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POLITICS OF SOVIET INDUSTRIALIZATION:  
VESENKHA AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH RABKRIN,  
1929-30

by Sheila Fitzpatrick  
Fellow, Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies

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Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies,  
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars  
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The historical study of Soviet politics has its peculiarities. Dealing with the 1920s, Western historians have generally studied factional politics - Lenin and Stalin versus the oppositions - or the manipulation of the party apparatus that brought Stalin to power. Soviet historians have also concentrated heavily on the factional struggles, admittedly from a somewhat different perspective. In addition, they often write histories of particular government institutions (Sovnarkom, Rabkrin and the like) that rather resemble commissioned company histories in their avoidance of the scandalous, dramatic and political aspects of their theme.

Reaching the 1930s, both Western and Soviet historians have a tendency to throw up their hands and retire from the fray. Western historians run out of factions to write about. There is a memoir literature on the purges and a rather schematic scholarly literature on political control mechanisms, but the Stalin biography emerges as the basic genre of political history. For Soviet historians, the subject of the purges is taboo except for a few risqué paragraphs in memoirs, and even biographies of Stalin are not possible. There are no more institutional histories, and the safest (though extremely boring) topic is the 1936 Constitution.

The peculiarity of the situation lies in the neglect of many of the staples of political history as practised outside

the Soviet field, notably studies of bureaucratic and regional politics and local political histories. The neglect has various causes. In the first place, it reflects a bias of the sources. For example, there are abundant records on the factions of the 1920s, not only because of Trotsky's deportation (though that is an important factor) but also because factions were a Bolshevik preoccupation. Bureaucratic politics, on the other hand, were something that the Bolsheviks' unworldly and Marxist background made them slow to recognize, even though the turf battles started more or less on the morning after the Revolution. As a result, the primary record is there but there are relatively few commentaries. The situation is worse for the 1930s because of the homogenizing effect of heavy censorship on the published sources.

Related to this is the second factor, problems of access to primary sources for Western scholars. Archives used to be inaccessible to Western historians, and even now the 1930s is largely a closed area, and provincial archives for any period are usually unavailable. Provincial newspapers are generally not available outside the Soviet Union, and there are still significant restrictions in practice on foreign scholars' use of them in Moscow. This obviously has a deeply discouraging effect on regional and bureaucratic studies.

Finally, it must be said that our own preconceptions have limited the field of enquiry in the past. The totalitarian

model - like its mirror image, the Soviet concept of monolithic unity of party and state - made the bureaucratic and regional dimensions of politics seem insignificant, if not non-existent. In terms of the totalitarian model it was important to study transmission belts, mobilization mechanisms and levers of control. But policy formation was basically a question of how the leader interpreted the ideology, not a political process comparable in some respects to non-totalitarian societies.

My study of the politics of Soviet industrialization during the First Five-Year Plan, of which this paper is a part, is to some extent an effort to redress the balance. It deals with bureaucratic politics - the conflicts between different institutions like the economic ministries, the state control agency and the trade unions over industrialization tempos and priorities, labor/management relations and other issues related to the First Five-Year Plan. It also deals with the regional dimension of politics, that is, the competition between regional authorities over investment allocations stimulated by the ambitious industrial development plans. Industrialization, the focus of this study, was the regime's primary preoccupation throughout the period. Thus, the politics I describe were of central not peripheral concern to the participants, and involved major political actors.

A study of this kind is possible now because Western scholars may, with some luck and a lot of persistence, have much better access to materials in the Soviet Union than they had in the

past. My image of the bureaucratic politics of the First Five-Year Plan was formed to a large extent by working on the archives of some of the relevant bureaucracies.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, my sense of regional politics came initially from reading a type of source that is hard to come by in the West and even in many Soviet libraries<sup>2</sup> - the stenographic reports of regional and republican party conferences. Twenty years ago, I probably would not have had those opportunities.

Soviet politics described in terms like bureaucratic conflict are bound to seem less exotic and more familiar than "the politics of totalitarianism" analyzed in the classic works of Sovietology. Some people feel this is a loss - even a betrayal - because the 1984 imagery captured the essence of societies like the Stalinist one. But there has to come a time when we descend from the emotional heights of a George Orwell or Hannah Arendt and write about an actual society and political system, not an ideal type (even assuming that their ideal type was the right one). If no man is a hero to his valet, it may be equally true that no society looks totalitarian to the reader of its archives.

However, it is not my intention to domesticate Soviet political processes to the point where we see all similarities with other bureaucratic political systems and no differences. Once we get over the shock that there are any similarities at

all, the differences are what are interesting. How do bureaucratic politics interact with the politics of personal dictatorship? How does centralized control of the economy affect the political process? What are "party" interests and how are they represented? What are the interests of bureaucratic control agencies? What does it mean in political terms to have the secret police as a major bureaucratic actor?

This paper is not going to offer definitive answers to such questions, but I hope that it will at least provide a context for thinking about them. The first section of the paper describes the bureaucracy most directly involved in industrialization, Vesenkha, the Supreme Council of the National Economy, examining its structure, modus operandi, policy positions and relations with other institutions. The second section is a case study in bureaucratic politics, featuring institutional rivalry, the impact of an unwelcome policy incursion by Stalin, maneuvering for a major appointment and the use of the "OGPU card". The subject is Vesenkha's relationship with Rabkrin, the state control agency, in 1929-30, culminating late in 1930 with the appointment of Ordzhonikidze, formerly Rabkrin's chairman, as chairman of Vesenkha.

Vesenkha: anatomy of a bureaucracy

Founded in 1918 as a government agency overseeing the economy as a whole, Vesenkha<sup>3</sup> in fact functioned almost from the beginning as a People's Commissariat (Ministry) of industry and industrial development, having charge of all nationalized industries and supervisory responsibility over private and artisan industry. Although Vesenkha had a planning sector, Gosplan, the State Planning Commission, was the main economic planning authority in the system. Vesenkha, however, had an executive apparatus to carry out its decisions, whereas Gosplan did not.

Vesenkha was subordinate to Sovnarkom, the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, and its companion body STO, the Council of Labor and Defence. But, like other Soviet institutions, it also followed policy guidelines laid down by the party's Central Committee and Politburo. There was a functional overlap in this situation that had some significance in bureaucratic-political terms. If Sovnarkom's decision was unfavourable, it might be possible to shift the venue to the Central Committee or Politburo in the hope of getting a reversal. Sometimes it was even possible to do this in reverse (in the guise of raising a subsidiary issue), although theoretically the Central Committee ruling was definitive.

Many Sovnarkom and STO decrees on industry were simply



rubber-stamped versions of projects introduced by Vesenkha, whose chairman was ex officio one of 11-13 voting members of each body. But this was not always the case: sometimes Vesenkha and another government agency (usually Rabkrin, the Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, in the period 1927-30) would present different reports and draft decrees on the same question, leaving Sovnarkom or STO to decide between them; and on some occasions it was actually Rabkrin, not Vesenkha, that put a question of industrial policy on the agenda.

The Central Committee in theory concerned itself with broad policy issues (for example, in its resolution of 5 September 1929 "On measures setting to rights the administration of production and establishing one-man management"<sup>4</sup>), often creating special commissions, which might or might not be dominated by Vesenkha representatives, to investigate the matter. But in the First Five-Year Plan period, when the issue of the day was rapid industrialization, the Central Committee played an oversight role over industrial development that involved it in much more specific questions, of the kind that would previously have been left to Sovnarkom or simply to Vesenkha itself - for example, in its rulings "On the work of Southern Steel" (August 1929) or "On the activity of the Northern Chemical Trust" (29 August 1929).<sup>5</sup> As for the membership of the Central Committee, industry was quite well represented, with Vesenkha's chairman, several of his deputies and other prominent industrialists usually elected to the body. In the Central Committee elected in the summer of 1930, 10 out of

70 voting members came from industry.<sup>6</sup>

The most important and controversial questions of industrial policy went to the Politburo, but this is more difficult to document because the Politburo, unlike the Central Committee, did not issue formal resolutions for publication. The thorny case of Southern Steel (discussed later in this paper) went to the Politburo,<sup>7</sup> as did a dispute over the Dnieper Hydroelectric dam and the use of foreign contractors and technical advisors,<sup>8</sup> and there were certainly other cases. The principle of bureaucratic representation was foreign to the Politburo (in contrast to Sovnarkom and STO), but it should not be imagined that Politburo decisions on industry were decisions in which Vesenkha did not participate. From the time of Dzerzhinsky's appointment in 1924, Vesenkha's chairman - Dzerzhinsky (1924-6), Kuibyshev (1926-30), Ordzhonikidze (1930-31) - was a Politburo member;<sup>9</sup> and presumably even in Politburo meetings he did not forget his institutional affiliation and bureaucratic interest.<sup>10</sup> It was Stalin's presence, and the fact that his reactions were unpredictable, that put Politburo deliberations in a special category.<sup>11</sup>

Vesenkha - Vysshii sovet narodnogo khoziaistva - was called a "council", not a people's commissariat like most other contemporary government institutions or Vesenkha's own successor from 1932, the Commissariat of Heavy Industry (Narkomtiashprom).

But in practice this was not an important difference, though Vesenkha's structure was peculiar in a number of respects. There was a "council" - around 90 appointed members in 1928, most of them representing industrial trusts<sup>12</sup> - but it met infrequently and had only advisory functions. The top executive body was the presidium, which directed a central bureaucracy divided by function and branch of industry.<sup>13</sup> Beneath this were two separate bureaucratic systems, the most important being that of the industrial trusts (and, from 1930, the corporations /obyedineniia/ modelled on US giants like United Steel) to which individual industrial enterprises were subordinate. Vesenkha also had a network of republican and regional executive organs, called Vesenkha in the republics and sovnarkhozy in the regions, but they lacked the clout of the big trusts and corporations. The regional sovnarkhozy (formally jointly subordinate to Vesenkha and the regional soviet) generally had a closer working relationship with the local soviet and party committee than they did with Vesenkha. On development questions - what region or city would get which new plant or development project - the sovnarkhozy often became junior partners in a regional lobbying effort led by the obkom first secretary with Vesenkha as its primary target.

As was the case with all Soviet institutions, Vesenkha's senior appointments were in the nomenklatura of the Central Committee, though formally speaking Vesenkha's chairman and his deputies were appointed by TsIK, the Central Executive Committee

of the Congress of Soviets, while presidium members and sector and department heads were appointed by Sovnarkom. Middle-level appointments, issued over the signature of Vesenkha's chairman or one of his deputies, were in the nomenklatura of the Vesenkha presidium.<sup>14</sup> Sometimes these were based on nominations by a local authority, as in the case of the head of Tagil Construction, a Urals industrial site, whose appointment was suggested by the Urals obkom of the party.<sup>15</sup> Other appointments were made after a Vesenkha sector head or other senior official had chosen his own deputies and subordinates and sent the list to the presidium for confirmation.<sup>16</sup> Whether appointments by the presidium required advance vetting by the Central Committee Secretariat is unclear. According to an account of the later 1930s, Ordzhonikidze, then Commissar of Heavy Industry and touring the Donbass region, sent the Secretariat a long list of appointments of mine directors and so on for confirmation - but the point of the story is that the confirmation was supposed to be automatic.<sup>17</sup> In all the appointments listed in the archival files of presidium orders in these years, only one had the notation that it had been "checked out (soglasovan) with the Central Committee". But this was clearly an exceptional case, since the appointee, P.S.Alliluev, was related to Stalin by marriage.<sup>18</sup>

There are no indications that the Central Committee Secretariat exercised close supervision over Vesenkha at this period. It is likely, in fact, that the Secretariat did not even include

an industrial department before 1934.<sup>19</sup> One of the few episodes of interaction recorded in the archival files available to me suggests that the Central Committee apparat had no special clout as far as Vesenkha officials were concerned. In this case, an urgent enquiry from the Central Committee's Organization-appointments department was forwarded to the head of Vesenkha's Department of building materials, who "simply forgot to answer" despite two reminders from the Central Committee. He was rebuked by a Vesenkha superior.<sup>20</sup>

It may, however, be argued on the basis of the case history presented later in this paper that Rabkrin, although a state control institution, was acting in these years as the party Central Committee's agent for the control and supervision of industry. Communications from Rabkrin were certainly not casually dismissed by Vesenkha officials, since Rabkrin was associated with painful investigations, damaging disclosures and bad publicity for Vesenkha. Almost no branch of industry was spared a Rabkrin investigation in the years 1927-30,<sup>21</sup> and Rabkrin's recommendations usually ran counter to Vesenkha's own plans. According to Iosif Kosior, one of Vesenkha's deputy chairmen, writing in the spring of 1928, constant interference from the investigating commissions had become a major problem for industrial administrators.<sup>22</sup>

For all this, Vesenkha was a large and powerful institution, used to getting its own way in jurisdictional and policy conflicts

with other branches of the bureaucracy, and, with the advent of the First Five-Year Plan in 1929, carrying out crucial functions for a regime whose primary preoccupation was industrialization. In 1929-30, the years of factional struggle with the Right, Vesenkha's position was further strengthened by the fact that Kuibyshev, its chairman, belonged to Stalin's faction and that its policies were generally anti-Rightist. Vesenkha was the victor in an unequal contest with the Russian Commissariat of Enlightenment over technical education.<sup>23</sup> It gained decisive superiority in its relations with the trade unions after Tomsy, the chairman of the Central Council of Trade Unions, was removed for Rightism at the end of 1928. It successfully asserted itself and its prerogatives in the planning field during the long debates over the First Five-Year Plan that preceded its formal acceptance by the XVI Party Conference.<sup>24</sup> Gosplan was the loser here, being forced to concede Vesenkha's equal status as an industrial planner, as well as having its own moderate targets - damagingly similar to those advocated by the Right - rejected in favour of Vesenkha's more ambitious ones.

In simple size terms, the central Vesenkha apparat was the largest of the all-Union commissariats at the end of 1929, having 2,832 employees as against Gosplan's                      and Rabkrin's 513.<sup>25</sup> Vesenkha's industrial trusts employed 45,966 (not counting white-collar employees at plant level), and an almost equal number was employed in Vesenkha's distribution agencies, the

syndicates.<sup>26</sup> 6,437 people were working in the republican Vesenkhas and the regional (oblast and okrug) sovnarkhozy.<sup>27</sup> About a quarter of the personnel in Vesenkha's central apparat, trusts and syndicates were Communists, with the proportion rising sharply in the upper administrative strata.<sup>28</sup>

Like all other government (but not party) agencies, Vesenkha employed experts, the non-Communist majority of whom were described as "bourgeois experts", in its bureaucracy. At the end of 1929, Vesenkha had 1,189 experts working in non-administrative positions in its central apparat, and just over a fifth of them were Communist.<sup>29</sup> The trusts had 8,866 experts, with only 7.5% Communist.<sup>30</sup> However, the most important bourgeois experts were the ones in senior administrative jobs, usually working under Communists as deputy heads of sectors and chief administrations, technical directors of trusts, and so on. At the beginning of 1928, Vesenkha's central apparat contained 162 such experts,<sup>31</sup> including men who had made a solid pre-revolutionary reputation as industrial entrepreneurs, managers, engineers and economists, and currently held key positions in Vesenkha. Among them were A.M.Ginzburg, head of the Planning Administration of Vesenkha; L.F.Kafengauz, head of the Planning Administration's Statistical Department; A.V.Nazimov, head of the Directorate of the coal industry; N.I.Skorutto, head of the Directorate of the coal industry of the Donbass; I.N.Strizhev, head of the Directorate of the oil industry; S.A.Khrennikov, board member and dominant figure in

the Chief Metals Administration; and V.S.Mikhailov, deputy head of the Defence Industry Administration.<sup>32</sup> Such men were highly valued by Vesenkha, and often they were more highly paid than their Communist superiors,<sup>33</sup> whose income was held down (at least in theory) by the "party maximum".

However, the bourgeois experts came to be a great political embarrassment and problem for Vesenkha in the years of the First Five-Year Plan. Early in 1928, on a local OGPU initiative that was taken up by Stalin,<sup>34</sup> the State Prosecutor announced that "economic counter-revolution" and sabotage had been discovered in the coal industry of the Donbass.<sup>35</sup> Most of those accused were Donbass mining engineers, together with a small group of experts from the Vesenkha apparat (Skorutko was indicted, and his superior Nazimov was named as a conspirator in the Shakhty Trial). But it was immediately clear that a new policy was being introduced that put bourgeois experts as a group under suspicion of sabotage and conspiracy.

The anti-expert policy, which came to be part of the broader movement of Cultural Revolution,<sup>36</sup> cannot be traced to any kind of leadership consensus but seems peculiarly associated with Stalin, Molotov and, in executive terms, the OGPU which carried out the arrests. It may be regarded as one of the first of Stalin's truly "dictatorial" actions, for it was a policy that was introduced arbitrarily, without apparent consultation and to the chagrin of many in the Communist leadership. (Apart from the Rightist



objection on principle, any Communist who headed a government agency had to have objections in practice, since he employed bourgeois experts and was therefore inconvenienced and also threatened when they were arrested.)

Of Vesenkha's top 162 bourgeois experts, fifteen (including all seven listed above, pp. 13-14) are known to have been charged or named in connection with wrecking;<sup>37</sup> but, given that almost none of them still held a responsible job in Vesenkha in 1931, that figure probably greatly underestimates the scope of the arrests that occurred in this elite group. In mid 1930, Kaganovich said that almost 300 members of "counter-revolutionary wrecking organizations" were under arrest;<sup>38</sup> in context, he seems to be referring to arrests not just of any experts but of experts (like Vesenkha's 162) holding top jobs in government bureaucracies, notably Vesenkha, Gosplan and the Commissariats of Finance, Transport and Agriculture. Kuibyshev, Vesenkha's chairman, gave<sup>39</sup> the new anti-expert policy lukewarm public support (as did most of the other government leaders); and, to judge from its internal documents, Vesenkha's reaction to the arrest of its experts was embarrassed, intimidated and passive. Arrests were silently acknowledged by crossing out the victims' names when it was time to update lists of office-holders, committee members and so on.<sup>40</sup> Sometimes, but no invariably, a victim was "removed" (otstraniaetsia) rather than "released" (osvobozhdaetsia) from an appointment.<sup>41</sup> During Kuibyshev's tenure, there seems to have been no instance

when Vesenkha publicly repudiated any of its experts who had turned out to be "traitors".

The real generic accusation against the economic experts - leaving aside the baroque scenarios of sabotage, conspiracy and spying that were unfolded at the show trials - was that they were too cautious in their approach to the industrialization drive and did not believe that the most ambitious First Five-Year Plan targets favoured by the political leadership could be achieved. (The accusation was probably well founded, and applied as much to the experts in Vesenkha, which had supported higher targets in the debates of 1926-9, as to those in Gosplan, which had supported lower ones.<sup>42</sup>) An associated accusation, or at least reproach, was directed at the Communists who had worked with the bourgeois experts. In Stalin's view, they were easily misled by the experts because of their own lack of technical knowledge.<sup>43</sup> As Ordzhonikidze, head of Rabkrin, put it, they were liable to become "toys in the hands of their apparat".<sup>44</sup>

These were awkward charges for Vesenkha to handle, despite its good showing in the First Five-Year Plan drafting debate. The reason was that in 1929-30, as the Plan got under way, Vesenkha showed many signs of panic, confusion and inability to cope with the enormous new responsibilities laid upon it. It was supposed to be directing simultaneous construction of dozens of major projects, some without precedents, others without blueprints and yet others in inaccessible locations like Magnitogorsk. All

the novostroiki (plants under construction) were complaining of shortages of engineers, Communists, workers, housing, food, equipment, building materials, power, water and transport. Everything was behind schedule. Vesenkha stopped talking about optimal targets and became quite plaintive and apologetic in its tone. Its reports to higher government and party organs were full of requests for more time, more money, more imported machinery, more foreign technical assistance. "Only with great effort", if at all, would it be possible for Vesenkha to implement all the projects STO had approved.<sup>45</sup> "Great effort and energy" would be need to mobilize an extra 100 million roubles from industry's internal resources, if indeed that was possible. Vesenkha's credit plan was "extremely tight".<sup>46</sup>

Vesenkha's difficulties were compounded by its exposure to extremely active political lobbying from republican, regional and city authorities anxious to get their share of industrial development allocations while the opportunity lasted. The first hints of an emerging pork-barrel politics could be discerned at the end of 1925 in the discussion preceding the XIV Party Congress.<sup>47</sup> Eighteen months later, the Urals and the Ukraine were locked in "a clash of regional interests"<sup>48</sup> over mining and metallurgical development, while Vesenkha, Gosplan and other central institutions tried to mediate the dispute. At the XVI Party Conference in 1929, one speaker claimed that pork-barrel politics so preoccupied the delegates that they had become indifferent to factional politics

and the ideological allure of the Right: "Give us a plant in the Urals and to hell with the Rights! Give us an electric power station and to hell with the Rights!"<sup>49</sup>

One aspect of the problem was described by Khrennikov of the Chief Metals Administration when he said that planning was constantly disorganized by pressure tactics, where "local trade-union, economic and even party organizations use, for example, the opportunity of a visit by influential persons or their own contacts" to lobby for the local development scheme. People think, he added, that to get your local project funded, "you need /only/ begin some construction, and then /central funds/ will be added to complete it".<sup>50</sup>

Exactly this strategy was used by the Sverdlovsk supporters of Uralmash, a plant whose construction was first proposed by the Urals delegation to the XIV Party Congress in December 1925. Reactions were mixed, and there was dispute about which Urals site would be chosen, if indeed the machine-building plant was to go to the Urals. Before any of this was settled, Sverdlovsk preempted the decision and started to build. Shortage of money and doubts about the technical feasibility of the project caused the Chief Metals Administration of Vesenkha to order a halt to construction on more than one occasion. But the Sverdlovtsy were persistent. Finding Kuibyshev sympathetic but inactive, they appealed for support to Kaganovich (visiting Central Committee rapporteur at a Urals conference), Piatakov (head of the State Bank) and - finally and most successfully - Ordzhonikidze, whose intervention got the

project back on the rails. They were jubilant when Khrennikov was arrested, readily accepting that he was a wrecker because of the way he had opposed their plans. The Uralmash plant was finally completed, over a year behind schedule, in July 1933.<sup>51</sup>

Another danger for Vesenkha was that it might be bypassed on a development issue. There was anger in Vesenkha in mid 1930 when the head of the Khibinsk "Apatit" trust dealt directly with Rudzutak, a deputy chairman of STO, instead of going through Vesenkha's Chemical Administration and its presidium.<sup>52</sup> Part of the problem here was Tomsky, the inexperienced and politically-disgraced head of the Chemicals Administration. But basically Vesenkha had very little influence over the Khibinsk project, situated on a distant area of the Kola Peninsula north-east of Leningrad, because it was so actively sponsored by Kirov, the Leningrad party's First Secretary, working together with the OGPU, which was to supply the convict labor. When the Politburo discussed the question, the big report came from the Leningraders. (Tomsky was not even present to give a co-report, having been lured into a difficult on-site visit to Khibinsk and apparently misinformed about the date of the Politburo meeting.)<sup>53</sup>

Of course, it was also possible for regional pressure to work in Vesenkha's favour. This was the case in the conflict between Rabkrin and Vesenkha's Kharkov-based trust, Southern Steel, which is described later in this paper. From the Stalino okrug party committee to the Ukrainian Politburo, the Ukrainian Communists were solid in their support of Southern Steel's reconstruction

plans. They demonstrated this in a very lively manner at the XVI Party Conference in April 1929,<sup>54</sup> and took up the gauntlet again with even greater vigor at the Ukrainian Party Congress in June 1930.<sup>55</sup> Vesenkha ultimately lost the battle over Southern Steel, but it is inconceivable that it could have continued so long without the Ukrainians' involvement and support.

Vesenkha's weaknesses, notably in its dealings with Rabkrin in 1929-30, are what will emerge most strongly in the case history that forms the second part of this paper. Its residual strengths, however, should not be forgotten. When all is said and done, this was still the government agency in charge of one of the life-and-death policies of the period - the industrialization drive of the First Five-Year Plan. The chairmanship of Vesenkha was in many ways the most attractive and challenging job in government. It is not surprising that Ordzhonikidze, one of the rising figures in the party leadership, should have sought it and, in the period 1930-37, used it to make his mark on history.

Rabkrin and Vesenkha, 1929-30: The Ordzhonikidze takeover

From 1926 to 1930, G.K. (Sergo) Ordzhonikidze headed a dual organ of state and party control, the state Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (Rabkrin) and the party's Central Control Commission (TsKK). Ordzhonikidze, a Georgian, had previously been First Secretary of the Transcaucasus party organization. His predecessor in the Rabkrin/TsKK job was V.V. Kuibyshev, who had gone on to head Vesenkha in 1926.

Ordzhonikidze's job was important because of the TsKK side rather than the Rabkrin one. TsKK was the party's disciplinary organ, and in a period of conflict with factional oppositions it had to be headed by a senior and trusted man. Ordzhonikidze was personally well liked, and seems to have maintained good relations even with oppositionists,<sup>56</sup> but this must be only part of the story. A "soft" Communist would not have been put in that job. It should be added that it was a position whose holder would necessarily be in close contact with the OGPU.

For all the clout that went with the TsKK job, Ordzhonikidze was still a less established figure in the party leadership in 1926 than Kuibyshev. Kuibyshev became a full member of the Politburo in December 1927. Ordzhonikidze was not on that level before his move to Rabkrin/TsKK, and theoretically as a member of TsKK he was ineligible for Central Committee or Politburo membership. However, an official biography lists him as a candidate member of the Politburo in the years 1926-30,<sup>57</sup> and this informally may have been his status. He became a full member of the Politburo

only in December 1930, after his appointment - again as Kuibyshev's successor - to the chairmanship of Vesenkha.

During Kuibyshev's days at Rabkrin/TsKK (1924-26), Rabkrin was a rather ineffectual agency with a bias towards administrative theory and no special interest in industry or Vesenkha (which was then under the energetic leadership of Dzerzhinsky). This seems to have changed radically soon after Ordzhonikidze took over, despite the fact that his other responsibility, TsKK, must have been keeping him quite busy at the time. By August 1927, judging by Ordzhonikidze's report to the Central Committee plenum, industry had become Rabkrin's major preoccupation; and Ordzhonikidze referred cheerfully to Rabkrin's various fights (draki) with Vesenkha and promised the Vesenkha comrades more trouble in the future if Rabkrin's latest investigation (of capital repair and reequipment of industry) warranted it.<sup>58</sup>

Rabkrin's industrial bias became even more pronounced over the next few years. In the period 1927-30, it conducted investigations of the oil industry, the chemicals industry (twice), precious metals, capital construction in industry, repair and reequipment in industry, planning in industry, delivery of imported equipment, use of foreign experts, the design bureau of the metallurgical industry, diesels, coal, steel, textiles and most of Vesenkha's major industrial trusts, in addition to drafting a radical reform of the structure of industrial administration.<sup>59</sup> Clearly most of Rabkrin's operational groups, which numbered twenty in 1929,<sup>60</sup> were engaged in one or other of the



of the investigations of industry. Ordzhonikidze became the recipient of industry's grievances and petitions: factory managers went to him with protests about Vesenkha's budgetary decisions.<sup>61</sup> In March 1929, one of Kuibyshev's deputies felt obliged to order Vesenkha's subordinate institutions not to complain about each other to Rabkrin.<sup>62</sup> In October 1930, Kuibyshev issued a plaintive instruction deploring the practice of appealing controversial issues to Rabkrin instead of settling them within Vesenkha.<sup>63</sup>

The results of many of Rabkrin's investigations - following normal procedure - were presented to the highest government organs, Sovnarkom and STO. But in a number of other cases, Rabkrin reported on some aspect of industry to the party Central Committee, which in these years devoted a large amount of its time to questions of economic development and industrial production. The closeness of the Rabkrin/Central Committee relationship over industry was remarked on by several delegates to the XVI Party Congress in the summer of 1930;<sup>64</sup> and the unspoken judgement underlying much of the discussion was that Rabkrin was playing rather a peculiar role. "TsKK/Rabkrin has recently become more a punitive planning organ (bichuiushchii planovyi organ) than a Rabkrin," said one delegate, whose disapproval of the process was clear.<sup>65</sup>

Rabkrin's avowed purpose in all this was to help industry mobilize its resources for the Five-Year Plan. More specifically, Rabkrin's specialty was uncovering hidden resources and unused

capacity - in other words, demonstrating how industrial production could be maximized with minimum new investment. On any given problem, Rabkrin was likely to recommend a smaller budget than Vesenkha was asking, while at the same time advocating a higher production target than Vesenkha wanted to accept. As far as tempos and targets were concerned, Rabkrin in 1929-30 was constantly outbidding Vesenkha, just as Vesenkha had outbidden Gosplan a few years earlier in the debates that accompanied the drafting of the Five-Year Plan. The effect of this was increasingly to put Vesenkha on the defensive.

Vesenkha was also on the defensive for another reason, the harrassment and arrest of its "bourgeois experts" at every level from the plants to the central apparat. Rabkrin played a role here too, since its investigators often turned up instances of alleged incompetence and abuses on the part of individual engineers and experts (as well as Communist managers and administrators). In addition, Rabkrin was the agency charged with carrying out a general purge of the government bureaucracy, including Vesenkha, in 1929-30.

On one issue, capital investment in the Southern Steel Trust (Iugostal') and the desirability of a general reconstruction of the Stalino Metallurgical Plant, Rabkrin and Vesenkha became involved in a particularly intense private and public controversy. The basic situation was that Vesenkha's Southern Steel - the trust responsible for the major Ukrainian metallurgical centres,

headed by the irrepressible Stepan Birman, ex-chairman of the revolutionary Budapest Soviet of 1918 - wanted to expand and reconstruct all of its twelve plants including Stalino (formerly Iuzovka, now Donetsk) during the First Five-Year Plan. Rabkrin objected to this on the grounds of expense and the fact that production would drop while the plants were under reconstruction; and it objected in particular to any major investment in Stalino. As understood by Southern Steel and others in the Ukraine, this was the equivalent of a death sentence on the Stalino plant.

There were a number of different Rabkrin investigations of Southern Steel, beginning with one in the autumn of 1927 after which Rabkrin reported to STO on capital construction of Vesenkha's metallurgical plants.<sup>66</sup> Late in 1928 the Stalino plant, acting on its own initiative, began work on the reconstruction of blast furnace No. 3, but Rabkrin, seeing this as the thin end of the wedge for a costly general reconstruction, obtained an order that work should be stopped.<sup>67</sup> Early in 1929, a Rabkrin group headed by A.I.Gurevich under the general supervision of deputy Commissar A.P.Rozengolts concluded that reconstruction of Stalino was<sup>68</sup> inadvisable. Gurevich's group also put forward its own detailed proposals on capital investment in the Southern Steel plants, justifying this invasion of Vesenkha prerogatives by the assertion that Vesenkha had failed to offer any viable development plan for Ukrainian metallurgy.<sup>69</sup>

Gleb Krzhizhanovsky, chairman of Gosplan, was called upon

to adjudicate the question, and held several meetings of interested parties. Expert opinion was called in, partly Russian (Khrennikov of the Chief Metals Administration was there) and partly German: Southern Steel had hired Dr Puppe, identified by Birman as "one of the biggest experts on metal-rolling in Germany, chief consultant to the German Steel Trust", while Rabkrin relied on Dr Karner, described (not impartially) by Birman as a person of lesser stature, "director of a small plant" in Austria.<sup>70</sup> Krzhizhanovsky's recommendations to STO were judicious, but basically he came down on the Rabkrin side.<sup>71</sup>

Later, the Southern Steel issue was studied by a special commission of the Politburo;<sup>72</sup> and on 8 August 1929 the Central Committee came out with a ruling in its resolution "On the work of Southern Steel";<sup>73</sup> this in effect decided in favour of Rabkrin, criticizing Vesenkha for being indiscriminate and extravagant in its reconstruction plan, and instructing (explicitly in the actual resolution, implicitly in the published version<sup>74</sup>) that there should be no general reconstruction of Stalino. (When the issue came up again at the XVI Party Congress in the summer of 1930, the emphasis was very strongly on short-term increases in output by the Ukrainian plants, although it was becoming clear that the equipment was deteriorating at an alarming rate. It was not until 1931 that the Stalino plant had any major work done on it, and that fell far short of a general reconstruction.<sup>75</sup>)

One of the things that makes the Southern Steel case so

interesting is that Birman, a bold and resourceful political in-fighter, fought the issue the whole way, up to and indeed beyond the Central Committee resolution. First he used the press, assailing Rabkrin and its spokesmen on Southern Steel, A.I.Gurevich and I.Z.Gokhman, in very lively polemical terms.<sup>76</sup> Then he made it an issue at the XVI Party Conference, using his position as a delegate to attack Rabkrin publicly for its interference with industry and to put the case for Stalino.<sup>77</sup> Just before the Central Committee decision, he brought a group of experts down to Stalino - Dr Puppe was there, but he had also found an American consultant to add weight - and had them tell the press of their support for Southern Steel and disagreement with Rabkrin's recommendations.<sup>78</sup>

Birman had the Ukrainian party organization, up to Politburo level, actively supporting his position and helping to keep the issue alive in Moscow as late as the summer of 1930.<sup>79</sup> Even after the Central Committee decision in August 1929, Birman continued to lobby, desisting only (as far as the public record is concerned) after the liquidation of Southern Steel in a general reorganization of industrial administration and his own appointment to a job in the Urals.<sup>80</sup> The activist in all this was Birman himself, backed up by his fellow industrialists in the Ukraine and Ukrainian party politicians. Vesenkha's support was passive, and its leaders were mainly silent.

When Birman launched his attack on Rabkrin at the XVI Party

Conference, Rabkrin representatives rose one after the other to argue the Rabkrin position, in what was rightly perceived as a display of bureaucratic solidarity ("What is the reason that a fourth prominent representative of Rabkrin is speaking against Southern Steel?" called a voice from the floor during Rozengolts' presentation. "Isn't it because Birman criticized Rabkrin in his speech?"<sup>81</sup>). Vesenkha did not respond in the same way. Only Iosif Kosior (a deputy chairman) and G.I.Lomov (head of Donbass Coal) spoke up for Birman against the Rabkrin rebuttals, in addition to a defence of Southern Steel's policy position by the head of the Ukrainian Vesenkha,<sup>82</sup> and this was as much a regional interest group as a bureaucratic one. Birman was probably too volatile for the decorous spirit prevailing in Kuibyshev's Vesenkha. In addition, he was downright provocative in his oblique suggestion that Rabkrin inspectors were essentially doing OGPU work;<sup>83</sup> and the scandal surrounding Southern Steel, which was obviously well known to many of the conference delegates, must have aroused great embarrassment in the Vesenkha leadership.

The facts of the Southern Steel scandal, as far as they can be reconstructed, were as follows. Adam Svitsyn, the expert who was Birman's technical director at Southern Steel, had been arrested by the OGPU along with other Southern Steel experts on wrecking charges. (In pre-revolutionary days, Svitsyn had been the first Russian director of the Iuzovka/Stalino plant;

in his wrecking, he was supposed to have carried out the wishes of the old owners - now abroad, but hoping to return - by pressing for new investment in Stalino and the repair and replacement of worn-out equipment.<sup>84</sup>) The arrests had followed a Rabkrin investigation on use of imported equipment that had found Svitsyn guilty of carelessness and waste; as a result of that investigation the TsKK Presidium had ordered in February 1928 that Svitsyn be fired as technical director and the Communist leadership of Southern Steel (Birman and company) reprimanded.<sup>85</sup> Birman had apparently defended Svitsyn after his arrest; and he was continuing to push Southern Steel policies (including the reconstruction of Stalino, Svitsyn's old plant) that had been advocated by Svitsyn.<sup>86</sup> As an additional curious note, Vesenkha had not formally removed Svitsyn from the directorate of Southern Steel until quite recently, a year after the TsKK order.<sup>87</sup>

Rabkrin speakers seemed both uneasy about the Rabkrin/OGPU connection,<sup>88</sup> and outraged that Birman, who should have been shaking in his shoes because of the Svitsyn affair, had the nerve to make public complaints about it. The OGPU connection that Birman hinted at clearly did exist. On the other hand, Rabkrin had not developed a vigilante spirit about Cultural Revolution, and its leaders showed no great enthusiasm either for the persecution of experts as a group or for the general purging of government institutions that Rabkrin was required to carry out.<sup>89</sup> As for Birman's fellow industrialists, they must all have

had or known stories to match his, and there can surely be no doubt where their sympathies lay. But they stayed prudently on the sidelines.

Ordzhonikidze's stance on the expert question is a little difficult to gauge, partly because he was noticeably silent during Rabkrin's XVI Conference battle with Birman (a man whom, as later developments suggest, he personally liked and esteemed). The literature represents Ordzhonikidze as a moderate.<sup>90</sup> But back in 1927, when he referred to the 5,000 "great scholars" (probably meant ironically) attached to Vesenkha institutions, he sounded quite cavalier on the expert question:<sup>91</sup>

We are not touching them. Despite the fact that we are not the greatest cowards in the world, all the same we are rather frightened of them. Look, they will say, the barbarians pushed their way into these scholarly institutions and made a mess of everything. For the time being /my emphasis, S.F./, we are not going to touch them.

In March 1928, at the time of the announcement of the Shakhty trial, Ordzhonikidze was non-committal - not fervently supportive of the new policy, but not sounding particularly worried about it either.<sup>92</sup> In both these speeches, Ordzhonikidze made a big point of the need to get access to foreign experts and technology: it may be that his main feeling about Russia's bourgeois experts at the time was that their expertise was probably out of date. In September 1929, however, he did seem to be distancing himself



from Molotov's fervor in the anti-expert campaign: at a guest appearance at a Moscow Party Conference, he gave his opinion that the ex-Menshevik economist Groman, whom Molotov had just denounced as a wrecker, was "a person who could not be bought" (chelovek nedokupnyi), even if his ideology did make him a political danger.<sup>93</sup>

But at the XVI Party Congress in June-July 1930, Ordzhonikidze took quite a different tack. A large part of his TsKK/Rabkrin report to the Congress consisted of a strong attack on Vesenkha and its handling of the challenge posed by the First Five-Year Plan. In case after case, Ordzhonikidze argued, Vesenkha had set the output targets too low and been careless and extravagant about investment funds; time after time, Rabkrin had had to intervene to correct the situation. On the Southern Steel issue, for example, Rabkrin had demonstrated that by keeping all the existing furnaces in operation and not throwing money away on general reconstruction of Stalino and other plants, output in 1932-3 could be raised from the 1.8 million tons of pig-iron projected by Vesenkha's Five-Year Plan for Southern Steel to 2.4 million.<sup>94</sup> Why, Ordzhonikidze asked, had Rabkrin been able to discover so much production potential in industry that was not visible to Vesenkha? Rabkrin had no magical resources, Ordzhonikidze said, only "devoted, honest Communists and some specialists, including foreigners. Evidently the whole superiority of our investigations lies in the fact that so far there have

been no wreckers among our investigators."<sup>95</sup>

The implied smear of Vesenkha was quite startling, coming from Ordzhonikidze. But even more striking was the fact that, presumably at Ordzhonikidze's request, the OGPU had prepared a small book of verbatim extracts from the interrogations of leading arrested experts formerly employed by Vesenkha, Gosplan and the Commissariat of Transport as documentation for Ordzhonikidze's TsKK/Rabkrin report.<sup>96</sup> Numbered copies were distributed to the delegates at the Party Congress.

The OGPU document is extraordinarily interesting in itself, but for our present purposes only a few characteristics need be noted. First, the experts' confessions were not fantasies of sabotage and conspiracy (as in the Shakhty and Industrial Party show trials, which featured many of the same people as the OGPU document), but detailed reports on the working of the economic bureaucracy, the relationship of experts and Communists therein, and the extent to which engineers and other bourgeois experts retained a separate esprit de corps and communications network. The extracts were organized as an investigation of various hypotheses on the subject, the most important of which - voiced by Ordzhonikidze himself in 1927 and Stalin on many occasions subsequently<sup>97</sup> - was that Communist economic administrators, lacking technical knowledge, were in danger of becoming mouth-pieces for their experts.

Second, the OGPU document was peculiarly damaging to the

Vesenkha leadership (headed by Kuibyshev), since it named a number of senior Vesenkha Communists as persons who at one time or other had made faulty decisions, taken bad expert advice, and so on. Two deputy chairmen of Vesenkha - V.I.Mezhlauk,<sup>98</sup> and Birman's patron Iosif Kosior<sup>99</sup> - were among those named, along with the heads of several major industrial trusts. Their inclusion was clearly a conscious political act: whatever the content of the original interrogations, the names could easily have been dropped in editing, and normally would have been.

Ordzhonikidze noted that "some people don't like this /OGPU/ pamphlet. Some comrades mentioned in this pamphlet are offended."<sup>100</sup> Later he added that his criticisms of industry had been thought unfair by "some comrades who did not speak at the Congress (although it would have been better if they had spoken)".<sup>101</sup> In fact, Vesenkha's leaders scarcely tried to defend themselves, being apparently in a state of shock, and very conscious that Ordzhonikidze had emerged as an authoritative spokesman for the party leadership, and must have cleared this all in advance with Stalin.<sup>102</sup> Kuibyshev was devastated, according to his widow's account, and sat up all night composing a letter to his industrialists. In the letter, he advised them to sit tight and not try to argue with Ordzhonikidze's criticisms:<sup>103</sup>

- 1) Through the lips of Sergo speaks the party, its general line.
- 2) The party, as always, is right.

- 3) The industrialists must not turn into a sort of caste; they must fearlessly uncover defects and harness themselves to work together with the party, helping it.
- 4) The industrialists must purge themselves and more boldly fill their ranks with fresh proletarian blood /sic/.

In the months that followed, morale at Vesenkha was low, and Kuibyshev - not a dynamic leader even at his best - may well have been perceived as a lame-duck chairman.<sup>104</sup> Whether Ordzhonikidze had already been promised Kuibyshev's job or whether both men were awaiting Stalin's decision is not clear. In any case, it was early in November 1930, five months after the XVI Party Congress, that Ordzhonikidze's appointment as chairman of Vesenkha was announced.<sup>105</sup> He began work at Vesenkha three days later.<sup>106</sup> A.A. Andreev, the First Secretary of the Northern Caucasus kraikom who had distinguished himself during collectivization (and would later rise, like Ordzhonikidze, to higher things) replaced him as chairman of Rabkrin/TsKK. Kuibyshev was moved to the chairmanship of Gosplan, a respectable post, but one in which he was slighted by all accounts and suffered a sharp decline in political status that was not reversed, despite his continued Politburo membership, during the four years of his life that remained.

Ordzhonikidze's move to Vesenkha was a classic example of a senior man moving with his entourage, for he brought his Rabkrin people over with him in force. Ex-Rabkrin or TsKK personnel

filled nine out of eighteen positions as Vesenkha sector heads in 1931;<sup>107</sup> and, to illustrate the same point from a Rabkrin standpoint, of Rabkrin's fifteen heads of operational groups in 1930, six were working in Vesenkha in 1931 and another two had worked there briefly in 1930-31 before moving elsewhere.<sup>108</sup> On his arrival in Vesenkha, Ordzhonikidze announced eleven senior appointments (one deputy commissar and ten Presidium members);<sup>109</sup> of the eleven appointees, eight were from Rabkrin or TsKK, two from the Central Committee Secretariat, and one from the OGPU.<sup>110</sup>

Ordzhonikidze was in a trickier position with regard to policy. A number of the policies with which he had been associated at Rabkrin - vigilance against expert "wrecking" in the economy, advocacy of high targets for industrial production but low investment in upkeep and maintenance, detailed oversight of Vesenkha's activities by an outside body (Rabkrin) - were scarcely appropriate for his new position. Rabkrin oversight was easily handled, probably by an agreement made prior to Ordzhonikidze's taking office at Vesenkha: after November 1930, Rabkrin investigations of industry became infrequent, routine and rarely publicized. Production targets were a problem for the future. But the expert issue was very much a problem of the present when Ordzhonikidze took over. He himself had recently pointed the finger at some of Vesenkha's experts, and several groups of these experts were now headed for show trials. The very issue of Pravda that announced Ordzhonikidze's appointment on page 1 devoted four subsequent

pages to the Prosecutor's conclusions on the "Industrial Party" wreckers<sup>111</sup> - experts who had held high economic posts in Vesenkha, Gosplan and other agencies. During Ordzhonikidze's first month in office, the newspapers carried extensive coverage of proceedings at the Industrial Party trial in every issue from November 26 to December 10. In the spring, the process was repeated with the Menshevik trial, which also featured experts who had worked for Vesenkha and Gosplan.

Ordzhonikidze did not follow Kuibyshev's strategy of trying to ignore the OGPU's activities or blunt the political rhetoric of vigilance. On the contrary, he installed himself in Vesenkha with some conspicuous security flourishes and a threatening mien. On 18 November, he set up a new formal procedure whereby all new Vesenkha appointees must be vetted by a commission which must include an OGPU representative.<sup>112</sup> On 29 November, he created a "temporary group for liquidating the consequences of wrecking" to be headed by G.E.Prokofev, the ex-OGPU man who had been one of Ordzhonikidze's first batch of Presidium appointees.<sup>113</sup> On 4 January 1931, breaking with the established Vesenkha tradition of embarrassed silence when its personnel were arrested or accused of crimes against the state, he issued a formal pronouncement expelling six Vesenkha members (all Industrial Party or Menshevik trial victims) as "traitors and enemies of Soviet power".<sup>114</sup>

It is hard to believe that even at the start this was much

more than window-dressing and political insurance. (At his most vigilant, Ordzhonikidze usually denounced wreckers who were already under arrest.) No new purges were conducted in Vesenkha. Mezhlauk and Kosior remained at Vesenkha as deputy chairmen, despite the innuendos of the OGPU document circulated at the XVI Party Congress. Stepan Birman was immediately called back from the Urals to head Vesenkha's central Accounting and Book-keeping sector<sup>115</sup> (later he was to become one of Ordzhonikidze's most visible and successful industrialists, as director of the Petrovsky Metallurgical Plant in the Ukraine). Prokofev, Vesenkha's new security man, made no apparent impact: he did not attend Presidium meetings,<sup>116</sup> and his only known contribution was to co-sign a report to the Presidium in July 1931 "On liquidating the consequences of wrecking in the flax-hemp-jute industry"<sup>117</sup> - as harmless a topic as could have been devised for him, and the report in any case was not about wrecking but about the economic problems of the industry. A few months later, Prokofev was released from his responsibilities at Vesenkha,<sup>118</sup> and he had no successor.

In the summer of 1931, Stalin announced a new policy of "rehabilitation" of bourgeois experts.<sup>119</sup> For obvious practical reasons this change was extremely welcome to industry and probably to Ordzhonikidze personally, since he had identified very quickly with his new sphere. Ordzhonikidze may even have been instrumental in getting the policy changed,<sup>120</sup> although, lacking Politburo minutes or any memoirs that shed direct light on the question,

we can only speculate on this. In any case, whatever his role in initiating the new policy may have been, Ordzhonikidze immediately moved energetically to implement it. He took an active part in bringing experts back from disgrace and putting them in responsible positions.<sup>121</sup> (One of the beneficiaries was Adam Svitsyn, Birman's old offsider at Southern Steel, who was named to a Vesenkha council of metallurgical experts in April 1932 and appointed first deputy director and technical director of Magnitogorsk Metallurgical Combine in December.<sup>122</sup>) Vesenkha - or, as it became in 1932, Narkomtiazhprom - and its newspaper Za industrializatsiiu were prominent in subsequent efforts to refurbish the image of the old experts, even those who had been in prison, and underline their current loyalty and the value of their contribution to the economy.

. . . . .

Ordzhonikidze's tenure, 1930-1937, was the great era of Vesenkha/Narkomtiazhprom. These were years when industrialization was a matter of great national pride and Ordzhonikidze and his industrialists were national heroes. They were years in which industrial managers and engineers, old and new, developed self-confidence and esprit de corps, and Ordzhonikidze's commissariat was a mighty institutional empire, far outdoing its predecessors in resources, scope of operations and entrepreneurial vigor. The source of Vesenkha/Narkomtiazhprom's institutional strength



was the continuing industrialization priority and the fact that - however painfully and patchily - it had pulled off the First Five-Year Plan which had so often seemed on the brink of disaster. But Ordzhonikidze's leadership was also a strength that should not be underestimated.

In the first place, Ordzhonikidze was a talented politician with skills appropriate for the Stalin period. His image was genial but tough - no signs of the covert liberalism and intelligentshchina that characterized many of the Old Bolsheviks who became oppositionists in the 1920s. He was on back-slapping terms with Stalin, who probably trusted him as much as he trusted anyone of independent stature, but did not overplay the relationship. Whether out of prudence or genuine respect for Stalin's judgement, he did his best to support Stalin's policy interventions and enthusiasms - for example, on the untrustworthiness of the experts and super-high tempos during the First Five-Year Plan, later on renewed enemy-hunting after Kirov's assassination and the Stakhanov movement - and generally seems to have backed away from them only when they had run their course and there was a chance that Stalin himself had cooled. He was not too scrupulous to play the "OGPU card" in politics, but he was too level-headed and pragmatic ever to succumb to a real passion for witch-hunting.

As head of a bureaucracy, Ordzhonikidze had a sharp eye for bureaucratic opportunity, as in his exploitation of Vesenkha's weaknesses when he was at Rabkrin. But he was also very responsive to the needs of his bureaucracy. Thus, once installed in Vesenkha,

he quickly moved away from his expert-baiting stance at the XVI Party Congress, and subsequently became unusually protective of "his" experts, as well as "his" managers. On questions of production targets and growth rates, similarly, he soon shifted to the more realistic position appropriate to a chairman of Vesenkha.<sup>123</sup>

Ordzhonikidze was also an energetic defender of his bureaucratic turf, often speaking quite openly of this as a policy objective (which in Communist terms was unusual) and acting straightforwardly in pursuit of it. One way of controlling turf is to control your own appointments, a power that according to conventional wisdom lay not with Vesenkha/Narkomtiashprom or any government agency but with the Central Committee Secretariat and Orgburo. However, Ordzhonikidze was keenly interested in appointments;<sup>124</sup> and his early appointment of Moskvina, an Orgburo member and candidate member of the Central Committee Secretariat, to head Vesenkha's Sector of Cadres, may have been a ploy to emancipate Vesenkha from unwanted supervision over appointments by bringing over a highly-placed "supervisor" and absorbing him into the commissariat. There is some evidence, in any case, that Ordzhonikidze did win considerable autonomy vis-a-vis the Central Committee Secretariat in the matter of appointments.<sup>125</sup>

Birman's 1929 argument that industry should be as free as possible from outside interference clearly accorded very

well with Ordzhonikidze's sentiments once he and Birman were on the same side of the bureaucratic fence. For his industrial directors, Ordzhonikidze preferred assertive, risk-taking types like Birman. He disliked it when his directors enlisted "outsiders" like regional party secretaries to help lobby the central commissariat on behalf of a local enterprise, taking this either as a sign of weakness or an inadmissible attempt to bring outside pressure to bear on one's own institution.<sup>126</sup> His attitude to OGPU intervention on economic matters (and probably also on personnel ones) was similar. He objected strongly when the OGPU petitioned him for equipment for the Cheliabinsk Coal Trust, a Narkomtiashprom subordinate over which the local OGPU had assumed shefstvo, the role of patron and protector. His reaction here revealed how much he thought in terms of turf and bureaucratic pecking orders. "'What kind of shefstvo is this?' Sergo marvelled. 'A strong institution /generally/ assumes shefstvo over a weak one. Is Narkomtiashprom really weaker than the GPU?'"

This last quotation reminds us of a sobering fact: a high proportion of Ordzhonikidze's industrialists - and indirectly Ordzhonikidze himself<sup>128</sup> - fell victim to the Great Purges of the late 1930s. This suggests in the first place that the secret police was stronger than Narkomtiashprom, and in the second place that Stalin was stronger than both of them. It raises the problem of how to interpret the phenomenon of a powerful,

independent, empire-building bureaucracy like Ordzhonikidze's Vesenkha/Narkomtiazhprom in systemic terms. The idea that the totalitarian dictatorship prevented the emergence of such phenomena seems untenable. It would seem more plausible to argue that the political system of the 1930s actually generated barons and baronial fiefdoms, but at the same time had a low tolerance for them. But this still leaves us with more questions than answers. In terms of concrete historical research, we have scarcely begun to explore the complicated interaction of dictator, police and powerful bureaucracies in the Stalin period. Major reconceptualization of Stalinist politics may have to wait until more of that basic research is done.

NOTES 1)

1. The archival files that were available to me came from TsGAOR (the Central State Archive of the October Revolution and Socialist Construction of the USSR) and TsGANKh (the Central State Archives of the National Economy of the USSR), fondy of Vesenkha USSR, Narkomtiazhprom USSR, the Commissariat of Labour of the USSR and the Central Council of Trade Unions.
2. The Lenin Library in Moscow still gives Western and indeed Soviet scholars a hard time. However, more or less normal (in Western terms) working conditions are available at the library of INION, the Academy of Science's Institute of Scientific Information, which has very good holdings for the period from the mid 1920s to the mid 1930s.
3. There are two useful general accounts of Vesenkha by Soviet historians: F.V.Samokhvalov, Sovety narodnogo khoziaistva v 1917-1932 gg. (Moscow, 1964) and V.Z.Drobizhev, Glavnyi shtab sotsialisticheskoi promyshlennosti (Ocherki istorii VSNKh 1917-1932 gg.) (Moscow, 1966). In English, E.H.Carr and R.W.Davies' Foundations of a Planned Economy 1926-1929, vol. 1 (London, 1969) and the earlier volumes of Carr's History contain a wealth of information.
4. Kommunisticheskaiia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza v rezoliutsiiakh i resheniiakh syezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK, vol. 4 (Moscow, 1970), pp. 310-17.
5. Ibid., pp. 284-94 and 295-309. The most comprehensive collection of Central Committee resolutions on industry is

NOTES 2)

- M.Savelev and A.Poskrebyshev, Direktivy VKP(b) po khoziaistvennym voprosam (Moscow-Leningrad, 1931).
6. The breakdown of Central Committee members is based on my biographical files; the list of members comes from Pravda, 14 July 1930, p. 1.
  7. See below, p. 26.
  8. Byli industrial'nye. Ocherki i vospominaniia (Moscow, 1970), pp. 313-14.
  9. Dzerzhinsky was a candidate member; Kuibyshev and Ordzhonikidze became full members after being appointed to Vesenkha.
  10. See Khrushchev's description of Muscovite and Leningrad contributions to Politburo discussions in the mid 1930s, Khrushchev Remembers, trans. and ed. Strobe Talbott (Boston, 1970), pp. 60-61.
  11. Stalin was also a member of STO from 1931 (Vsia Moskva, 1931 and 1936), but no reports have been found on its meetings or the nature of his participation.
  12. Its composition as of 12 November 1928 is in Sbornik postanovlenii i prikazov po promyshlennosti 1928-29, no. 122.
  13. For Vesenkha's sectors and departments, see its yearly entry in Vsia Moskva. Adresnaia i spravochnaia kniga na ... godu.
  14. TsGANKh 3429/1/5233, pp. 50-51.
  15. TsGANKh 3429/1/5157, p. 31.
  16. See, for example, Tomsky's note to Kuibyshev on his nominees for jobs in the Chemical Administration of Vesenkha, of which Tomsky was the new head: TsGANKh 3429/1/5213, p. 166.

NOTES 3)

17. A.Chuianov, Na stremnine veka. Zapiski sekretaria obkoma (Moscow, 1976), p. 41.
18. TsGANKh 7297/1/3, p. 161. Alliluev is spelt "Aliluev" in this document, but spelling mistakes are common in the files.
19. The first record I have found of an Industrial department of the Central Committee is when M.I.Tselishchev was appointed to head it in April 1934. He had previously worked in Gosplan and the Commissariat of Labor, and later worked in Narkomtiazhprom (Industriia, 23 April 1938, pp. 1-2).
20. TsGANKh 3429/1/5208, pp. 2-4.
21. See below, p. 22.
22. I.Kosior, "On working conditions of economic cadres", Pravda, 7 April 1928, p. 1.
23. Described in Sheila Fitzpatrick, Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921-1934 (Cambridge, 1979), ch. 6.
24. See E.H.Carr and R.W.Davies, Foundations of a Planned Economy 1926-1929, vol. 1 (London, 1969), pp. 844-97.
25. Ia.Bineman and S.Kheinman, Kadry gosudarstvennogo i kooperativnogo apparata SSSR (Moscow, 1930), pp. 86-7.
26. Ibid., pp. 62 and 67.
27. Ibid., pp. 86-7.
28. Ibid., pp. 92-3, 114-5, 62 and 67.
29. Ibid., pp. 114-5.
30. Ibid., p. 63.
31. Listed by name and salary in TsGANKh 3429/1/5142, pp. 62-71.
32. Names from ibid.; job titles from Vsia Moskva 1928, pp. 90-6.

NOTES 4)

33. The experts' salaries, with bonuses, went as high as 500 roubles a month (TsGANKh 3429/1/5142, pp. 62-71), whereas the "party maximum" was less than half that (225 roubles, according to Izvestiia Narodnogo Komissariata Truda SSSR, 1925 no. 49, p. 9). For an example, see the appointments of two Communists and one expert (David Grigorevich Erenburg, probably the writer's brother) to the board in charge of the brewing industry in September 1928: the Communists, one of whom was chairman of the board, each got 225 roubles, while Erenburg's salary was 450 roubles. TsGANKh 3429/1/5158, p. 5.
34. On the OGPU background, see Ordzhonikidze in XVI syezd Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (b) 26 iiunia-13 iiulia 1930 g. Stenograficheskii otchet, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1935), p. 566; on Stalin's involvement, see A.Avtorkhanov, Stalin and the Soviet Communist Party (London, 1959), p. 29.
35. Pravda, 10 March 1928, p. 1.
36. For discussion of this phenomenon, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., Cultural Revolution in Russia 1928-1931 (Bloomington, Ind., 1978).
37. Based on my biographical files. The fifteen are A.M.Ginzburg, S.D.Shein, K.I.Rabinovich, S.D.Abramovich, S.A.Kukel-Kraevskii, A.V.Nazimov, N.I.Skorutto, I.N.Strizhev, I.I.Elin, S.V.Kupriianov, V.S.Mikhailov, S.A.Khrennikov, S.L.Liubarskii, N.M.Kutskii and V.I.Zhdanov.
38. XVI syezd VKP(b), vol. 1, p. 146.
39. See Pravda, 30 March 1928, p. 3.
40. An example is L.G.Rabinovich, one of the defendants in the Shakhty trial of June 1928. In a draft order of 27 February



NOTES 5)

1928, Rabinovich was listed as a member of a Vesenkha advisory council, but in the final version dated 15 March his name was crossed out in pencil (TsGANKh 3429/1/5145, p. 129). The existence of the Shakhty conspiracy, though not yet the names of alleged participants, had been announced in the press on 10 March.

41. S.A.Khrennikov, who was to be one of the accused in the Industrial Party Trial, was "removed" from his job in the Chief Metals Administration by a Vesenkha order of 24 October 1929 (TsGANKh 3429/1/5201, p. 67). This was probably just after his arrest, for his interrogation by the OGPU began no later than 4 November 1929 (Materialy k otchetu TsKK VKP(b) XVI syezdu VKP(b). Sostavlennyi OGPU /K dokladu t.Ordzhonikidze/ /Moscow, 1930/, p. 50).
42. See the detailed report of 1929 discussions by experts from Vesenkha, Gosplan and elsewhere, evidently based on unpublished minutes, in V.Bogushevskii and A.Khavin, "The year of the great break", in God deviatnadsatyi (Moscow, 1936), pp. 304-78.
43. See Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Stalin and the Making of a New Elite, 1928-1939", Slavic Review, September 1979, pp. 379-80.
44. Biulleten' TsKK VKP(b) - NK RKI SSSR i RSFSR, 1927 no. 8, p. 8.
45. TsGANKh 3429/1/5162, p. 8 (9 January 1929).
46. TsGANKh 3429/1/5162, pp. 22-3 (5-6 February 1929).
47. Iu.V.Voskresenskii, Perekhod Kommunisticheskoi Partii k osushchestvleniiu politik sotsialisticheskoi industrializatsii SSSR (1925-1927) (Moscow, 1969), pp. 125-7.
48. Khoziaistvo Urala, 1927 no. 6, p. 4.

NOTES 6)

49. Riazanov, in XVI konferentsiia VKP(b). Aprel' 1929 goda. Stenograficheskii otchet (Moscow, 1962), p. 214.
50. Materialy k otchetu TsKK, p. 51. Note that Khrennikov made these comments under OGPU interrogation. A Vesenkha patriot at heart, Khrennikov devoted much of his "confession" to advising his successors on the pitfalls of the job, including the problem of local lobbying.
51. A.Busygin, Pervyi direktor (Sverdlovsk, 1977), pp. 18-66; G.Unpelev, Rozhdenie Uralmasha(1928-1933 g.) (Moscow, 1960), p. 172 and passim.
52. TsGANKh 3429/1/5224, p. 155.
53. See report by Kondrikov of "Apatit" in Biulleten'obyedinennoi V oblastnoi i III gorodskoi Leningradskoi konferentsii VKP(b) (Leningrad, 1934), Bulletin 8, p. 42.
54. Ukrainian leaders like Skrypnik (Ukrainian Commissar of Education) and Liubchenko and Postyshev of the Ukrainian party organization interjected repeatedly in support of Birman (Southern Steel) and opposition to the Rabkrin speakers. XVI konferentsiia VKP(b), pp. 492, 500, 528, 532, 551, 556, 557, 558, 597.
55. See the discussion of Rozengolts' TsKK/Rabkrin report, and the political report by Stanislav Kosior, 1st Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, in XI z'ezd komunistichnoi partii (bil'shovikov) Ukraini (5-15 chervnia 1930 roku). Stenografichni zvit (Kharkov, 1930), pp. 199-232 passim and 469-76.

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56. See, for example, his banter with the oppositionist Muralov in 1927, in VI plenum TsKK sostava XIV syezda VKP(b) 26-27 iiulia 1927 g. (Moscow, 1927), pp. 99 and 102.
57. Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia (3rd ed.), vol. XVIII (1974): Ordzhonikidze entry.
58. Biulleten' TsKK VKP(b) i NK RKI SSSR i RSFSR, 1927 no. 8, pp. 8-14.
59. This probably incomplete list is compiled from archival materials in the series TsGANKh 3429/1/5132-5231 and from a variety of published sources.
60. Vsia Moskva (Moscow, 1929), p. 85.
61. A vivid example is given in the biography of A.P. Bannikov, the first director of the Uralmash plant in Sverdlovsk: A. Busygin, Pervyi direktor (Sverdlovsk, 1977), pp. 66-7.
62. Sbornik postanovlenii i prikazov po promyshlennosti 1928-9, vypusk 14, p. 3.
63. TsGANKh 3429/1/5229, p. 201.
64. See, for example, Mezhlauk, in XVI syezd VKP(b), vol. 1, pp. 588-9.
65. Kiselev, in ibid., p. 653.
66. TsKK VKP(b) - NK RKI SSSR, Nedochety kapital'nogo stroitel'stva v promyshlennosti za 1927-28, 1928-29 gody (Moscow, 1930), p. 39.
67. XI z'ezd komunistichnoi partii (bil'shovikov) Ukraini, pp. 229-30, 232.
68. TsKK - NK RKI SSSR /marked "na pravakh rukopisi"/, O rekonstruktsii zavodov Iugostali (Moscow, 1929), p. 12.
69. Ibid., p. 55.

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70. XVI konferentsiia VKP(b), pp. 460 and 499.
71. O rekonstruktsii zavodov Iugostali, p. 74 - undated memo of Krzhizhanovsky to Rykov, chairman of STO.
72. Rozengolts, in XI z'ezd komunistichnoi partii (bil'shovikov) Ukraini, p. 229.
73. Pravda, 13 August 1929, p. 5.
74. The Pravda and other published versions list three Southern Steel plants, not including Stalino, that are to be reconstructed. A one-sentence instruction that Stalino not undergo reconstruction during the Five-Year Plan, omitted from these texts, is quoted by Ordzhonikidze in XVI syezd VKP(b), vol. 1, p. 541.
75. G.Volodin, Po sledam istorii. Ocherki iz istorii Donetskogo ordena Lenina metallurgicheskogo zavoda im. V.I.Lenina (Donetsk, 1967), p. 205.
76. Birman had articles on the question in Metall, 1929 no.2; Puti industrializatsii, 1929 no. 10 (31 May) and no. 11 (15 June); and Torgovo-promyshlennaia gazeta, 27 April 1929, p. 3 - the fourth day of the XVI Party Conference. In addition, he spoke on the subject at the Vesenkha plenum in April 1929 and was reported in Torgovo-promyshlennaia gazeta, 6 April 1929, p. 1.
77. XVI konferentsiia VKP(b), pp. 493-501.
78. Torgovo-promyshlennaia gazeta, 24 July 1929, p. 3.
79. See above, notes 54 and 55, and reference by Ordzhonikidze in XVI syezd VKP(b), vol. 1, p. 540.

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80. There was a major reorganization of industry (sponsored in part by Rabkrin) in the winter of 1929-30 involving the creation of new industrial corporations (obyedineniia) - see "On the reorganization of the administration of industry", 5 December 1929, in Resheniia partii i pravitel'stva po khoziaistvennym voprosam (1917-1957 gg.), vol. 2 (Moscow, 1967), pp. 136-42. In the first version of the reform, which was industry-wide, the new metallurgical corporations were Steel and New Steel, responsible respectively for old metallurgical plants throughout the Soviet Union and new ones (TsGANKh 3429/1/5203, p. 591). But a few months later these were scrapped in favour of Steel (now located in Kharkov, as Southern Steel had been, and responsible for Ukrainian metallurgy, old and new plants alike) and Eastern Steel (located in Sverdlovsk and responsible for Urals and Siberian metallurgy). Iosif Kosior was appointed chairman of Eastern Steel and Birman - in what was surely a partly punitive appointment of his deputy (TsGANKh 3429/1/5226, p. 273: order of Kuibyshev dated 27 August 1930).
81. XVI konferentsiia VKP(b), interjection by Skrypnik, p. 558.
82. Ibid., pp. 200, 528, 529, 5/3.
83. Ibid., Birman's speech, pp. 497, 500 and passim.
84. XI z'ezd komunistichnoi partii (bil'shovikov) Ukraini, p. 165.
85. Ibid., pp. 506-7, 556-7.
86. Ibid., pp. 498-500, 556.

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87. Sbornik postanovlenii i prikazov po promyshlennosti 1928-9,  
vypusk 9, p. 6.
88. See, for example, Gurevich in XVI konferentsiia VKP(b), pp. 506-7.
89. See the report by Ia.Iakovlev (Rabkrin/TsKK) "On results and  
coming tasks of the struggle with bureaucratism", XVI konfe-  
rentsiia VKP(b), pp. 444-88 passim, especially pp. 461-5.
90. See Kendall E.Bailes, Technology and Society under Lenin and  
Stalin (Princeton, 1978), pp. 16-7, 82 and 142-9, and Sheila  
Fitzpatrick, Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet  
Union, 1921-1934 (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 120 and 215. Soviet  
scholars writing on Ordzhonikidze also stress his moderate  
and conciliatory attitude to experts.
91. Biulleten' TsKK VKP(b) i NK RKI SSSR i RSFSR, 1927 no. 8, pp. 13-14.
92. Ordzhonikidze, speech to the Moscow meeting of graduating  
students, Pravda, 28 March 1928, p. 4.
93. Pervaia moskovskaia oblastnaia konferentsiia Vsesoiuznoi  
Kommunisticheskoi Partii (bol'shevikov). Stenograficheskii  
otchet /marked "Tol'ko dlia chlenov VKP(b)"/ (Moscow, 1929),  
vypusk 1, pp. 163, 181-2.
94. XVI syezd VKP(b), vol. 1, p. 540.
95. Ibid., p. 547.
96. Materialy k otchetu TsKK VKP(b). Sostavlennyi OGPU (k dokladu  
tov. Ordzhonikidze /marked "Na pravakh rukopisi. Tol'ko dlia  
delegatov XVI Syezda VKP(b)"/ (Moscow, 1930).
97. See above, notes 43 and 44.

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98. Materialy k otchetu TsKK VKP(b). Sostavlennyyi OGPU (k dokladu tov. Ordzhonikidze (Moscow, 1930), p. 51. The comment on Mezhlauk was that he had been talked into buying unnecessary equipment for Leningrad industrial plants.
99. Ibid., pp. 23, 50 and 51. An oil expert noted that Kosior, who had headed the major oil trust Azneft in the early 1920s, was "not a specialist in oil"; and a metallurgical expert (Khrennikov) said that when Kosior moved from Azneft to Southern Steel he had trouble getting a grasp of his new field and was led into needless purchases of expensive foreign equipment.
100. XVI syezd VKP(b), vol. 1, p. 566.
101. Ibid., p. 714.
102. See the response by two of Vesenkha's deputy chairmen, V.I.Mezhlauk and S.S.Lobov, in XVI syezd VKP(b), vol. 1, pp. 588-9, 641.
103. G.V.Kuibysheva, O.A.Lezhava, N.V.Nelidov and A.F.Khavin, Valerian Vladimirovich Kuibyshev. Biografiia (Moscow, 1966), pp. 299-301.
104. This is suggested by a reading of the orders issued by Kuibyshev and his deputies in these months: TsGANKh 3429/1/5223-5231.
105. Pravda, 11 November 1930, p. 1 (TsIK decree of 10 November).
106. TsGANKh 3429/1/5232, p. 208.
107. The nine sectors were Planning (A.I.Gurevich, Labor (Iu.P. Figatner - a TsKK member elected July 1930, though also

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listed in Vsia Moskva 1930 as head of Vesenkha's Chief Inspectorate), Organization, rationalization of production and administration of industry (V.Ia.Grossman), Finance (Z.G.Zangvil), Supply and distribution (M.A.Fushman), Fuel distribution (M.A.Fushman), Machinebuilding (M.M.Kaganovich), Fuel and energy (A.I.Izrailovich) and Building and timber (S.Z.Ginzburg). - Data from Vsia Moskva 1930 (Rabkrin listing), Vsia Moskva 1931 (Vesenkha listing) and Pravda, 14 July 1930, p. 1 (listing of TsKK membership).

108. The six were V.Ia.Grossman, Z.G.Zangvil, A.I.Izrailovich, M.M.Kaganovich, S.I.Ignat and F.G.Ego. A.V.Ozerskii and M.B.Grossman also worked briefly in Vesenkha before transferring to the Commissariat of External Trade (Ozerskii) and back to Rabkrin as head of its precious metals group (Grossman). There were also Rabkrin/Vesenkha crossovers at a lower level, for example I.Z.Gokhman, part of the Rabkrin team that investigated Southern Steel in 1929-30, who moved over to the Vesenkha Planning sector in November 1930 and subsequently headed the Ferrous metal group of the Metallurgical sector. - data from Vsia Moskva, 1930 and 1931, supplemented from my own biographical files.

109. TsGANKh 3429/1/5232, p. 262 (order of 15 November 1930).

110. The eight were I.P.Pavlunovskii (deputy commissar), K.F. Martinovich, Z.G.Zangvil, A.I.Izrailovich and A.I.Gurevich, together with S.Z.Ginzburg and A.E.Bliznichenko, who were TsKK members but not ranking Rabkrin officials.



NOTES 13)

From the Central Committee apparat came I.M.Moskvin (elected an Orgburo member and candidate member of the Secretariat at the XVI Party Congress in 1930) and Ia.D.Rozental. Moskvin became head of Vesenkha's Cadres sector, and Rozental worked under him.

G.E.Prokofev represented the OGPU at the XVII Party Congress in 1934 and was NKVD representative to Sovnarkom RSFSR in 1936 (Vsia Moskva 1936). I have assumed from this and the nature of his responsibilities in Vesenkha that he was also in the OGPU before his Vesenkha appointment.

- data sources as in notes 107 and 108.

111. Pravda, 11 November 1930, pp. 3-6.

112. TsGANKh 3429/1/5233, pp. 50-51. Whatever may have been the actual practice, this had a symbolic impact as the first formal statement of OGPU participation in Vesenkha appointments. Kuibyshev's Presidium had set up a body that was similar except for the absence of an OGPU representative on 27 November 1929 (TsGANKh 3429/1/5203, p. 258).

113. TsGANKh 3429/1/5233, pp. 150 and 151.

114. TsGANKh 3429/1/5251, p. 12. The experts were A.M.Ginzburg, L.B.Kafengauz, L.K.Ramzin, A.L.Sokolovskii, S.D.Shein and S.A.Khrennikov. Most of them were long gone from Vesenkha (Khrennikov, for example, had not only been under arrest for more than a year but had also been named as a wrecker in the OGPU document circulated at the XVI Party Congress months earlier), so this order had a declarative rather than practical purpose.

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115. TsGANKh 3429/1/5251, pp. 33 and 64. Birman was appointed head of sector on 4 January 1931 and member of the Presidium of Vesenkha on 6 January.
116. TsGANKh 3429/1/5239 and 3429/1/5242 (protocols of meetings of the Vesenkha Presidium, January-February and April-August 1931).
117. TsGANKh 3429/1/5242, pp. 89-93.
118. TsGANKh 3429/1/5259, p. 227, and 3429/1/5260, p. 91 (orders of 18 August and 14 September 1931).
119. I. Stalin, "New circumstances - new tasks" (the "Six Conditions" speech), June 23, 1931, in his Sochineniia, vol. XIII (Moscow, 1951), p. 77.
120. For the argument that Ordzhonikidze was probably the initiator, see Kendall E. Bailes, Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin (Princeton, 1978), pp. 144-51.
121. See testimony in Byli industrial'nye. Ocherki i vospominaniia (Moscow, 1973, 2nd ed.), p. 189. An interesting example is in TsGANKh 7297/1/1, pp. 99-102: V.V. Lelkov, an engineer arrested on 11 March 1931, "evidently in connection with the MOGES affair", and freed on 29 July 1931, wrote asking for a job to the chief of the Cheliabinsk Tractor construction project, Lovin. Lovin forwarded the letter to Ordzhonikidze, adding his own request for "a major engineer" for Cheliabinsk or, failing that, Lelkov (who at least had 28 years experience and had worked at Cheliabinsk earlier). The letter was annotated in pencil by Ordzhonikidze: "Where do I get him from(?)

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Agreed." On 21 January 1932, Lelkov was appointed chief engineer for the construction of Cheliabinsk Tractor.

122. TsGANKh 7297/1/3, p. 102, and 7297/1/9, p. 280.

123. Byli industrial'nye, pp. 194-5.

124. In contrast to Kuibyshev, who delegated appointments to his deputy Kraval (TsGANKh 3429/1/5214, p. 67), Ordzhonikidze signed most of the presidium's appointments and made the Cadres Sector answer directly to him rather than to a deputy (TsGANKh 3429/1/5233, p. 230).

125. See above, p. 10.

126. I.V.Paramonov, Uchit'sia upravliat'. Mysli i opyt starogo khoziaistvennika (Moscow, 2nd ed., 1970), p. 162.

127. I.V.Paramonov, Puti proidennye (Moscow, 1966), p. 208.

128. Ordzhonikidze committed suicide in February 1937, having been unable to prevent the show trial and death sentence imposed on his deputy at Narkomtiazhprom, Piatakov.