sense. But in the last two decades, historians have ventured beyond the landmark of 1929, beginning with the work of R. W. Davies, Carr's collaborator in his last years. Professor of Economic Studies at the University of Birmingham, Davies more than anyone else put Soviet industrialization on the historical agenda. He has now completed three volumes of his own monumental project, *The Industrialization of Soviet Russia*, which takes the story to the end of 1930.<sup>13</sup>

Davies revises a basic impression left by the Carr volumes. Whereas the *History of Soviet Russia* concluded that the foundations of a planned economy had been laid by the end of the 1920s, Davies demonstrates how in the course of 1929–1930 the acceleration of the pace of industrialization undermined those basic structures. Acceleration was a function of the “great leap forward” mentality of the political elite, which remained oblivious to objective constraints. “Astonishing expansion in industrial investment” was thus accompanied by severe disorder in the supply and planning system. Enthusiasm and achievement were paradoxically combined with “vicious repression and waste.” Progress proceeded along with growing turmoil.

Davies shows that despite the crisis in the countryside connected with collectivization and peasant resistance, Soviet planners managed to expand investment in industry enormously. Huge construction projects – the Stalingrad Tractor Factory, the Rostov-on-Don

agricultural machinery plant, the Turksib railroad – were brought to completion in the first years of the Five-Year Plan, while still others, like the Dneprostroi Hydroelectric Plant, were well on their way. A start had been made, however hesitantly, toward the rearmament of the Soviet Union, and several campaigns to raise worker productivity had been launched. Yet real wages were falling for workers, and the economy was in serious trouble. Existing industrial capacity was fully employed, and the decline in agricultural output and the peasants' slaughter of livestock led to a general fall in the standard of living. The huge investments in producer goods industries led to acute shortages of labor, capital, and material in other crucial sectors. Quantities did not meet expected targets, and quality was low. The fabled Stalingrad Tractor Factory rolled out its first tractor with much fanfare in June 1930, but instead of the projected two thousand tractors expected by September, a mere forty-three were produced. And these began to fall apart after seventy hours of operation!

Davies ranges across a vast canvas, discussing at one time the political infighting within the Stalinist faction about the tempo of industrialization, at another the intricacies of financing and budgeting in a system that was abolishing the market and questioning the future use of money. He underscores the fantasies and willfulness of the Stalinists who pushed for high rates of industrial growth to the detriment of balances in the economy. But he refuses to romanticize the mixed market economy of the New Economic Policy (NEP) that other historians, such as Stephen F. Cohen and Moshe Lewin, believe offered a viable alternative to the excesses of Stalinism. He notes the problems that grew within NEP – mass urban unemployment, the growing need for replacement of prerevolutionary capital stock, the refusal of peasants to give up their grain in the absence of favorable terms of trade and available industrial goods.

The picture that Davies draws of the second “spinal” year of the Five-Year Plan is scrupulously balanced between positive achievement and excessive cost. The key tropic device is that “in spite of X, Y was achieved,” where X connotes unanticipated complications and “confusions” and Y represents some advance measured in increased output or the near fulfillment of some planned task, albeit by applying drastic measures. For example, “In spite of the deficiencies in the norm campaign, the relation between wages and productivity achieved in the first eight months of 1929/30 was reasonably satisfactory,” meaning that “monthly output per workers increased by 16.3 per cent, and the average wage by only 7.9 per cent.”<sup>14</sup>

Though the text is often dense with information and broad lines of argument are sometimes lost in the forest of detail, Davies' volumes add up to economic history at its encyclopedic best. This recovery and integration of scattered and disaggregated data, however, does not adequately treat some topics of interest to social historians, most notably the relationship of state and society and the positions and actions of social classes and groups. Workers in general are treated as factors of production, and their agency is situated on the X rather than the Y axis.

In addition to his own prodigious research, Davies fostered a new generation of scholars through his directorship of the University of Birmingham's Centre for Russian and East European Studies (CREES). Beginning in the mid-1970s, CREES sponsored a Soviet Industrialisation Project Seminar (SIPS) that produced an impressive series of informal discussion

papers and afforded Davies and younger scholars, many of them graduate students, the opportunity to examine discrete issues based on close readings of Soviet newspapers, journals, and statistical compendia. Though sometimes narrowly focused and highly technical, these analyses of working-class composition and standards of living, price policy, industrial relations, and performance were first forays into an unknown landscape. In June 1981 SIPS went international, convening a West European Conference on Soviet Industry and the Working Class in the Inter-War Years. As with the seminar papers, the contributions at the West European Conference fell into two distinct genres. One was what Charles Maier has called “historical political economy,” that is, interrogations of power relations underlying economic outcomes and the ways “classes or interests use political and ideological resources to bring about contested economic policies.”<sup>15</sup> The other was essentially labor history, that subgenre of social history newly respectable among academics from the 1960s onward, which investigated social processes and “outcomes” as they affected and were affected by industrial workers.<sup>16</sup> Both inquiries were informed by a Marxist appreciation of relations of production and an emphasis on the labor process. In these papers, the standpoint is almost exclusively within the factory gates where rationalization, the functional division of management, the scientific organization of labor, the assembly line, and other capitalist-derived techniques were introduced and contested.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, the post-totalitarian investigations of Stalinist politics and culture were followed by a newly revived interest in Soviet industrialization. Although now scarcely believable, until the mid-1970s American academic mentors discouraged their graduate students in history from writing dissertations on the Stalin period. Partly a function of the lock that political science had on the field, this judgment was also based on the assessment that Soviet restrictions on source material did not permit scholarship of depth and quality that could match that of the history of earlier periods. This lamentable situation changed as new approaches broadened the understanding of sources, and thanks to the seminal and enduring contributions of three innovative historians: Kendall Bailes, Sheila Fitzpatrick, and Moshe Lewin.

Kendall Bailes’s study of the technical intelligentsia was an inspirational and exemplary model of empirical research shaped and argued through a clear conceptual framework that sought to integrate elements of the totalitarian model, primarily the element of coercion as a means of enforcing social cohesion, with the emerging group conflict model. In addition to the more familiar bureaucratic and elite conflicts, he included cultural as well as class conflict. By the end of his account of the rise–fall–and–rise of the technical intelligentsia, there is not much left of a conventional totalitarianism, but rather a very rich picture of mobility, integration, and politics of a particularly violent kind, all in an environment of repressive state power and social conflict.

To a historiography still obsessed with the brutalities of Stalin’s personal rule, Sheila Fitzpatrick brought a unique focus on the importance of upward social mobility, especially of workers, during the First Five-Year Plan period. Analyzing the phenomenon of *vydvizhenstvo*, the systematic campaign to promote workers from the bench into administrative positions via crash courses in adult education, Fitzpatrick argued that Stalinism was a revolution that combined the regime’s perceived need for its own technical intelligentsia with

workers' and rank-and-file communists' desires to rise within the social hierarchy. For Fitzpatrick's *vydvizhentsy*, "industrialization was an heroic achievement – their own, Stalin's and that of Soviet power."<sup>17</sup> Promoted workers proved to be the social bulwark of the Stalin regime and its long-term beneficiaries, the "New Class" in Djilas's terms, or what Fitzpatrick called the "Brezhnev generation."<sup>18</sup>

Moshe Lewin's perspectives on industrialization have a character all their own. As in his studies of the peasantry, so with workers and bosses Lewin integrates economic, social, and political history into a rich portrait of contradictory processes. Typically he concludes one of his pioneering articles with this complex summation:

The crudity of social relations and social policies, the despotic traits of the system and of the management, their control and stimulation by manipulating hunger or by administering overdoses of privileges, favors, and perks in an overt or covert manner, the exaggerated material benefits for the powerful coupled with terror against them or others, and in general the direct correlation and proximity of the carrot and the stick marked Soviet industrialization and the style of the regime deeply.<sup>19</sup>

The author of books on Russian peasants and the state in the 1920s, Soviet economic debates in the 1960s, and, most recently, the impact of urbanization and professionalization on the "Gorbachev phenomenon," Lewin brings to the study of Soviet industrialization a rich appreciation of the ironies of its "telescoping of stages," remarkable conceptual creativity, a linguistic playfulness, and merciless criticism of the deprivations of Stalinism. He ranges widely from discussions of "the ruralization of the cities" (Lewin's characterization of the massive influx of peasants into towns in the early 1930s), to the "economization of the party" (part of the transformation of the Communist party into an administrative and managerial elite), to "the 'archaization' of the socio-economic system."

The context of a backward society rushing pell-mell into modernity only to arrive at an "accentuation of backwardness" is always foregrounded in Lewin's work, so that personalities and politics, hardly neglected in his essays, are never liberated from the real social constraints in which they operated. In seeking to explain the bacchanalia of experimentation and campaigns, the "jolts and tilts" that punctuated industrial and social policy in the 1930s, Lewin looks both at high politics and the social flux at all levels of society. He emphasizes the narrowing at the apex of political authority that occurred in the 1920s and the "pathologies" associated with Stalin's dictatorial rule. He illuminates the intricate hierarchies within industry, the frequent reshuffling of personnel, the *grubost'* (crudeness) that reflected the new political style of the bosses, workers' distrust of the *nachal'stvo* (management), and their withdrawal of initiative. He also refines the picture of mobility by reminding us that

The 1930s was an era of great mobility, but for too many the direction was down, not up. . . . Professional training was impressive, but the majority of the working class were still working with their bare hands. . . . Acceding to a "position" of a *chernorabochii* [unskilled laborer] and living in overcrowded barracks (not to



mention *zemlianki*, simple holes dug in the soil and covered with makeshift roofs) could not have looked like “upward” mobility to peasants who had previously had a farm of their own, however poor.<sup>20</sup>

Lewin would be the first to admit that much of the terrain covered in his essays needs to be sketched in and that a good deal of fog persists. Indeed, the essays might have been titled, in good Russian fashion, “Toward a History of the Making of the Soviet System,” for they explicitly invite elaboration and debate.

Several historians have taken up that challenge and have pushed the study of Soviet industrialization in a new direction, namely, toward analyzing the nature of the work process and the informal organization of the shop floor. Donald Filtzer’s book on workers during the 1930s represents the first overview of the “formation of modern Soviet production relations” since Solomon Schwarz’s pioneering study published in 1951.<sup>21</sup> In contrast to Schwarz, whose chief concern was to demonstrate, via an exhaustive survey of labor legislation, the state’s ever-tightening grip on workers, Filtzer insists that the state and workers fought each other to a standstill. While the former succeeded in “atomizing” the working class, it did not – and, given competition among enterprises for skilled labor and other resources, could not – gain control of the labor process. Neither coercion in the form of decrees punishing violations of “labor discipline” nor incentive systems borrowed from the capitalist West broke the stalemate that has persisted until recent times.

Filtzer’s argument, reminiscent of the Trotskyist critique of Stalinism, contrasts the privileged conditions of the “exploiting class” of bureaucrats with the abysmal circumstances in which most Soviet workers labored and lived. Yet he is able to demonstrate through impressive empirical detail how workers confounded the regime’s campaigns to increase productivity by engaging in both covert and overt acts of indiscipline, and how managers, desperate to hold onto scarce labor resources, colluded with them.

Vladimir Andrie, an industrial sociologist at the University of York, adds subtle refinements to the picture drawn by Filtzer.<sup>22</sup> Though he does not agree with Filtzer that atomization of the working class by the Stalinist state left only individualist responses available, Andrie reinforces Filtzer’s general point that older forms of collective working-class resistance were supplanted by the appropriation of considerable control over the labor process. Despite the loss of their institutional forms of representation and actual means of collective bargaining, the workers of the workers’ state managed to gain a degree of relative protection and privilege.

Andrie elaborates the ways in which the abolition of markets and the party’s commitment to “taut planning” (ambitious target setting) mitigated against stable relations between policy-making and policy implementation and gave rise to bureaucratism and “an almost anarchic competition for scarce resources within the state system of administration”.<sup>23</sup> The party leaders believed that mass mobilization of labor and material resources alone could overcome Russia’s backwardness and that that mobilization required their firm control over the industrialization drive. Ironically, their very efforts to legislate scrutiny and control not only failed to thwart bureaucratism and anarchy, but promoted new associations of managers

and workers that at least made it possible to work, though at levels far below the exaggerated targets proposed by the regime.

Following Michael Burawoy's ethnographic study of workers "making out" in a Chicago engineering plant, Andrlé argues that the shopfloor culture in Soviet plants of the 1930s operated similarly "to promote stability in work relations by upholding performance standards which fell short of the expectations generated by technological investment."<sup>24</sup> Not workers but outsiders provided the stimulus for raising performance standards, which in the absence of market conditions arrived in the form of political campaigns. Even as Soviet industrializers attempted to create a "new Soviet man," they were convinced the only way to achieve prosperity was to borrow Western technology and the industrial culture that emphasized cleanliness, self-discipline, and a rational, methodical approach to work. Taylorism seemed the appropriate scientific solution to the problem of production efficiency. Yet even in its years of dominance, up to the mid-1930s, the regular rhythms of Taylorism were constantly upset by speed-up campaigns, *sturmovshchina*, so-called shock work, and the fiddling with accounts by shopfloor managers and workers. "Taylorism," Andrlé concludes, "may have been in theoretical harmony with the idea of industrialization under the auspices of a planned economy, but it was severely at odds with the realities of taut planning" which prevented long, stable, uninterrupted production runs, predictable output requirements, and input supplies.<sup>25</sup> When scientific management as a strategy for creating a new industrial culture and improving efficiency was compromised, political leaders turned to other campaigns: socialist competition and, eventually, Stakhanovism.

Together with more recent contributions to Soviet social history, Andrlé's study undermines the overly simple political interpretation of the totalitarian model in which an all-powerful state renders completely impotent an atomized population. Historians like Hiroaki Kuromiya and Lewis Siegelbaum further enrich our understanding of labor relations in two monographs that link high politics to the shop floor.<sup>26</sup> Both reveal the strategies by which workers and managers cooperated to limit the party state's direct involvement with production within the factory and preserve a sphere of autonomy. Kuromiya's study of the First Five-Year Plan period argues that the Stalin regime used the theme of "class war" to mobilize the support of primarily young, male workers for assaults ("offensives") against "bourgeois specialists," political opponents, and trade unionists, not to mention kulaks and "unconscious" peasants opposed to collectivization. Staggering in its human and material costs, the prosecution of class struggle nonetheless "ideologically integrated" tens of thousands of cadres, the "new class" that came into its own in the post-Stalin era.

Siegelbaum's analysis of Stakhanovism focuses on the second half of the 1930s, by which time industrialization strategy had shifted from reliance on ever-increasing inputs of labor and mechanical power to their intensification. To break through bureaucratic inertia and return to the mass mobilization that had characterized the "great breakthrough" of the First Five-Year Plan, political leaders in 1935 launched an appeal with the appropriate xenophobic, antielitist, and populist overtones, to the ex-peasant majority in the industrial work force to initiate new, more efficient productive practices. The Stakhanovite campaign was many things at once: a return to the policy of taut planning after a few years of more moderate target

setting; a struggle against bureaucratic managers, cautious engineers, and unresponsive trade unions; an emphasis on personnel rather than technology (Stalin's famous phrase: "Cadres decide everything!"); and an exercise in cultural prescriptiveness designed to instruct workers how to behave on the job, in other public arenas, and in their family lives. Although the campaign did shake up industrial relations, it left more images and symbols than concrete results. The Soviet industrial culture that remained was fraught with conflict and confusion, political intervention to raise production and enforce labor discipline, and the pervasive collusion of workers, foremen, and managers to protect the work environment. Stakhanovism was thus "something less but also something more than was originally foreseen or officially sanctioned."<sup>27</sup> Maneuvering and accommodation were at least as evident as enthusiasm and resistance.<sup>28</sup>

Studies of the factory floor and the labor process have now become possible thanks to the unprecedented access to Soviet archives and factory newspapers available since the Gorbachev revolution. In April 1988 Western historians of Soviet industrialization held a conference in Ann Arbor on industrialization and change in Soviet society that integrated microstudies of Magnitogorsk and the Donbass with broad-gauged investigations of rural-urban migration, social identity, the formation of the new managerial elites, and the cultures of industrialization.<sup>29</sup> Exemplary of the attempt to bring together social and cultural history is Katerina Clark's account of the literature of industrialization, in which she examines Moscow as a paradigm for the Soviet conquest of culture over nature, order over chaos, control and plan over spontaneous forces.

In current studies and monographs now in preparation the factory emerges not simply as a place of work but a mini-society. To be sure, Magnitogorsk and Dneprostoi, the subjects of two recent studies, were chaotic, even "idiotic" places.<sup>30</sup> But they did have their rules, norms of behavior, and hierarchies that needed to be learned if only to know which could be violated and negotiated. Just as engineers and other "commanders of production" learned about their authority and its limits, so there developed a certain folk wisdom among rural migrants about where to find work and, perhaps more importantly, shelter and food. Kinship, cultural identity, skill acquisition, and social mobility thus take on enhanced importance in understanding how millions of new workers made their way through and around the bureaucratically imposed structures.

The story of industrialization under noncapitalist conditions in the Soviet Union is now beginning to be told, and the 1930s is becoming part of the long history of the "modernization" of "Russia." Part of that story can be recounted through economic analysis, demographic statistics, and general explanations derived from high politics, but increasingly historians have felt that another essential part requires getting down to where people lived and worked. The making (and unmaking) of the Soviet working class, not only in the simple demographic sense of creating a mammoth new work force, but in its retention, undermining, and reinterpretation of labor's traditions and vocabulary has only begun to be explored. The discursive, as well as sociological, dimensions of labor and management's experiences are only now beginning to be mapped out. At a conference on "The Making of the Soviet Working Class" held at Michigan State University in November 1990, older conceptions of class were subjected to vigorous interrogation, and discussants criticized the inadequate attention to the

relationship between gender and class, class and ethnicity, and the influence of cultural representations in general.<sup>31</sup> How workers saw themselves was understood to be central to the formation of class. But in the context of Stalinist repression, expression and communication were impossible beyond very restricted limits. Soviet workers articulated their sense of self, defended their actual victories (“they pretend to pay us and we pretend to work”), and protected themselves against further erosion more often passively than in open resistance – at least until another revolutionary breakthrough at the end of the 1980s offered an unprecedented political opening.

## NOTES

1. *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, 3 November 1987; and *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 39 (2 December 1987):6.
2. Bruno Rizzi, *The Bureaucratization of the World. The USSR: Bureaucratic Collectivism*, trans. Adam Westoby (London and New York, 1985; originally Paris, 1939). For an interesting account of the debates on the USSR among Marxists, see Antonio Carlo, “The Socio-Economic Nature of the USSR,” *Telos* 21 (Fall 1974):2–86.
3. Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1966), 233.
4. *Ibid.*, 237.
5. W. W. Rostow, *The Dynamics of Soviet Society* (New York, 1954), 133.
6. *Ibid.*, 244.
7. Clark Kerr, J. T. Dunlop, F. H. Harbison, and C. A. Mayers, *Industrialism and Industrial Man: The Problems of Labour and Management in Economic Growth* (London, 1966), 46. The totalitarian and modernization-convergence schools are discussed and criticized in David Lane, *The Socialist Industrial State: Towards a Political Sociology of State Socialism* (London, 1976), 44–62.
8. David Granick, *The Red Executive: A Study of the Organization Man in Russian Industry* (London, 1960).
9. *Ibid.*, 18–19.
10. Walter Arnold Rukeyser, *Working for the Soviets: An American Engineer in Russia* (New York, 1932); and John Scott, *Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia's City of Steel* (Bloomington, 1973; originally New York, 1942).
11. See, for example, Maurice Hindus, *The Great Offensive* (London, 1933).
12. E. H. Carr and R. W. Davies, *Foundations of a Planned Economy, 1926–1929*, vol. 1 (London, 1969), v–vi. Carr used the same metaphor in a published interview (“The Russian Revolution and the West,” *New Left Review* 111 [September–October 1978], 27).
13. The titles thus far published are *The Socialist Offensive: The Collectivisation of Soviet Agriculture, 1929–1930*; *The Soviet Collective Farm, 1929–1930*; and *The Soviet Economy in Turmoil, 1929–1930* (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1980–1989). More are in preparation. Davies had earlier published *The Development of the Soviet Budgetary System* (Cambridge, UK, 1958).
14. Davies, *Soviet Economy in Turmoil*, 270.
15. Charles Maier, *In Search of Stability: Explorations in Historical Political Economy* (Cambridge, 1987), 5.
16. A parallel interest in Soviet industrialization developed on the European continent, most notably in West Germany, promoted by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* and the University of Bremen's project on “Sozialgeschichte der UdSSR 1917–1924.” For some representative texts, see Tatjana Kirstein, *Sowjetische Industrialisierungsplaner oder spontaner Prozess? Eine Strukturanalyse des wirtschaftspolitischen Entscheidungsprozesses bei Aufbau des Ural-Kuznec-Kombinats 1918–1930* (Baden-Baden, 1979); Walter Suss, *Der Betrieb in der UdSSR: Stellung, Organisation und Management, 1917–1932* (Frankfurt/Bern, 1980); and Melanie Tatur, “Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsorganisation”: *Arbeitswissenschaften und arbeitsorganisation in der Sowjetunion, 1921–1935* (Wiesbaden, 1979). See also, Charles Bettelheim, ed., *L'industrialisation de l'URSS dans les années trente: Actes de a Table Rond organisée par le Centre d'Etudes des Modes d'Industrialisation de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (10 et 11 décembre 1981)* (Paris, 1982).

17. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921–1934* (Cambridge, U.K., 1979), 254. See also, idem, “Cultural Revolution as Class War,” in *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick (Bloomington, 1979); and “The Russian Revolution and Social Mobility: A Re-examination of the Question of Social Support for the Soviet Regime in the 1920s and 1930s,” *Politics and Society* 23 (1984).

18. While Fitzpatrick added an important dimension to our understanding of Soviet industrialization, her work to date does not deal directly with industrial production. The struggles and accomplishments that she analyzes occur not so much on the shop floor as in the makeshift classrooms where promotees received their training and the conference halls where militant communists confronted and denounced “bourgeois specialists” and insufficiently militant party members.

19. Moshe Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet System: Essays in the Social History of Interwar Russia* (New York, 1985), 257.

20. *Ibid.*, 34.

21. Donald Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and Stalinist Industrialisation: The Formation of Modern Soviet Production Relations, 1928–1941* (London, 1986). Filtzer has extended his analysis of the system of Soviet production relations into the Khrushchev years. See his *Soviet Workers and de-Stalinization, 1953–1964* (Cambridge, U.K., 1992).

22. Vladimir Andrie, *Workers in Stalin's Russia: Industrialization and Change in a Planned Economy* (New York, 1988).

23. *Ibid.*, 71.

24. *Ibid.*, 154; and Michael Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process Under Monopoly Capitalism* (Chicago, 1979).

25. Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent*, 99.

26. Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Stalin's industrial Revolution: Politics and Workers, 1928–1932* (Cambridge, 1988); and Lewis Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1925–1941* (Cambridge, 1988).

27. Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism*, 7.

28. On Stakhanovism and particularly its connection with the Great Purges in industry, see Francesco Benvenuti, *Fuoco sui Sabotatori! Stakhanovismo e Organizzazione industriale in URSS, 1934–1938* (Rome, 1988); and Robert Maier, *Die Stachanov-Bewegung, 1935–1938* (Stuttgart, 1990). Andrie suggests in his concluding chapter that workers were not among the principal victims of the purges, though they had lost the collective capacity to combat the repression of the police and party. The regime understood that appeals to workers expressed in terms of class interests and antagonism to elites retained their power.

29. The papers from the conference, sponsored by the National Seminar on Russian Social History in the Twentieth Century, will be published as William G. Rosenberg and Lewis H. Siegelbaum, eds., *Social Dimensions of Soviet Industrialization* (Bloomington, 1993).

30. Anne Rassweiler, *The Generation of Power: The History of Dneprostroi* (Oxford, 1988); and Stephen Kotkin, “Magnetic Mountain: City Building and City Life in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. A Study of Magnitogorsk” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 1988). Kotkin has published *Steeltown, USSR* (Princeton, 1991), a study of contemporary Magnitogorsk (see the review by Lewis Siegelbaum in this issue of *ILWCH*). Among other dissertations with a local or sectoral focus are David Shearer, “Rationalization and Reconstruction in the Soviet Machine Building Industry, 1926–1934 (University of Pennsylvania, 1988); Kenneth Strauss, “The Transformation of the Soviet Working Class, 1929–1935,” a study of the Serp i Molot factory in Moscow (University of Pennsylvania, 1990); and David Lloyd Hoffmann, “Urbanization and Social Change during Soviet Industrialization: In-Migration to Moscow, 1929–1937” (Columbia University, 1990).

31. The papers from this conference are currently being revised for publication in a volume edited by Lewis Siegelbaum and R. G. Suny.