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Author(s): Andrea Graziosi

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ANDREA GRAZIOSI

AT THE ROOTS OF SOVIET INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
AND PRACTICES

Piatakov's Donbass in 1921*

“Natura di cose altro non è che nascimento di esse.”

G. Vico

Introduction

From the turn of the century to World War II the Donets Basin was for the Russian Empire and the USSR what the Ruhr and the Creusot were for Germany and France. In 1913, more than 85% of the coal burned by tsarist industry came from Donbass mines. Twenty years later, approximately 70% still came from the region. The situation was much the same in the case of steel.

But what Lenin called the “real basis of industry in Russia” lay outside Russian borders. In fact, Russian and then Soviet great-power status were secured by a Ukrainian region which, because of its status, found itself close to the heart of the imperial dimension of two large state formations. The way the region was industrialized complicated the situation even more. Its work force did not come from the surrounding countryside but, rather, from other areas of the Empire. As a result, Donbass cities were soon inhabited by a conflict-ridden mixture of Russians, Jews, Poles, Germans, Baltics and russified Ukrainians with quite strained relations with the surrounding Ukrainian peasants.¹

These industrial and national features distinguished a region much larger than the Donbass proper, a *guberniia* with Bakhmut at its center. It included the eastern part of the southern steppes as well as the Khar'kov *guberniia*. Not accidentally, some of our main characters, the Russian and russified Bolsheviks of the region, founded in 1918 a *Donetskaia respublika*, independent from Ukraine, with Khar'kov as its capital.

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Later on, they defended the idea of a Donbass *oblast'* with privileged ties with Moscow.²

These few remarks suffice to understand why, from 1890 on, the history of Donbass was a particularly interesting one. In 1921 this interest was heightened by the transition from War Communism to the NEP which, in this key economic region, took on features anticipating what we may call the pre-1953 Soviet industrial relations. 1921 Donbass was also, in Lenin's words, the center of "so many intrigues and entanglements [...] that in ten years the Institute of party history will not get to the bottom of them." In other words, the Donbass was then the theater of a battle which helped shape the subsequent political line-ups, and contributed heavily to the make-up of the Stalinist ideology.³

I

Background

On November 25, 1920, G.L. Piatakov was appointed chairman of the Donbass state agency in charge of coal production, the *Tsentral'noe pravlenie kamennougol'noi promyshlennosti* (TsPKP).⁴ In the two previous years he had twice been the secretary of the Communist Party of the Ukraine (KPbU). Many of the above-mentioned intrigues were thus rooted in this party's quite bitter factional record.⁵

One of the factions had been that of the Donbass activists, approximately 14,000 in December 1917 versus the 5,000 of the Kiev region. In the fall of 1918, the opposition to a Ukrainian revolution based on the peasants' revolt, earned this faction the title of "Right." But the policies it embraced in the following months were by no means right-wing.⁶

Until his death on July 1921, F.A. Sergeev (Artem) was its most influential leader. Voroshilov, Kviring, Chubar', Lebed', Rukhimovich, Petrovskii, the Mezhlauk brothers, Epshtein (Iakovlev) and Shvarts (Semen) sided with him. In 1919 they were joined by two of the Kosior brothers, previously close to Piatakov and the Left and one year later Molotov was appointed secretary of the Donbass *gubkom*. But the Donbass bloc also included people like Zaveniagin, later on an important leader of both industry and the Gulag, Shvernik, the trade union chairman of the 1930's, and Khrushchev, who was then starting his party career in this region.

The list thus includes some of the most important Stalinists of the following years. As a consequence of the way the region was industrialized, with some exceptions like the Mezhlauks, these men were as a rule non-Ukrainians or russified Ukrainians of proletarian origins who had worked long years in local mines and steel mills. This background, however, did not mean that they represented the local working classes. As Skrypnyk reminded Kviring, who on July 1918 vaunted the proletarian purity of the Donbass party versus the *meshchanstvo* of Kiev's, the Ekaterinoslav Bolsheviks were quite unpopular among workers who "in many factories" voted for their arrest and "supported the Menshevik platform." Three months later, the II KPbU Congress acknowledged that Khar'kov trade unions were still solidly in Menshevik hands.⁷

As the history of the *Donetskaia respublika* shows, these men considered their larger Donbass part and parcel of Russia, its "South" in the words of Sverdlov and many other Great-Russian imperialists. Kviring even proposed to call what was to be

the KPbU "Russian Communist Party in the Ukraine" and confessed that the motto "Soviet Ukraine" meant nothing to him. This refusal to recognize the autonomy of Ukraine went hand in hand with strong anti-Ukrainian feelings, directed above all against nationalists and local peasants, but also against right-bank Bolsheviks.⁸

In the spring of 1918, the Donbass red guards fled eastward with their families before the German offensive. Their detachments, later unified under Voroshilov's command, ended up in Tsaritsyn where they first ran into Ordzhonikidze and soon afterwards into Stalin.⁹ This meeting's importance can hardly be overestimated. It begot that X Russian army which was soon to become a nest of anti-Trotskyite intrigues and provided Stalin with both a number of faithful henchmen and elements for the brewing of a peculiar ideology. In fact, amongst the Donbassite-Tsaritsynites the hatred for *spetsy* and *intelligenty*, typical of a *milieu* of newly-promoted people of low social origins, merged with the defense of *partiinost'*, considered the bulwark of recently acquired power against the attacks of those who, like Trotskii, threatened it. At the same time, this populism went hand in hand with an extreme and primitive harshness towards both subordinates and the population at large.¹⁰

Stalin's hold on part of the KPbU leadership was strengthened by the 1919 crisis. The catastrophe brought about by the great peasant revolt and by Denikin's offensive then pushed the Donbass men to demand the dispatch to Ukraine of "an authoritative leader" capable of straightening things up, "perhaps Stalin himself." This soon came true with Stalin's appointment in the southern front's RVS, which controlled also the former Ukrainian troops. The crisis, moreover, soothed the conflicts between the Ukrainian national Bolsheviks, headed by Skrypnyk, and the Donbass ones, who found themselves confronted with a common enemy represented by Trotskii and the KPbU Left, whose anti-Ukrainian dispositions had become even more virulent.¹¹

Piatakov was the leader of this Left, which at first included Zatonskii, Bubnov, the Kosiors, Gamarnik and Primakov. The son of a big Russian entrepreneur from Kiev, *intelligent*, internationalist, authoritarian, Piatakov naturally attracted the hatred of the Donbassites, whom he despised and defined with terms from Gogol' and Saltykov-Shchedrin such as *blagolupost'* and *khlestakovshchina*.¹²

This enmity was compounded by the nasty tensions that arose in January 1919 around the formation of the second Ukrainian Bolshevik government. At first Piatakov headed it. Then Artem replaced him. Eventually, Lenin was forced to send Rakovskii to put things in order. Before his arrival, Voroshilov, Rukhimovich and Mezhlauk even promulgated a false decree appointing themselves members of the Ukrainian Revolutionary Military Soviet and Piatakov demanded that they be court-martialed.¹³

These conflicts, however, did not prevent an accord on the course to follow in Ukraine, which was based on Great-Russian imperialism and, at the same time, on the desire to keep a degree of independence from Moscow, i.e. from Trotskii (not casually, the bulk of the Military Opposition came from Ukraine). Rakovskii confessed that "we approached the Ukraine from the point of view that we must use it to a maximum in order to relieve the food shortage in Russia," while Iakovlev, who was later to head the *Narkomzem* during collectivization, recognized that in 1919 Ukraine "the process of grain requisition was crazy." This policy of *lobovoi udar po vsei derevne* ignited that *vosstanie vsego sela* which was a crucial factor in the Bolshevik 1919 Ukrainian catastrophe.¹⁴

Coming after a fight against Trotskii and his methods, this catastrophe persuaded also the majority of the Left leaders to side with Stalin. Piatakov instead, after

befriending Ordzhonikidze and beginning to submit to Stalin, chose Trotskii, thus strengthening the hostility of the Donbassite-Tsaritsynites and stirring the resentment of his former comrades.

For four years Piatakov remained Trotskii's right hand and subservient assistant. At the beginning of 1920, the economist Liberman saw him jumping to his feet after recognizing the voice of the master on the phone. "His whole manner changed," becoming "quick and nervously abrupt. He said — Right away!" and "explained without looking at me: Lev Davidovitch loves the 'pathos of distance' between us and himself... Probably he is right." The same man who in October 1919 ironically asked *Ego Vysokoprevoskhoditel'stvo* Stalin to let him work with Ordzhonikidze, now addressed Trotskii with a deferential *Glubokouvazhaemyi*. In short, Piatakov had become a *Trotskyist*, a term which began circulating in 1920 to indicate the thousands of army commanders dispatched with wide powers to the civilian "front."¹⁵

This shift of personnel was among the cornerstones of militarization. After the rejection of his proto-NEP proposal in February 1920, Trotskii became, as is well known, this policy's standard-bearer. The idea was to redress the economic situation by resorting to the methods and the men of the sole successful Bolshevik experience, the military. Following the RVSР-fronts-armies model, the command of the economy was to be entrusted to a *Sovet truda i oborony* (STO) which would direct labor armies Soviets operating on the main economic fronts. These Soviets would govern by military methods, including *edinonachalie* and the militarization of the work force (*via* labor armies, conscription, *corvées*, etc.).

The first Soviet was formed in the Urals in January 1920. As its deputy-chairman and then as its chairman, Piatakov soon clashed with the Cheliabinsk miners and with their unions, thus anticipating the events of the following year in the Donbass. On the basis of a study of working practices conducted with the help of engineers, he requested the militarization of miners who did not go to work or put into work a "negligible effort," mainly because — as that very study had uncovered — they did not receive enough bread nor had enough shoes.¹⁶ The request raised, in Trotskii's words, "the opposition of local and central union leaders" and the incident became an episode in the more general war between Trotskii and his men and the unions and important segments of the party.¹⁷

The use of engineers in dealing with labor sheds light on another aspect of the 1920 Trotskyite theoretical construction, which influenced Piatakov in his 1921 Donbass activities. Moving from an understanding of the key importance of *spetsy* in the military sphere, Trotskii and his men discovered their value also in the economic one and started to protect them "from those who thought them guilty of all evils." More generally, they discovered the importance of a well organized and well directed bureaucratic apparatus as the key to the success of the administered economic system they wanted to build. The necessity to select its leading cadres led them to rely extensively on *naznachestvo*, which was often used to saddle resentful local organizations with *spetsy* or former military men.¹⁸

Beside this new justification of the bureaucracy's existence and role — which introduced a theoretical innovation into the Marxist tradition — was that of forced labor and of harsh administrative methods. The application of the latter was not to be based on plans drafted by economists and statisticians. Rather, the drafting of the plan had to start with the identification of key fronts where available forces were to be concentrated. The extension of planning to other sectors was then to proceed

hand in hand with the building of the bureaucratic apparatus charged with its implementation.

Behind these ideas was a firmly centralist and deductive notion of the socio-economic “mechanism.” *First* one had to single out the key sectors (energy, transport, large state industry). Then these had to be started “heroically,” i.e. freely disposing of labor, raw materials and food-stuffs which could not be paid because there was nothing to pay them with. At this stage, *lodyri* and *shkurniki* who did not understand the need for “heroism” were “to be *forced to work* and to *give*” (the three key verbs in a 1920 Piatakov’s booklet). Only afterwards, thanks to the recovery, were sacrifices to be rewarded. The Marxist origins of this formulation are evident, as is its extreme subjectivism. Also evident is the fact that such coercive methods led to extreme *étatisme* and to clashes with workers asked to work without pay as well as with peasants required to give their grain free.

In fact, workers and peasants, who agreed with the first element of the Bolshevik solution — to rid the country of landlords and capitalists —, felt and said in 1920 that this was not the way out of the economic catastrophe. Economic *stikhiia*, they argued, was far more preferable and produced better results in less time and with much lower costs. That they were right is shown by a comparison between the modesty of Trotskii’s and Piatakov’s 1920-1921 targets, in terms of coal output or locomotives to be repaired in five years, and what was later achieved by the NEP (one could thus say that the NEP was sentenced by its very success, which every day reminded the Bolsheviks of the power of spontaneous market forces vis-à-vis the limitations of their administrative methods).¹⁹

In 1920-1921, however, this “wrong way” was pursued with determination, also in labor relations, something which helps explain the nature of the unions Piatakov had to deal with in the Donbass. Since 1917 unions had been repeatedly purged. In 1920 purges were extended to Bolshevik union men who continued to fight militarization in spite of the IX Congress (where Tomskii had sided with the enemies of *edinonachalie* and of the extension of military methods to the economy).

This opposition was dealt with also by fusing, in strategic areas, the unions with the *politotdely* (PO), the army’s political departments. In the Donbass, where the old, Menshevik union had been already “wiped off the face of the earth,” a plenipotentiary commission headed by Trotskii decided in November 1920 the *sliianie* of the local *politotdel* with the corresponding regional body of the *Vserossiiskii soiuz gornorabochikh* (VSG). One hundred seventy-nine cadres then passed from the former to the *Iuzhbiuro* of the latter.

The local party, which had more than once protested against the existence of the *politotdel Donbassa*, did not fight this decision because it delivered the party out from under control of the *politotdel*, considered a Trotskyite creature. Of course, the union regional organization born out of the fusion with the PO was to provide strong support for Piatakov’s 1921 policies. On the other side, both the Muscovite union center and the Donbass locals carried with them a deeply inimical attitude toward Trotskii.²⁰

The more so since in Ukraine and in the Donbass the opposition to militarization had been particularly strong. At the KPbU conference of March 1920 a coalition of *detsisty*, groups of the Worker Opposition, union men and remnants of the old Left had rejected *edinonachalie*, *naznachestvo* and labor armies. Moscow answered by dissolving the newly elected Central Committee (TsK), replaced by a temporary organ that included many of the Donbass leaders. This was done by Stalin, who represented

Moscow at the conference. But the Trotskyites, identified with the victorious policies, were the main targets of the hatred generated by these measures. In fact, as we shall see, Stalin was even capable in 1921 to direct and use this resentment.²¹

Tensions and conflicts peaked with the Trade Unions debate, which opened in November. Their dynamics, the violence of the struggle between Lenin and Trotskii, who, in the words of Max Eastman, received “a good, sound scolding,” have been studied more than once. And yet, also in the light of what happened in the Donbass, I think that the importance of these events in the making of a “Leninist” faction — a crucial step in the evolution of Stalin’s power and following — has been underestimated (even by Trotskii who, however, in 1930 conceded the role of the 1920–1921 conflicts in his later defeat).

The Trotskyites, too, organized their own faction. Among the leaders then siding with Trotskii were, in Moscow, Dzerzhinskii and Bukharin, still Piatakov’s best friend. In Ukraine, besides Rakovskii, then heading the local SNK, there were TsK members and union men like Kalnin, who chaired the already mentioned *Iuzhbiuro* of the Miners union.²²

Trotskyites juxtaposed what they called their communist policy to the trade union policies. The former proceeded, in Trotskii’s words, “from the fact that our state is a workers’ state, which knows no other interests than those of the working people.” From this premise, argued Trotskii, “it follows that trade unions should teach the workers not to haggle and fight with their own state, but by common effort to help it get on to the broad path of economic development.” As Stalin noted with pleasure, such a course soon caused “a conflict with the majority of the Communists working in the unions, a conflict of the majority of the unions with the *Tsektan* (the prototype of Trotskii’s productive unions)” and stirred “the workers’ discontent.” As Trotskii himself vaunted at the II All-Russian Congress of the Miners’ union on January 1921, this policy had been implemented with greater resolve precisely in the Donbass, where Piatakov had arrived just a few weeks before.²³

Besides that in Trotskii’s writings, the convictions he held in those days can be traced in two works he prepared with Bukharin. The two friends associated the process of transition with the inevitable decay of society’s *trudovoi apparat*. To stop this trend it was necessary to resort to any means, including “proletarian coercion in all of its forms,” directed by a *soznatel’nyi obshchestvennyi reguliator* whose administrative apparatus had to be quickly built. This was accompanied by the rejection of openly despised democratic methods and by an *étatisme* judged extreme even by many party members.

The most interesting objections, however, were Chaianov’s. He called their ideas “a typical rationalization of what is happening” and condemned their notion of economic policy, reduced to “*komandovanie soldatskimi massami na nikolaevskom platsdarme*.” Chaianov was also troubled by the complete lack of reference to the *melko-burzhuaznaia stikhiia* — i.e. to peasants — in Piatakov’s and Bukharin’s plans and by their concentration on the state economy, which the duo wanted to extend at all costs.²⁴

Apart from theoretical principles, Piatakov brought to the Donbass also the experience of two years of ferocious civil and national conflicts in Ukraine. There he had been personally responsible for thousands of deaths, directing the repression of peasant revolts in the Kiev region, heading Khar’kov’s military tribunal (there he had stirred Korolenko’s indignation by signing decrees considering “*vsia koe nedonesenie*

[...] *kak prestuplenie*”) and supervising, with his friend Béla Kun, the “cleansing” of Crimea after Wrangel’s defeat.²⁵

As far as mining is concerned, Piatakov could rely on the results of the investigation carried out in 1920 by a commission headed by professor Bokii, who had classified the Donbass’ pits according to their conditions, dimensions and perspective.²⁶ He could also rely on the work done in November by the *Polnomochnaia komissiiia SNK po Donbassu*, headed by Trotskii, which had ascertained that the Donbass miners had no clothes, had not received their rations for twelve days (and their wages for months), and that cold and hunger could spark at any moment a mass flight from the mines. To deal with such a catastrophe, it was decided to resort to *udarnik* methods, concentrating all the available resources on this key economic front. Trotskii also decided to merge, as we know, the PO *Donbassa* with the corresponding union body; to reinforce labor discipline; to shift administrative officials from Khar’kov and Lugansk to Bakhmut; and to redesign the region’s administrative structure. After these reforms, economic *raiony* ceased to correspond to political ones. And since redistricting implied the redistribution of powers among bureaucracies, these moves also aroused, like the previous year in the Urals, the discontent of many local organs thus causing, as Piatakov later wrote, “a whole series of phenomena negatively affecting our work.”²⁷

The commission’s effort did produce some results. Output increased, exceeding in December 30 million puds (not the 50 Trotskii boasted of). But, as Trotskii realized, extraordinary measures could guarantee only temporary improvements which, in the absence of real progress in the workers’ situation and thus in supplies, would have been followed by a reaction “in the form of strikes, increased absenteeism,” etc.

Piatakov was thus given the task to secure and further these improvements. The productive *zapoved’* he received from the VIII Congress of the Soviets spoke of 600 million puds — 50 a month — in 1921. In order to obey it, Piatakov was supposed to stop at nothing. Donbass coal was so important for Russia that “*vse ostal’noe — vtorostepenno*” and even outright plunder was allowed. The “extreme tension of the forces” of the party and of its leaders was the unavoidable corollary of this policy (which resurfaced, with the same words and expressions, at the end of the decade).²⁸

In view of the fact that the Donbass belonged to Ukraine, this policy became immediately tinged with colonialism: Ukrainians, including not a few Bolsheviks, could not but note that the idea was to seize (*grabit’*) the grain of Ukrainian peasants in order to mine Ukrainian coal which was to be shipped to Moscow.

Unquestionably, Piatakov was the right man for the job. In 1917, on the basis of a vulgarization of Renner’s ideas, he had resisted Ukrainian independence because “Russia could not survive without the Donbass coal.” And in 1919 he had been one of the fathers of a government that, according to its very members, aimed at shipping to Russia as many local resources as possible. But the arrival of the Trotskyite Piatakov in a Donbass which was the stronghold of his old KPbU enemies, now siding with Stalin, could not but cause troubles. No one of the Donbassites questioned at first the policy Piatakov was called to execute. In 1918, Kvirring too had stated that the Ukrainian sugar, coal and pig-iron were vital for Russia, and thus Ukraine’s independence impossible. Therefore, the issue that divided Piatakov and the Donbassites was not Ukrainian independence or Piatakov’s methods. Rather, it was the person of Piatakov and the political forces he represented that could not be swallowed.²⁹

Not by chance, immediately before his arrival, the V KPbU Conference refused to re-elect him secretary of the party. The place was given instead to Molotov, surrounded by a TsK in which the Donbassite-Tsaritsynites and their allies of the former Left had a clear majority. Their active participation in the anti-Trotskyite machination of those months, led by Lenin but orchestrated by Stalin (more on it in section IV), emerges clearly from a letter addressed by Stalin to Voroshilov on January 25, 1921:

“Drug! [...] My zdes’ ne somnevaemsia, chto ty, Frunze, Molotov, Minin [the X army’s former polkom] i drugie sumeete zavoevat’ Donbass (s’ezd gornorabochikh tozhe za nas vyskazalsia), promyshlennye goroda i armia.”

In those very days the *Sekretno-operativnoe upravlenie VChK* prepared its *Operinfsvodki* in approximately ten copies: the first one was for Lenin and Stalin, the second for Trotskii and Sklianskii and the others for the TsK secretariat, the trade unions, the VTsIK, etc. Stalin was thus considered Lenin’s deputy.

Two months later, when the X Congress called Molotov to the secretariat of the Russian TsK, Kon, Lebed and Manuil’skii replaced him. On that same occasion, Artem, Voroshilov, Petrovskii, Frunze and Rakovskii were elected to the Russian TsK, with Piatakov and Chubar’ as substitute members.³⁰

II

Beginnings (January-April 1921)

Donbass coal output peaked in 1916 with 1,751 million puds. Then it rapidly fell from the 1,510 million of 1917 to the 272 of 1920, half of which burned locally. In the meantime, the work force more than halved itself. In 1920, the 291,000 workers of January 1917 — a quarter of them prisoners of war — had become 100-130,000 while the proportion of skilled workers had declined from 22 to 14%, so that in December *zaboishchiki* (face-workers) numbered approximately 17,000. As a result of these changes, the proportion of women and minors increased from 10 to 25%, while the number of those working above ground had surpassed that of those employed underground (60% of the total in 1916, the latter were now no more than 40%). As a consequence, productivity fell dramatically. In December 1920 each *zaboishchik* produced 1,800 puds and each employee 246, versus the 3,550 and 763 of 1913.

Always at the end of 1920, more than 600 of the 1,600 pits investigated by Bokii were closed. They were grouped in mines and *kusty* (groups) subordinated to nine *raiony*. The most important ones were Iuzovskii (9 *kusty*, 56 mines and 31,500 miners); Krindachevskii (10 *kusty*, 179 mines, 22,000 miners) and Enakievskii (10 *kusty*, 53 mines, 19,000 employees). Pits, whose conditions were found to be better than expected, were small, except for the Iuzovskii ones, and poorly mechanized. In 1912 the Donbass could count on 56 cutting machines versus the 16,000 American ones. In 1921 things had changed only for the worse because of poor maintenance. One-fourth of the pits, moreover, were of the “peasant” kind, i.e. former concessions leased to locals during the war years, worked only with horses and thus not very deep. That the technological level was as a rule very low was confirmed by yet other criteria: in 1920 the majority of vertical pits did not pass the 100 meters mark; wood was the main building material and those pits which did not use horses, resorted to steam. Only 95

of them had some sort of electrical machinery and only 150 some kind of artificial ventilation.

Piatakov thus operated in a primitive industrial setting whose main productive asset was a mostly unskilled work-force (more than 50% of it had no qualification at all), with close ties to the villages. At the beginning of 1921, the situation was made even more desperate by the spread of murrain among horses, whose number was reduced to one-third of that needed.³¹ Piatakov, moreover, arrived when the regime's relations with both workers and peasants were reaching their all time low — whose symbol was Kronstadt — before the introduction of the NEP.

To deal with this situation Piatakov was given extraordinary powers, making him the forerunner of those 1930's "builders" who ruled over huge industrial regions. He could also count on the full backing of at least part of the center. On one side, Trotskii's support meant Dzerzhinskii's, who in early 1921 wrote to Karlson, the head of the Donbass political police, in behalf of the TsPKP, as well as Rakovskii's in Khar'kov.³² On the other, Piatakov also received support from part of the VSNKh leadership, in spite of its siding against Trotskii in 1920. In particular, Piatakov could count on the support of both Bazhanov, the chairman of *Glavugol'* (which he headed also for Piatakov's and Ordzhonikidze's NKTP in the 1930's), and of Smilga, a good friend who headed the *Glavnoe upravlenie topliva* (GUT) and was thus in charge of the entire energy policy of the country.³³

In spite of his Trotskyism, Piatakov could also count, at least partially, on the support of Lenin, who sponsored his appointment. In view of the previous bitter conflicts between the two men, one could think that with his work in the Urals, on the Polish front, and against Wrangel' Piatakov had regained Lenin's good opinion, which was to grow up to his inclusion in the Testament.³⁴

Locally, Piatakov could rely on three organs: the TsPKP, the Miners' union's *Iuzhbiuro* and the *Donrudarmia* (DTA). Following Trotskii's productivist line, their central apparatuses had been merged: Kalnin, the *Iuzhbiuro* chairman, and Pylaev, the DTA commander, had become deputies of the TsPKP, while Piatakov was also the vice-chairman of the regional Miners' union. This union thus defined its tasks: to guarantee the workers' supplies (*rabsnab*); to fight for the increase of productivity; to supervise the TsPKP *orabochenie*, i.e. the promotion of workers to its leading positions.

Piatakov's enemies in Moscow were first and foremost Trotskii's. Besides Zinov'ev and Stalin, they included Tomskii, the majority of the trade unions, including the miners' one led by Artem, the Worker Opposition, and what was left of the *detsisty*. In the Donbass, for objective and subjective reasons we already know, Piatakov was opposed by Rukhimovich, then chairman of the *gubispolkom Donbassa*; by Kviring, secretary of the local party *gubkom*, with its 10,000 members the strongest in Ukraine and by Chubar', chairman of the Ukrainian SNKh. Piatakov was also opposed by the mine and *kust* union cadres, who could not abide neither Kalnin's *Iuzhbiuro*, considered an intruder in union life, nor the TsPKP arrogance. Finally, as we know, Ukrainians in general, both the leaders of local Soviets and rural cells and national figures like Skrypnyk, resented Piatakov's policy of plunder and remembered 1919 very well.

Such an array of opposition explains why Piatakov complained already in his first report to Moscow, that "only sporadically do local institutions favor the TsPKP." In the course of the year, this antagonism grew to huge proportions also because, faithful to

his *zapoved'*, Piatakov decided "not to let victims stop" the fulfillment of his duty.³⁵ Thus, he immediately devoted himself to the establishment of what he called "the dictatorship of coal," dictating one *prikaz* after the other (at the end of the year they were 1,013).³⁶

While doing it, he ran at once into the problem of coordinating the several local bureaucracies, and he struggled constantly with the *raznoobraznye chastnye interesy* that hampered the achievement of the interest "of the working class as a whole," namely the production of more coal for Moscow.

Piatakov had had to deal with similar problems the previous year in the Urals. But, at least from this point of view, the 1920 labor army Soviet had proved a better instrument than the TsPKP. The fact that the economic recovery was now entrusted to a civilian body was indeed a step on the way back to normalcy and an anticipation of the NEP. Precisely because it was an economic organ, however, the TsPKP suffered an inferior status, even though it controlled the local labor army.³⁷ Moreover, the old TsPKP, born on February 1919 on Kviring's and Rukhimovich's initiative, had been "completely destroyed" by the move from Khar'kov to Bakhmut and by the strife accompanying it (most employees had of course tried to resist the transfer).³⁸

Piatakov's first task then was to re-build the TsPKP. Only the presence of "a good apparatus," capable of controlling and directing the region, would have made it possible to improve work organization and supervision and to reorganize the system of supplies.³⁹ In this work he drew inspiration from Trotskii's ideas about the necessity of a good bureaucracy, regulated by military principles — "do not waste your time, correctly assess your forces, always carry through what you have begun" — which Piatakov exalted falling, he who liked so much Saltykov-Shchedrin, in some purely Shchedrinian paradoxes.⁴⁰

First came the selection of personnel for the TsPKP center, whose employees grew from 250 in January to almost 700 in April. In this case, too, conflicts with local organizations, which controlled recruitment, proved inevitable and Piatakov's notorious heavy hand made itself felt: top officials were removed and even arrested not only because they had been caught stealing, but also because they were not properly dressed, were late at work, had not complied with regulations or, more simply, Piatakov had judged them *pompadury*.⁴¹ At the same time, local branches were reformed by way of the abolition of the plenipotentiaries, who had reigned over the *raiony* without coordination between themselves and with the center. Always inspired by military life, Piatakov asked the *raionnye upravliaiushchie* (RUP), who replaced the plenipotentiaries, to obey orders promptly and stated that, in the future, each would be "really held responsible for the tasks entrusted to him." Piatakov also promised, however, a large degree of freedom in the execution of his orders (as he was to do also in the 1930's).

Finally came the outlining of a new organization chart and the reform of clerical work and accounting. The old TsPKP had had four *otdely*: administration; technology and mining; supplies and accounting. This number was doubled with the creation of four new departments — transport, building, electric power and agriculture. Later on, three new *otdely* were formed, including a large statistical one (*Statotdel*). Piatakov was especially proud of his reform of *deloproizvodstvo* (its manual filled 20 dense pages), inspired by the literature on *scientific management*. At the same time, he was conscious of the limits of accounting in the absence of meaningful prices. "*Budut tseny, budut otchety*" he wrote paraphrasing Mises

without knowing him at the end of the year when, with the NEP, real accounting started again to be possible.⁴²

As proved by the attention to organization chart and *deloproizvodstvo* and by the citations from the latest texts on *management*, everything was done in the name of modernity and modernization. Great care was also paid to technical details, this being a constant of Piatakov's work.⁴³

In spite of the constant atmosphere of crisis and of countless daily worries, Piatakov was also able to start planning for the future. Already in February he appointed a technical commission, headed by the engineer Danchin, which was to draft a plan for the recovery of the Donbass modeled on that ordered the year before by Trotskii for the railroad.⁴⁴

Investigations — let us remember that of the Cheliabinsk miners in 1920 — were therefore one of the main tools of Piatakov's style of command. Here was the source of the great value attached to the *Statotdel*, soon used, probably once more under the influence of *scientific management*, also against workers.

Another important tool of command was the DTA. This organ was born in December 1920, but its detachments had begun to work under the authority of the *Ukrtrudarmiia* already in the spring. In fact, labor armies, which at the end of 1920 had approximately 160,000 men, lasted longer and were more significant than usually believed. They continued to exist up to the end of 1921, i.e. well after the end of militarization and of the special conditions by which Trotskii had ambiguously justified their formation (ambiguously because he used also far from temporary arguments).⁴⁵

This survival was not just the product of inertia: labor armies went through an interesting evolution exemplified by that of the DTA. When Piatakov took its command, the DTA had 20,000 men on two brigades and eight regiments. Half of them were fighting peasant-bandits, while the other half kept itself busy in non-working activities. Piatakov required the involvement of the *trudarmeitsy* in productive work, such as loading railroad cars (a task executed also by POWs) and mining. This stirred the resentment of the unions and of other local institutions (some *raiony* even demanded the removal of *trudarmeitsy* from the Donbass) as well as of workers. An evidence of the DTA still ambiguous role, workers' hostility also stemmed from the fact that the *trudarmeitsy* were used to repress theft and black-marketeering (workers stole coal in order to exchange it with the peasants' wheat). But the opposition to the presence inside the mines of *de facto* forced labor also made itself felt.

Piatakov used the DTA to guarantee TsPKP communications and to make its bureaucracy march. With this aim in mind, he entrusted the inspection as well as the disciplining of clerks and workers to Pylaev and his officers. Like in the Urals, Piatakov also tried, illegally this time, to subordinate the comradesly courts (*dissudy*) to the DTA military tribunal.⁴⁶

Everything was done in order to re-start a productive machinery identified with large scale state industry (small-scale one had been closed by a *prikaz* enforced, as critics said, "with extreme harshness"). This machinery was to be guided by three different kinds of annual plans. The political, "optimal" plan of 600 million puds was calculated by multiplying by 12 the maximum monthly output imagined by Bokii in the best possible conditions and with a 50% increase in the work force. The technical, "minimum" plan was set instead at the 450 million puds indicated by Bokii as the

Donbass *maximum* output with adequate supplies in 1921. A third figure was also established, which Piatakov's reports called the actually possible target.⁴⁷

As noted above, the realization of the "minimum" program was linked to the acceptable working of the supply system. The problems this posed deserve a digression. Food-stuffs and labor had their own networks, to which we shall return. As for other goods, Trotskii had left Piatakov the privilege to supply himself not only through the "planned" VSNKh channels, but also through the military *Tsusosnabarm*. Moreover, in January 1921 — the Donbass month — a national campaign was launched to ship things there.⁴⁸

In spite of efforts and privileges, however, supplies were never adequate. Depending on the period and on the goods, the TsPKP received from 15 to 50% of what it had asked for. Moreover, the arrival of pumps, cables, nails, pipes, beams, etc., could never be predicted. And, as Piatakov bitterly remarked, the slogan of the Donbass month, "Everything for the Donbass!," soon became "Anything for the Donbass," which received "scores of rail cars" stuffed with unusable, old materials.

Certainly, this was also the fault of the country's crisis as well as of a defective supply apparatus. The latter was organized "so badly" that it generated both in Moscow and in the Donbass real supply *bakkhanaliia*. Moreover, unlike the Stalin of the 1930's, Trotskii did not seem capable of guaranteeing the privileges he granted.⁴⁹ But the kernel of the problem was already visible, and in fact it was then understood by both Brutskus, through direct experience, and Mises, *via* theoretical speculation. In view of the lack of spendable money and of meaningful prices, nobody was interested in giving away what he controlled because nothing was received in exchange, not even when monetary payments were involved. Officials thus preferred to accumulate, waiting for the good occasion to barter their treasures or to buy with them favors and privileges.⁵⁰ This structurally built-in obstacle to exchanges created huge managerial problems which compounded the accounting ones derived from the impossibility to keep monetary balances.

Of course, things could be improved and made to work in a more "Christian" way and Piatakov devoted himself also to this task. In view of the structural features of the Soviet system, however, this improvement could come only from the education and the growth of the bureaucracy in charge of *snabzhenie*. Piatakov, for example, created a network of offices in a number of cities, differentiated his warehouses by kind of article and increased the number of articles the TsPKP produced for its own internal consumption (yet another cause of contrast with institutions, such as those operated by Rukhimovich's *gubispolkom*, from which the shops producing them were taken away). Finally, in May, Piatakov introduced a *edinyi material'nyi otchet* that allowed a higher degree of control, but at the price of never-ending updates and laborious calculations (Russian archives teem with extremely detailed lists, continuously updated, of received and distributed materials. They often include hundreds of items).

Not surprisingly, *snabzhenie* was the *otdel* that produced the most paper: of the 81,300 papers filed in 1921 by the TsPKP, almost 30,000 related to it. The *upravdel*, which came second in this *paperasserie* contest, produced 11,600 documents. This bureaucratic hypertrophy was periodically interpreted as the very cause of the low efficiency which the bureaucracy had been created to remedy. This generated recurrent attempts to pare down the *snabzhenie* apparatus, aiming at improving things, but often having the opposite effect.⁵¹

The public addressed by Piatakov in his effort to revive the TsPKP and thus output was that of *spetsy* and technical workers (ITR) and of command-administrative personnel in general, from RUP down to *desiatniki*. These approximately 12,000 people (a number which did not vary too much in the course of the year) were the material out of which Piatakov hoped to extract the good bureaucracy dreamt of with Trotskii. ITR, one-fourth of them engineers, numbered approximately one thousand, foremen and *desiatniki* 3-4,000 and clerks 7-8,000. For them Piatakov organized in the first five months of 1921 a series of meetings. Those of the RUP, the most important ones, were held in January and May. But there were also congresses of building executives, of accounting and maintenance heads, of *nachal'niki snabzheniia*, etc.⁵²

As he repeated in these meetings, Piatakov expected from his officials "the production of maximum output, in the minimum time and with the minimum effort." In keeping with these premises, Piatakov valued professional capacities more than political enthusiasm. A questionnaire engineers were asked to fill included questions about education, work experiences, scientific publications, foreign *stazh* (more than 50% of the interviewed answered positively) and knowledge of foreign languages. None concerned political attitudes. The contrast with the center, which put *partiinosť* first, could not be greater. The 200 party members sent to strengthen the DTA were, for example, in need of *azbuchnoe perevospitanie* and thus of no help.⁵³

Many of Piatakov's officials had been mobilized by the organs of labor militarization or came straight from *kontslagery* and, as we know, Piatakov ruled them with an iron fist.⁵⁴ But Piatakov also defended them. Already in January, he launched an appeal to respect *spetsy*. Soon afterwards, Piatakov created a Commission for the defense of ITR which provided the model for an analogous organism of the VSNKh. This commission examined 150 complaints in the first semester alone, often arguing with the ChK, which Piatakov asked, with *prikaz* no. 71, to "stop arresting technical personnel without serious grounds." With *prikaz* no. 157, instead, Piatakov introduced rules defending *spetsy* and officials from the workers' accusations, which had increased with the increase in the TsPKP hierarchies' powers.

In fact, reflecting also in this case his experience with Trotskii in the army, Piatakov ruled that "*spetsy* were to command, assisted by commissars." In February, with *prikaz* no. 41, Piatakov "temporarily" empowered his officials with the right "to punish workers and clerks" without the unions' previous consent. Because of militarization, this meant that higher TsPKP officials could arrest and hold at will their employees for up to fourteen days.

Piatakov also granted to *spetsy* and officials important privileges and bonuses, both in kind and in money, asking the unions to renounce "their opposition in principle to large rewards." Big bundles of money, typical of the wild 1930's, made then their appearance, but also in the more ruly 1920's, Piatakov headed the secret VSNKh commission for bonuses to cadres. He was fully aware of creating a *privilegirovannyi organizatorskii sloi*, but he was also convinced — it is difficult to understand on which grounds — that, in time, this would have lost its *kastovyi kharakter*. Notwithstanding Piatakov's difficult temper, many of this *sloi's* members — the so-called *piatakovtsy* — became loyal to him and continued to work with him also in following years. These included Bitker and Reingol'd, devoted Communists with degrees from foreign universities, as well as N.I. Moskalev, who was to head Piatakov's secretariat in VSNKh, at the *Gosbank*, and finally in the NKTP.⁵⁵

If *spetsy* and officials of all ranks formed Piatakov's natural allies, the population at large became his natural enemy. This was not surprising, given the conditions of the country in early 1921 and the policies the TsPKP was called upon to execute. In the Donbass more than elsewhere, workers and peasants were the same people, or at least people linked by very close ties. Because of analytical reasons, however, I shall treat them separately.

The war raging in 1920-1921 in the Ukrainian countryside is too big and complicated a topic to be dealt with here. New documents, by the way, are rapidly modifying our image of it as well as of its role as an episode in the more general war fought between 1919 and 1933 by the Ukrainian peasantry and the Soviet regime.⁵⁶ I shall thus just recall some general data but it is essential to keep in mind that this war, with its extreme ferocity, formed the background of the TsPKP activities, whose direction and results it often determined. The more so since, as we know, up to April also DTA troops were used to quell peasant revolts.

Already in October 1920 Lenin had acknowledged that in Ukraine grain procurements were difficult because of "peasant-bandits." In March 1921, Vladimirov, the Ukrainian *Narkomprod*, confessed that his procurement apparatus had been wiped out in entire regions by the "mass killing of the *prodrabotniki*" sent to pillage the Ukrainian countryside. In fact, 1,700 of them were killed just in January. Two months later, according to a *Vedomost'* of the Red Army's field staff, there were in Ukraine at least 31 bands with more, and 35 with less than 100 members (data are unreliable because peasant-informers often sided with "bandits").

In the Donbass, where also Makhno's men had moved at the end of 1920, according to the *gubcheka* in February "banditizm" reached "huge proportions." Over the whole year, 46 bands with 9,000 men operated in the region.⁵⁷

This social and political banditry was the natural outgrowth of the great peasant insurrections which had rocked Ukraine starting in 1918 as well as of the particularly vicious anti-peasant policies of the Ukrainian party (which are at least partially explained by the already mentioned national factor). At the same time, it was also part and parcel of that general, "all-Soviet" revolt against what I called the "wrong way," which was soon to impose the switch to the NEP.⁵⁸

We know that the majority of the Bolshevik cadres far from welcomed even the timid, initial version of the NEP. This was especially true in Ukraine, where the clashes with the alien countryside had been too violent to allow for too many concessions and the Russian majority of the party tried at first to interpret the new policy in the strictest possible way.⁵⁹

This spirit animated also Piatakov who never gave up the idea of seizing back part of the peasant land, continued to take the fodder for the mines' horses free and, above all, persisted in using *corvées* that the *Narkomtrud* was now calling "outrageous exploitation of the labor masses" (in the first semester of 1920 six million of peasants had done *corvée* work all over the country).

To Piatakov, *corvées* were necessary to secure the transport of the coal mined in pits not served by railroad, which amounted to approximately 10-20% of the total. At the beginning of 1921, this meant more than 50,000 loads per month, supervised by a commission (*Chrezvykomguzh*) formed by representatives of the TsPKP, the ChK, and other military and civilian institutions. As a TsPKP report acknowledged, "everything would have been fine if we had something to give the peasants in exchange, thus strengthening their households. But we had nothing: *prinuzhdenie* was our main tool" and banditry was strengthened instead.⁶⁰

As is well known, workers' unrest was also growing in early 1921. In the Donbass like elsewhere this had both objective and subjective causes. In January, health officers had "nightmares" in a region stricken by both typhus and cholera and with terrible housing. An average *kust* had, for example, 1,600 rooms for 7,000 people in 400 dwellings. Forty-seven per cent of these were no more than holes dug in the ground (*zemlianki*). The rest were pre-war, wooden barracks. In 1920, when workers received 60% of the bread norm and 10-25% of the necessary fats, more than 40% of them were affected by some epidemic disease and more than one-fourth were involved in labor accidents. These were no more carefully recorded. In early 1921, because of the collapse of production and of the growth of people working above ground, the accident rate per mined pud was perhaps lower than in 1916. But precautions against coal dust were not taken anymore and mortal accidents were on the rise.

In spite of the plans to improve the situation, conditions in the first half of 1921 remained dangerous and primitive. The mines' safety units continued to be few and poorly equipped "on account of the TsPKP officials' conspicuous neglect of labor protection." As for housing, plans had been made to build 2,500 apartments in new "garden cities" complete with schools, hospitals, etc. By July, however, only 32 apartment buildings had been completed. Always in July, the TsPKP owed its work force several million rubles in wage arrears.

Most important of all, even before the summer crisis workers received no more than 70-80% of the necessary bread. Besides, 10-15% of this got lost on its way and another sizeable quantity fed the corrupted distribution apparatus. With but few exceptions, the situation with other food-stuffs was even worse, while clothes and shoes were well below the 50% mark.⁶¹

In such a situation, the appeals asking workers to work more and more heroically and to respect the productive *zapoved'* took on grotesque overtones. And one wonders how much Piatakov and Kalnini still believed in their own words when they wrote that the disappearance of the exploiters raised the productive heroism of workers who understood that their *sviashchennaia obiazannost'* was to strain their forces in order to help the state and thus themselves, "*ibo gosudarstvo — eto my, a my — eto gosudarstvo.*" In fact, official "workerism" verged on open hypocrisy and the same leaders who vaunted the workers' enthusiasm also spoke of "*shirokie massy rabochikh*" which looked upon work "*kak na chuzhuiu i dazhe vrazhdebnuiu silu;*" complained that inside mines there was no discipline; and decided in February to deprive workers who did not show up at work of ration cards as well as to evict them from their lodgings, thus anticipating the 1932 anti-labor laws.⁶²

In fact, a desperate attempt to survive determined the workers' behavior. The search for food increased absenteeism (in early 1921 miners went down the pits three days a week out of the regular five) while the attempt to make ends meet necessitated stealing coal and exchanging it for grain (this latter practice being the source of the *bazar* decried by official documents). Workers also took illegal compensation in the form of unauthorized absences on abolished religious holidays, when the mines were the scene of acute tensions. They also engaged in the "*otkaz vykhodit' na rabotu vpered do vydachi khleba*" and in strikes and unrest, already chronic in 1920.⁶³

Party leaders explained the contradiction between this reality and the expected enthusiasm by arguing, as Lenin did speaking precisely of the Donbass miners, that these were not real workers, but peasant-workers.

It thus became possible to justify the use of coercion,⁶⁴ an option made easier by the workers' hostility, which went beyond elemental behaviors. In fact, labor protests could be quite articulate and Bolshevik leaders knew this very well. If, in Petrograd, Zinov'ev declared that it would have been a folly to convene the producers' conference requested by Shliapnikov because it would have given a clear majority to the enemies of the party, in the Donbass it was decided in March and for the same reason that it was too dangerous to re-elect the mine committees (*rudkomy*). This after that in the two *raiony* reputed to be the safest ones (Iuzovskii and Enakevskii) miners had elected solid Menshevik majorities on a free trade platform.⁶⁵

Indeed, in the Donbass the tension between the workers and the regime was probably higher than elsewhere because of Piatakov's strong-willed attempt to raise both production and productivity in spite of prevailing conditions. Piatakov knew very well that miners did not work because they were hungry and he knew that — as Trotskii had written in November — the surprising thing was that, in those conditions, workers still gave something to the Republic. Already in January, however, Piatakov analyzed the situation in terms of “*slaboe zhelanie bol'shei chasti rabochikh rabotat'*,” of “*slaboe userdie rabochikh k rabote*.”⁶⁶

The fact was that, as far as the problem of supplies was concerned, there was little he could do outside of “bombarding” the proper institutions with requests for more, and more regular, shipments of food.⁶⁷ What he could do, instead, was to drive workers to work more, thus falling in the vicious circle described by Trotskii, who had predicted that without an improvement in supplies extraordinary measures could only achieve temporary success and would be followed by violent reactions.

Piatakov's measures were really harsh. We already know some of them, like the use of military justice to discipline workers; that of DTA troops to repress pilferage; the increase in the powers of TsPKP officials, etc. The crucial *prikaz*, however, was no. 47 of February 21. This order caused a sensation by introducing a minimum of 18-20 *vykhod* per month, by defining each day of absence as *zlostnyi sabotazh*, and by establishing that the fulfillment of production norms was not a sufficient reason for leaving the mines. Norms were in fact just a *nizhnii predel* whose non-fulfillment automatically involved prosecution for sabotage and neglect of one's duty towards the working class.

As in the Urals, Piatakov also made work on week-ends *de facto* compulsory (in the Iuzovskii *raion*, alone, more than 250 Sundays were worked in February), utilized *udarnik* brigades of young enthusiasts, granted the title of labor hero to miners who fulfilled twice or more over their norm, and began to say *priamo i otkryto* that a wage system based on egalitarian principles “choked productivity.” Piatakov thus asked for the introduction of new methods, capable of rewarding valuable men and punishing *lodyri i bezdel'niki*. Since, given the situation, incentives could not but be in kind, it was necessary to re-organize the distribution of food-stuffs and other consumption goods. The *rabsnab*, controlled by the *Tsentrosoiuz* and by the unions, was therefore to be handed over to the TsPKP.⁶⁸

Meanwhile, Piatakov ordered several investigations of the miners' work, starting with a single pit with 150 employees. These investigations were the forerunners of the huge ones organized by VSNKh in 1923-1924 and by the NKTP in 1933-1934 and were influenced, as many quotations show, by *scientific management* precepts (which inspired also the reform of wage systems).⁶⁹

In spite of all this, Piatakov's productivism at first deceived even some real union men who saw in the merger of the productive apparatus with the unions the realization of the 1919 program, which called upon unions to "concentrate in their hands the administration of the national economy as if it were a single economic unit." In fact, in early 1921, some union leaders thus interpreted the fusion between the TsPKP and the VSG *Iuzhbiuro*, underlining the latter's supremacy over the economic organs (after all, Trotskii himself had stated at the end of 1920 that the TsPKP "was to base its work upon the *Gornosoiuz*").⁷⁰ As early as January, however, Piatakov frustrated the unions' ambitions stating that, since unions were not yet pervaded by a productivistic spirit and their members were not animated "only by the interest to improve and increase production," it was impossible to leave control in their hands. Rather, control was to be firmly kept in the hands of the TsPKP.

This stand incensed even part of the union men who had sided with Trotskii, even though others, including many former PO cadres, continued issuing documents threatening workers and formally asked union locals to keep lists of grumbling miners, i.e. to spy upon workers. Above all, the uncompromising application of Trotskii's line in the Donbass nourished the central and the local unions' hostility to Piatakov. In January the II VSG Congress rejected Trotskii's line and re-elected Artem, who had signed Lenin's motion, as its president. This was followed by Kalnin's defeat at the first regional congress of the Donbass miners in April 1921. The ground for it was prepared by a visit of a VSG TsK delegation headed by Artem, requested by a number of local union leaders. An old foe of Piatakov in the KPbU, Mezentsev, had for example written Artem that "the *Iuzhbiuro* does not exist anymore. Attached to the TsPKP, under Piatakov, there is *chto-to vrode soiuz*. But, above all, there do exist *prikazy* raising hell among the members of a union [...] swallowed" by economic organs (in a process clearly anticipating that at the end of the 1920's). While in the Donbass, Artem received other letters full of resentment against "these pieces of paper upon which, in huge characters, is written *prikazyvaiu*." And he wrote Moscow that the "harsh policy implemented by the TsPKP was sparking the revolt of all other institutions."

The regional union congress thus only formally approved the TsPKP activity while substantially criticizing its notion of the union role. The congress disbanded the *Iuzhbiuro*, replaced it with a *Dongubotdel* led by Mezentsev and re-affirmed the union control over part of the *rabsnab* as well as the union right to check the industrial hierarchy's powers. The defeat of the TsPKP was echoed in Piatakov's *prikaz* no. 96, of April 19, which instructed the RUP to discuss with the unions any decisions concerning wages, bonuses, discipline, etc. Piatakov was later to maintain that this had been one of the main causes of the summer crisis: "the TsPKP hands — he said — were tied."⁷¹

The trade unions' protests were reinforced by those of other local institutions against a "dictatorship of coal" which was an euphemism for the dictatorship of Piatakov's TsPKP "over the entire Donbass state and party apparatus." Objective factors thus blended with old disputes and new political conflicts, generating acute tensions already at the beginning of the spring.⁷²

Right then, however, the "dictatorship of coal" was proving to be a success in productive terms. February's daily output was 52% higher than that of the same month in 1920. March, with its 33,1 million puds, was a record month and in April output was still above 30 million, despite Easter and the growing troubles with supplies. In March, for the first time since 1917, the *zaboishchiki*'s monthly productivity came close to

2,000 puds, hovering in April around the 1,900 mark. Piatakov could also vaunt a reduction in the percentage of coal burned locally and a 90% fulfillment of the “minimum” plan in the first quarter of 1921. He had built a strong apparatus with a stable structure, which was capable of asserting its authority and of reacting promptly to the center’s stimuli. In April, for example, the TsPKP *otdely* and local branches presented approximately 40 reports, whereas until a few weeks before the center had ignored what happened in the periphery as well as in its very offices.

In a word, Piatakov believed he was winning. In fact, the reports and the telegrams he sent Moscow between the end of March and the beginning of May, cultivated the illusion that, in spite of everything, most had been done. These reports were both very detailed and very modern, full of graphs and tables, and included all the data one can imagine (employees’ meals, phone calls made and received, letters and packages mailed, people received, papers filed, etc.). They conquered Lenin, who read them with great interest and are still interesting today, even though one wonders whether the extraordinary bureaucratic efforts required by their production were not detrimental to productive activities.⁷³

Lenin was also impressed by the candor with which Piatakov criticized his ideas about American concessions in the Donbass. At the beginning of 1921, he had circulated a project to which Piatakov answered in a long, private letter of April 8. This document is of great interest, for its ideas as well as for its tone, so different from that of contemporary letters to Trotskii.

“You accuse me unfairly and in vain — it began — of being one of those who think they can win easily, as is typical of Russians. My sins are numerous, but do not include this one. I never brag and always tell *nachal'stvo* how things stand, much as this may not be to their liking.”

Piatakov continued stating that his opposition to concessions in the Donbass came “not from the consciousness of our strengths but, rather, from that of our weaknesses.” It would have been impossible to beat Americans who were stronger both technically and economically. Besides, “our miners would be definitively convinced of capitalism’s superiority and the best ones would go to work for the Americans, where they would get shoes, tobacco, clothes and ham [...] and would be paid in good money and not with our miserable paper.” In view of all this, it was not realistic to ask Piatakov to catch up with the Americans, as Lenin did. “In this question you seem to me schematic — wrote Piatakov — and, if I may repay you with your own currency, you brag (you and not I) that it would be possible to catch up with and pass the U.S.” After touching upon local successes and difficulties, Piatakov concluded:

“You see, I was born in a family of big capitalists, and I learned how capitalists eliminate competition not through books, but with my own eyes. I fear that soon I will have to experience this personally. I regret that I will not be able to write this story, but I hope that you will allow me to hand to my friend N.I. Bukharin the materials for a *Beitrag zur Theorie des Konkurrenzkampfes zwischen einer Finanzkapitalistischen und Nebergangsproletarischen Kohlen Unternehmungen*. It will be a useful book, and the new Lenin, studying the failed course of the proletarian revolution, will say: they failed by giving away the Donbass, but we shall not repeat this mistake...”

It may be added that the Lenin-Piatakov's debate continued and that on its basis Piatakov was appointed in 1923 chairman of the new State committee for concessions.⁷⁴

Meanwhile, Piatakov's troubles were growing more intense, and more rapidly, than expected. The Trotskyites' defeat at the X Party Congress strengthened his enemies and increased his isolation. In a memorandum to Lenin, Rukhimovich boasted that Piatakov had been elected a delegate to the congress with difficulty and that only thanks to the generosity of his opponents, who did not wish to undermine his authority, he and two of his backers had been elected into the local *gubkom*. In those same days, Piatakov lost the opportunity to replace Kviring with S.I. Syrtsov at the *gubkom* secretariat. This replacement was something for which Piatakov had hoped, promising to Lenin that neither he nor Syrtsov wanted to pursue their faction's interests in the Donbass. Their "first and foremost interest — he said — was to increase production."

With the start of NEP, moreover, the extraordinary character of Piatakov's methods and the "colossal efforts and countless victims" which had been the price of the first quarter's success stood out more than ever. Piatakov was thus caught in a paradox: he was the only top party leader to have followed in a great region the way marked out by Trotskii in 1920 and believed he had proven its correctness just at a time when the party was abandoning that way to appease a country that considered it wrong.⁷⁵

III

Crisis and success (May-November 1921)

In spite of all this, the II RUP Congress, which met at the beginning of May, made yet new plans and discussed how to use *premirovanie* to fulfill them. But events were coming to a head. In April, the technical plan had been overfulfilled (115%), but in May that percentage declined to 77% while output fell 20%, in spite of more numerous working days.

In the following months, the causes of this collapse were discussed at length. The list included the constraints on the TsPKP activity, the shortage of labor and technical personnel, low productivity, the poor machinery conditions, the lack of fodder and thus the death of horses and, above all, the sudden deterioration of food supplies. The seasonal return of miners to agricultural work, which the Bolsheviks were never able to accept and always considered a desertion to be punished, was also cited. In May, however, it involved less than 3,000 workers.

In fact, the TsPKP was suffering from both the consequences of War Communism in the countryside and the short-run effects of the transition to the NEP. The latter immediately involved a redistribution of resources in favor of local organizations while the crisis of the centralized system of distribution hit hardest privileged organs like the TsPKP. For the Donbass, this meant a paralysis in the delivery of food-stuffs. If, in the first half of May, things went more or less as they had in the past, after the 15th Bakhmut started to receive telegrams charging that *oprodkomarmy* and *gubsoiuzy* (the military and the civil supply organs) were "answering our demands saying that there is no bread." At the end of the month, the approximately 135,000 miners had received half of the cereals and 60-65% of the bread needed to survive.⁷⁶

The “huge success” of previous months was now in danger. In articles such as “Donbass zovet” Piatakov renewed appeals to the center but, as in past months, he could not “solve the main problem,” i.e. the paucity of supplies and the irregularity of their flow. Once again he thus concentrated on what he could do, frantically “fighting against the oncoming crisis with all available means.”⁷⁷

Thanks to widely publicized arrests and punishments, he was able to keep in working conditions the administrative machinery built in previous months.⁷⁸ As Piatakov himself stated in May, however, the main way out of the crisis passed through the *intensifikatsiia truda* and the increase of work *napriazhennost'*. Workers were to be subjected to a *bol'noi nazhim*, embodied in *mery karatel'nye i pooshchritel'nye*.

To find out how to proceed, Piatakov launched a new, much wider investigation of 2,500 workers in 20 mines. It showed very large fluctuations in monthly productivity but much smaller ones in productivity per actually worked day. In fact, on an average work day 40% of the work force failed to show up, so that the solution seemed to be to ensure the presence of workers in the mines, extending as much as possible the time spent underground. Piatakov, of course, knew that *nevykhody* were due to delays in the payment of wages, to work conditions and, above all, to the lack of food which had even made it impossible to award part of the promised premiums in kind (among these was the still forbidden vodka, about which Piatakov did not have Trotskii's scruples). Piatakov also knew that in April, “*v pogone za premiiam*,” the *zaboishchiki trudoliubivye* had exhausted themselves so much that the shortened Easter holidays had not been enough for their recovery.⁷⁹

By the end of April, however, with *prikaz* no. 109, Piatakov ordered the RUP to take “all necessary measures to increase the workers' presence in the mines.” In the weeks that followed, the RUP, denounced by union locals as new *administratory-samodury*, after calling miners *shkurniki*, *predateli* and *parazity* started to push them in the pits *s revolverom v rukakh*.⁸⁰

Meanwhile, on the basis of the little which was still arriving, Piatakov extended the system of premiums in kind “depending on work actually done” and increased pressure on every aspect of workers' life, going as far as complaining to Moscow about the new laws for the protection of juvenile work. Miners started to receive third class coal for heating and a war against pilferage and “speculation” was declared. In May, a *Politbiuro* meeting attended by Piatakov decided to apply the death sentence in the most serious cases of factory theft; RUP who exchanged coal with bread were severely punished; guards and controls were multiplied and eventually even sacks — the symbol of “speculation” — were forbidden all over the Donbass (a prohibition soon suspended because it paralyzed transports).⁸¹

Secret measures were taken to increase the work force and to improve its quality. Local peasants were forced to work in the mines, whole villages were deported, and urban dwellers were purged of *shkurniki* and alien elements. In May, Piatakov also asked Moscow for 20,000 more soldiers of labor.

By then, the evolution of the DTA had entered into a new stage. In April the repression of “banditry” had been entrusted to the ChK. Soon afterwards, Piatakov issued order no. 135 to deal with the flight of free labor from the mines. The same *prikaz* ordered the remaining troops to productive work. The idea was to have *trudchasti* “whose work would have been indistinguishable from that of regular miners.”

This new use of militarized labor resulted from two considerations. The first was that peasants, busy tilling the additional land received from the Revolution and with

food reserves larger than those of the cities, “did not have any reason to work in industry.” The second reason was that “a considerable portion of the peasant-workers,” left to itself, “*guliaet i ne rabotaet*,” especially if working conditions were not to its taste. This situation required the military organization of at least part of these people in order to facilitate, as Piatakov wrote in May, their *prevrashchenie* into true workers. This proto-forced labor was thus considered a temporary phenomenon of the long era of transition, during which it was to form an integrant part of the work force.⁸²

Pressure was brought to bear on peasants too. While the TsPKP tried to squeeze out of them as many resources as possible, Piatakov backed the leaders fighting at the national level for setting very high procurements targets. He hoped in this way to secure at least part of his supplies. The ups and downs of these struggles convinced Piatakov of the necessity to increase the TsPKP’s own agricultural production by organizing a network of mine *sovkhozy* administered by the agricultural *otdel*. The 1919 policy of fighting with the peasants also for the land was thus resurrected. It led to fights not only against peasants but also against the institutions which, because of the NEP, now supported them. Village soviet leaders openly told TsPKP men that “the countryside is none of your business — stick to coal mining,” while *piatakovtsy* often discovered that the TsPKP land had been illegally seized by peasants who were tilling it with materials “taken” from TsPKP warehouses. In some locales, these episodes ended in conflicts “*edva ne zakonchivshiesia vooruzhennoi skhvatkoi*,” in which the TsPKP faced “bandits” backed by the *Narkomzem* and by local officials.

Not surprisingly, by the end of June the TsPKP was, in the words of its own officials, an organ “*travimoe i nenavidimoe, no uvazhaemoe*”!, opening its way through objective difficulties as well as “through the thicket of local interests.” Its leaders were “hated [...] and considered *khoziaeva-ekspluatatory*.”⁸³

The situation degenerated to such an extent that Lenin was forced to intervene, intensifying, among other things, his correspondence with both Piatakov and his antagonists. Yet, it was in Lenin’s letters that Piatakov found the authorization to answer the crisis in the way he knew best. In fact, Lenin reproached Piatakov for his “begging from the center,” and wrote: “Take the trouble to get everything *by yourselves*, [using your] resourcefulness and enterprise.” This, however, was legally impossible without an official sanction from Moscow. Piatakov asked in June for the concentration of all economic powers in TsPKP hands, but was denied it. Therefore, what Lenin suggested could be done only by breaking the law with yet new *prikazy*, exasperating the already tense relations with local powers.⁸⁴

This was, in fact, what happened. As Artem wrote to Lenin shortly before dying, union cadres were against the large-scale resort to *premirovanie* and were worried by the periodic attempts to snatch from them control over part of the *rabsnab*. They were also furious because of the “disrespect to their role and the disregard for the workers’ feelings” implicit in the attitudes of Piatakov and of his men. Relations with the party *gubkom* had been irreversibly poisoned by the Syrtsov affair and by the TsPKP pretense to take over part of its powers. Relations with the ChK were made difficult by the arrest and deportation of *spetsy* and of their relatives (this often being the unexpected result of mass “cleansing” ordered by Piatakov himself) and became even tenser after that Piatakov, exasperated by the persecution of the members of the Danchin commission, decided that *spetsy* could be arrested only “*s soglasiia Predsedatelia TsPKP*” (the same measure introduced by Ordzhonikidze at the end of 1936 to withstand the NKVD attack on the NKTP).

The NEP further strained the relations with the *gubispolkom*. Applying the principle of the restoration of civilian control, it seized, at the height of the crisis, the DTA communication system, disrupting Piatakov's connections with the *raiony* and perhaps even with Lenin. Similar problems arose with confiscation of printing works, different kinds of materials, funds from Moscow, etc., all of which made Piatakov and his men furious.

Meanwhile the DTA and the *Ukrtrudarmii* quarrelled over the apportionment of new soldiers of labor; the TsPKP had continuous arguments with local procurement organs which kept delivering incorrect materials or shipped to other institutions; other local powers were accused of assaulting and robbing the TsPKP trains; and of course, Piatakov's *bombardirovka* did not make for easy relations with the Russian and the Ukrainian *Narkomprod*, whose deputy, S.V. Kosior, Piatakov openly accused of sabotage.⁸⁵

In this situation, "supplies difficulties" grew into a "food catastrophe" and the situation became desperate. In June, workers received only 60% of the bread and 10% of the groats needed for survival. What little they received was not delivered regularly or to proper locations. In July, according to Kosior, the TsPKP got half of the grain needed to feed miners, old people and very small children of working class families. Nothing was left for these families' other members as well as for the remainder of the urban population. In the first half of August, only a third of the bare minimum was received, and the number of people dying of starvation grew steadily. The Donbass was now "in the grip of hunger," of that 1921-1922 famine which was the product of the interplay of the drought with the regime's policies, represented by *prodotriady* which continued to ravage the countryside up to the end of the year. In the steppes, the 1921 harvest was to be a tenth of the 1909-1913 average.⁸⁶

As Piatakov reported to Moscow, "because of the complete breakdown in supplies" production plunged and the workers, "*poddavshis' prodovol'stvennoi panike*," scattered "looking for bread," a behavior Piatakov termed "petit-bourgeois conduct unfortunately common also among pure proletarians." In June, output plunged 27% lower than in May, in July 75%. The Donbass then produced only nine million puds, barely covering its own consumption. By this time, the workers' flight had become something quite different from May's seasonal departures. Throughout July, when food rations were distributed only seven times, there were 30,000 fewer miners than on May 1. *Zaboishchiki*, in particular, numbered 40% less than what they had been.⁸⁷

Such conditions gave "banditry" new breath and caused the explosion of workers' protest, the two phenomena being of course closely related. In July, in many *raiony*, the majority of the mines did not work and the workers' mood "threatened the works' integrity." Besides hungry miners who "*prosto 'brosili' rabotu i ushli*," there were "desperate ones" who attacked food storehouses. And there were those who went out on strike. Piatakov then started to receive from the *raiony* reports like the following:

"July 1: Workers' unrest (*volnenie*) in two pits, caused by incomplete rations. July 4: *Volnenie* provoked by the non-distribution of food-stuffs[...] All pits, mines, shops inform of workers' *brozhenie*. [...] Part of the work force deserted."⁸⁸

The gravity of the crisis pushed Piatakov further on the road of the illegal concentration of all powers in the TsPKP hands. And while it is true that many of his

actions followed patterns already established in 1920 (in the Urals by Trotskii and Piatakov himself, in the country at large by the VSNKh and the *Narkomprod*) **the increasingly radical measures he took to deal with the crisis proved highly innovative and anticipated a substantial part of later Soviet industrial and labor policies.** The 1921 summer crisis, like that of 1932-1933, thus gave Piatakov a lesson from which he was able to learn.⁸⁹

First came the repression of workers' actions that endangered the survival of TsPKP. With *prikaz* no. 101 all the men found without documents justifying their movements were dispatched to the nearest mine. With no. 194, of June 22, Piatakov extended militarization of the coal industry and its work force through September. With no. 198, of June 24, he ordered the deportation from mining towns of all people not working for the coal industry. The ensuing mass re-registration was used to get rid of "several thousand *lodyrei, bezdel'nikov i melkikh burzhua*" among miners.

In July, *prikaz* no. 233 re-affirmed a minimum of monthly *vykhody* per miner. RUP officials were to enforce it "without letting themselves be impressed by difficulties and by the inevitable opposition and dissatisfaction of backward miners." Since miners were now working an average of seven to eight days a month instead of the 18 mandatory ones, to comply with the decree meant resorting to arms in order to force miners into the pits.

Meanwhile, some DTA units were re-organized into strikebreaking battalions and others were transformed into anti-worker flying squads, "in full fighting trim and ready to be deployed in a few minutes anywhere conditions required it." These squads were used to force recalcitrants to work and to defend warehouses, which were transformed into fortresses surrounded by barbed wire. In both cases, the DTA evolution seemed to follow a different path from that leading to the forced labor of later decades when these tasks were entrusted to VLKSM "enthusiast battalions" first and to the political police later. But in June, the re-organization of the DTA followed another principle. Its units were to become "a supplementary (*dobavochnaia*) work force." For this purpose its regiments were subjected to the RUP. Each *raion* could thus rely on a *trudpolk*, whose commander also became a member of the local union committee. On August 1, the re-organization had been carried through and the DTA, with its eight *trudpolk*, its two *rabbat* and its flying squads, for a total of 13-14,000 men, represented a special section of the work force.

New arguments, based on its supposedly lower costs, were then presented in favor of the use of forced labor. *Trudarmeitsy* did not have families to support; they needed little or no housing; they went where it was decided and did what they were ordered, etc. Evidence of this was found in the "heroic feats" of some units. But the contradiction between reality and what could be called the utopia of forced labor as an absolutely flexible and thus efficient tool of economic building was conspicuous. This contradiction had been clear already to Trotskii the previous year in the Urals, but Soviet leaders continued to believe it the product of contingencies. In fact, Piatakov's efforts notwithstanding, the DTA "heroic" units had in April 8,000 trousers for 12,000 men and its soldiers had to exchange shoes before going to work. Time was mostly wasted in non productive occupations. In the first semester *samoobsluzhivanie* absorbed more than half a million working days versus the 60,000 employed in mining while 270,000 days were lost because of lack of equipment and only 90,000 were used to load railroad cars. The productivity of actual working units was, moreover, very low. In the words of their commanding officer, the *trudarmeitsy*'s attitude toward work was

“*skuchen — do otказа.*” Units behaved no differently, and even worse, than miners, stealing, “speculating,” etc. For these crimes almost 200 soldiers of labor were sentenced and 18 were shot in the course of six months.⁹⁰

In spite of their harshness, the measures taken against workers could not save the situation. Without the arrival of new supplies, Piatakov wrote at the end of July, the final catastrophe was inevitable. He thus supported anybody promising to guarantee this and worked to perfect ways in which what did arrive, or what he was able to procure by himself, was used.⁹¹ Thus, he at last took control over the workers’ supplies (*rabsnab*), brushing aside the organs which up to then had run it.

This measure, threatened more than once, was taken because, as Piatakov wrote Lenin, “without controlling the *rabsnab*” it was impossible to deal with the crisis. “*Rabsnab* — Piatakov wrote — is the most important tool for directing production and it must therefore be in the hands of the administration and of its representatives, down to pit supervisors and *desiatniki*.”⁹² The idea was to use control over supplies to spur production, strengthening *premirovaniie* and breaking the practice of wage levelling. The usurpation of *rabsnab* was followed by the invalidation of the ration cards of miners’ relatives (*prikaz* no. 196) and by the abolition of all egalitarian principles. Bread was now distributed only according to the work done. Housing, coal, work clothes, etc. were considered part of the wage and the newly established workers’ categories were divided by significant wage differentials (formally 1:5, more if bonuses were taken into account). As Reingol’d wrote in September,

“we stopped accepting the waste existing at the beginning of the year, when bread was meted out on the basis of state cards even to idlers and speculators, and the Donbass was a huge almshouse (*bogadel’nia*). We started giving bread only to seriously working men.”

The contrast with the ideals, if not with the realities, of War Communism’s initial stages and with the Worker Opposition program could not be greater.⁹³

As was to happen ten years later, catastrophe did not halt Piatakov’s planning for new investments and experimenting with innovations. With *prikaz* no. 159, of June 7, he organized four model mines, to which he granted *udarnik* status. Piatakov concentrated in these mines the approximately 100 existing machine and experimented there with new wage systems (very likely, the project was discussed with Bazhanov, who had already proposed to create model mines in the Donbass). The first of these mines was the Brianskii, instituted on July 16. The *spetsy* and the officials entrusted with its organization were given huge powers and privileges and promised enormous bonuses. Considerable benefits were also extended to *zaboishchiki* and machine operatives, causing the protest of other workers as well as of unions which, as Piatakov wrote Lenin, “hinder the mass introduction of mechanization.” To boost his effort, he asked Moscow, in the midst of the famine, to buy at least 50 new, expensive machines in the West.

To guarantee future mining, Piatakov decreed, with *prikaz* no. 179, that each pit was to have veins ready to be mined with a capacity three times larger than its annual output. And on July 22, with no. 193, he re-organized the *Gorno-tekhnicheskii otdel*, charging it with the preparation of new veins and other technical tasks. Above all, in June the already mentioned Danchin commission was put to work. It now included experts from Moscow and Petrograd, Bokii among them, and its tasks were much wider than the original commission’s. Danchin was ordered to carry out an in-depth

investigation upon which the future development of the Donbass was to be based and the work of his commission prefigured that of *Osvok*, whose work served as a basis for the huge industrial investments of the 1930's. Soon afterwards, Piatakov sided with those fighting for the recovery of the coke-benzene industry, even to the prejudice of the immediately more important fuel industry.⁹⁴

In the meantime, the great summer crisis was pushing the NEP forward in the Donbass, as in other areas of the country. In the words of Bukharin, who still shared his friend Piatakov's positions, from an economic point of view the NEP was initially conceived as a policy of concessions to peasants aimed at extracting from the countryside resources which were to be allocated to state industry. This was not supposed to fall under NEP rules but, by the summer, the crisis overwhelmed industry as well.

Piatakov came to terms with this reality and, spurred by Lenin, allowed the RUP to organize those very "commercial operations" he had before severely repressed. Piatakov remained, however, true to the essence of Bukharin's ideas: everything was permitted, but only as long as it served to strengthen state industry. And everything still meant *corvées*, which Piatakov enforced throughout the summer.

In the meantime, in order to increase output, Piatakov decided to let strong peasants rent the old "peasant pits" (*prikaz* no. 229). He had finally recognized that it was necessary to change to a new kind of industrial concentration. Up to that point, Piatakov had closed the greatest possible number of small mines and tried to defend as many middle and large ones as possible (of the 112 closed mines, 96 belonged to the first group). In July, instead, mines were re-classified in eight new categories, and it was decided to concentrate resources only on the less than 300 "large, well equipped mines" of the first three categories which were granted all kinds of privileges. This new "retreat" was preceded by "rumors," which spread among engineers, of an imminent restoration of private enterprise. But in the *prikaz* that authorized the renting of mines belonging to the eighth category and of concessions up to 25 desiatins, Piatakov made clear that these exceptions should "not in any case be construed as a policy of denationalization."⁹⁵

On July 28, with *prikaz* no. 247, industrial supplies were reformed by the introduction of the *tverdyi adres*. Materials allocated to the TsPKP were now to pass directly under its control. The TsPKP would distribute them to the mines, categorized into groups (A, B, V, G) on the basis of their productive importance. Group B mines were to receive something only after group A's needs had been met 100%; V's only when B's needs had been satisfied at least 75% and so on.⁹⁶

Always in July, Piatakov reinstated Kalnin as chairman of the regional Miners union. But even Kalnin was now voicing some doubts about the consequences of the TsPKP policies, acknowledging that "the crisis proved that union organs are neither strong nor influential enough."

Above all, Piatakov relied on the support of Moscow, interested in receiving as much coal as possible. And Moscow did not disappoint him, dispatching at the end of August an STO plenipotentiary commission to the Donbass headed by his friend Smilga.⁹⁷

In his instructions, Lenin recommended to Smilga that he try to settle "the conflicts between Piatakov and Rukhimovich on one side and Piatakov and local unions on the other." But the commission sided with Piatakov, "sanctioning" — as Piatakov noted with satisfaction — all his previous decisions and granting him yet new powers.⁹⁸

These powers were recapitulated in *prikaz* no. 304 of September 10 which, along with *prikaz* no. 247, proved of crucial importance for the direction of industry in the industrialization years, which was — as we know — in Piatakov's hands. Addressed to “central, *raion*, *kust*, mine and pit officials as well as to all technical cadres, *desiatniki* included” it summarized and praised the Smilga commission's conclusions. In fact, no. 304 established what could be called the Soviet *khoziaistvenniki*'s ideal standard, a standard guaranteed by Stalin between 1929 and 1935-1936, when once again, to use Piatakov's 1921 words, “industrial leaders were given *znachitel'no bol'she vozmozhnosti upravliat'*.”⁹⁹

First came the powers needed to select a “superior” work force. In particular:

a) The TsPKP was granted the “right” to hire workers without passing through the inimical *Narkomtrud* apparatus. Piatakov cheered “the breaking of the labor organs' bonds” and the TsPKP soon established the two systems which were to prevail also in the first half of the following decade. On one side it discovered the advantages of *samotek*, of hiring at factory gates (*ot vorot*), which allowed the selection of men. From this point of view, even the famine was welcomed since it pushed the peasants towards mines where food was concentrated, making it possible “to select the best workers” from a larger number of applicants. On the other side, the TsPKP created a network of *verbovshchiki* in agricultural areas, to whom it paid a premium for each recruited worker.

b) TsPKP was also granted the right to fire workers and clerks, informing the unions only *after* the fact. In this case, too, “the TsPKP hands were freed,” making it possible to remove “from the pits men not known for their work zeal” and thus to secure “a new levy.” This led to the discovery of yet new, positive aspects of labor turnover which formed the basis for an appreciation of the phenomenon which was to linger on in spite of its official demonization.

c) TsPKP could blacklist workers, a practice formalized by *prikaz* no. 327 which prohibited hiring workers fired *za lodyrnichestvo*.

d) TsPKP could select its own executives. The unions retained the right to appeal to superior bodies, but they could not prevent the appointment of officials, nor prohibit them from taking up duties.

In addition, wages were put “in the hands of economic organs,” freed also in this field “from unions' bonds.” And since wages were still paid largely in kind, this freedom was used to rationalize the measures taken in the summer to stop “the senseless, destructive, philanthropic distribution of food-stuffs irrespective of production plans.” Concentration of wage payments was also used as a weapon to ensure the workers' presence at work. The suspension of planned *snabzhenie* of workers and of their families was now generalized. All families lost their ration cards, while the entire wage fund was concentrated in the hands of mine administrations, which were to regulate payments according to two principles:

a) *Naturoplata*, later specified by *prikaz* no. 306. This was a form of individual piecework in kind whose rates were determined by mine administrations on the basis of production norms which could not be lower than 70% of the 1916 ones. Incentives varied according to the mines' category, thus favoring A and B mines. *Naturoplata* gave immediately “unexpected results” in productivity.

b) *Kollektivnoe snabzhenie*. In spite of the name, this was a form of mass piecework. The TsPKP allocated a wage fund for each mine and promised not to alter

it if production plans were fulfilled with a reduced work force. Those “good” workers who were not fired thus received a larger share of goods.

The re-distribution of the work force into categories was extended throughout the Donbass, and decisions about wage differentials between levels were left partially to the discretion of mine administrations.

The possibility to use food on a large scale as a tool for directing the work force was guaranteed by the accumulation in the TsPKP storehouses of a three-month supply fund. This fund was formed using the proceeds of the first *prodnalog*, but it also grew as a result of the privileges granted to the Donbass mining industry in comparison with famine-stricken areas, which included the Donbass countryside (in the fall it was acknowledged that the steppes were in famine. In December ARA men circulated a figure of 1,158,000 starving out of a population of 10,000,000 inhabitants. Yet only in early 1922 the five southern Ukrainians provinces were officially declared famine areas).

Control by economic organs over *rabsnab*, formalized by *prikaz* no. 361 of October 6, stood in violation of the Russian SNK directives. The Donbass was thus a pilot program, the success of which soon convinced Moscow of the need to generalize it to the whole of the RSFSR. The Donbass model was implemented under the banner of the fight against wage-levelling (*uravnitel'stvo*, the predecessor of the better known *uravnilovka* of the 1930's). As further evidence of the enduring value of TsPKP's experience, the *naturoplata* was revived in the 1930's as the basis of the wage system adopted to remunerate forced labor.¹⁰⁰

The Smilga commission also sanctioned the following measures:

a) The transformation of the DTA into an integral part of the work force, usable “*pri kakikh ugodno usloviakh, na kakikh ugodno rabotakh i v kakoe ugodno vremia.*” In November, when *trudarmeitsy* still represented about 10% of total manpower, *prikaz* no. 365 converted both their wages and their supplies to those of free labor, from which they were now distinguished only by their complete subordination.

b) The extension of mechanization and the training of skilled workers.

c) The reform of the system of goods distribution other than food-stuffs, based on the *tverdye adresy*. This principle contradicted the spirit of the NEP and, in fact, formalized *udarnik* methods of industrial administration born under War Communism and resurrected in the 1930's.¹⁰¹

d) The new principles of mine concentration proposed by the TsPKP, which ran counter to the practice of renting middle-sized mines, as requested by the *Gosplan* and defended the concentration of as much power as possible in the hands of a large state industry ready to work miracles thanks to improved supplies and new wage methods. The renting of small mines was instead approved.

Control over these leases was, since July, a source of yet new conflicts between the TsPKP, Rukhimovich's *gubispolkom* and the latter's new economic *soveshchanie*. This was headed by Radchenko, who had replaced Mezentsev as chief of the regional Miners' union. Radchenko claimed that, in view of the fact that the TsPKP was to concentrate on large mines and could thus not be a good landlord of small ones, these were logically his province. Perhaps following Lenin's instructions, at least in this case, Smilga decided in favor of local organs. These had already formed a *Komissiiia ispol'zovaniia melkoi kamennougol'noi promyshlennosti* (KIMKP) which, as

Piatakov complained, instead of “usefully devoting itself to the organization of small industry and of cooperating with state mines,” transformed itself “into a weapon of the fight led by the *gubekonsoveshchanie* against the TsPKP.”

Changes in mine concentration were accompanied by a new *raionirovanie*, causing yet new conflicts of jurisdiction, and by the strengthening of the *kombinaty*. These were large, vertically integrated units, controlling both mines and iron and steel works. Three at the beginning of 1921, until September their importance had been relatively small due to the standstill in industrial production. With recovery, and with the birth of the *Khimugol'*, a new, chemical *kombinat*, the situation changed.¹⁰²

Smilga, instead, was generous with land, allocating 150-200,000 desiatins to Piatakov's mine *sovkhazy*. Allotments to peasants in mining areas were forbidden and a *Komissiiia po natsionalizatsii zemel' v Donbasse dlia gosudarstvennykh predpriatii* was charged with the nationalization of up to 240,000 desiatins. “Boundless horizons” thus opened for the activity of the TsPKP *Sel'khozotdel* but, at the same time, the conflicts with Ukrainian peasants, village soviets and the state organs backing them were rekindled. In the meantime, the famine had “sentenced to death” the few *sovkhazy* already organized and forced the TsPKP to allot part of its land to the families of miners threatened by starvation (a similar measure was to be taken also ten years later). Thus, in spite of “boundless horizons,” the land not tilled, legally or illegally, by miners and peasants remained uncultivated.

The STO commission also transferred to the TsPKP the control over civilian building and thus over the local *Ukrkomgosstroii*, with which the TsPKP building apparatus had until then competed fiercely for men and materials. Building, completely halted in previous months, thus slowly recovered on a program which had nothing in common with the first quarter's grandiose projects.¹⁰³

As a result of this array of measures, the TsPKP became much more than the explosion out of proportions of a big company town like Piatakov's father's *Mariinskii sakharnii zavod*, the sugar mill controlling 42,000 desiatins with 75,000 male “souls” where Piatakov was born. In the words of his enemies, the TsPKP was now a *malen'koe samostoiatel'noe gosudarstvo*, run on the basis of the principle that Moscow's wishes were to be fulfilled at all costs, without worrying about *mandarinskie etikety*. Secure in the belief of their rightness, the *piatakovtsy* behaved “*kak zavoovateli sredi papuasov*,” boasting of their iron nerves. In October these *kolonizatory* feted their success in the “Report” for the first semester, a 500-page bureaucratic celebration.¹⁰⁴

These policies led “to the annihilation of all other organizations,” asked to “submit without discussion” to the authority of the TsPKP. Together with Piatakov's high handedness, this fueled the revolt of both local organizations and representatives of Moscow's central organs, such as *Narkomprod* and *Narkomtrud*, which could not resign themselves to the loss of their powers. Backed by a majority of the local party, these bureaucracies counterattacked using two tactics. On one side, local organs, like the KIMKP, presented themselves as the champions of a NEP different from Piatakov's industrialist and Muscovite model.¹⁰⁵ On the other side, both local and central bureaucracies — starting with *Narkomtrud* and the unions — denounced how the TsPKP treated the population in general, and workers in particular. This is well illustrated by an episode that began in early November.

At that time, thousands of hungry, half-naked workers shipped to the TsPKP arrived by railroad in Bakhmut. They were left for several days with little or no food in unheated cars. Immediately, “local organs, slandering as usual the TsPKP, *podniali*

shum.” But those workers had been shipped to Bakhmut by the *Narkomtrud* which, at the end of October, had re-won from the STO the right to supply the Donbass with labor. However, as a result of the famine and other measures already discussed, the TsPKP’s labor needs had been already met. The newly-arrived workers were thus unwelcome people: *Narkomtrud* did not want them back, local organs refused to feed, and the TsPKP did not want to hire them. Consequently, nobody took care of the workers until, after ten days, the TsPKP conceded responsibility. It hired part of the train load as replacements for those workers “hindering production” and for local peasants, considered unstable and thus fired. Piatakov, who had accused the *Narkomtrud* of sending the workers only to justify its *pravo biurokraticheskogo sushchestvovaniia*, secured in exchange the suspension of these kinds of shipments.¹⁰⁶

Though with different shades, anti-worker practices and feelings were thus shared by institutions accustomed to treating the work force (as well as the population) like cattle. Actually, in the case of the TsPKP, such policies were, at times, tempered by the aspiration to achieve modernity and efficiency. But, of course, workers’ resentment focussed on the closest enemy, i.e. precisely on economic organs such as the TsPKP which, as Kalnin wrote, was carrying on “a harsh economic line that came into conflict with the workers’ narrow, egoistic interests.” Certainly, there were workers happy with the new wage systems, which allowed them to double and even triple the old rations. But TsPKP’s labor policies rekindled most workers’ rancor towards industrial hierarchies, and toward bourgeois *spetsy* in particular, commonly called *ekspluatatory*, thus creating a reservoir of hatred from which Piatakov’s enemies could freely draw.¹⁰⁷

To attack Piatakov, however, was very difficult because of his extraordinary success. The Donbass output had jumped from 20 million puds in September to 61.5 (53 produced by the TsPKP alone) in December. Output reached such high levels that the railroads were no longer able to carry away the coal accumulated near the pits. And this had been achieved with far fewer workers than those needed in March to produce barely more than half the amount mined in December. In fact, at the end of the year the TsPKP employed 115,000 persons, including 15,000 *zaboishchiki* whose monthly productivity had reached 1913 levels. The number of men working underground had increased while that of women and minors had fallen. Miners who were employed worked to such an extent that Piatakov was forced to intervene to calm a *trudovoe rvenie* that was undermining the health of his work force.

As Piatakov reported to Moscow, this productive wonder and the “increase in the tension and intensity of work” resulted specifically from the “abolition of rationing and wage levelling and from the introduction of piecework.” More generally, increased productivity resulted from the STO decision to free the TsPKP’s hands (even the RKI preventive controls had been removed), which at last gave TsPKP the “opportunity to command.” Had this happened earlier, Piatakov lamented, the *zapoved’* of the VIII Congress could have been fulfilled sooner.

Piatakov closed the list of factors explaining his “brilliant results” stressing his “excellent relations with the unions.” Since he had repeatedly accused them of sabotage as well as of resisting “the firm and resolute application of *udarnik* principles,” it would have been more honest to vaunt the outburst of his own activity: between October and December Piatakov had issued approximately 200 of the 550 *prikazy po Donbassu* of the whole year, and had outlined productive plans for the following decade.

Weakened by the unexpected dimensions of this success, his enemies tried to insinuate that it had been achieved by sacrificing the future to the present, by neglecting maintenance and the preparation of new veins. Their most important argument, however, was that Piatakov had been at least partially responsible for the crisis, caused also by the over-extension of his TsPKP, which in the spring had refused to adjust its aims to its resources. Furthermore, with his *biurokraticheskaia liniia sverkhu* which oppressed and disrupted the life of local organs, he was now hindering, not helping recovery. Bread, not Piatakov, was working the current wonders.

This was not only untrue, at least from the productive point of view, but also clumsily stated. In comparison with Piatakov's clear, precise, "modern" reports, such as the *spravka* to the Russian TsK of November 25, the charges of his antagonists, especially given the cultural background of their authors, made a very poor impression. Having read Piatakov's report admiringly, Lenin then showered Rukhimovich "with rude remarks" for submitting reports "poorly organized, not well developed, lacking clarity [...] and with plenty of figures" but lacking "the necessary tables."

Not surprisingly, Lenin spoke more and more frequently of the need to keep Piatakov in the Donbass. There, however, local organs spoke increasingly of a *dvoevlastie* to be removed at all costs. Moreover, local conflicts were increasingly interwoven with politics in Moscow. Rukhimovich, outraged by Lenin's insults and full of resentment against the Trotskyite intellectual scion of big capitalists, knew that Stalin was ready to understand his feelings, exposed in a letter of September 3, and to act as his defense attorney.¹⁰⁸

IV

Intrigues and defeat (December 1921-January 1922)

Rukhimovich's letter set the stage for the final act of the Donbass intrigues, favored by a disease which forced Piatakov to bed, leaving the TsPKP in the hands of Bitker. The first public outbreak came with the publication of a booklet written by Iu. Remeiko, a member of the Miners' union TsK who accused the TsPKP of following the Trotskyite line defeated at the X Party Congress. Lenin saw in it the reemergence of the factionalism that had endangered the life of the party at the beginning of the year. He thus wrote worried letters to Molotov, Rakovskii, Shvarts, Piatakov and Rukhimovich, asking for an immediate clarification.

Lenin's assessment of the situation was, however, wrong. Far from dying out, in previous months the struggle between factions had intensified. The initiative had been in the hands of the "Leninists," as the leaders siding with Lenin at the X Congress and uniting around Zinov'ev and Stalin called themselves. Remeiko's booklet was therefore not a symptom of battles being rejoined; rather it gave notice of a carefully prepared settling of accounts, opened by the demand to remove both Piatakov and Kalnin from the Donbass.¹⁰⁹

The reasons advanced to justify this request shed some light on the evolution of the ideology of those "Leninists" who had already chosen Stalin as their leader. I shall deal with this in the conclusions and will instead now try to sum up the different levels of the intrigues centering in late 1921 around the Donbass.

Locally, many different and often conflicting groups were united by the fight against Piatakov, whom they saw as the main danger. First were the pro-Soviet Ukrainians, who considered the TsPKP, with its colonial policies, the direct representative of Moscow's economic interests (and not unreasonably: in following years its executives were the "backbone of resistance" to ukrainization).

Then came the officials united around Rukhimovich's *gubispolkom* and its KIMKP. They were accused of "localism and separatism" by Piatakov, who was ready to produce coal for Moscow "*dazhe vushcherb* to the other sectors of the region's life." But, of course, these officials' defense of Donbass autonomous development, based on the NEP and not only around the production of coal for Russian industry, was a solid ground for an alliance with the Ukrainians as well as with the population at large. Both were ready to support what Rukhimovich wrote Stalin: "We are firmly opposed to the predominance in the Donbass of a coal dictatorship killing everything else [...] To demand the development of other economic sectors is not localism."

In the first part I spoke of the hostile attitude of these mostly Russian local leaders towards both the NEP and the Ukrainian question. In May, this attitude had been confirmed by the V KpbU conference which "corrected" the pro-Ukrainian turn imposed by Lenin at the end of 1919. Thus, their line at the end of 1921 may, at first glance, seem paradoxical. But, by opposing Piatakov, they were able to defend their own power and, at the same time, to find allies in the battle against their main enemy at the national level. Here was one origin of that 1920's alliance between Ukrainian Communists and Stalin's *druzhina* against the hyper-centralist Trotskii which greatly helped the *gensek*'s rise to absolute power.¹¹⁰

Kombinaty, which now produced about 15% of the total output in 80 pits with 24,000 miners, also sided against the TsPKP. Jealous of their newly-found autonomy, they felt threatened by Piatakov, who aimed at regaining control over them. These conflicts took on a personal hue when Mezhlauk was named director of the *Iugostal*, born out of the merger of the Petrovskii, Makeevskii and Iuzovskii iron and steel *kombinaty*. Besides being one of Rukhimovich's best friends, he naturally supported his line favoring the development of local metallurgy.

Hostile to Piatakov was also, as we know, the majority of local party, state and union organs, united against the TsPKP's imperialism. As the deputy secretary of the Donets *gubkom* wrote to Manuil'skii in December, in the previous months *partkomy* "always sided with *ispolkomy* against economic organs" and their ambition to rule.¹¹¹

Inside the regime, the list of Piatakov's enemies was topped by the Worker Opposition, whose strength in the Donbass has already been discussed. Its members complained about his "exceedingly harsh" attitude towards them, which was a typical if extreme characteristic of Trotskii's policies during that period.

We also know that the campaign against Piatakov was very popular not only in the countryside, but also among workers who saw in the TsPKP their immediate antagonist and could not imagine that it was possible to fall into worse hands. Stalin's men masterfully used these resentments, showing understanding and turning a patronizing face towards their most violent expressions. TsPKP officials were arrested on the basis of motions, approved by factory meetings, accusing them of preparing the return of industry to private hands. Manuil'skii and Petrovskii called assassination attempts against *spetsy* "actions inspired by proletarian instincts" degenerated into "Red banditry" because of TsPKP policies which favored the growth of "anarchic tendencies."¹¹²

In Moscow, Stalin orchestrated the whole plot. His role and status in the party were already much larger than Lenin realized, and among the means by which Stalin had attained this position was precisely the defense of the party's pre-eminence against the "Trotskyite menace." In this defense, Stalin proved to be both firm and reasonable, ready to fight for each delegate to congresses and each appointment to party committees ("ne otdavajte bez boia ni odnogo delegatskogo mesta ni Trotskomu, ni rabochei oppozitsii," he wrote in the mentioned letter to Voroshilov) as well as to listen to local complaints, including the national ones which, as *Narkomnats*, he was the first to examine. As the Donbass shows, he also proved himself capable of waging war on several fronts, of seeing what his enemies, his allies and even Lenin did not see, and of winning the loyalty of a growing group of followers. In the intrigues of the Donbass, for example, he put to good use Molotov, Voroshilov, Ordzhonikidze and Artem, as well as the majority of the Ukrainian delegation to the TsK. The slogan on the defense of the party, moreover, secured him the support of all Trotsky's enemies and, as we know, allowed him to use the divisions caused by the trade unions debate and to present himself as the leader of the "Leninist" faction.

Among Stalin's allies were the *Narkomtrud* and the majority of union leaders. On the other side, even more than at the beginning of the year, the economic center continued to back Piatakov. Krzhizhanovskii and Ramzin, for example, implored Lenin to defend him "for the sake of industry's interests as well as of those of the national economy as a whole."¹¹³

In spite of his personal preferences, however, Lenin's position was very ambiguous. He backed Piatakov, appreciated his work and his success, and wanted to confirm his appointment, discussing the problems this raised with Piatakov himself on November 28. But, as remarked at the end of section I, it was Lenin who, both during the Trade unions debate and after it, had sanctioned the Leninists' maneuvers and the harshness of the fight against Trotskyites. Therefore, his pretension to annul the legacy of those conflicts and to keep both Piatakov and Rukhimovich in the Donbass was wishful thinking. Not even Lenin's prestige could make this come true. An evidence of Lenin's weak and ambiguous position were his regrets at the IX Congress of the Soviets (December 1921) and at the XI Party Congress (March 1922). In both forums he vaunted Piatakov's "extraordinary devotion [...] real education and great ability" and complained about the failure to keep him in the Donbass in spite of "extraordinary success." This had been made impossible also by Piatakov's behavior: "a talented communist, he nevertheless *pereadministrival*." (this comment being the embryo of the assessment given in the Testament of December 1922).¹¹⁴

The process that led to Piatakov's removal was begun by the KPbU *orgbiuro* which, on November 22, discussed the conflicts within the Donbass *gubkom*. On the 26, the Donbass *raznoglasii* were examined by the Russian *politbiuro* which laid the blame for the "sharpening" of local problems on Piatakov and his manners and ordered him *bezuslovno* to renounce his methods. Piatakov was also asked to submit in advance all decisions in non-economic matters to the party *gubkom*, whose supremacy was re-asserted. The *politbiuro* also called for the coordination of the TsPKP's work with the *gubekonomsoveshchanie*, and it reminded all of the importance of keeping good relations with the unions.

In spite of the decision to keep "until further news" Piatakov, Kviring and Rukhimovich in the Donbass, it was clearly a sound defeat of the former. Piatakov however, still thought victory possible, at least partially because of Lenin's support. In

fact, after the meeting Lenin did complain to Molotov that the *politbiuro*'s decision had been a "hurried" one and asked him to organize the approval of a more moderate solution (let us remember that Molotov was the acting TsK secretary as well as an active participant in the intrigues).

Meanwhile, the Donbass *gubkom* majority, which had understood well the meaning of the *politbiuro* decision, formally requested Piatakov's removal. Soon afterwards, Piatakov and Kviring left for Moscow to discuss their problems with the Russian TsK, which ordered them not to engage in any public dispute until a solution was found.¹¹⁵ But, instead of ceasing, conflicts were exacerbated by the preparation of the KPbU all-Ukrainian conference, convened on December 9.

The *gubkom* meeting which preceded the Donbass conference formally respected the ruling of the Russian TsK, represented by Chubar'. Acting on a proposal by Kviring, the *gubkom* decided that delegates were not to discuss the conflict with Piatakov, who did not attend the conference. Even at its opening, however, Piatakov received half of Chubar''s and Rukhimovich's votes and was not included in the presidium. Then, to the surprise of some *uezd* delegations, a point was added to the final resolutions that condemned "the *nepodchinenie* of some *biuro* members" to party directives. This point was carried by a majority vote (68 for, 48 against, 11 abstaining). Then, according to Chubar''s report to the Russian TsK, Piatakov's candidacy to the new *gubkom* was rejected, "forcing" Chubar', Kviring and the Ukrainian *politbiuro* to take another vote.

Chubar' underlined his and Kviring's efforts to maintain a comradely atmosphere. But, in a report later sent by the secretary of the Debal'chevskii *ukom* to Ordzhonikidze, one could read that in the informal meetings which discussed candidacies for the new *gubkom*, both Kviring and Rukhimovich had fought against Piatakov's candidacy. According to the same report, Piatakov eventually succeeded in winning control over part of both the new *gubkom* and its *biuro*. As a result, the first meetings of these organs were quite stormy. The secret letter of a local party official to Manuil'skii noted that a haphazard majority formed out of an understanding between the "Leninists" and representatives of the Worker Opposition and local interests. This majority requested the expulsion of Piatakov and of his followers and voted against the TsPKP's proposal to acquire control over the KIMKP.¹¹⁶

The battle continued at the all-Ukrainian conference. Here too hostilities began with elections to the presidium. When 13 names, including Piatakov's, were officially proposed, some delegates asked for five *besspornye* names and, once their proposal was rejected, demanded that each name be discussed. Chubar' then read the economic report, which exalted the activities of local organs, the KIMKP most of all (KIMKP's output had jumped from the 2,3 million puds mined in September by 4,500 workers to 8,4 in December, mined by 15,000 miners in approximately 900 pits).

During the debate, Piatakov was accused of having brought the Donbass "to a boiling point" by acting as an agent of "more important figures" (i.e. of Trotskii). At the end of the conference, the majority of the Donbass delegation, led by Kviring and Rukhimovich, and supported by Khar'kov and by part of the Lugansk one (that loyal to Voroshilov; the secretary, Boris Magidov, sided with Piatakov), formally requested the removal of Piatakov from the region. They threatened otherwise not to vote him to the Ukrainian TsK.

Chubar' reported to the Russian TsK that it was an ultimatum which could not be rejected. Thus a final "compromise" was reached. Piatakov was re-elected to the KPbU

TsK and then also to its *politbiuro*, and was even appointed editor of its newspaper, *Kommunist*. But, he was forced to leave the Donbass where Chubar' replaced him at the TsPKP.

Manuil'skii, Chubar', Kvirring, Rukhimovich *et al.* thus got what they had been fighting for in previous months. It is not clear, however, why Rakovskii, who sided with Trotskii and was quite influential in Ukraine, did very little to defend Piatakov. This probably had to do with Rakovskii's independence as well as with the poor personal relations between the two men. They had often and violently clashed ever since Rakovskii had replaced Piatakov as head of the Ukrainian government in January 1919. Rakovskii admitted the necessity to abandon *uravnitel'nyi kommunizm* in order to eliminate the *obshchaia nishcheta* it had caused, but he cherished the egalitarian principles which had inspired wage levelling and deeply disliked the *neravenstvo* championed by Piatakov in industry.¹¹⁷

Put before the "unanimous decision" of the Ukrainian party, Moscow was "forced" to give up. Inverted commas are necessary because, as we know, though Lenin continued to speak of a Russian TsK "unanimously" trying to keep Piatakov in the Donbass, a sizeable portion of that TsK had maneuvered to reach the opposite result. Lenin charged that in Ukraine "tricky people" were cheating the TsK and keeping away from it (i.e. from Lenin). But Lenin pretended not to understand, and perhaps for a time did not understand, that behind them was part of that very TsK. Stalin's behavior probably contributed to this: only very reluctantly — he wrote Lenin — he had submitted to the fact that "all that happened" had made it "*nevozmozhno i netselesoobrazno* to keep Piatakov in the Donbass."¹¹⁸ On the basis of Stalin's "reasonable" conclusions, on December 28 the *politbiuro* sanctioned Piatakov's replacement with Chubar'. It further ordered TsPKP officials who threatened to resign in solidarity with their former boss to remain at their place or face "severe punishment."

Lenin had to be content with the appointment of an investigating commission headed by Ordzhonikidze, whom Lenin still trusted. Sergo worked with Kvirring, Chubar', Manuil'skii, Petrovskii *et al.*, i.e. with local intriguers, to prepare quite hypocritical documents for Moscow's consumption. In the *protokol* of the Ukrainian *politbiuro* of January 1, 1922, Manuil'skii, for example, argued for a coal dictatorship but noted that it was also necessary to work for the recovery of the Donbass economy as a whole. He maintained that Kvirring had been so respectful of Russian TsK directives that his "neutrality" toward Piatakov had aroused the indignation of many members. He also reminded all that the poor Rukhimovich had more than once offered to resign and leave everything to Piatakov, even after the Petrovskii commission had decided that it was Piatakov who had to go. Piatakov, in contrast, had threatened to bring whole *ispolkomy* and *partkomy* to trial and, with his TsPKP, had strangled "all other economic, Soviet and party organs." Surely, it was not only Piatakov's fault, rather the "system's," but with industry run by Rukhimovich everything would have been better.

Ordzhonikidze then thoughtfully asked: "But if Piatakov leaves, output will not fall?" to be immediately reassured: No, bread was the real problem. In July, with Piatakov but without bread, output had collapsed. In September, bread arrived and output grew. Petrovskii and Chubar' presented an even bleaker picture of Piatakov, who had mistreated Kvirring in spite of the latter's loyal support. All then claimed to be anxious about the party's moods and concluded that Piatakov's removal had really been the right thing to do.¹¹⁹

The same duplicity was to be found in Ordzhonikidze's conclusions, of which there were actually two different versions. One was the official report to the *politbiuro* and the other a secret, personal letter to Lenin. The former, based on Manuil'skii's speech at the Ukrainian *politbiuro*, had a very reasonable tone and did not openly lie. Charged with introducing the dictatorship of coal, Piatakov had been forced by circumstances to push for the *perevod* of all local organizations *na proizvodstvennye rel'sy*. This had naturally provoked the reactions of these organizations, and especially of party organs, which felt their authority threatened by an economic organ. Instead of dealing with these reactions "carefully and tactfully," Piatakov had exacerbated them with his arrogance. This situation made it impossible to keep him in the Donbass.

But the official report did not reveal, as Ordzhonikidze wrote Lenin, "the main reason for the conflicts." "Our Donbass, comrades," had convinced themselves that Piatakov was working to unite "the Trotskyites" in order to conquer the region. This was why they decided to wage war against him. Trotsky, who could already count on Rakovskii, was not to control also the Donbass. The letter, therefore, openly recalled the factions of the preceding year and addressed Lenin as the natural leader of one of them, thus confirming the weakness and, above all, the ambiguity of his position. Lenin knew the real basis of the Donbass "intrigues," whose obscurity he publicly denounced. In fact, that the fights in the Donbass led back to Moscow was known to everybody (Trotsky himself later wrote that "Piatakov was crowded out of the Donets Basin by Stalin's underground intrigues."). Three months later, at the XI Party Congress, Lenin proposed Stalin as general secretary against the advice of many old Bolsheviks who favored I.N. Smirnov.

It is worth noting that in his official report, Ordzhonikidze highly evaluated both Piatakov and his TsPKP. The former was praised for having built an organ which

"is a rare bird among our Soviet and economic organizations, which is distinguished by discipline, orderliness, and the fast and precise execution of its tasks. Its leading group has been successfully selected. The work it carries out is colossal."

In 1932, also on the basis of this appreciation, Ordzhonikidze was to appoint Piatakov his first deputy at the NKTP, making him "the brain of the whole organization" as well as "of the industrialization of the whole country."¹²⁰

In the Donbass, the repercussions of Piatakov's removal were immediately felt. The hunt for his collaborators soon began. Economic functionaries were partially shielded by the desire to preserve the TsPKP's efficiency. But Piatakov's political allies dearly paid for their loyalty. On January 14, the secretaries of the Debal'chevskii, Shaktinskii and Luganskii *partkomy* complained to the Russian TsK that, inside the party, "after the departure of Piatakov, there has been the opposite of that reconciliation" officially wished for by the *gubkom* majority. That majority had, instead, begun to persecute the cadres "who had sided with large industry," expelling from the *gubkom* Piatakov's former allies.

The most eminent victim was Kalnin, whose expulsion from the party Piatakov was later called to investigate. Among other things, Kalnin — a supporter of militarization — was accused of "defending the Menshevik notion of union independence" (he had urged union cadres to increase their influence in the party in order to resist the victory of the "Leninists").

Once the Trotskyites had been defeated, an iron fist was shown also to the members of the Worker Opposition used in the fight against them. At the beginning of 1922,

Mitin and Kuznetsov, their most important local leaders, were accused of syndicalism and criminal intrigues. They were expelled from the party at the XI Congress, where Manuil'skii boasted about the "harsh fight" in the Donbass against the Worker Opposition.¹²¹

In Moscow, in the meantime, Piatakov, still backed by Lenin, was first appointed chairman of the GUT in Smilga's place and soon afterwards vice-president of *Gosplan*. This appointment was made with the blessing of Krzhizhanovskii who wrote Lenin that he "was delighted at the prospect of working with Piatakov." Thus Piatakov began his career as the most important Soviet economic administrator, which reached a first peak in 1923 with his appointment to the vice-chairmanship of the VSNKh.¹²²

In the Donbass, instead, Chubar's TsPKP was soon in deep troubles. Already in January production started to fall and in September it was only slightly above that of the previous year. Certainly, as in 1921, many factors were involved. But, as Piatakov's old collaborators complained in the press, the crisis was also the fruit of Chubar's lack of talent as well as of local party decisions, about which Magidov complained in an October letter to the Russian TsK.

The reform which had attempted to reduce the "cumbersome" structure built by Piatakov and to transfer a number of mines to trusts and local organs had proved a failure, showing, according to Magidov, the "necessity of centralization." Besides, as Reingol'd noted, Chubar had not been able to maintain the intensity of Piatakov's administrative pressure, had neglected *premirovanie* and reintroduced wage-levelling. Nor had he understood the importance of mechanization or paid the necessary attention to the needs of *spetsy*, thus causing their flight. Danchin, instead, underlined the neglect of planning for the future, to which Piatakov had attached such great importance. The 1921 crisis and success, therefore, had not been just a question of bread, and experience was showing that the quality of leadership was indeed a decisive factor, the more so in an administrative system such as the Soviet one.¹²³

Conclusions

That the origin of Stalinist post-1928 policies can be found in War Communism's final stage is a well known hypothesis. Both Carr and Deutscher, for example, noted that in 1928-1929 Stalin embraced the Trotskyite policies of 1920-1921, merely "changing their name."¹²⁴ And yet even these historians seem to have underestimated two important points: the extent to which what they thought to have been in 1920-1921 mostly words were, indeed, already policies actually put into practice; and how much these policies, which Trotskii formalized rather than invented and which Trotskyites carried to their most extreme limit, were actually a patrimony shared by the great majority of Bolshevik leaders. *As such* they resurfaced in 1928.

More generally, perhaps because of its presumed obviousness and of the difficulty implicit in dealing with both the "civil war" and the 1930's, the continuity between the two periods has remained a historiographic cliché. The close look we gave to the 1921 Donbass gives, I think, new content to this old axiom.

The question is not, of course, to deny or underevaluate the evident and quite important differences. To get a glimpse of the abyss dividing the two periods it is enough to compare the relations between Lenin and Piatakov with those Piatakov had with the new *vozhd'* in the following decade (even though, as we know, already in 1920-1921 Piatakov's relations with Trotskii were marked by submission, and in

1921 he was already complaining of the *khitrospleteniia pridvornoj zhizni* around Lenin).

Continuity, however, proves to be essential and the NEP emerges as a frail parenthesis. Its undeniable call thus seems more the fruit of the hopes it generated (and continued to generate) as well as of its relative mildness between two horrible periods than of its brief and contradictory life.

Even the similarity of details between the two periods that bracketed the NEP is impressive. This similarity, however, extends well beyond details. On one side, already in 1921 Donbass the relationships between procurements, famine, peasants' and workers' conditions and behaviors, industrial development, the handling of the work force and modernization took a configuration anticipating that of the early 1930's.¹²⁵ On the other, the kind of priority planning necessitated by extreme scarcity and the direction of industry on the basis of different levels of planning recall the realities of planning in the 1930's analyzed by professor Zaleski. Also the mechanism which set industry in motion, as well as the whip which made it march — that is the *raison d'État*, those *soobrazheniia obshchegosudarstvennye i politicheskie* to which economical, technical and human considerations were to be subordinated — were already those of the 1930's.

And the bloc of party, union and state organs which defeated Piatakov's powerful and arrogant TsPKP in 1921 was still there ten years later. In a 1933 letter to Ordzhonikidze, for example, Piatakov bitterly complained that in the Urals party committees, urban soviets, union locals, GPU, the militia, etc., totally depended on the NKTP, and, as a result, hated it and led a guerrilla war against it. Thus, in 1936, as in 1921, it was not too difficult for Stalin to win a war waged in the name of the supremacy of politics against an economic organization to which he had *temporarily* granted extraordinary powers to create the country's industrial basis, a task which, by 1936, had been more or less completed.¹²⁶

The continuity in the Soviet leaders' anti-workerism is also impressive. That of 1930's is well known, even though Stalin's vulgar "workerism" has confused not a few Western academics. But it is rather surprising to find the same attitudes, and in quite mature forms, already in 1920-1921 (and possibly earlier). Workers were already then "treated like cattle," as some German engineers re-stated in 1932 in a report read by Ordzhonikidze. The extreme use of the carrot and the stick which marked the 1930's was in 1921 already evident and factory hierarchies had gained already, though temporarily, control over hiring, firing, wages and even food. Actually, it was in 1921 that the importance of putting the *rabsnab* in the hands of industrial executives was understood (Stalin was to give it back to the NKTP at the end of 1932). And already in 1920-1921 there was an attempt to reduce the unions to "small *politotdely* fighting only to increase productivity and labor discipline," as Tomskii said in 1928 denouncing the Stalinist offensive against his unions.¹²⁷

The last analogy I wish to point out is that between the labor armies, as they evolved in 1920-1921, and the forced labor of the early 1930's. Both phenomena were guided by the search for absolute command over a fraction of the work force in order to make possible things that otherwise — because of climatic conditions, lack of resources, danger or general backwardness — would not have been possible. Not casually, *in 1925*, it was Piatakov who raised once again and in this spirit the issue of resorting to forced labor. This "temporary" notion of forced labor, later shared by the NKTP leadership, differed from that of the political police, which upon it wanted to build its

economic empire, as well as from the Stalinist despotic-imperial idea which, together, dominated the 1936-1953 period.¹²⁸

A second group of questions which the study of 1921 Donbass puts at the center of our attention is that centering around the Stalinist bloc. Its early, strong links with Lenin emerge quite vividly, and perhaps precisely this closeness explains the violence of Lenin's reaction against Stalin and his men in 1922. But this would deserve a separate essay. Here, I prefer to focus briefly on that bloc's flexibility and evolution, as well as on its ideology, which had a special bond with the Donbass. I said that a certain mixture of anti-popular harshness, populism, hostility for military *spetsy* in particular and intellectuals in general, and a readiness to defend a newly acquired power through the exaltation of the supremacy of the party, was typical of the Donbass-Tsaritsyn group. It openly surfaced for the first time in this group's participation in the military opposition of 1919.

In 1921 Donbass, the Stalinists followed a line similar to that defended at the VIII Party Congress. Once more, at the core of their position was the defense of the party's supremacy, and once more the enemy was Trotskii, presented as its main foe. This time, however, as a consequence of the extension of militarization to the economy, the fight was not against military *spetsy* but rather against economic and technical ones. This meant that trade-unionism, workerism, and *spets*-baiting (different from the Tsaritsynites' traditional populism but not foreign to it) were now precious weapons. Also precious was the defense of local and national interests against Trotskyite hyper-centralism.¹²⁹

In following years these ingredients were used over and over again to distill new ideological brews, often prepared in the Donbass. A good example of this is the famous Shakhty trial, which opened the hunt for *spetsy* of 1928-1931. Shakhty had been a *raion* of Piatakov's TsPKP, and the trial "organizer," Evdokimov, had been in 1919-1921 an officer in Budennyi's *1-vaia konnaia* and later the commander of the special troops employed against "bandits."¹³⁰ This time, too, the attack on *spetsy* was accompanied by the brushing up of workerism. But, unlike 1921, in 1928 trade unions were among the enemies and therefore that year's ideological brew was distinguished by a violent anti-unionism. And this time, too, the Stalinists attacked the economic organs, VSNKh in particular, in order to submit them to the supremacy of politics.¹³¹

The Donbass was back at the center of the stage in the spring of 1933 when Lazar Kaganovich, aided by a commission of *praktiki*, prepared there a key TsK resolution on industry which recalled in many points Piatakov's *prikaz* no. 304 and treated workers in an even more vulgar and threatening way.¹³²

It was, however, two and a half years later, with Stakhanovism, that the Stalinist ideology took tones more closely recalling those of 1921. In fact, the enemy was now very similar: a huge economic organ, whose second in command was Piatakov. The enthusiasm with which the majority of party, state, and union organs embraced Stakhanovism in order to fight the NKTP was rooted in the circumstances described by Piatakov in his 1933 letter to Ordzhonikidze. Those circumstances replicated the 1921 experience and, as in 1921, a minority of the party then sided with the NKTP.

Of course, there were crucial differences. Even some of the main players of 1921, like Ordzhonikidze and Rukhimovich, were now fighting on the other side as, respectively, number one and four of the NKTP. And yet the study of 1921 Donbass does illuminate the events of the following decade.¹³³

University of Naples, 1994.

* I thank David Shearer, who struggled with my English, and the Russian archivists whose help made this essay possible.

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L. Kaganovich (Scuola superiore di studi storici, Università di San Marino, 1992): 124, maintains that in the 1920's Kvirning sided with Trotskii. In fact, he was a follower of Kamenev.

36. Through *prikazy* "it is possible to study the TsPKP activity, its main phases and the problems it faced[...] One can also ascertain when life put it before *udarnye zadachi*, how these were dealt with, with which consequences, victories and mistakes, how the latter were straightened." (*Otchet 1921 g.*: 286).

37. G.L. Piatakov, "Ob upravlenii.," *art. cit.*: 19; *Pro minule, op. cit.*: 226; Trotskii, *Soch.*, XV: 337, 523-525; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Feb. 2 and 6, 1921).

38. *Uzakoniennia i rasporiasheniia Raboche-krest'ianskogo pravitel'stva Ukrainy za 1919 god* (Khar'kov, 1923): 193; *Sbornik*: 145-147 and *Doklad*: 119-120; G.L. Piatakov, "Otchet...," *art. cit.*: 126; Trotskii, *Soch.*, XV: 491; Iu. Tereshchenko, *op. cit.*: 139 ff.

39. RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 87, ll. 7-11; G. L. Piatakov, "Otchet...," *art. cit.*: 126 ff.

40. Trotskii, *Soch.*, XV: 91, 225, 304; G.L. Piatakov, "Ob upravlenii...," *art. cit.*: 19-23. Saltykov-Shchedrin's governors would have liked the idea of winning Russian *inertnost'* and *udusheniie lichnosti* through military methods.

41. *Doklad*: 123 and *Otchet 1921 g.*: 316; G.L. Piatakov, "Otchet...," *art. cit.*: 126; RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 307.

42. *Doklad*: 119-122, 476-480 and *Otchet 1921 g.*: 269 ff.; G.L. Piatakov, "Ob upravlenii...," *art. cit.*: 17 ff.

43. *Otchet 1921 g.*: 64.

44. RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 347; *Sbornik*: 65-79 and *Doklad*: 177 ff.

45. O. Figes, "The Red Army... during the Russian Civil War," *Past and Present*, 129 (1990): 184 ff.; G. Legget, *op. cit.*: 244; *Doklad*: 499 ff.; L. Trotsky, *How the Revolution...*, *op. cit.*, III: 48-49.

46. *Sbornik*: 32-51, 110-125 and *Doklad*: 267, 499, 503-525, 531-535; G.L. Piatakov, "Otchet...," *art. cit.*: 129; Trotskii, *Soch.*, X: 269, 282-292, 322.

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48. N. Briukhanov, "Kak pitalis' i snabzhalis' Krasnaia Armiia," in *Grazhdanskaia voina* (Moscow, 1929) II: 306-326; *Doklad*: 131 ff.

49. RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 87, l. 10; *Doklad*: 132, 435-449; G.L. Piatakov, "Otchet...," *art. cit.*: 132-142.

50. L. Mises, "Die Wirtschaftsrechnung im sozialistischen Gemeinwesen," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaften*, 47 (1920); B.D. Brutskus, *Sotsialisticheskoe khoziaistvo* (Berlin, 1923); *Doklad*: 439 ff. and *Otchet 1921 g.*: 269 ff.; RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 307; d. 308, l. 33; d. 309, l. 15.

51. *Otchet 1921 g.*: 224-260 and *Doklad*: 123-131.

52. *Doklad*: 91 ff., 435 ff.; *Otchet 1921 g.*: 22.

53. *Doklad*: 94, 166, 527 and *Sbornik*: 118-120.

54. RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 338, ll. 1-126; *Doklad*: 123 ff.

55. G.L. Piatakov, "Ob upravlenii...," *art. cit.*: 19; *Doklad*: 136-144, 152, 175 ff. and *Sbornik*: 110-121; *Pro minule, op. cit.*: 229-231; G.L. Piatakov, "Otchet...," *art. cit.*: 132; M. Lewin, *The making of the Soviet system* (New York: Pantheon, 1985): 254; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Febr. 12, 1921); Trotskii, *Soch.*, XV: 43; RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 307, ll. 1-90; d. 308, ll. 1-54; N.I. Bukharin and G.L. Piatakov, *art. cit.*; Kh.G. Rakovskii, "The professional dangers of power (Astrakhan, Aug. 6, 1928)," now in C. Rakovskii, *Selected writings* (London, 1980); A. Orlov, *The secret history of Stalin's crimes* (New York, 1953): 178, says that in the 1920's Piatakov headed the VSNKh-GPU secret Commission which judged the caste of economic administrators.

56. A. Graziosi, "Collectivisation, révoltes paysannes et politiques gouvernementales," *CMR*, XXXV, 3 (1994).

57. *Povstancheskie dvizheniia na Ukraine. 1921 g., Komplekt dokumentov iz fondov TsGASA* (Moscow, 1991), docs 13, 22, 23, 27, 34; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Mar. 6, 1921); M. Kubanin, *art. cit.*; *Grazhdanskaia voina na Ukraine, op. cit.*, II: XIII, 92; V.N. Volkovinskii, *Makhno i ego krakh* (Moscow, 1991); E.A. Kurdiunova, *op. cit.*: 19 ff.; *Doklad*: 533 ff.; *KPbU v rezoliutsiakh*: 99-101; Trotskii, *Soch.*, XV: 236, 280; *Kommunist* [Kiev] (Apr. 30, 1919).

58. *VIII konferentsiia RKP(b)* (Moscow, 1920); M. Fremkin, *Tragediia krest'ianskikh vosstanii v Rossii* (Jerusalem, 1987); M. Wehner, "Krest'ianskoe soprotivlenie, golod i reaktsiia pravitel'stva," to be published; V.A. Antonov-Ovseenko, "O banditskom dvizhenii v Tambovskoi gubernii," originally in Trotsky archives; N.E. Eliseeva, *Krest'ianskoe vosstanie na Tambovshchine, Komplekt dokumentov iz fondov TsGASA* (Moscow, 1991). V.P. Danilov is preparing a *sbornik* of documents on Tambovshchina.

59. S.V. Tsakunov, *V labirinte doktriny* (Moscow, 1994); *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Febr. 15 and Mar. 4, 1921); *KPbU v rezoliutsiakh*: 89-101, 111-135.
60. *Doklad*: 53-54, 264-266, 455-460 and *Otchet 1921 g.*: 195; G. Legget, *op. cit.*: 244.
61. *Sbornik*: 60-63; *Doklad*: 91, 411, 455, 476 ff. and *Otchet 1921 g.*: 30, 105, 182, 294 ff.; RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 306, l. 7; d. 87, l. 8; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (May 31 and Aug. 4, 1921); L.K. Ramzin, *art. cit.*: 50 ff.; Trotskii, *Soch.*, XV: 495.
62. *Doklad*: 136 ff. and *Sbornik*: 3-6, 13-16, 80-84, 89-91, 95-98; Iu. Remeiko, *op. cit.*: 3-4, 6; G.L. Piatakov, "Ob upravlenii...", *art. cit.*: 23-24 and id., *Put'...*, *op. cit.*: 4-6; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (June 3 and 9, 1921).
63. *Sbornik*: 38, 64, 84; G.L. Piatakov, "Ob upravlenii...", *art. cit.*: 24-26 and id., "Donbass zovet," *art. cit.*; I. Reingol'd, "Budet khleb — budet ugol'," *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Sept. 9, 1921); *ibid.* (Jan. 18, Feb. 6 and June 9, 1921); RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 169, l. 1.
64. I. Stalin, *Opere*, *op. cit.*: V: 12-24; Trotskii, *Soch.*, X: 497. I tried to deal with these problems in "Stalin's antiworker 'workerism', 1924-31," to be published in *International Review of Social History*.
65. Trotskii, *Soch.*, XV: 496; Iu. Remeiko, *op. cit.*: 8, 10; E.H. Carr, *op. cit.*: 633 ff.; *Sbornik*: 147.
66. Trotskii, *Soch.*, XV: 505; G.L. Piatakov, "Otchet...", *art. cit.*: 132-135; *Sbornik*: 84 ff.
67. RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 307, ll. 10-20.
68. Trotskii, *Soch.*, XV: 309, 489; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Febr. 12, 1921); E.A. Kurdiunova, *op. cit.*: 15-21; *Sbornik*: 80, 89-94, 102-120, 147; *Doklad*: 168-174, 191-203, 454.
69. *Doklad*: 76 ff.; G.L. Piatakov, "Ob upravlenii...", *art. cit.*: 21-23; Trotskii, *Soch.*, XV: 85-92, 347; A. Graziosi, "Stalin's antiworker...", *art. cit.*
70. E.H. Carr, *op. cit.*: 627; *Sbornik*: 13-16, 145-146; Iu. Remeiko, *op. cit.*: 5.
71. RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 307, l. 6; E.H. Carr, *op. cit.*: 630; G.L. Piatakov, "Ob upravlenii...", *art. cit.*: 23-26; *Sbornik*: 13-16 and *Doklad*: 136-139, 145-152, 454; Iu. Remeiko, *op. cit.*: 3, 6-8.
72. RTsKhIDNI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 17854 and f. 17, op. 3, d. 146; *Sbornik*: 111-12; RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 307; Iu. Remeiko, *op. cit.*: 9-12.
73. RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 306, ll. 1-93; d. 307, ll. 1-90; d. 308, l. 33; d. 87, ll. 7-11; *Biograficheskaiia khronika*, *op. cit.*, X: 239-241; A. Kaktyn, "Novaia ugroza krasnomu Donbassu," *Ekonomicheskaiia zhizn'* (Apr. 20, 1921): 1; *Otchet 1921 g.*: 16-21, 286, 316 and *Doklad*: 33-63; G.L. Piatakov, "Donbass zovet," *art. cit.*; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Apr. 6, 1921).
74. RTsKhIDNI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1296, ll. 1-7; f. 2, op. 1, d. 17885; *Biograficheskaiia khronika*, *op. cit.*, X: 310; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Dec. 3 and 23, 1920); Trotsky Archives T 652; RGAE, f. 3429, op. 6/sekr., dd. 697 and 700 for its activities.
75. *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Mar. 22 and 31, May 5 and 18, 1921); G.L. Piatakov, "Donbass zovet," *art. cit.*; id., "Ob upravlenii...", *art. cit.*: 23-24; *Biograficheskaiia khronika*, *op. cit.*, X: 254; RTsKhIDNI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 17854; f. 5, op. 2, d. 243, ll. 5-7; *Doklad*: 44-49, 131; Trotskii, *Soch.*, XV: 29 ff.
76. RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 307, 308, l. 1 ff. 33, 43, 62, 69; RTsKhIDNI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1296; Iu. Remeiko, *op. cit.*: 12; *Doklad*: 37-68, 256-263, 429-430, 435-438; *Otchet 1921 g.*: 316; I. Reingol'd, "Prichiny katastrofy Donbassa," *Pravda* (Oct. 29, 1922); A. Kaktyn, *art. cit.*; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Mar. 25, 1921); *KPbU v rezoliutsiakh*: 116-128; *Ekonomicheskaiia zhizn'* (June 3, 1921).
77. *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Apr. 7-May 12, 1921).
78. RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 308, ll. 60-70; *Doklad*: 123-130, 136-139; *Otchet 1921 g.*: 46-63.
79. RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, dd. 87, 308; *K probleme proizvoditel'nosti truda*, *Sbornik* (Moscow, 1924) I: 73 ff.; *Doklad*: 63-68, 76-88, 162-165, 476-492; *Ekonomicheskaiia zhizn'* (June 3, 1921).
80. *Doklad*: 76-88, 140-161; Iu. Remeiko, *op. cit.*: 9.
81. RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 308, ll. 20-53; G.L. Piatakov, "Donbass zovet," *art. cit.*; *Doklad*: 136-139, 256-263; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (June 9, 1921).
82. L. Trotsky, *How the Revolution...*, *op. cit.*, III: 48-49; I. Stalin, *Opere*, *op. cit.*, V: 12-24 and "Vos'moi s'ezd...", *art. cit.*: 162-164; *Sbornik*: 84 ff. and *Doklad*: 31, 35, 42, 43, 44, 47, 52; RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 308, ll. 56-69; d. 338, l. 83 ff.; d. 87, ll. 7-11.
83. RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 307; K. Nakai, *art. cit.*: 45-47; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (May 5, 1921); *KPbU v rezoliutsiakh*: 116-121; *Otchet 1921 g.*: 257 and *Doklad*: 1 ff.; TsPKP, "Doklad o deiatel'nosti TsPKP za iul' 1921 g.," in *Doklad*: 18 ff.; RTsKhIDNI, f. 5, op. 2, d. 243, ll. 5-7.
84. *Biograficheskaiia khronika*, *op. cit.*, X: 592, 637, 670; XI: 81, 140; RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 308, l. 43; d. 87, l. 10; V. Lenin, *Opere*, *op. cit.*, XLV: 92; Trotskii, *Soch.*, XV: 221-224.
85. *Doklad*: 204-220, 429-430, 435-438; RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, dd. 307, 308, 338, ll. 1-126; *Biograficheskaiia khronika*, *op. cit.*, X: 670; *Doklad*: 1, 169 ff., 476 ff., 511 and "Doklad... za iul' 1921 g.," *art. cit.*: 31; RTsKhIDNI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 999; *KPbU v rezoliutsiakh*: 122 ff.

86. K. Nakai, *art. cit.*: 54-56; H.H. Fisher, *Famine in Soviet Russia, 1919-22* (New York, 1927); R. Serbyn, "The famine of 1921-23," in *Famine in Ukraine* (Edmonton, 1986); M. Wehner, *art. cit.*
87. *Doklad*: 62, 88-91, 140-144, 256 ff., 431-434, 503-504; "Doklad... za iiul' 1921 g.," *art. cit.*: 1-18 and *Otchet 1921 g.*: 13-15; E.A. Kurdiunova, *op. cit.*: 22-27; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Aug. 7-23, 1921).
88. *Doklad*: 88-91, 431-434, 533-542 and "Doklad... za iiul' 1921 g.," *art. cit.*: 4-31; Iu. Remeiko, *op. cit.*: 11.
89. GRVA, f. 164, op. 1, dd. 12, 16, 25, 101, 107; Iu. Tereshchenko, *op. cit.*: 134-158; NKProd, *Tri goda bor'by s golodom* (Moscow, 1920): 7, 69; RTsKhIDNI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1296.
90. *Sbornik*: 84 ff. and *Doklad*: 267-275, 431-434, 494-508, 531, 542; RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 308, l. 57; d. 338, ll. 83 f.; d. 87, l. 10.
91. *Doklad*: 140-151, 166-173, 494-498 and "Doklad... za iiul' 1921 g.," *art. cit.*: 31 ff.; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Oct. 20, 1921); Iu. Remeiko, *op. cit.*: 11.
92. RTsKhIDNI, f. 2, op. 1, dd. 19645, 19692, 21086; f. 5, d. 1296; "Doklad... za iiul' 1921 g.," *art. cit.*: 1-32; Iu. Remeiko, *op. cit.*: 3.
93. *Doklad*: 145 ff.; RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 306; RTsKhIDNI, f. 85, op. 23, d. 10; E. H. Carr, *op. cit.*: 630 ff.: "V Donetskom basseine," *Ekonomicheskaiia zhizn'* (Oct. 13, 1921); *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Sept. 4, 1921).
94. *Doklad*: 152-165, 175-178, 276 ff.; RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 347; A. Graziosi, "Building...," *art. cit.*; *Biograficheskaiia khronika*, *op. cit.*, XI: 222; RTsKhIDNI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1296; V.N. Ipat'ev, *op. cit.*: 317; I.V. Paramonov, *op. cit.*: 47-58; V. Lenin, *Opere*, *op. cit.*, XLV: 196-197, 247, 391; A. Graziosi, "Stalin's antiworker...," *art. cit.*
95. *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Aug. 17 and Nov. 2, 1921); "Doklad... za iiul' 1921," *art. cit.*: 1-17 and *Otchet 1921 g.*: 46, 209 ff., 287-289; V. Lenin, *Opere*, *op. cit.*, XLV: 92.
96. *Otchet 1921 g.*: 255 ff., 290-293.
97. *Ekonomicheskaiia zhizn'* (Aug. 31, 1921); Iu. Remeiko, *op. cit.*: 12; I. Reingol'd, "Budet...," *art. cit.*; *Doklad*: 1 ff.
98. RTsKhIDNI, f. 85, op. 23, d. 10; *Khoziaistvo Donbassa* [Bakhmut] (Nov. 15, 1921); V. Lenin, *Opere*, *op. cit.*, XLV: 247; *Otchet 1921 g.*: 206, 294.
99. RTsKhIDNI, f. 85, op. 23, d. 10; RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 309; *Otchet 1921 g.*: 286, 294.
100. *Ibid.*: 13-15, 199-213, 295-300; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Oct. 19, 1921); E.A. Kurdiunova, *op. cit.*: 22 ff.; RTsKhIDNI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 21086; A. Solzhenitsyn, *Arcipelago Gulag* (Milan, 1975) II: 78-83; Zh. Rossi, *Spravochnik po GULagu* (London, 1987): 268-269.
101. *Otchet 1921 g.*: 26-29, 46-63, 255-268, 294.
102. *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Sept. 20 and Nov. 3, 1921); "Vnimanie k Donbassu," *Ekonomicheskaiia zhizn'* (July 3, 1921); L.K. Ramzin, *art. cit.*; *Otchet 1921 g.*: 46-51, 215 ff.; RTsKhIDNI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 21698; f. 5, op. 2, d. 105; *Biograficheskaiia khronika*, *op. cit.*, XI: 563, 569; RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 309, l. 15 ff.; G.L. Piatakov, "V Donbasse," *Ekonomicheskaiia zhizn'* (Nov. 30, 1921).
103. RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, dd. 307, 309, l. 98; *Otchet 1921 g.*: 182-184, 269 ff., 296 ff.; E.A. Kurdiunova, *op. cit.*: 54.
104. RTsKhIDNI, f. 5, op. 2, d. 243, ll. 5-7; f. 85, op. 23, dd. 2, 10; *Biograficheskaiia khronika*, *op. cit.*, XI: 617, 655; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (1921): 21; G.L. Piatakov, "V Donbasse," *art. cit.*; id., "Ranenyi gigant," *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Sept. 10, 1921); *Otchet 1921 g.*: 296 and *Doklad*: 1 ff.; Iu. Remeiko, *op. cit.*: 12.
105. E.A. Kurdiunova, *op. cit.*: 38-50; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Aug. 30, Sept. 17 and 20, Oct. 12, 1921); *Otchet 1921 g.*: 297-300.
106. Iu. Remeiko, *op. cit.*: 13; *Otchet 1921 g.*: 6-21, 206-268 and *Doklad*: 82-87, 409-415; K. Nakai, *art. cit.*: 43-44; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Nov. 11, 1921); RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 309.
107. *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Nov. 3, 1921); RTsKhIDNI, f. 5, op. 2, d. 243; f. 85, op. 23, dd. 10, 11; *Otchet 1921 g.*: 30-45, 286; Iu. Remeiko, *op. cit.*: 10.
108. *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Aug. 23, Oct. 19, Nov. 11 and 15, 1921); RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 309, l. 15 ff., 148 ff.; *Otchet 1921 g.*: 3-25, 206, 209-223, 286, 316; K. Nakai, *art. cit.*: 43, 57; RTsKhIDNI, f. 5, op. 2, dd. 105, 255; G.L. Piatakov, "Novyi rekord Donbassa," *Ekonomicheskaiia zhizn'* (Nov. 27, 1921); id., "Donbass trebuet," *ibid.* (Dec. 1, 1921); id., "V Donbasse," *art. cit.*; KPbU, *Shestaia vseukrainskaia konferentsiia, Biulleten'*, 1 (Dec., 1921): 8 f., 29-30; V. Lenin, *Opere*, *op. cit.*, XLV: 312, 323-325.
109. *Doklad*: 1 ff.; Iu. Remeiko, *op. cit.*: 3, 5, 10, 13; *Biograficheskaiia khronika*, *op. cit.*, XI: 655, 666, 684; V. Lenin, *Opere*, *op. cit.*, XLV: 378-379; *Sbornik*: 49-51.
110. B. Krawchenko, *Social change and national consciousness in Ukraine* (Edmonton, 1985): 105-108; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Nov. 3, 1921); *Otchet 1921 g.*: 6, 26 and *Sbornik*: 111-112; Trotsky archives T 640; KPbU v rezolutsiitsiakh: 131 ff.; RTsKhIDNI, f. 5, op. 2, d. 243.

111. *Otchet 1921 g.*: 3-15, 224-243; E.A. Kurdiymova, *op. cit.*: 26-29; RTsKhIDNI, f. 85, op. 23, d. 12; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Oct. 28 and 29, Dec. 8, 1921); T. Hunczak, *op. cit.*: 105-110; B. Krawchenko, *Social change...*, *op. cit.*: 100; *Ocherki istorii KPbU* (Kiev, 1964): 315.
112. RTsKhIDNI, f. 85, op. 23, dd. 5, 12; I. Deutscher, *op. cit.*: 679; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Dec. 14, 1921).
113. L. Trotsky, *The Stalin school...*, *op. cit.*: 55-56; *Biograficheskaiia khronika*, *op. cit.*, XII: 82, 87; RTsKhIDNI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1101, ll. 3-5.
114. E.H. Carr, *La morte di Lenin* (Torino, 1965): 244-245; M. Sapun, *art. cit.*; V. Lenin, *Opere*, *op. cit.*, XXXIII: 148-149, 270-271; *Leninskii sbornik* (Moscow, 1980) XXXI: 373 ff.; *Biograficheskaiia khronika*, *op. cit.*, XI: 655, 666, 684-685.
115. V. Lenin, *Opere*, *op. cit.*, XLII: 344; RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 3, dd. 236, 238; f. 85, op. 23, d. 12; G.L. Piatakov, "Donbass trebet," *art. cit.*; id., "V Donbasse," *art. cit.*; *Biograficheskaiia khronika*, *op. cit.*, XI: 666, 684-685, 691, 695; XII: 82, 87.
116. RTsKhIDNI, f. 85, op. 23, dd. 8, 12.
117. *Shestaia vseukrainskaia...*, *op. cit.*: 1-30; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (Dec. 9-14, 1921); RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 13, d. 1200; f. 85, op. 23, d. 8.
118. V. Lenin, *Opere*, *op. cit.*, XXXIII: 270 ff.; Magidov had met Piatakov in 1911 Kiev.
119. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 2, d. 76. In its December 28 meeting the *politbiuro* also decided to organize the TsK PSR show trial, later chaired by Piatakov. RTsKhIDNI, f. 85, op. 23, dd. 3-9.
120. R.V. Daniels, *The conscience of the revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960): 200; RTsKhIDNI, f. 85, op. 23, dd. 1, 2; L. Trotsky, *The Stalin school...*, *op. cit.*: 55-56; M. Kun, *Bukharin. Ego druz'ia i vragi* (Moscow, 1992): 111, convincingly maintains that Lenin considered Trotskii an enemy up to the XI Party Congress; M. Sapun, *art. cit.*; A. Weissberg, *The accused* (New York, 1951): 55.
121. RTsKhIDNI, f. 5, op. 2, d. 105, l. 9; f. 17, op. 2, d. 76; op. 3, dd. 238, 256, 273; f. 85, op. 23, dd. 2, 11; E.A. Kurdiymova, *op. cit.*: 38-41.
122. RTsKhIDNI, f. 5, op. 5, d. 1105, l. 1; f. 17, op. 3, d. 247, l. 9; A. Graziosi, "Building..." *art. cit.*; *KPbU v rezoliutsiakh*: 136-185.
123. *Shestaia vseukrainskaia...*, *op. cit.*: 1 ff.; *K probleme...*, *op. cit.*, l. 77; I. Reingol'd, "Prichiny..." *art. cit.*; RGAE, f. 8082, op. 1, d. 308, ll. 57-69; K. Nakai, *art. cit.*: 57 ff.; *Otchet 1921 g.*: 244 ff.; E.A. Kurdiymova, *op. cit.*: 29-37; RTsKhIDNI, f. 5, op. 2, d. 105, ll. 12-15.
124. E.H. Carr, *La rivoluzione...*, *op. cit.*: 633 ff.; I. Deutscher, *op. cit.*: 686.
125. RGAE, f. 7297 (NKTP), op. 28, d. 72; f. 8082, op. 1, d. 309, ll. 98 ff.; *Biulleten' oppozitsii*, 17-18 (1930); 29-30 (1932); K. Nakai, *art. cit.*: 3; *Kommunist* [Khar'kov] (May 5, 1921); *Doklad*: 37-62, 82-90 and "Doklad... za iul' 1921 g.," *art. cit.*: 31; *XVII konferentsiia...*, *op. cit.*: 10 ff.; RTsKhIDNI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 798, l. 9.
126. E. Zaleski, *Stalinist planning for economic growth, 1933-1952* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); RTsKhIDNI, f. 85, op. 1/sekr., d. 136, ll. 73-75.
127. A. Graziosi, "Stalin's antiworker..." *art. cit.*; RTsKhIDNI, f. 85, op. 8/sekr., d. 5, l. 19; *Doklad*: 411 ff.; J. Barber, "The standard of living of Soviet workers," in *L'industrialisation de l'URSS* (Paris, 1981); *Vos'moi s'ezd professional'nykh soiuзов* (Moscow, 1929): 44; Iu. Remeiko, *op. cit.*: 4.
128. *Sbornik*: 34 ff.; G.L. Piatakov, "Dokladnaia zapiska ob organizatsii poselenii zakliuchennykh," *Sovetskie arkhivy*, 4 (1991): 71-75; O. Khlevniuk, "Prinuditel'nyi trud v ekonomike SSSR," *Svobodnaia mysl'*, 14 (1992): 73-84.
129. RTsKhIDNI, f. 85, op. 23, d. 5; A. Graziosi, "Stalin's antiworker..." *art. cit.*
130. M.A. Tushnis, "Eshche raz o kadra kh chekistov 30-kh godov," *Voprosy istorii*, 6 (1993): 190-191; A. Litvin, *art. cit.*
131. K.E. Bailes, *Technology and society under Lenin and Stalin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978): 69 ff.; A. Avtorkhanov, *Stalin and the Soviet communist party* (Munich, 1959): 18; S. Fitzpatrick, "Ordzhonikidze's take-over of VSNKh," *Soviet Studies*, 2 (1985): 160-161; G. Hilger, *The incompatible allies* (New York, 1953): 218; N. Lampert, *The technical intelligentsia and the Soviet state* (London, 1979): 44, 61; M. Lewin, *op. cit.*: 232-233; *Torgovo-promyshlennaia gazeta* (Sept. 21, Dec. 6, 1928); RTsKhIDNI, f. 85, op. 1/sekr., d. 91.
132. F. Benvenuti, *Fuoco sui sabotatori* (Rome, 1988): 64, 102, 138; NKTP, *Nauchno-tekhicheskoe obsluzhivanie tiazheloi promyshlennosti* (Moscow, 1934): 15-18.
133. RGAE, 7297, op. 38/sekr., dd. 98, 99, 176; L. Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the politics of productivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988): 62, 83, 117, 138; F. Benvenuti, *op. cit.*: 148, 230, 250, 304, 407; *Pro minule*, *op. cit.*: 227; *Doklad*: 173 ff.; E.A. Kurdiymova, *op. cit.*: 26; *Voprosy istorii* (1992-1994) for the stenographic records of the 1937 plenum.