

# Workers, the Intelligentsia and Marxist Parties: St Petersburg, 1895–1917 and Shanghai, 1921–1927

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**Summary:** The article investigates relations between workers and intellectuals in the pre-revolutionary Bolshevik Party in St Petersburg and the Chinese Communist Party in Shanghai. It commences with a background examination of the social position and traditions of the intelligentsia in each country and the emergence of a stratum of so-called “conscious” workers. The position of workers in each party is then analysed, especially with respect to leadership, and the nature of tensions between workers and intellectuals explored. The investigation demonstrates that workers acquiesced in their subordination to a greater degree in Shanghai than in St Petersburg, and this and other differences are traced back to historical and cultural context. In conclusion, the implications of contextual differences are explored in order to suggest why the intelligentsia in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) attracted greater odium from the party-state than its counterpart in the Soviet Union.

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The germ of this article lay in the observation of a paradox. Intellectuals suffered greatly under Communist regimes in both the Soviet Union and China, yet it was in China that they were singled out for repression.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The evidence for this is largely impressionistic. The vulnerability of the “urban educated” to repression is a leitmotif of the literature on the Cultural Revolution in China. See, for example, Anne F. Thurston, *Enemies of the People* (New York, 1987). By contrast, Getty and Chase conclude from a study of 898 members of the Soviet elite between 1936 and 1939 that the “vast majority of the elite intelligentsia escaped repression”, higher officials in the army, party and economic organs being those most likely to fall victim. See J. Arch Getty and William Chase, “Patterns of Repression Among the Soviet Elite in the Late 1930s: A Biographical Approach”, in J. Arch Getty and Roberta T. Manning (eds), *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 229. This claim relates only to the relative vulnerability of the intelligentsia *vis-à-vis* other social groups. It is not a claim

Looking at the Bolshevik Party and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the period before they came to power, however, one might have predicted that the reverse would be true. For in pre-revolutionary Russia antipathy on the part of the Bolsheviks towards the intelligentsia and, more particularly, antipathy on the part of workers towards intellectuals *within* the party was more acute than was the case in the CCP before 1949. The present article does not attempt a comprehensive explanation of this paradox, nor a causal account of why persecution of the intelligentsia was relatively greater in the PRC than the USSR. Rather it seeks to shed light on the paradox by investigating relations between intellectuals and workers within the Bolshevik Party and the CCP in their formative stages, before they came to power. It explores the differences between the two cases and relates them to historical and cultural context, suggesting ways in which the differences may have influenced the fate of the intelligentsia once the Communists were in power.

The first part of the article investigates relations between intellectuals and workers within the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP), mainly its Bolshevik faction, from 1895, when socialists turned to “agitation”, through to October 1917. The second part examines the CCP in Shanghai from its foundation in 1921 through to its temporary suppression by Chiang Kai-shek in 1927. Since the political and cultural characteristics of the two cities were radically different, it is worth briefly saying why the two have sufficient in common to merit comparison. First, both were key industrial and urban centres in overwhelmingly agrarian societies that were beginning to undergo economic and social modernization. Second, new industrial labour forces came rapidly into existence as a result of large-scale peasant migration. Third, both societies were presided over by ailing political formations which blocked the participation of emergent social groups in the polity, with the result that the intelligentsia, cut off from the major social classes and alienated from the political order, played a role in politics out of all proportion to its numbers. Deprived of the chance to pursue its fortunes through government service, commercial or industrial entrepreneurship, and lacking organic links to the still largely traditional middle classes, the intelligentsia displayed an unusual attachment to ideology, particularly ideas of a socially oppositional character.<sup>2</sup> In both cases, Marxist political parties acquired a dominant influence over the emergent labour movement, to the extent that, ultimately, reformist

that *only* intellectuals suffered in China: party cadres, for example, were a prime target of the Cultural Revolution, and vastly more peasants perished as a result of the famine induced by the Great Leap Forward than did intellectuals as a result of thought reform, the Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Cultural Revolution put together.

<sup>2</sup> Pareto, Michels and many subsequent writers have pointed out that intellectual radicalism varies inversely to the degree to which intellectuals are attached to the middle classes. For a valuable discussion, see Robert J. Brym, *Intellectuals and Politics* (London, 1982).

governments succumbed to Communist regimes based on mass mobilization.

Each half of the article is divided into four sections. The first discusses the traditions, social status and political involvements of the intelligentsia in each country, especially in respect of their relation to the "people", in the belief that these coloured relations between workers and intellectuals within the early Communist parties and also shaped the policies of these parties towards the intelligentsia once they came to power. Out of the efforts to educate and mobilize the people there emerged a layer of educated workers, from whose ranks proletarian activists in the Communist parties were largely drawn. These so-called "conscious" workers are the subject of the second section. Section three examines the respective weight of workers and intellectuals in the membership of the party, and the success of workers in gaining access to positions of leadership. The final section investigates the nature of tensions between workers and intellectuals within the two parties. The fact of such tension, even in Leninist parties, will not necessarily occasion surprise; intellectuals of all types, including those who put themselves at the service of the proletariat, enjoy social and economic advantages by virtue of the "cultural capital" they possess.<sup>3</sup> Yet the extent to which this tension is present, recognized, legitimated or contested, turns out to be historically and culturally variable. And it is the principal purpose of this investigation to examine why the degree of tension between workers and intellectuals differed between the two parties, and to relate this to the historical and cultural context. In the conclusion, some reflections are offered on the implications of these variations for the subsequent fate of the intelligentsia under Communism.

### St Petersburg

#### The intelligentsia and the people

Until the late nineteenth century, the Russian intelligentsia was defined less by sociological traits than by its self-image as the embodied "intelligence", "understanding" or "consciousness" of the nation.<sup>4</sup> *Intelligent* were, in the words of Petr Lavrov, "critically thinking personalities" (*kriticheski mysliashchie lichnosti*) whose duties were to act as the voice of society (*obshchestvo*) and to work for the common good.<sup>5</sup> Their identity was thus inseparable from their "others": an oppressive autocracy, on the one hand; the people, on the other. From its birth in the

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Bourdieu shows how cultural capital serves as a principle of social stratification. See P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, 1984).

<sup>4</sup> Martin Malia, "What is the Intelligentsia?", in R. Pipes (ed.), *The Russian Intelligentsia* (New York, 1961), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> P. Lavrov, "Istoricheskie pis'ma", in *Filosofia i sotsiologiya*, 2 (Moscow, 1965), p. 122.

1830s the intelligentsia saw itself as the embattled defender of civilization in a country dominated by autocracy, the legacy of serfdom and “asiatic” backwardness. Conscious of Russia’s tenuous claim to have achieved a Western level of culture, it maintained a steadfast commitment to an ideal of *kul’turnost’*, dreaming of a unified society in which the people would share the fruits of knowledge and enlightenment. This commitment to raise the cultural level of the masses through education and social activism was crucial to the social identity of the intelligentsia.<sup>6</sup> It was a commitment that was not without its ironies. First, there was the somewhat schizoid relationship to the people: on the one hand, a deep idealization of the pure and simple peasantry; on the other, a mistrust of the “dark” and ignorant masses. Second, there was the fact that from the last quarter of the nineteenth century the concern with raising the cultural level of the masses was one shared by “official” Russia, in the form of the government and Church. This did not, however, stop the intelligentsia from continuing to see itself as the leader of the people in the struggle against a benighted regime.

Since no fewer than 70 per cent of the intelligentsia were concentrated in St Petersburg and Moscow, it was there that its educational activities were focused.<sup>7</sup> The principal arena comprised the Sunday and night schools for workers (mostly private initiatives of the intelligentsia, although some were run by factory owners or the Church). In 1900 there were twenty such Sunday and evening schools in St Petersburg, run with financial backing from the municipal government.<sup>8</sup> Other ventures included people’s libraries and reading rooms, popular theatres and dramatic societies and so-called people’s houses. In 1903 countess Panina founded the most famous of these, the Ligovskii People’s House, which during its first decade put on 376 lectures for an audience of 35,000, had a library, a museum, observatory and theatre, and which offered legal aid to workers.<sup>9</sup>

Whilst backing ventures to promote “moral and intellectual development” (*npravstvennoe i umstvennoe razvitie*), the government and employers were vigilant in trying to prevent teachers promoting sedition under the guise of education. All Sunday and evening schools were required by law to teach religious instruction, as well as reading, writing and arithmetic. Most, however, had far more ambitious syllabuses, which included literature, history, geography and the natural sciences.

<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read* (Princeton, 1985), pp. 317–320.

<sup>7</sup> L.K. Erman, *Intelligentsiia v pervoi russkoi revoliutsii* (Moscow, 1966), pp. 9–14.

<sup>8</sup> *Istoriia rabochikh Leningrada, 1703-fevral’ 1917*, 2 vols (Leningrad, 1972), I, pp. 146–147; I.V. Abramov, *Nashi voskresnye shkoly: ikh proshloe i nastoiashchee* (St Petersburg, 1900), p. 318.

<sup>9</sup> V.P. Leikina-Svirskaiia, *Ruskaia intelligentsiia v 1900–1917 godakh* (Moscow, 1981), pp. 76–77; Gerald D. Surh, *1905 in St. Petersburg: Labor, Society and Revolution* (Stanford, 1989), pp. 129 and 296.

In addition, they organized literary evenings and outings to concerts, the theatre, art galleries, the zoo and botanical gardens. Despite close vetting of syllabuses and teachers, some revolutionaries did manage to use the classroom to sow seeds of political dissent. Among them was Nadezhda Krupskaja, Lenin's wife, who taught in perhaps the most radical of these schools, the Kornilov (Smolenskii) school in Shlüsselburg tract.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, we should not exaggerate the extent to which these schools were hotbeds of political radicalism: their function was, first and foremost, to provide an all-round education for workers; and this was what most workers wanted.

The 1905 Revolution appeared to fulfil the hopes which the intelligentsia had placed in the people. In that year both groups joined forces against the Russo-Japanese war and the autocracy, as the emergent labour movement backed the liberal and radical opposition groups in an "all-nation struggle". The massacre of peaceful protestors on 9 January 1905 brought tens of thousands of workers out on strike in protest at government brutality and abysmal working conditions. And in the course of the summer, workers, increasingly organized in strike committees and trade unions, joined with the Union of Unions, a federation of professional associations, to press for a Constituent Assembly as a way of giving Russia a democratic constitution. On 17 October Nicholas II was forced into conceding a parliament and civil liberties, thereby appearing to inaugurate a new era of freedom and democracy. The 1905 Revolution thus justified the intelligentsia's faith in the people as the driving force of political change.<sup>11</sup>

In retrospect, however, the Revolution can be seen as the last moment when the intelligentsia could claim to speak for society. For some time it had been losing its coherence as an ideological-ethical category. Industrialization, urbanization, the decline of the gentry, the growth of education, the expansion of local administration, the proliferation of urban middle strata, the slow professionalization of the middle and upper ranks of the civil and military bureaucracy, the development of patronage and the commercialization of culture had conspired to undermine its social identity. The growth of the liberal and technical professions, for example, offered an alternative model of serving the common good – through the exercise of professional expertise rather political activism.<sup>12</sup> The political changes set in train by 1905 accelerated the erosion of the intelligentsia's *esprit de corps*. In the aftermath of the revolution, and especially during the Years of Reaction (1907–1912),

<sup>10</sup> Nadezhda Krupskaja, *Memories of Lenin* (London, 1970), p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> L.H. Haimson, "Introduction", *The Making of Three Russian Revolutionaries: Voices from the Menshevik Past* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 23.

<sup>12</sup> Harley Balzer, "The Problem of Professions in Imperial Russia", in Edith W. Clowes, Samuel D. Kassow and James L. West (eds), *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia* (Princeton, 1991), pp. 183–198.

many intellectuals who had hitherto believed in revolution as the modality of social change, opted to work for reform through new constitutional and legal channels. And those who had always been inclined to reformism seized enthusiastically on the opportunities provided by the lifting of censorship, the flourishing press and the proliferation of civic and professional organizations.<sup>13</sup> In this changed atmosphere, many of the certainties which once had underpinned the intelligentsia's sense of mission were called into question. Social and political changes complicated the single ethical polarity between state and people, modifying opposition to the state and deepening disenchantment in the common people.<sup>14</sup>

One should not exaggerate this shift. After 1905 the intelligentsia continued its *Kulturträger* initiatives, and probably expanded their scope. During the Years of Reaction, which set in after June 1907, the trade unions were unable effectively to operate and class-conscious workers turned to clubs, educational and cultural societies as a means to express their aspirations for self-improvement and social change. Over twenty clubs were established in St Petersburg in 1907–1914, with 5,000 to 6,000 members. The “Knowledge is Light” club, for example, held readings, lectures, literary evenings, musical evenings, dances, educational walks, and had a reading room, library and a drama group. It defined its objective as “the achievement by members of all-round education and spiritual self-development”. The average member was young and skilled, most likely a metalworker or printer, with a better than average education, probably single and under the age of thirty. Only 15–20 per cent of club members were women, mainly young and single. Intellectuals serviced these clubs, giving lectures on such recondite subjects as “What is Bacteriology?”; “The Psychology of Speech”; Giordano Bruno; and “The Idea of a Golden Age in History”.<sup>15</sup>

Yet these clubs were subtly different from the evening classes at the turn of the century, since workers now aspired to control the form and content of their education. As a contributor to the newspaper, *Nadezhda*, put it in 1908: “the need for education [. . .] can be fully satisfied only when the workers themselves take matters into their own hands and create their own workers' enlightenment institutions, which can provide them with unfalsified spiritual nourishment”.<sup>16</sup> Such assertions of proletarian autonomy reflected not only a new confidence born of victory in

<sup>13</sup> Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siecle Russia* (Ithaca, 1992), p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Confino, “On Intellectuals and Intellectual Traditions in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Russia”, *Daedalus*, 101/2 (1972), pp. 140–141.

<sup>15</sup> I.D. Levin, “Rabochie kluby v Petrograde, 1907–14”, *Materialy po istorii professional'nogo dvizhizheniia*, 3–4 (Moscow, 1925), pp. 88, 98, 103, 108.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Victoria E. Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion: Workers' Politics and Organizations in St Petersburg and Moscow, 1900–1914* (Berkeley, 1983), p. 333.

1905, but also disillusionment with the intelligentsia. Militants, mostly Social Democrats, resented the tutelary relationship to the latter and sought to define the object of educational and cultural work for themselves.<sup>17</sup> When liberal and populist academics set up the People's Universities in 1905–1906 the Central Bureau of Trade Unions in St Petersburg demanded representation on its Council, a demand that was initially resisted.<sup>18</sup> At the First All-Russian Congress of Activists of the People's Universities in January 1908 – which proclaimed itself to be a “victory of the intelligentsia over hostile forces” – members of the labour delegation demanded that intellectuals recognize that workers had to develop “class knowledge” for themselves and not merely imbibe the fruits of bourgeois culture.<sup>19</sup> Workers were no longer ready to accept that the intelligentsia knew best or to feel grateful for its intellectual and moral leadership.

The significance of this assertion of proletarian independence on the social identity of the intelligentsia was probably slight. After all, class-conscious workers were a minority within a minority class. Yet such criticism was one element in a wider challenge to the intelligentsia's view of itself as the bearer of *kul'turnost'*. Hitherto it had viewed the world of culture as unitary, as consistent in its hierarchy of values, its forms defined by the men of letters of the mid-nineteenth century, its spirit permeated by a scientific world-view and a commitment to progress. Now this unitary notion of culture came under pressure not only from “conscious” workers, but also from the ideology of expertise articulated by the new professions, from the artistic avant-garde, which rejected the aesthetic of critical realism and social utility, and, above all, from the commercialization of popular culture, particularly from publications aimed at a mass reading public. The appearance of literature produced for profit struck a blow at the ideal of *kul'turnost'*, indissolubly associated with high moral and aesthetic purpose, to which the intelligentsia had hitherto subscribed.<sup>20</sup> A mood of self-doubt is evident in the years up to the First World War, nowhere more so than among students. Their fight against government arbitrariness continued, yet as a body they showed none of the certainty and determination which had marked their struggles at the turn of the century. “Students asked themselves whether they were politically important, whether they were justified in defending

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 333–334.

<sup>18</sup> Geoffrey Swain, *Russian Social Democracy and the Legal Labour Movement, 1906–14* (London, 1983), p. 36.

<sup>19</sup> Leikina-Svirskaja, *Intelligentsia*, pp. 76–77; Swain, *Social Democracy*, p. 37. For a similar conflict in relation to workers' theatres, see E.A. Swift, “Theater for the People: The Politics of Popular Culture in Urban Russia, 1861–1917” (Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley, 1992), pp. 339–340.

<sup>20</sup> Brooks, *When Russia Learned*, pp. 321–322.

their corporate interests, whether the student movement could and should serve as a catalyst for the mobilization of larger social groups.”<sup>21</sup> Surveys of political opinion in institutions of higher education showed a decline of support for left-wing parties and an increased alignment with the right.<sup>22</sup> There was an upsurge of student radicalism in 1911 and some revival of interest in the labour movement during the years 1912 to 1914, but this ceased with the outbreak of war. Students rallied to the motherland, displaying an unexpected depth of patriotism.<sup>23</sup> The failure of the student movement to sustain its role as a radicalizing force in the struggle for freedom contrasts sharply with the Chinese case. Indeed so ineffectual had the student movement become by 1917 that the 272 delegates who met for the All-Russian Congress of Students on 15 May declared it “necessary to no one, and its resolutions binding on no one”.<sup>24</sup>

The overthrow of the autocracy in February 1917 rekindled the desire of the intelligentsia to rally the “vital forces of the nation” for the purpose of democratic renewal and salvation of the motherland.<sup>25</sup> But such a project had little popular support by now: three years of war had hardened the workers and peasants to the blandishment of patriotic rhetoric. Though it remained true to the ideals of democracy and service to the people, the intelligentsia found itself at odds with those in whose name it had once spoken confidently. In St Petersburg radical workers scoffed at the claim of intellectuals to be “above party” and “above class”, whilst among wider layers of workers and peasants, mobilized by a discourse of visceral class antagonism, *intelligenty* became synonymous with *burzhui* (“bourgeois”) and *gospoda* (“bosses”).<sup>26</sup> By autumn intellectuals had succumbed to such a state of demoralization that the press could refer to them, apparently without irony, as the “i.i.” (*ispugannye intelligenty*, or “terrified intellectuals”).<sup>27</sup> The mass mobilization for which they had yearned turned out to mean anarchy, lawlessness and the death of *kul’turnost’*. Their worst fears of the “dark masses” seemed to have been realized.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>21</sup> S.D. Kassow, *Students, Professors and the State in Tsarist Russia* (Berkeley, 1989), p. 399.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 310–315.

<sup>23</sup> A.E. Ivanov, “Problemy izucheniia studencheskogo dvizheniia v trekh russkikh revoliutsiiakh”, in *Intelligentsiia i revoliutsiia: XX vek* (Moscow, 1985), pp. 96–97.

<sup>24</sup> O.N. Znamenskii, *Intelligentsiia nakanune velikogo oktiabria (fevral’–oktiabr’ 1917g.)* (Leningrad, 1988), p. 275.

<sup>25</sup> Haimson, “Introduction”, p. 26; Znamenskii, *Intelligentsiia*, p. 261.

<sup>26</sup> David Mandel, “The Intelligentsia and the Working Class in 1917”, *Critique*, 14 (1981), pp. 67–87.

<sup>27</sup> Znamenskii, *Intelligentsiia*, p. 302.

<sup>28</sup> A.B. Nikolaev, “Intelligentskie organizatsii i gosudarstvennoe soveshchanie”, in *Petrogradskaia intelligentsiia v 1917 godu: sb.stat i mat.* (Moscow, 1990), p. 95; A. Voronskii, “Iz sovremennykh nastroeni”, in M.N. Pokrovskii (ed.), *Intelligentsiia i revoliutsiia* (n.d.), p. 143.



## The “conscious” worker

However gloomy the intelligentsia may have felt in October 1917, fifty years of effort to raise the cultural level of the people had not in fact been in vain. Already by the turn of the century there were hundreds of workers actively pursuing educational and moral advancement. Styling themselves variously as “conscious” (*soznatel’nyi*), “intellectual” (*intelligentnyi*) or “mentally developed” (*umstvennyi*) workers, they were often referred to as the “worker-intelligentsia”. The origins of this stratum can be traced back to the 1860s, but it did not acquire social visibility until the Narodniks began to organize circles (*kruzhki*) during the following decade. By the mid-1880s, with the quickening of Social Democratic activity, the number of such workers increased from scores to hundreds. In the main, they were like those who later joined the workers’ clubs: young men (there were “conscious” working women, but they were few), born in the countryside, who had migrated to the city at the age of sixteen to twenty, still unmarried. Possessed of a degree of literacy, they gained skilled, relatively well-paid jobs in factory or artisanal trades such as engineering, printing, carpentry or tailoring.<sup>29</sup> In terms of values, they believed passionately in individuality (*lichnost’*) and self-respect. In the words of Mark Steinberg, it was “the natural dignity and rights of the individual, not the particularistic interests of a class, (that) became the foundation of social judgement and [ . . . ] the measure of a just society”.<sup>30</sup>

By definition, “conscious” workers were untypical of the working class as a whole. Indeed they defined themselves precisely by their rejection of the squalor and ignorance in which most workers lived. Boris Ivanov, a young teenage baker, wrote: “Drunkenness, card games, prostitutes, the bondage of the job, sottish and filthy company – otherwise nothing. Did it have to be like that?”<sup>31</sup> The “backward” mass, for their part, were not enamoured of those who sought to rise above their station. K. Mironov, a metalworker and supporter of the “Economist” newspaper, *Rabochaia Mysl’*, recalled: “The grey worker mass did not like and even hated those in its midst who had raised themselves above its level of understanding. They disliked them not because they considered them wicked or harmful, but because they did not share their prejudices, customs, habits, beliefs.”<sup>32</sup> In seeking an escape from a life of degradation and exploitation, the “conscious” workers turned to the intelligentsia.

<sup>29</sup> Robert McKean, *St Petersburg between the Two Revolutions: Workers and Revolutionaries, June 1907–February 1917* (New Haven, 1990), p. 24.

<sup>30</sup> Mark D. Steinberg, “Worker-Authors and the Cult of the Person”, in Stephen P. Frank and Mark D. Steinberg (eds), *Cultures in Flux: Lower-Class Values, Practices and Resistance in Late-Imperial Russia* (Princeton, 1994), p. 169.

<sup>31</sup> Boris Ivanov, *Po stupen’am bor’by: zapiski starogo bol’shevika* (Moscow, 1934), p. 49.

<sup>32</sup> K. Mironov, *Iz vospominanii rabochego* (Moscow, 1906), p. 21.

“What we wanted to hear from outsiders, from students, was something out of the ordinary, something novel, something that would open new horizons to us.”<sup>33</sup>

The *kul'turnost'* which the intelligentsia offered meant, first and foremost, entry into the world of books. Knowledge of the literary canon became the paramount aspiration of the “conscious” worker. Takhtarev recalled that “reading was the first requirement of the developing worker”, and Kanatchikov tells how he was “irresistibly drawn” to “books in beautiful, dark bindings”.<sup>34</sup> Yet if these workers were inspired to read by a desire for dignity and self-improvement, the way in which they appropriated the literary canon testifies to a rather strong class consciousness. Maksim Gorkii was the author they most admired. One skilled turner explained that “when you read *Mother*, it is as though it was written about you”.<sup>35</sup> A. Frolov actually met Gor'kii – “This great Russian writer of the people even shook my calloused hand” – but was disconcerted to discover that in real life he looked like an *intelligent* rather than the shoemaker of his portraits.<sup>36</sup> Nekrasov was also popular: “How well that man could write about the poor, and how he hated the rich.”<sup>37</sup> And his strong sympathy for the poor, tinged with a streak of sentimentalism, appealed to Shapovalov and his radical workmates.<sup>38</sup> Many of these workers themselves turned to writing out of a powerful need to express their sufferings and aspirations. Discussing the poems, stories and essays published by workers in trade union, party or popular journals, Gor'kii wrote of hundreds “cultivating their self (*ia*) under a cloak of silence”.<sup>39</sup> Mark Steinberg has shown that much of their writing was pervaded by a spirit of melancholy that would later be censured by Soviet critics for being insufficiently positive and collectivist in tenor.<sup>40</sup>

In their determination to repudiate the world of the “grey” worker, in their anxiety to enter the world of the intelligentsia, “conscious”

<sup>33</sup> Reginald E. Zelnik (ed. and trans.), *A Radical Worker in Tsarist Russia: the Autobiography of Semën Ivanovich Kanatchikov* (Stanford, 1986), p. 93. Compare Jacques Rancière's remark about similar workers in nineteenth-century France. “It is not the knowledge of exploitation that they lack, but the self-knowledge which reveals to them beings destined for something other than exploitation; an insight into themselves which comes only via the secret of others – of those intellectuals and bourgeois, with whom they will later say [. . .] that they will have nothing in common.” J. Rancière, *La Nuit des Proletaires* (Paris, 1981), p. 32.

<sup>34</sup> K.M. Takhtarev, *Ocherk peterburgskogo rabocheho dvizheniia 90-kh godov* (Petrograd, 1921), p. 10; Zelnik, *Radical Worker*, p. 165.

<sup>35</sup> E.O. Kabo, *Ocherki rabocheho byta* (Moscow, 1928), p. 67.

<sup>36</sup> A. Frolov, *Probuzhdenie* (Kiev, 1923), pp. 167–168.

<sup>37</sup> Kanatchikov, *Autobiography*, pp. 75–76.

<sup>38</sup> A.I. Shapovalov, *Po doroge k marksizmu. Vospominaniia rabocheho revoliutsionera* (Moscow, 1924), p. 44.

<sup>39</sup> L.M. Kleinbort, “Rukopisnye zhurnaly rabochikh”, *Vestnik Evropy*, 7–8 (1917), pp. 278 and 282.

<sup>40</sup> Steinberg, “Worker-Authors”, p. 175.

workers were in a liminal state, on the border of two cultural zones. Theirs was not a comfortable location, since the result of their education was to make them deeply dissatisfied with daily existence. Writing of the time when he was an apprentice fitter in his early teens, Shapovalov recalled: "I felt like a bird in a cage. Life seemed like a prison, vague desires stirred in my soul – desires for space and air."<sup>41</sup> "L. Ekho" wrote an essay, entitled "My Life", in one of the manuscript worker journals: "Life as ever goes by quickly, day chases day, and I go about like a shadow [ . . . ] waiting for something. What am I waiting for? I'm waiting for life which will bring an existence that stirs the blood, one which I think about until my brain aches."<sup>42</sup> As one contemporary critic noted, a "howl of the spirit" emanated from every page of their handwritten or hectographed journals.<sup>43</sup>

As this suggests, the consciousness of the worker-intelligentsia was by no means revolutionary in a conventional Marxist sense. Yet since self-fulfilment was impeded by a social and political order that denied workers dignity, even those who set little store by radical politics, such as Tolstoyans or the supporters of Father Gapon, were deeply sceptical of traditionally sanctified forms of authority.<sup>44</sup> And many went on to embrace science and evolutionary theory as an antidote to the superstition and ignorance that surrounded them. V.I. Chubar' joined a revolutionary circle in 1904 as a fourteen-year-old Ukrainian lad. "Under the influence of teachers in the two-class school, I read Darwin's *Origin of the Species* to the circle: it destroyed my belief in God and led me to search for the meaning of my life."<sup>45</sup> Such workers were ripe for recruitment by teachers of revolutionary populist or Marxist persuasion.

For a minority of "conscious" workers the quest for *kul'turnost'* ended in all-consuming dedication to the struggle against autocracy and capitalism. Some joined the Socialist Revolutionaries, but it was Marxism that most appealed, since it seemed to offer a scientific analysis of society and a guarantee that history was on the side of the working class. Kanatchikov commented of a populist teacher of literature: "For her every kind of 'poor' human being deserved compassion and help. We, on the other hand, felt and always strongly emphasised, the special position of the working class and its special tasks."<sup>46</sup> Shapovalov used religious language to describe his attraction to Marxism, saying that he was captivated by the idea of a "day of judgement" on the capitalists.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Shapovalov, *Po doroge*, p. 26.

<sup>42</sup> Kleinbort, "Rukopisnye zhurnaly", p. 295.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 278 and 282.

<sup>44</sup> Tim McDaniel, *Autocracy, Capitalism and Revolution in Russia* (Berkeley, 1988), pp. 183–193.

<sup>45</sup> G. Haupt and J.-J. Marie, *Makers of the Russian Revolution* (London, 1974), p. 115.

<sup>46</sup> Zelnik, *Radical Worker*, p. 111.

<sup>47</sup> Shapovalov, *Po doroge*, p. 82.

Boris Ivanov stated that the “flame of faith” was ignited when he attended his first meeting of the St Petersburg bakers union in the fall of 1905, referring to union supporters as “believers” (*veruiushchie*).<sup>48</sup> For this minority, the “organized struggle of the working class against the capitalists, landowners and the tsar” became the “meaning of life and work”.<sup>49</sup> And it was from their ranks that workers were recruited to the RSDLP.

### Growth and social composition of the Social Democrats

From the time of the shift to agitation in 1894–1895, workers probably comprised a small majority of Social Democrats nationwide (there are no statistics pertaining solely to St Petersburg). If we look at those charged with participating in SD activities between 1892 and 1902, it is clear that the proportion of workers far exceeded their share in the population. Of 5,047 individuals charged, 55.6 per cent (2,820) engaged in physical labour, almost all of them workers, and 30.6 per cent (1,546) engaged in mental labour (there is no information on the occupation of 12.3 per cent). Of those engaged in mental labour, 60.4 per cent were university or secondary-school students, 30.1 per cent *intelligently* and 9.5 per cent white-collar employees (*sluzhashchie*).<sup>50</sup> The literacy rate of SD sympathizers and activists as a whole was 4.6 times that of the population in general and 2.5 times that of the urban population.<sup>51</sup> Using overlapping data for the period 1883–1903, supplemented by biographical information on known SD members and sympathizers, V.V. Lozhkin reckoned that of a sample of 607 SD workers of known occupation, 51.2 per cent were metalworkers and railway workers (metalworkers comprised 15 per cent of the manufacturing work-force of the empire in 1900); 11.9 per cent were printers (they comprised 1.7 per cent of the manufacturing work-force); whereas only 19.6 per cent were textile workers (as against a share of 40.9 per cent of the manufacturing work-force).<sup>52</sup>

After a period of buoyant growth in the mid-1890s, the socialist movement in St Petersburg entered a phase of stagnation around the turn of the century due, in part, to conflicts between the Workers

<sup>48</sup> Ivanov, *Po stupen'iam*, pp. 73 and 68. See also Reginald E. Zelnik, “‘To the Unaccustomed Eye’: Religion and Irreligion in the Experience of St Petersburg Workers in the 1870s”, *Russian History*, 16/2–4 (1989), p. 319.

<sup>49</sup> Zelnik, *Radical Worker*, p. 34.

<sup>50</sup> N.D. Erofeev, “Chislennost' i sostav sotsial-demokratov, privlekavshikhsia k doznaniiam v 1892–1902gg.”, *Voprosy Istorii KPSS*, 11 (1990), p. 131.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>52</sup> V.V. Lozhkin, “Sostav rabochikh sotsial-demokratov i ikh rol' v sozdanii leninskoj partii”, *Voprosy Istorii*, 7 (1983), pp. 70–71. The percentages for the entire work-force in 1900 are taken from E.E. Kruze, *Polozhenie rabocheho klassa Rossii v 1900–14gg.* (Leningrad, 1976), p. 26.

Committee of the Union of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, founded in the city in 1895, and the Iskra group; and later between Mensheviks and Bolsheviks. On the eve of 1905 there may have been as many as 800 SDs in the capital, of whom 550 were workers, but most operated independently of the Petersburg Committee (PK) and the Menshevik "Group".<sup>53</sup> By contrast, there were 7,000 workers in the nine or ten branches of Father Gapon's Assembly of Russian Workers in December 1904.<sup>54</sup> Even as the revolution gathered pace, the SDs failed to capitalize on the mood of militancy. Only in the summer did they begin to acquire influence in the nascent labour movement. Overall, growth was fairly modest during this year of turbulence, with about 3,000 SDs in the city by the end of the year, a majority of them leaning towards the Mensheviks.<sup>55</sup> The PK continued nominally to represent both factions until mid-1907.<sup>56</sup>

Significant growth of the RSDLP on a national scale came in 1906 and the first half of 1907. Even then it was less impressive in St Petersburg than elsewhere, owing to regular attrition by police raids. In January 1907 the Bolsheviks claimed 2,105 members against the Mensheviks' 2,156, though the latter contested these figures.<sup>57</sup> In the following months, the Bolsheviks grew quickly. Elections to the city conference suggest that there were 5,100 Bolsheviks and 2,200 Mensheviks in March 1907, at a time when national membership of the RSDLP stood between 150,000 and 170,000.<sup>58</sup> A national sample of 4,500 members in the period 1905–1907 suggests that workers comprised about 60 per cent of the party by this stage, rather more than in the 1889–1902 and 1883–1903 surveys.<sup>59</sup> *Intelligently* comprised 32 per cent of membership, of whom 38 per cent were students, 42 per cent teachers and 10 per cent medical workers. Whereas the student had been the typical *intelligent* in the party before 1905, it was now the teacher in a people's school.<sup>60</sup>

During the Years of Reaction, membership of the RSDLP plummeted. Having reached a peak of around 8,800 in the late spring of 1907, the St Petersburg organization fell to 3,000 members in 1908, 1,000 in 1909 and about 600 in 1910, a loss of more than 90 per cent. Intellectuals

<sup>53</sup> T.P. Bondarevskaia, *Peterburgskii komitet RSDRP v revoliutsii 1905–07 gg.* (Leningrad, 1975), pp. 75 and 202.

<sup>54</sup> Gerald Surh, "Petersburg's First Mass Labor Organization: The Assembly of Russian Workers and Father Gapon", part 2, *Russian Review*, 40/4 (1981), pp. 419 and 427.

<sup>55</sup> Surh, *1905 in St Petersburg*, p. 226.

<sup>56</sup> Bondarevskaia, *Peterburgskii komitet*, pp. 202–203.

<sup>57</sup> David Lane, *The Roots of Russian Communism* (1968; Pittsburgh, 1975), p. 76; cf. *Ocherki istorii leningradskoi organizatsii KPSS, 1883–1917*, 1 (Leningrad, 1980), p. 152.

<sup>58</sup> Bondarevskaia, *Peterburgskii komitet*, p. 228.

<sup>59</sup> M.S. Volin, "K voprosu ob izuchenii sostava bol'shevistskoi partii nakanune i v period revoliutsii", in *Revoliutsia 1905–1907 godov v Rossii i ee vseмирno-istoricheskoe znachenie* (Moscow, 1976), pp. 176–177.

<sup>60</sup> Volin, "K voprosu", pp. 177–178.

were particularly likely to leave the party in this period.<sup>61</sup> The responsible organizer of the now-Bolshevik PK, A.M. Buiko, a worker, recalled: "all agitational, propaganda and organisational work fell by default on to the shoulders of the worker intelligentsia. There were cases when district newspapers and leaflets had not even one collaborator from the intelligentsia, being served exclusively by workers."<sup>62</sup> The PK was in chaos, and only re-established itself (and then fitfully) in February 1912.<sup>63</sup>

The party revived after the Lena massacre of April 1912, when labour protest broke out once more on a massive scale. By the spring of 1914 there were probably 5,000 to 6,000 Bolsheviks in St Petersburg, consisting overwhelmingly of workers.<sup>64</sup> Yet police repression continued to prevent the party operating on a coordinated city-wide basis. Such strength as it had derived from factory cells and *raikomy*, and there was little unified command by the PK.<sup>65</sup> The war dealt a shattering blow to this recovery. Following the first mobilization into the army, membership in the city fell as low as 100. Under relentless pressure from the police, and undermined from within by the activities of some 25 provocateurs, the PK was disbanded and reformed no fewer than ten times between August 1914 and February 1917.<sup>66</sup> From the summer of 1915, the party started to recover, and by October membership may have reached 1,200. The advance was reversed at the beginning of 1916 when the PK and Russian Bureau were smashed once more, and membership fell to less than 500.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless the party's fortunes picked up in the autumn of that year, when membership rose to between 2,000 and 3,000.<sup>68</sup> And despite police raids in early 1917, it remained somewhere between these figures at the time of the February Revolution.<sup>69</sup>

If workers comprised a majority of the RSDLP in St Petersburg from the first, it was only after the 1905 Revolution that they gained any significant representation on the PK and city-district committees (*raikomy*). During 1905–1907 worker members of the PK grew to 32 out of 99, but the continuing predominance of intellectuals is reflected in the fact that 55 of the 99 had higher education, and 35 had complete or incomplete secondary education.<sup>70</sup> Only during the Years of Reaction did the proportion of workers climb: of 74 newcomers to the PK in 1908–1910, 33 were workers, 32 were *intelligenty* and nine were of

<sup>61</sup> *Ocherki leningradskoi organizatsii*, pp. 429 and 170.

<sup>62</sup> A.M. Buiko, *Put' rabochego. Zapiski starogo bol'shevika* (Moscow, 1934), p. 74.

<sup>63</sup> McKean, *St Petersburg*, p. 87.

<sup>64</sup> *Ocherki leningradskoi organizatsii*, pp. 242 and 276.

<sup>65</sup> McKean, *St Petersburg*, p. 111.

<sup>66</sup> I.P. Leiberov, *Na shturn samoderzhavii* (Moscow, 1979), p. 87.

<sup>67</sup> *Ocherki leningradskoi organizatsii*, pp. 293 and 298.

<sup>68</sup> Leiberov, *Na shturn*, p. 73; *Ocherki leningradskoi organizatsii*, p. 303.

<sup>69</sup> Leiberov, *Na shturn*, p. 73; L.S. Gaponenko, *Rabochii klass Rossii v 1917 godu* (Moscow, 1970), p. 251.

<sup>70</sup> Bondarevskaia, *Peterburgskii komitet*, p. 208.

unknown social origin.<sup>71</sup> By the time the party's fortunes revived in 1912, workers occupied most leadership positions. Of 36 members of the PK in 1913, 24 were workers, including 19 metalworkers. The average age of the PK as a whole was 28, and two of its worker members, N.K. Antipov and V.F. Malakhovskii, were only nineteen years old.<sup>72</sup>

During the First World War workers increased their preponderance in the PK still further. Robert McKean calculates that out of 112 members of the PK in this period, only 18 were not proletarian.<sup>73</sup> Among 15 members of the PK at the end of 1916 eight were metalworkers, one a tram worker, two were clerks in the sickness funds, one was a doctor, one a student and one a party full-timer. Two were female. Seven were aged 20 to 25; four were aged 26 to 30 and four aged 31 to 47. Yet despite the fact that workers were in the majority, the educational level of the fifteen was still higher than the average for the population as a whole.<sup>74</sup> After the February Revolution *intelligently* somewhat improved their representation in leadership. Among 82 members of the PK in 1917, 53 were workers and 29 were *intelligently* (including three students).<sup>75</sup> Among members of thirteen raikoms from March to June, the proportion of workers was 74 per cent.<sup>76</sup> In the highest organ of the party, the Central Committee, the intelligentsia retained considerable, though not overriding, influence.<sup>77</sup>

The sexual composition of the party may have had implications for relations between workers and *intelligently*. Women were a minority in the RSDLP: evidence suggests that they comprised about 15 per cent of the membership prior to 1905, and slightly less thereafter.<sup>78</sup> In the main, female SDs, unlike their male counterparts, were *intelligently*. According to Lozhkin's sample of SDs charged between 1883 and 1903, women comprised 23.4 per cent of intelligentsia members, compared with only 7.2 per cent of worker members.<sup>79</sup> As far as their representation in local leadership organs was concerned, women may have been slightly

<sup>71</sup> *Ocherki leningradskoi organizatsii*, p. 172.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>73</sup> McKean, *St Petersburg*, p. 405.

<sup>74</sup> Leiberov, *Na shturm*, pp. 84–86.

<sup>75</sup> G.L. Sobolev, *Proletarskii avangard v 1917 godu* (St Petersburg, 1993), p. 219.

<sup>76</sup> L.V. Golovanova, "Sostav chlenov raionnykh komitetov RSDRP (b) Petrograda v marte-i iune 1917 goda", *Iz istorii trekh russkikh revoliutsii* (Leningrad, 1976), p. 88.

<sup>77</sup> Among 78 full and candidate members of the Central Committee between 1917 and 1922, 21 per cent came from worker backgrounds and 31 per cent from peasant backgrounds, the rest were presumably *intelligently*. Evan Mawdsley, "Makers of the Soviet Union Revisited: The Bolshevik CC Elite in the Revolutionary Period", *Revolutionary Russia*, 8/2 (1995), pp. 205–206.

<sup>78</sup> Beate Fieseler, "The Making of Russian Female Social Democrats, 1890–1917", *International Review of Social History*, 34 (1989), pp. 195–196; Erofeev, "Chislennost'", p. 125.

<sup>79</sup> Lozhkin, "Sostav", p. 75.

overrepresented. To judge by name, 30 (12.8 per cent) members of the PK from 1902 to February 1917 were women, of whom no fewer than 26 were *intelligentski*.<sup>80</sup> Among members of the raikoms in March to June 1917, the proportion of women was 15.5 per cent.<sup>81</sup> Given that women were much better educated than men, one might have expected there to be more in top policy-making positions and in jobs as publicists and theoreticians.<sup>82</sup> But women were at a disadvantage in the male world of the party, and gender may have served to bridge the otherwise vast gulf in education, culture and family circumstances between women from working-class and intelligentsia backgrounds. Certainly, both groups had to fight to free themselves of family ties and expectations, and both paid a higher personal cost than men for their immersion in the struggle for justice and freedom.<sup>83</sup> There is little evidence about social relations between women inside the party, but both working-class and intelligent women seem to have worked well around the newspaper, *Rabotnitsa*, which was published for working-class women in 1913–1914.

Still more speculatively, we may consider the implications of the ethnic composition of the St Petersburg Bolshevik organization. There is evidence that where Marxist parties were ethnically homogeneous, as in the Jewish Bund or Georgian Social Democracy, relations between *intelligentsy* and workers were relatively harmonious.<sup>84</sup> The RSDLP, however, was a multi-ethnic party, in which non-Russian minorities were overrepresented both among the membership and in leadership. Among members of the PK in 1917 were 58 Russians, 22 Jews, 6 Latvians, 4 Poles, 4 Ukrainians, 2 Finns, 1 Lithuanian, 1 Estonian, 1 Armenian and 1 Georgian.<sup>85</sup> Among the members of the thirteen raikoms between March and June 1917, 22.2 per cent were said to belong to the “oppressed nationalities”.<sup>86</sup> Although the evidence is scanty, it seems that non-Russians were more likely to derive from intelligentsia than worker backgrounds (Lozhkin’s sample suggests that the ethnic composition of worker SDs was broadly in line with that of the empire, whereas non-Russian minorities were overrepresented among *intelligentsy*).<sup>87</sup> If this is so, and it is by no means proven, the presence of non-Slavs in leadership positions may have been a factor complicating relations

<sup>80</sup> *Peterburgskii komitet RSDRP: Protokoly i materialy zasedanii. Iul' 1902- fevral' 1917* (Leningrad, 1986), appendix; Fieseler, “Making”, p. 197.

<sup>81</sup> Golovanova, “Sostav”, p. 87.

<sup>82</sup> Fieseler, “Making”, p. 205.

<sup>83</sup> Barbara A. Engel, *Mothers and Daughters: Women of the Intelligentsia in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 107–108; Fieseler, “Making”, pp. 222–224.

<sup>84</sup> Brym, *Intellectuals and Politics*, pp. 46–47; Stephen F. Jones, “Georgian Social Democracy in 1917”, in E.G. Frankel *et al.* (eds), *Revolution in Russia: Reassessments of 1917* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 250.

<sup>85</sup> Sobolev, *Proletarskii avangard*, p. 219.

<sup>86</sup> Golovanova, “Sostav”, p. 87.

<sup>87</sup> Lozhkin, “Sostav”, p. 76; Erofeev, “Chislennost'”, pp. 126–127.



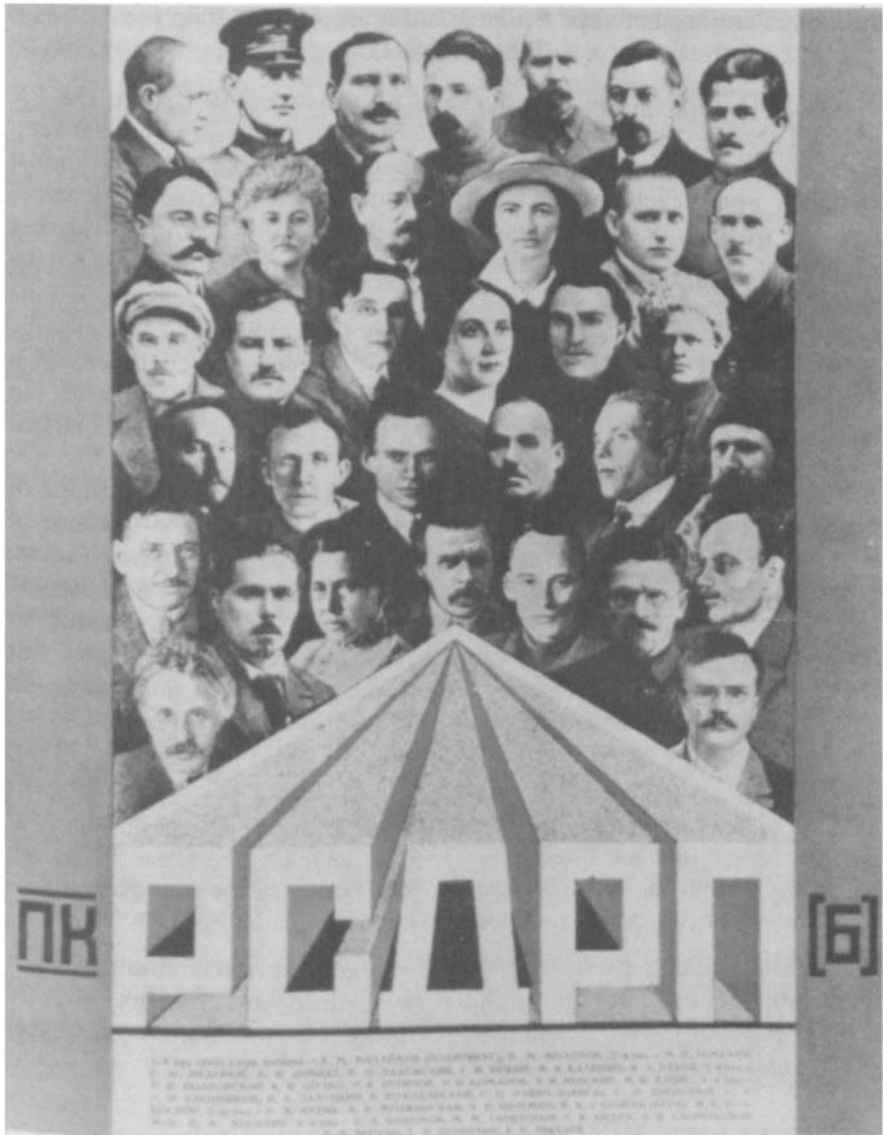


Figure 1. Members of the Bolshevik Petersburg Committee in 1917 (incomplete) (Photograph from Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power. The Revolution of 1917 in Petrograd* (New York, 1976))

between workers and *intelligenty*. In St Petersburg, for example, the proportion of Jews among factory workers was small, whereas the number of Jews in the PK was large, and this may have been a factor compounding the sense of social distance between worker members and the intellectuals in the leading organs, without imputing anti-semitism to the former.

### Tensions between workers and intellectuals within the Bolshevik faction

In July 1902, in response to a question from workers in Batum, the PK declared that it “completely rejects any distinction among SDs between *intelligently* and workers”, and that leadership should fall to the “most conscious and developed elements, regardless of whether they come from the workers or other classes or social strata”.<sup>88</sup> In practice, worker resentment at intelligentsia predominance in the party remained a persistent feature of Social Democracy down to 1917. This tension had its roots in the different social and cultural backgrounds of the two groups, and in the fact that the different “skills” of each tended to create a division of labour within the party which aligned *intelligently* with the word, and workers with the deed.<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless the issues which sparked worker antagonism changed over time.

“Conscious” workers who joined the RSDLP experienced feelings of inferiority, mixed with resentment, towards intellectuals. At the turn of the century, Frolov, a samovar-maker from Tula, tells how he was drawn to the company of local students, and how, initially, he was ashamed to let them know he was a worker, covering up his calloused hands to avoid discovery.<sup>90</sup> Later he became a full-time RSDLP organizer, but still continued to feel embarrassment in the presence of *intelligently*. In 1905 he describes how he hid in the safe house of a professor:

I couldn't use my knife and fork like him. We workers put a napkin on our knees so that we didn't soil our trousers, but he stuck it in his collar [. . .] Sitting at table during dinner they could eat and talk about intelligent things at the same time, whereas I could not join in, and felt like some hanger-on. Everything – from the bread with which they began, to the conversation with which they finished – was smooth and polished.<sup>91</sup>

Such feelings could produce contempt as well as discomfiture. Semen Kanatchikov took umbrage at the way in which revolutionary workers in St Petersburg were “taken for display” to the homes of liberal intellectuals before 1905. “After leaving these gatherings we would

<sup>88</sup> *Peterburgskii komitet RSDRP*, p. 18.

<sup>89</sup> The argument of this article is not that such tensions were abnormally acute within the Bolshevik party. Indeed the evidence for 1917 suggests that they may have been more muted than in society at large. The memoir sources on which I rely differ in their estimation of the seriousness of this tension. Lydia Dan, for instance, states: “I never found the workers unfavorable to the intelligentsia. Of course, there were individual cases, but I deny categorically that it was widespread.” Haimson, *Three Revolutionaries*, p. 81. See also R.E. Zelnik's thoughtful observations on the differences between Kanatchikov and Fisher in this respect, in Reginald E. Zelnik, “Russian Bebel: An Introduction to the Memoirs of the Russian Workers, Semen Kanatchikov and Matvei Fisher”, part 2, *Russian Review*, 4 (1976), p. 426.

<sup>90</sup> Frolov, *Probuzhdenie*, p. 27.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 190–191.

breathe a sigh of relief and laugh at our hosts' lack of understanding of our lives as workers and at their alien way of life and thinking."<sup>92</sup>

In the early years of the RSDLP tension between workers and *intelligenty* focused mainly on the issue of intelligentsia domination of leadership positions. The Economist tendency, which enjoyed its heyday from 1897 to the spring of 1899, successfully campaigned to open up the central group of the Union of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class to workers.<sup>93</sup> As A. Fisher explained, "in no way would we entertain the intelligentsia ordering us to do this one minute, that another".<sup>94</sup> In October 1897 the first number of *Rabochaia Mysl'*, the standard-bearer of Economism, proclaimed:

The labour movement owes its vitality to the fact that the worker himself has finally snatched his fate from the hands of his leaders and has taken it into his own hands [. . .] So long as the movement was only a means to quiet the guilty conscience of the repentant intellectual, it was alien to the worker himself.<sup>95</sup>

At this stage, Lenin opposed the admission of workers to the Union's central group, mainly because they lacked experience of conspiratorial organization.<sup>96</sup> In *What Is To Be Done?* (1902) he argued that socialist consciousness had to be brought to the workers' movement "from outside" by the Marxist intelligentsia. Commentators have correctly pointed out that this created a potential for intelligentsia control. Yet Lenin did not "idealize" the "intellectual professionals", as Leonard Schapiro and others suggested.<sup>97</sup> *What Is To Be Done* is essentially a justification for the professional revolutionary, whether of intelligentsia or working-class background. "As I have stated repeatedly, by 'wise men', in connection with organization, I mean professional revolutionaries, irrespective of whether they have developed from among students or working men."<sup>98</sup> Lenin envisaged that:

as the spontaneous rise of their movement becomes broader and deeper, the working-class masses promote from their ranks not only an increasing number of talented agitators but also talented organizers, propagandists and "practical activists" in the best sense of the term (of whom there are so few among our intellectuals who, for the most part, in the Russian manner, are somewhat careless and sluggish in their habits).<sup>99</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Zelnik, *Radical Worker*, pp. 104–105.

<sup>93</sup> Allan Wildman, *The Making of a Workers' Revolution: Russian Social Democracy, 1891–1903* (Chicago, 1967), p. 144.

<sup>94</sup> A. Fisher, *V Rossii i v Anglii: nabliudeniia i vospominaniia Peterburgskogo rabochego, 1890–1920* (Moscow, 1922), p. 23.

<sup>95</sup> Jonathan Frankel (ed.), *Vladimir Akimov and the Dilemmas of Russian Marxism, 1895–1903* (Cambridge, 1969), p. 27.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>97</sup> Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (London, 1963), p. 57.

<sup>98</sup> V.I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*, trans. Joe Fineberg and George Hanna; ed. Robert Service (London, 1988), p. 185.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

As this suggests, whilst Lenin lauded the “party” intelligentsia, he had little time for the intelligentsia as a whole. In the debate on party organization at the Second Congress of the RSDLP in July 1903, he accused intellectuals of being the source of “opportunism” in the party. And in *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* (1904) he claimed that the party rules proposed by I. Martov “in fact serve the interests of bourgeois intellectuals, who fight shy of proletarian discipline and organization”. He went on to suggest that this

is a feature which unfavourably distinguishes this social stratum from the proletariat; it is one of the reasons for the flabbiness and instability of the intellectual, which the proletariat so often feels; and this trait of the intelligentsia is intimately bound up with its customary mode of life, its mode of earning a livelihood, which in a great many respects approximates to the petty-bourgeois mode of existence.<sup>100</sup>

Throughout the pamphlet he counterposed the “individualism” and “wishy-washyness” (*khrupkost*) of the intelligentsia to the “discipline” and “organization” of the proletariat.<sup>101</sup>

The polemic on party organization was intimately bound up with, but not reducible to, the issue of relations between workers and *intelligenty*. At the end of 1903 the Menshevik leader, Pavel Aksel'rod, beseeched the RSDLP to encourage the independence and political consciousness of worker members as a matter of urgency. If it failed to do so, he warned, “we will face a revolutionary political organization of the democratic bourgeoisie which will use the Russian workers as cannon fodder”.<sup>102</sup> Bolsheviks were divided on the feasibility of promoting workers to leadership. At the Third Congress in April 1904 Lenin called for the promotion of workers into local and central committees. But A. Lunacharskii cautioned: “There are workers who can carry out so-called proletarian work excellently, but the huge majority of them are absolutely incapable of, for example, liaising with ‘society’.”<sup>103</sup> Some saw in such an attitude what P.A. Krasikov, a member of the PK, called “worker-phobia” (*rabocheboiazn*). “In our committees – and I speak of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks without distinction – they will accept a girl-student (*kursistka*) with ease, but will not accept a worker.”<sup>104</sup>

Tension between *intelligenty* and workers within the RSDLP did not abate with the 1905 Revolution. After the failure of the May Day demonstration, a worker told an SD meeting:

As soon as we form a district organization an intellectual is immediately sent in from somewhere to act as tsar. Undoubtedly, in some districts we have good

<sup>100</sup> V.I. Lenin, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* (Moscow, 1947), pp. 68–69.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 184–185.

<sup>102</sup> Abraham Ascher, *Pavel Axelrod and the Development of Menshevism* (Cambridge, MA, 1972), p. 198.

<sup>103</sup> *Tretii s'ezd RSDRP: april'-mai 1905 goda. Protokoly* (Moscow, 1959), p. 331.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 325–336.

tsars, but there are some who won't let us open our mouths. We need neither good nor bad tsars, we just want to run our own party.<sup>105</sup>

The failure of workers to strike in protest at the dissolution of the first *duma* in 1906 caused some Mensheviks to revive the demand for a non-party workers' congress.<sup>106</sup> Speaking in support of this idea to the Fifth Congress in May 1907, Aksel'rod declared:

Our party is in origin and remains a revolutionary organization not of the working class but of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia for revolutionary influence on that class [ . . . ] One may cite against this the fact that workers predominate numerically in our organization. But the huge majority have only entered it in the most recent time or, more correctly, have been allowed or accepted into the organization – not least because of fractional considerations. The mass of proletarians who have been accepted function within the party as a kind of estate of plebs, while the intelligentsia acts the part of the aristocracy, the estate of patricians, managing the internal and external affairs of the party state, safeguarding its plebeian depths from any pernicious influences from outside.<sup>107</sup>

The advance of workers into leadership after 1907 removed this particular bone of contention. Yet conflict between *intelligent*y and workers persisted. Its focus, however, now shifted to the issue of the supposed propensity of the intelligentsia to sectarian wrangling. Many workers were deeply upset by the split in the party, and blamed it upon the fondness of intellectuals for factional squabbling. In an essay of 1912 Trotsky argued that for the Russian intelligentsia “personal steadfastness could be bought only at the price of fanaticism in the realm of ideas, merciless self-restriction and self-demarcation, mistrustfulness and suspicion, and unblinking surveillance of one's own purity”.<sup>108</sup> This was something which many workers felt intensely: for A. Fisher, *intelligent*y “made elephants out of gnats”;<sup>109</sup> N.N. Glebov-Putilovskii averred that “we do not need intellectual nannies to befuddle the workers with sectarian nonsense”; in 1912 an activist in the St Petersburg union of metalworkers declared: “Lenin and Plekhanov are good so long as they confine themselves to the realm of political economy and philosophy”, but the workers organizations “do not need sermons from abroad”.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>105</sup> S.I. Somov, “Iz istorii sotsialdemokraticeskogo dvizheniia v Peterburge v 1905 godu”, part 2, *Byloe* (May 1907), pp. 173–174.

<sup>106</sup> Peter A. Garvi, *Zapiski sotsial-demokrata, 1906–21* (Newtonville, MA, 1982), pp. 104–116.

<sup>107</sup> *Piatyi (Londonskii) s'ezd RSDRP, april'-mai 1907 goda. Protokoly* (Moscow, 1963), p. 505.

<sup>108</sup> L. Trotskii, “Ob intelligentsii”, in *Literatura i revoliutsiia* (Moscow, 1924), p. 293; also D.N. Ovsianiko-Kulikovskii, “Psikhologiia russkoi intelligentsii”, in K. Arsen'ev *et al.*, *Intelligentsia v Rossii* (St Petersburg, 1910), pp. 192–219.

<sup>109</sup> Fisher, *V Rossii*, p. 42.

<sup>110</sup> I.S. Rozental', “K voprosu ob osobennostiakh Rossiiskogo anarkho-sindikalizma”, in *Bol'sheviki v bor'be s neproletarskimi partiiami, gruppami i techeniiami* (Kalinin, 1983), p. 74.

Even in 1917, when the breach between the two factions had become irreparable, calls for an end to intelligentsia factionalism continued. On 1 August the Narvskii district soviet of workers and soldiers deputies declared

factionalism is inadmissible and harmful in these times when dangers threaten the country from within and without [. . .] Political groupings and multifarious shades of opinion issue from above (*sverkhi*), shades of opinion, factions, disagreements, which the rank-and-file (*v nizakh*) neither understands nor sees the need for.<sup>111</sup>

Whereas for intellectuals, ideological conflict was the guarantee of correct, scientific politics, for workers such conflict breached the code of solidarity and equality on which socialism was based.

Dislike of sectarianism led significant layers of workers in St Petersburg to form groupings independent of the two main factions. In 1905 a group of “worker social-democrats” launched the newspaper, *Rabochii Golos*, on whose masthead was the slogan “The emancipation of the workers is the action of the workers themselves”.<sup>112</sup> Later formations such as the Central Group of SD Workers of 1911–1912, and the Mezhraionka, formed in November 1913, continued this tendency. A report to the Okhrana of 15 June 1914 commented: “The growth of a new conciliatory current is evident among the worker rank-and-file of Social Democracy, extreme dissatisfaction with the political passions and fractional quarrels of the Pravdists and Liquidators.”<sup>113</sup>

Another issue which fed tension between intellectuals and workers concerned the kind of education appropriate for worker SDs. The Menshevik Somov, active in the St Petersburg Soviet in 1905, observed: “For the most part the workers who land up in the (SD) circles are the youngest ones, those who hope to find in the circles knowledge and the satisfaction of their intellectual interests.”<sup>114</sup> The RDSLPP offered “conscientious” workers real opportunities to develop their education through reading groups, lectures and party schools. I.I. Fokin, who began as an unskilled worker at the Metal Works, had by 1914 become head of the propaganda board of the PK. A comrade recalled:

Our Ignat had an all-round education. He was a widely-read “intellectual proletarian” [. . .] When we were young he was the only worker in the factory who could master by himself the literature on the philosophy and economic theory of Marx, which for simple workers was very difficult.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>111</sup> *Raionnye sovety Petrograda v 1917g.: Protokoly*, 2 (Moscow, 1965), p. 46.

<sup>112</sup> L. Martov, P. Maslov and A. Potresov, *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v Rossii v nachale XX veke*, 3 (St Petersburg, 1914), p. 589.

<sup>113</sup> M.A. Tsiavlovskii (ed.), *Bol'sheviki: dokumenty po istorii bol'shevizma c 1903 po 1916 god byvsh. Moskovskogo Okhrannogo Otdeleniia* (1918; Moscow, 1990), p. 227.

<sup>114</sup> Somov, “Iz istorii”, part 2, p. 153.

<sup>115</sup> *Ocherki leningradskoi organizatsii*, p. 241.

Not all workers, of course, had Fokin's head for theory, yet they could relish the opportunity the party provided for developing skills as public speakers, agitators, organizers and conspirators. For Lenin, it was precisely such agitational skills which it was appropriate for worker members to master. He was less concerned whether or not they understood the intricacies of theory.

Our most pressing duty is to help train working-class revolutionaries who will be on the same level *in regard to party activity* as the revolutionaries from among the intellectuals (we emphasize the words "in regard to party activity", for, although necessary, it is neither so easy nor so pressingly necessary to bring the workers up to the level of intellectuals in other respects).<sup>116</sup>

Not all party intellectuals agreed with this emphasis on training over general intellectual development. A.A. Bogdanov and Lunacharskii believed that such an attitude perpetuated intelligentsia authoritarianism, and argued for the creation of a "worker intelligentsia", as opposed to Lenin's "party intelligentsia". They wished to see workers become "conscious socialists", capable of analysing problems for themselves, and of disseminating knowledge among the broader working class. And it was in this spirit that the party schools in Capri and Bologna were organized.<sup>117</sup> The relative success of these schools may suggest that "conscious" workers wanted an all-round education that would free them from intellectual dependence on intelligentsia inside the party.

Another source of tension between workers and *intelligently* lay in the fact that, although the party demanded huge sacrifices of all its members, the costs of political activism were different for the two groups. Intellectuals, especially full-time organizers, suffered many privations, including poverty, a nomadic existence, surveillance by the authorities, imprisonment and exile. According to Lenin, "even if they do not go on to a heroic death, they lead the truly heroic life of forced labour of the party 'rank-and-filer', poorly paid, half-starved, permanently exhausted, harassed to the last degree". The only compensating benefit he could think of was that they were "spared the dung-heap, known as 'society'", spared not having to put up with "the indifference of that audience to social and political questions".<sup>118</sup> Unlike workers, intellectuals who joined the RSDLP cut themselves off from comfortable family circumstances and well-paid careers. Yet as Lidia Dan observed:

It was easier for an *intelligent* to leave his customary surroundings because he usually had contacts and would not be lost. But for a worker who left the factory (and he could not remain at the factory if he was a "professional") and

<sup>116</sup> Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*, p. 192.

<sup>117</sup> Jutta Scherrer, "Les écoles du parti de Capri et Bologne: la formation de l'intelligentsia du parti", *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 19 (juillet-septembre, 1978), pp. 259-284.

<sup>118</sup> V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenie*, 15 (Moscow, 1960), p. 252.

knew nothing except the business of revolution, the problem of the next crust of bread, of subsistence, was much more acute.<sup>119</sup>

The ease with which intellectuals could return to normal life was brought home in a galling fashion to workers each summer, when the *intelligenty* trooped off to the Crimea on vacation, leaving them to carry on the party's work.<sup>120</sup>

When funds permitted, party professionals received a salary, known as the "party diet", which came from membership dues, donations to the party, fund-raising and the occasional "expropriation". After 1905 this was set at 35 rubles a month. As Buiko explained, worker full-timers were entirely dependent on this salary in a way that *intelligenty* often were not. "The fact that the worker was tied to the working class and lived very poorly created particular difficulties of an economic order. The *intelligent* often had supplementary earnings (lessons, translation, journalism)."<sup>121</sup> Of course, intelligentsia leaders lived frugally – it is said that Plekhanov, in exile in France, could not afford the gas to cook eggs, so ate them raw<sup>122</sup> – yet they could usually afford the occasional book or trip to the theatre.<sup>123</sup> Moreover, when intellectuals fell into the hands of the authorities, they could expect better treatment than workers. They were regarded, even by police officials, as misguided idealists, whereas workers were seen as ignorant rabble-rousers, and treated accordingly.<sup>124</sup>

The impact of party activism on family life was also different for workers and intellectuals and a possible cause of tension. In the early years of the socialist movement many workers felt that their political commitment ruled out a normal family life. On coming out of prison, A.I. Shapovalov was sent with intelligentsia comrades to Siberia:

I noticed something new among my comrades: they now spent time discussing love and female beauty [. . .] Up to my arrest I had seen only one side, the best side, of them. I saw them engaged in revolutionary work in the underground. This involved them totally [. . .] "I have only one fiancé, one wife, one mother", they would say, "the revolution". But in prison, and especially in exile, in forced inactivity, another side to these people emerged, which had been formerly hidden, stifled. Now personal life was thrust to the fore [. . .] Almost all the intelligentsia comrades had fiancés who used to visit them [. . .]. I noticed that for the most part workers received visits only from their mothers.<sup>125</sup>

For workers who did marry the effects of political activity on their spouses and children could be nerve-racking. After 1917 it was said that

<sup>119</sup> Haimson, *Three Revolutionaries*, p. 143.

<sup>120</sup> *Peterburgskii komitet*, p. 208; Fisher, *V Rossii*, p. 19.

<sup>121</sup> *Krushenie tsarizma: vospominaniia uchastnikov revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v Petrograde, 1907-fevral' 1917g.* (Leningrad, 1986), p. 46.

<sup>122</sup> Haimson, *Three Revolutionaries*, p. 111.

<sup>123</sup> *Krushenie tsarizma*, pp. 44–45.

<sup>124</sup> McDaniel, *Autocracy*, p. 209.

<sup>125</sup> Shapovalov, *Po doroge*, pp. 59–60.



“a party husband is a bad husband”.<sup>126</sup> Wives feared that husbands would lose their jobs, be imprisoned or exiled, and that the family would lose its breadwinner.<sup>127</sup> And the acquisition of “consciousness” on the part of the husband increased the cultural and emotional distance between him and his spouse. “The husband would talk freely about philosophy, while his wife would not be able to read. They lived together, had children, but otherwise had nothing in common.” She would nag her husband for always going to meetings.<sup>128</sup> The family life of the intelligentsia was not affected in the same way. Frolov, observing the domestic life of an SD couple around 1900, commented: “They ate, drank and lived not like us [. . .] They had no extras but lived well. They had children, but I didn’t notice any quarrels. They were comrades [. . .] not like a man and his wife.”<sup>129</sup> On the PK there were several prominent intelligentsia couples, including V.D. Bonch-Bruевич and his wife, V.M. Velichkina, and S.I. Gusev and F.I. Drabkina.<sup>130</sup>

It would be wrong to imagine that all the cards were stacked against workers within the party. If commitment to the struggle entailed hardship and sacrifice, it could also represent a form of upward social mobility for workers who rose to positions of leadership. Becoming a party member allowed him (occasionally her) to make contacts and friends outside the normal social range, and exposed him to experiences far beyond the humdrum world of work and family. R.V. Malinovskii, famous for being suborned by the police, was born into a Catholic peasant family in Poland, orphaned at an early age, rose to become first the full-time secretary of the St Petersburg metalworkers’ union and then a Bolshevik deputy in the duma from October 1912. A.E. Badaev, born into a peasant family in Orlov guberniia, joined an SD circle run by N.V. Krylenko in 1904, enrolled in evening technical courses at the Kornilov school, joined the metalworkers’ union and the “Knowledge is Light” club and, at the age of 28, became a Bolshevik deputy in the Fourth Duma. Such upward mobility was unthinkable for the mass of “grey” workers. Yet for that reason, the worker who rose through the party ranks was fated to lose touch with his native class. Frolov tells us: “I was already a party professional, and the workers regarded me as an *intelligent*. Whenever I had to call on a comrade about

<sup>126</sup> E.O. Kabo, *Ocherki rabochego byta* (Moscow, 1928), p. 223.

<sup>127</sup> Zelnik, *Radical Worker*, p. 102.

<sup>128</sup> Frolov, *Probuzhdenie*, p. 192.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>130</sup> Perhaps the best measure of closeness between *intelligent* and worker comrades would be the incidence of intermarriage between them. Unfortunately, we know little about this. Kanatchikov seems to have married a Menshevik *intelligentka*, yet neither Lidia Dan nor her sister would entertain marrying a worker. R.E. Zelnik, “The Fate of a Russian Bebel”, *The Carl Beck Papers*, 1105 (University of Pittsburgh, 1995), p. 4; Haimson, *Three Revolutionaries*, p. 96.

some party matter, he would be embarrassed about his circumstances and apologise for the fact that it was so cramped and dirty."<sup>131</sup>

It is much harder to speculate on the significance of these social and cultural differences for the psychological dynamics of worker-intelligentsia relations. In an obituary for P.A. Zlydnev, Menshevik leader of the Obukhov workers and a member of the presidium of the St Petersburg Soviet in 1905, Trotsky wrote: "between workers and intellectuals, even those holding one and the same point of view, there will long remain a certain psychological distance, a want of ties, as a result of the difference of social origin, lodged in the unconscious".<sup>132</sup> The precise elements which produced this psychological distance are difficult to specify. Although Western historians have not been slow to generalize about the psychological profile of the Russian intelligentsia, generalizations made about the 1860s cannot be assumed to hold fifty years later. The notion that "alienation" holds the key to their psychology by the twentieth century, for example, begs many questions.<sup>133</sup> Peter Garvi, a Menshevik activist in the trade union movement but basically an *intelligent*, insisted that as an "intelligentsia proletarian from a destitute Jewish family", he was not motivated by guilt, nor by a Lavrovian sense that he should repay his "debt to the people".<sup>134</sup> Nevertheless it remained true that those intellectuals who joined the socialist movement idealized the proletariat, seeing in it the means whereby their own lives could acquire wholeness and purpose. Such idealization could result in disillusionment, even positive dislike, if workers failed to live up to expectations. Mary Louise Loe has shown that in the fiction of the Sreda group of writers around Maksim Gor'kii, there is a recurrent sense that the closer an intellectual gets to the peasants or workers, the more he fears and distrusts them.<sup>135</sup> It is unlikely that those *intelligent* who stayed in the Bolshevik party feared the masses in this way, yet one can sense in the Leninist distrust of "spontaneity" a certain dissatisfaction with workers as they were and a desire to remould them in a more congenial image.<sup>136</sup>

For their part, the workers who joined the party were just as prone to idealize the intelligentsia, and just as prone to disillusionment if they

<sup>131</sup> Frolov, *Probuzhdenie*, p. 192.

<sup>132</sup> L. Trotskii, *Sochineniia*, 8 (Moscow, 1926), p. 200.

<sup>133</sup> Haimson, *Three Revolutionaries*, p. 44.

<sup>134</sup> Garvi, *Zapiski*, p. v. His deliberate use of the term "intelligentsia proletarian" is a sign that a clear distinction between workers and intellectuals was beginning to break down. To some extent, workers could transform themselves into *intelligent* through party activity. In 1929 Kanatchikov gave his current social status as *intelligent* and his past social status as "worker" and "peasant". Zelnik, "Fate of a Russian Bebel", p. 35.

<sup>135</sup> Mary Louise Loe, "Redefining the Intellectual's Role: Maksim Gorky and the Sreda Circle", in Edith W. Clowes, Samuel D. Kassow and James L. West (eds), *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia* (Princeton, 1991), p. 304.

<sup>136</sup> Wildman, *Making*, p. 252; McDaniel, *Autocracy*, pp. 118–119, 216.

discovered their idols had feet of clay. For the “conscious” worker, the *intelligent* represented a world of culture and freedom to which he was eager to gain admission. For Bolshevik workers, more particularly, the Marxist intelligentsia represented a realm of science, access to which was vital if revolution were to succeed. Yet though they admired intellectual accomplishment, such workers retained a lingering distrust of knowledge based on books. Lidia Dan confessed that “we knew little about life: we had a ready-made outlook drawn from books”,<sup>137</sup> and it was this which led Fedor Kalinin, a metalworker and “proletarian philosopher” who attended the party schools in Capri and Bologna, to conclude that the “intellectual can still think for the young class, but cannot feel for it”. For him, emotional understanding derived not from logical analysis of “external facts and phenomena”, but from experience.<sup>138</sup> The exodus of *intelligenty* from the revolutionary camp during the Years of Reaction left a permanent scar on the psyche of these worker Bolsheviks. In their eyes, the desertion was more than a *trahison des clercs*: it signified abandonment by their mentor-fathers, a kind of psychic orphaning. This helps to explain the fierceness of much anti-intelligentsia sentiment in this period, the tirades against their irresponsibility and untrustworthiness, such as those of another worker-philosopher, N.E. Vilonov, who in September 1909 denounced intellectuals for being “pillagers” (*marodery*) of the party.<sup>139</sup>

Looked at from a psychological point of view, we can see that the relationship between workers and intellectuals was shot through with ambivalence, suffused with elements of fantasy and projection. It could thus switch rapidly from credulous idealization to bitter disillusionment. Yet as we shall suggest in respect of relations between workers and intellectuals in the CCP, the fact that this relationship was fraught with conflict may have been a healthy development which helped to create a more equal relationship between the two groups. Finally, though the gulf between them was deep, tensions were counterbalanced by a real sense of comradeship, a sense of unity in a common struggle against a common enemy. Judged against the scale of the tasks the party faced, quotidian resentments and tensions may often have seemed secondary.

## Shanghai

### The intelligentsia and the people

The period from the end of the nineteenth century to the end of the 1920s witnessed the emergence of an intelligentsia (*zhishifenzi*) out of

<sup>137</sup> Haimson, *Three Revolutionaries*, p. 34.

<sup>138</sup> Cited by Mark D. Steinberg, “Workers on the Cross: Religious Imagination in the Writings of Russian Workers, 1910–24”, *Russian Review*, 53 (April 1994), p. 238.

<sup>139</sup> Jutta Scherrer, “Un “philosophe-ouvrier” russe: N.E. Vilonov”, *Le Mouvement Social*, 111 (1980), p. 183.

the stratum of scholar-officials (*shi*) which had ruled imperial China for centuries. The latter were men defined by their culture and learning who subscribed to an ethic of service to society, and who in times of tyranny or dynastic decline had a duty to criticize authority. To that extent, they were not dissimilar from the modern intelligentsia, except that their duty to criticize was aimed at restoring the imperial order rather than challenging its legitimacy. The intelligentsia, by contrast, like its Russian prototype, was defined by its repudiation of the existing political and social system. And though continuities with the scholar-officials can be traced through the period, these should not be exaggerated.<sup>140</sup> Until the end of the 1920s, the Chinese intelligentsia was an emergent rather than a fully-fledged social group, and in that respect it was unlike its Russian counterpart. It struggled to forge an identity in a period when the whole question of what it meant to be Chinese was in doubt, and issues such as the relation to Confucian tradition or the relation to the people proved to be profoundly divisive for the intelligentsia, not merely in an ideological sense, but in producing tensions in its very identity as a social group.

The origins of the modern intelligentsia go back no further than the 1890s. Alarmed at China's weakness in the face of foreign imperialism, particularly after defeat by Japan in 1895, members of the educated elite abandoned the attempt to strengthen the traditional way-of-life by means of foreign arms, technology and industry in favour of fundamental changes to the cultural and institutional bases of Chinese society. In a bid to preserve China from "national extinction", reformers such as Liang Qichao argued that it was useless to graft "branches onto our withered trunk"; while neglecting such roots as "the people's virtue, the people's wisdom and the people's vitality". The task was to build a strong nation-state through the creation of "new citizens" and representative government.<sup>141</sup> In 1905 the examination system, which traditionally selected the scholar-officials to staff the state bureaucracy, was abolished. This was a turning-point in the evolution of a modern intelligentsia, since it severed the historic connection between knowledge of the Confucian canon and political power. The new intellectuals, who came to style themselves "enlightened scholars" (*qimeng xuezhe*), displayed greater independence of outlook and social mobility than their Confucian forebears. Above all, they became identified with a new kind of knowledge derived from the West, which they had gained in schools based on Western and Japanese models, in study abroad, especially in Japan, and

<sup>140</sup> Benjamin Schwartz, "The Intelligentsia in Communist China: a Tentative Comparison", in Richard Pipes (ed.), *The Russian Intelligentsia* (New York, 1961), p. 171; Ying-shih Yu, "The Radicalization of China in the Twentieth Century", *Daedalus*, 122/2 (1993), pp. 144–145.

<sup>141</sup> M. Gasster, "The Republican Revolutionary Movement", *Cambridge History of China*, 11 (Cambridge, 1980), p. 476.

in universities and colleges set up by Westerners (though quickly imitated by Chinese). These intellectuals were, moreover, concentrated in the treaty ports – the enclaves of foreign power – and it was to Western models of modernity that they looked in their desire to reshape China.<sup>142</sup>

The students and teachers of the Westernized universities, colleges and schools, together with the new professions of law, medicine and journalism, became standard-bearers of the new nationalism.<sup>143</sup> Backing them were the commercially-minded gentry (*shenshang*) and nascent bourgeoisie, who took practical steps to aid the country's modernization by promoting commercial and industrial ventures, educational associations and vocational schools. Together these groups pressed for constitutional and social reform through study societies, reform societies (such as those to abolish footbinding), professional associations, such as chambers of commerce or associations of bankers and lawyers, and through the rapidly mutating guilds.<sup>144</sup> Crucially, the burgeoning press played a vital part in defining the boundaries of the civil society in which the politics of urban nationalism was located.<sup>145</sup>

Even in the treaty ports the intelligentsia was never more than a tiny fraction of the population. In 1919 it is estimated that the number of students in secondary and higher education in Shanghai was around 25,000, in a city of more than two million people.<sup>146</sup> This intelligentsia was less socially heterogeneous than its Russian counterpart, for although there was some variation in the social intake of different Shanghai colleges, the great majority of students came from gentry and, to a lesser extent, bourgeois families.<sup>147</sup> The background of Qu Qiubai, general secretary of the CCP in 1927–1928, was typical: “as members of a gentry family we never washed our own clothes or cooked our own food; and of course we always wore long gowns”.<sup>148</sup> Notwithstanding the radical politics which many came to espouse, these intellectuals remained in touch with traditional elites through family and native-place

<sup>142</sup> Jerome B. Grieder, *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China* (New York, 1981), p. 142; Vera Schwarz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley, 1989), p. 26.

<sup>143</sup> M. Bastid-Bruguière, “Currents of Social Change”, *Cambridge History of China*. 11 (Cambridge, 1980), p. 556.

<sup>144</sup> William T. Rowe, “The Public Sphere in Modern China”, *Modern China*, 16/3 (1990), pp. 309–329.

<sup>145</sup> R.S. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press, 1800–1912* (Taipei, rpt 1966), p. 111.

<sup>146</sup> *Shanghai xuesheng yundong dashi* [History of the Shanghai Student Movement] (Shanghai, 1985), p. 4; Zou Yiren, *Jiu Shanghai renkou bianqian de yanjiu* [Research on Population Change in Old Shanghai] (Shanghai, 1980), p. 4.

<sup>147</sup> Wen-hsin Yeh, *The Alienated Academy: Culture and Politics in Republican China, 1919–37* (Cambridge, MA, 1990), p. 5.

<sup>148</sup> Paul G. Pickowicz, *Marxist Literary Thought in China: the Influence of Ch'i Ch'iu-pai* (Berkeley, 1981), p. 5.

connections.<sup>149</sup> This was one reason why Chinese intellectuals may be considered less “marginal” than their Russian counterparts. Another was that they continued to enjoy the prestige traditionally accorded those with education. Like the scholar-gentry before them, the emergent intelligentsia assumed that knowledge entailed power and saw itself as having a right and duty to speak out on political matters. This right was widely recognized, even by those in authority, and enabled the intelligentsia to play a role in political life out of all proportion to its numbers.<sup>150</sup> As the American journalist, George Sokolsky, put it, “Chinese labour has a profound respect for the student because he is the direct heir to the scholar who was the recipient of all honour and glory in the traditions of the Chinese people.”<sup>151</sup>

Those who went to Japan to pursue their studies formed organizations according to their province of origin, which during the first years of the new century tended to support Liang Qichao’s brand of constitutional reformism. Not until 1905 did they display enthusiasm for Sun Yat-sen’s schemes for overthrowing the dynasty via an armed insurrection. In August of that year, however, the majority of student organizations fused with the secret societies which backed Dr Sun to form the Alliance Society (*Tongmenghui*). They were bound by little except a commitment to drive out the Manchus, restore Han rule and establish a republic. The Society’s journal, *Minbao*, however, became an important forum for the propagation of Western political ideas, especially those of a radical and socialist hue. In its pages one can see the glimmering of a new awareness of the plight of the common people and of its potential in the struggle against national extinction.<sup>152</sup>

The intelligentsia and the urban populace played relatively minor roles in the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1911, compared with those of the commercially-minded gentry, the New Army officers and the secret societies. Yet the establishment of a republic (*minguo*, literally, “people’s country”) and a “people’s party” (Guomindang) forced the “popular masses” (*minzhong*) on to the nationalist agenda. Henceforth the nation was conceived less as the “race” (*minzu*) – a Han people threatened by an alien dynasty – and more as the sovereign people (*min*), endowed with political rights.<sup>153</sup> Ephemeral political par-

<sup>149</sup> M.B. Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries: Radical Intellectuals in Shanghai and Chekiang, 1902–1911* (Cambridge, MA, 1971), p. 7.

<sup>150</sup> Jeffrey Wasserstrom, *Student Protest in Twentieth-Century China: the View from Shanghai* (Stanford, 1991), pp. 21–22; Tu Wei-ming, “Intellectual Effervescence in China”, in Stephen R. Graubard (ed.), *Exit from Communism* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1993), pp. 264–265.

<sup>151</sup> *North China Herald*, 20 March 1926, p. 552.

<sup>152</sup> Jerome Ch’en, *China and the West: Society and Culture, 1815–1937* (London, 1979), pp. 265–266.

<sup>153</sup> Odoric Y.K. Wou, “The Military and Nationalism: the Political Thinking of Wu P’ei-Fu”, in F. Gilbert Chan and T.H. Etzold (eds), *China in the 1920s: Nationalism and Revolution* (New York, 1976), pp. 108–126, esp. p. 109; Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*

ties such as the Labour Party and the Socialist Party, backed by the powerful Guomindang, the successor to the Alliance Society, turned to the embryonic working class, in particular, in a bid to organize the people behind the project of national regeneration. Since the growth of industry was crucial to this, they deemed it vital to organize the "industrial circles" (*gongjie*) – who included capitalists as well as workers – so that they could overcome their differences and work to develop the nation's productive forces. A nationalist impulse thus lay behind this first short-lived attempt to organize labour.<sup>154</sup>

The hopes placed in the republic were quickly dashed. The emergence of Yuan Shikai's dictatorship profoundly shook the confidence of the new intelligentsia. Concluding that a change of political superstructure was insufficient to generate national renewal, the more radical elements argued for a wholesale transformation in cultural values in order to uproot the ingrained subservience to patriarchal authority of the Chinese people. In 1915 the journal, *New Youth*, proceeded to unleash an onslaught on the subordination of the individual to the state, kin and family, which it saw as the root of the failure of the 1911 Revolution. As the antidote to the "slave mentality" of the Chinese people, it advocated Western values of liberty, equality, and individual autonomy. And since traditionally the scholars' mastery of *wenhua*, the classical language and literary canon, had set them apart from the common people, New Culture intellectuals sought to turn "language into a weapon against the intellectuals' privileged relationship to culture" by championing a new vernacular language – *baihua*, literally, the literature of plain talk.<sup>155</sup> Chen Duxiu, founder of *New Youth*, called for the "overthrow of the painted, powdered, and obsequious literature of the aristocratic few", and the creation of a "plain, simple, expressive literature of the people", in order to disseminate the new values of science and democracy.<sup>156</sup>

The ideas of the New Culture Movement fed directly into the May Fourth Movement of 1919. This movement, led by students and teachers, and backed by merchants, traders and workers, was sparked by outrage at the terms proposed by the peacemakers in Versailles for the transfer of German privileges in China to Japan. It drew many hitherto unpoliticized intellectuals into the movement to "save the nation". Qu Qiubai recalled:

(London, 1992), ch. 5; Joseph T. Chen, *The May Fourth Movement in Shanghai: The Making of a Social Movement in Modern China* (Leiden, 1971), pp. 35–36.

<sup>154</sup> Li Shiyue, "Xinhai geming qianhou de Zhongguo gongren yundong he Zhonghua minguo gongdang" [The Chinese Labour Movement and the Chinese Republican Labour Party around the time of the 1911 Revolution], *Shixue jikan* [Historical Quarterly], 1 (3) (1957), p. 73; Elizabeth J. Perry, *Shanghai on Strike: The Politics of Chinese Labor* (Stanford, 1993), pp. 41–43.

<sup>155</sup> Schwarcz, *Chinese Enlightenment*, p. 78.

<sup>156</sup> Chow Tse-Tung, *The May 4th Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge, MA, 1960), p. 276.

"I had believed that the world was to be saved by the practice of bodhisattvahood (*puxing*), that everything was impermanent, including the social system. But such a philosophy could not hold once the May Fourth Movement sucked me in like a whirlpool."<sup>157</sup> The anti-imperialist protests of 1919 linked the fate of the radical intelligentsia irrevocably to that of the people. The "new youths" believed that only the people could save the nation, but first they had to be enlightened. The newly-founded Shanghai Students Union (*Shanghai xuesheng lianhehui*) and the National Students Union thus set about organizing schools for the common people (*pingmin xuexiao*).<sup>158</sup> At a meeting of labour representatives on 27 May 1919 a woman teacher said:

Chinese workers are the group that most needs to learn to read. Literate workers will achieve results by themselves, as we can see from America where several workers have become president. In particular, I hope that after work you all will be able to learn to read, so that gradually you can read journals and imbibe new knowledge.<sup>159</sup>

Underlying these initiatives was a belief that enlightenment (*qiming*) would unlock the people's wisdom (*kaiqi minzhi*) and liberate popular energies for nation-building.<sup>160</sup> The first number of the journal *Shanghai Shopclerk* proclaimed:

In this era of the New Thought Tide the loudest cry that goes out is for "liberation" and "renewal" [. . .] but we cannot achieve liberation and renewal without basic education. Why? Because education is the root of man's power. Without literacy he is like a blind man. After coming into the world the first step towards becoming a man is to receive education. We need a good education, a high-level education, not a corrupting one. If we are to reform society, we must first reform the human personality.<sup>161</sup>

Whilst "new youths" lauded the potential of the people, they still saw themselves as its leaders, as "those first to know and first to become enlightened" (*xianzhi xian juewu zhe*).<sup>162</sup> This was captured in the very term that they increasingly used to describe themselves: *zhishifenzi*, meaning "knowledgeable elements".

During the May Fourth Movement the radical intelligentsia stepped up its efforts to organize the urban masses, especially the working class. The Shanghai Students Union, representing some 12,000 students, urged

<sup>157</sup> Quoted in Pickowicz, *Marxist Literary Thought*, p. 19.

<sup>158</sup> *Wusi yundong zai Shanghai shiliao xuanji* [Selected Historical Materials on the May Fourth Movement in Shanghai] (Shanghai, 1960), p. 553.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 270–271.

<sup>160</sup> John Kong-cheong Leung, "The Chinese Work-Study Movement: The Social and Political Experience of Chinese Students and Student-Workers in France, 1913–25" (Ph.D., Brown University, 1982), p. 124.

<sup>161</sup> *Shanghai huoyou* [The Shanghai Shopclerk], 1, 10 November 1920, pp. 13–14.

<sup>162</sup> Schwarcz, *Chinese Enlightenment*, p. 9.



traders and workers to support a boycott of Japanese goods, setting up “mass-education speaking teams” to popularize this aim. When workers went on strike in early June, the press accused students of stirring up the ignorant masses. For the first time, a distinct worker’s voice was heard within the public sphere. Some workers, incensed at being seen as dupes of the students, declared: “The fact is, if you’re a Chinese person and you see the country’s mines and railways being sold to the Japanese by corrupt officials for little more than a geisha’s song how can you not be concerned?”<sup>163</sup> Tramworkers, on the other hand, condemned students for trying to dissuade them from going on strike.

You students and merchants may have had more education than us and may have more money than us, but don’t you think that we, too, have a conscience, that we, too, are able to express our indignation at the traitors, who are selling out our nation. Just pause for a moment. Is the spirit of patriotism limited to those classes who have expressed it up to now?<sup>164</sup>

Many of the themes taken up by the New Culture Movement were of anarchist provenance, and anarchism shaped the way in which radical intellectuals forged a self-image through an identification with the working class.<sup>165</sup> The intimate connection at the heart of Confucian culture between knowledge and power meant that manual labour was seen as “low” (*beijian*) and “useless” (*meiyong*). Anarchists were the first to challenge this connection, investing manual work with qualities of dignity and utility through ideas such as the “sacredness of labour” (*laogong shensheng*) and “labourism” (*laodongzhuyi*).<sup>166</sup> Labour was the “greatest obligation of human life and the source of civilization”, “the means to avoid moral degeneration and help moral growth” and “a means of forging spiritual will-power”.<sup>167</sup> Because of the influence of anarchism on its founders, the CCP went on to pose the issue of the division between mental and manual labour in a much sharper fashion than had the Bolshevik Party. On May Day 1920 Chen Duxiu, founder of *New Youth* and soon to become first general secretary of the CCP, gave a rousing speech on the theme of “Who is most useful to society?”. He cited the maxim of Mencius: “Some work with their minds, others with their bodies. Those who work with their minds rule, while those who work with their bodies are ruled.” Then he summoned his audience to turn the apothegm upside down.<sup>168</sup> The theoretical journal of the

<sup>163</sup> *Wusi yundong*, p. 307.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> Arif Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution* (Berkeley, 1991); *The Origins of Chinese Communism* (Oxford, 1989).

<sup>166</sup> *Laodong* [Labour], 1, 20 March 1918; Peter Zarrow, *Anarchism and Chinese Political Culture* (New York, 1990), p. 17.

<sup>167</sup> *Laodongyin* [Labour Voice], 1, 7 November 1920.

<sup>168</sup> *Wusi yundong*, pp. 559–560.

Communist “small groups” (*xiaozu*), formed as a first step towards a party in 1920, developed this idea. An article by Ji Sheng declared:

Under Communism your work time will gradually decrease, because there will be no eaters of free meals. As far as mental labour is concerned, it will at last be made equal to the physical labour of peasants and workers. In today's society intellectual work has high status: often intellectuals (*lao xinde*) make others work for them, so that their lives are easier and their working hours shorter. But under Communist society there will no longer be rulers and ruled: the hours of manual labourers will be short and the benefits of both mental and manual labour will be equal. Intellectuals will no longer display the arrogance which they do now.<sup>169</sup>

For the May Fourth intelligentsia saving China remained inseparable from changing the culture of the Chinese people, since the eradication of “slave mentality” was the *sine qua non* of national renewal. They thus tried to reshape the Chinese national character (*guoxing*) according to the canons of Western science and democracy. Even conservative intellectuals who took offence at the denigration of the Confucian tradition drew on the historicism and relativism of Western thought in their attempt to validate the national soul (*guohun*).<sup>170</sup> As the 1920s wore on, however, increasing numbers of intellectuals came to doubt the adequacy of a project based on cultural Westernization. Their attempts to remake the masses in their own image merely highlighted their cultural distance from them, making them painfully aware that, in the damning words of Qu Qiubai, they lived in “their own country of intellectual youth”, in the “stationery stores of the Europeanized gentry”.<sup>171</sup> For many, though not all, the demands of “enlightenment” and “saving the nation” came to pull in divergent directions. For these – supporters of the Guomindang and CCP alike – saving the nation became synonymous with the requirements of state- and party-building, and the collective mobilization of the masses came to take precedence over their enlightenment. No longer could the intelligentsia cleave to a view of itself as an elite destined to lead the still-to-be-awakened masses. To that extent, it came to downplay its own role, to emphasize its duty of serving, rather than leading, the masses. By the 1930s the intelligentsia was politically divided and socially marginalized, yet there was an important sense in which it continued to empower itself as a social group by means of its relationship to the people. Recognizing that the people could achieve political agency only through political-military formations such as the Guomindang or the Red Army, the intelligentsia harnessed its fortunes to state-building not

<sup>169</sup> *Gongchandang* [The Communist Party] 4, 7 May 1921, p. 8.

<sup>170</sup> Laurence A. Schneider, “National Essence and the New Intelligentsia”, in Charlotte Furth (ed.), *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China* (Cambridge, MA, 1976), pp. 57–89.

<sup>171</sup> Pickowicz, *Marxist Literary Thought*, p. 99; Schwarcz, *Chinese Enlightenment*, p. 147.

merely out of patriotic altruism but out of a determination to demonstrate its own indispensability and to continue the process of articulating itself as a distinct social group.<sup>172</sup>

### The enlightened worker

As in St Petersburg a layer of fairly skilled male workers responded eagerly to the “enlightenment” offered by the May Fourth intelligentsia, but they were a thinner layer than their Russian counterparts. It is impossible to quantify what proportion they comprised of the work-force of Shanghai, which by 1928 numbered around a quarter of a million factory workers or 600,000 wage workers.<sup>173</sup> The moderate labour organ, *Shanghai Shopclerk*, guessed that no more than 20 per cent of shop employees were “conscious”, which it defined as having a sense of dignity, being reasonable in one’s demands, and committed to finding fundamental solutions to one’s problems. It subdivided this group into a vanguard, comprising those with a general awareness (*guangyi pai*), and a larger group who, though less ideologically advanced, were willing to defend themselves (*zishou pai*). It contrasted the enlightened minority with the “befuddled masses” (*hunchen pai*), who “wag their tails ingratiatingly, curry favour with powerful, gang up with the bosses to obstruct the common good, and think no further than the next bowl of rice”.<sup>174</sup>

As in Russia, “enlightenment” was not synonymous with class-consciousness. It was a diffuse notion which connoted educational and moral development, breadth of outlook, an orientation to modernity, an aspiration to play one’s part in regenerating the nation and bettering society. The forging of an identity as a conscious worker entailed rejection of the traditional ethic of filiality and obedience, in favour of “Democracy and Science”. As the printer, Pan Alao, explained:

Chinese society has always been apathetic, everything has been backward, but since the May Fourth Movement the atmosphere has at long last become a little fresher. Suddenly, a ray of light has penetrated this dark place; all kinds of things long hidden have sprung into life. The most piteous voice of the labour movement, which for a long time no one heeded, has cried out.<sup>175</sup>

<sup>172</sup> Against those, like Vera Schwarcz, who stress the marginalization of the intelligentsia in the face of mass mobilization, Tani Barlow emphasizes its continuing self-empowerment via Guomindang and CCP state-building. Tani Barlow, “*Zhishifenzi and Power*”, *Dialectical Anthropology*, 16 (1991), pp. 209–232.

<sup>173</sup> *Shanghai shi tongji* [Statistics on Shanghai] (Shanghai, 1933), section on labour, table 1; Alain Roux, *Le mouvement ouvrier à Shanghai de 1928 à 1930* (Thèse à troisième cycle, Sorbonne, Paris, 1970), pp. 11 and 45.

<sup>174</sup> *Shanghai huoyou*, 8, 26 December 1920, pp. 4–5.

<sup>175</sup> *Laodongjie* [Labourers’ World], 24, 23 January 1921.

For this small group the discourse of the New Culture Movement came as a revelation. A worker explained how his life had been changed by a chance reading of the article, "The New Life", by the doyen of liberalism, Hu Shi. "For twenty years I lived an inhuman existence. Smoking, drinking, gambling, whoring, cheating, swindling, getting rich, becoming an official, these were the evil devils that clouded my conscience." After reading the article, "I constantly began to ask myself the question 'Why?'. Gradually the eight devils left me and became my sworn enemies. Life was revealed in its true colours and I started out along the bright path of struggle and effort in order to become a man."<sup>176</sup> The awareness of not being enlightened could, for some, become a cause of anxiety. A shop employee wrote: "I do not get time to read the newspapers. I am ignorant about the world trade situation, and do not know what is New Thought or Old Thought, who are reactionaries (*wangu*) and who are new men. I am quite baffled and suffer acutely."<sup>177</sup> On the other hand, the acquisition of enlightenment did not necessarily still such anguish.

In my spare time I like to read the New Thought publications, but I no longer feel like reading them, indeed I avoid them like the plague because they make such uncomfortable reading. Why? Because the New Thought publications are full of arguments. I am a person you can reason with, but when I have read them, my whole body is seized by a rush of blood so that I pace up and down the whole day, not knowing what they are getting at. I think that the more you try to increase your knowledge, the more unhappy you feel. After I have read the New Thought publications, my spirit experiences unusual suffering. I fear that the more conscious one becomes, the more difficulties one experiences.

The editors of *Shanghai Shopclerk* gave short shrift to this existential dilemma. "Such despondency goes against your true inner feelings, and springs from fear. If you are depressed and everyone else is depressed, there will be no people to struggle, and we will be defeated by the obstinate conservatives."<sup>178</sup>

The first Communists, like the May Fourth intelligentsia in general, were committed to enlightening the working class. As early as August 1920 Li Qihan established a night school in the Xiaoshadu district of the city. Since he could not speak Shanghai dialect, he drew in workers by buying a gramophone and organizing football matches and other entertainments. Within a year the school had 200 pupils.<sup>179</sup> In October 1921 Chen Duxiu and Li Da set up a People's School for Women. It had about thirty pupils, whose ages ranged from seven to thirty. Its

<sup>176</sup> *Shanghai huoyou*, 2, 17 October 1920, p. 8.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 24 October 1920, p. 15.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, 26 December 1920, p. 12.

<sup>179</sup> Chen Weimin, "Zhongguo gongchandang chuangli chuqi de Shanghai gongren yundong pinggu" [An appraisal of the Shanghai labour movement at the time of the foundation of the CCP], *Shilin* [Forest of History], 4 (11) (1988), p. 73.

syllabus included basic literacy, foreign languages, economics, sewing and knitting.<sup>180</sup> Xiang Jingyu, the most prominent woman in the CCP in the early years, taught at this school from April 1922, composing songs in Shanghai dialect for her students about the oppression of working women.<sup>181</sup> Her methods followed those of Li Lisan, who had developed a method for teaching the Anyuan miners in Hunan province to read which involved raising their political consciousness. He would teach literacy by showing that the character for “heaven” was made up of “labour” on top of a “person”, whereas the second character in the word for “gentleman” (*xiansheng*) consisted of a “cow” on top of the “ground”.<sup>182</sup>

For the Communists, enlightenment was not an end in itself, so much as a means to organize the masses. This instrumental view was set out in the CCP’s first statement of tasks, published in 1921, which pledged to “establish labourers’ continuation schools in every industrial enterprise as a preparatory step to organizing industrial unions [. . .] The basic policy of such schools is to raise the consciousness of workers until they become aware of the need to establish trade unions”.<sup>183</sup> Enlightenment was thus synonymous with developing class-consciousness. Later, during the May Thirtieth Movement of 1925, when the common people’s schools expanded rapidly, this was again made explicit:

Every ordinary person who has come to one of the common people’s schools to study has become aware of the harmfulness of the present social system [. . .] Ordinary people have become aware that they themselves form the basis and the strength of society, and those who have the moral strength to participate in the patriotic movement are daily growing more numerous. Those who are studying in the common people’s schools know of China’s semi-colonial situation and a large number have come to sympathise with the sufferings of the common people and seek to advance their interests.<sup>184</sup>

The Communists thus adumbrated the shift which took place more generally among the anti-imperialist intelligentsia towards the end of the 1920s, when cultural critique and enlightenment for its own sake gave way to fostering class-consciousness and mass organization.

<sup>180</sup> Wang Jiagui and Cai Xiyao, “Pingmin nüxue” [The Common People’s Women’s School], *Dangshi ziliao* [Materials on Party History], 2 (7) (1981), p. 130; *Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuan* [Biographies of Past Members of the Chinese Communist Party], 6 (Xi’an, 1982), p. 16; 9 (Xi’an, 1983), p. 166.

<sup>181</sup> Dai Xugong, *Xiang Jingyu zhuan* [Autobiography of Xiang Jingyu] (Beijing, 1981), pp. 98–99.

<sup>182</sup> Tang Chunliang, *Li Lisan zhuan* [Biography of Li Lisan] (Heilongjiang, 1984), p. 25.

<sup>183</sup> *Zhongguo gongchandang diyici daibiao dahui dang’an ziliao* [Archival Materials on the First Congress of the CCP] (Beijing, 1982), p. 9. There is a slightly differently worded resolution in *Dangshi ziliao*, 1 (1980), p. 9.

<sup>184</sup> *Wusa yundong shiliao* [Historical Materials on the May Thirtieth Movement], 2 vols (Shanghai, 1986), 2, p. 685.

Whether workers resented the intelligentsia determining the content of their education, as their predecessors in St Petersburg had done, is unclear. Labour periodicals from the May Fourth Movement suggest that themes of cultural critique and individual autonomy were welcomed by “conscious” workers, yet such themes were suppressed by the CCP in the course the 1920s. Evidence of worker resentment, however, is lacking. This may partly reflect the fact that there were fewer workers than in Russia with a command of the written word. But it probably also reflects the fact that CCP publications offered workers fewer opportunities to voice their views, since the party rapidly fell prey to a Stalinist culture, in which the free exchange of opinion was discouraged. In the labour press of the May Fourth period there are signs of worker resentment of intellectuals, but it is mainly directed at aspiring politicians (*zhengke*) who used the labour movement for their own ends. The printer, Pan Alao, had harsh words for those labour organizers out to make a career for themselves: “Although we workers have no education, we have tasted suffering long enough, we have been duped by your fine words for long enough. We have woken up. No matter what tricks you try to play on us, we won’t be taken in any longer, so you need not rack your brains thinking up schemes of deception.”<sup>185</sup> And a downwardly mobile rickshaw puller wrote passionately of the humiliation he had suffered at the hands of a “friend of labour”, who prevented him from gaining access to a labour meeting. “Readers, are there not already enough places from which we are barred, without being barred from a workers’ meeting? I have had a middle-school education, but have ended up like this. If I have fallen into the working class, it doesn’t mean that I have lost my dignity. The sad truth is that these grand gentlemen who talk about labour also look down on us.”<sup>186</sup> Although Communist intellectuals may not be likened to *zhengke*, worker resentment of the educated may have continued inside the CCP. If so, it has been censored from party publications.

### Growth and social composition of the Chinese Communist Party

The CCP in Shanghai grew very slowly from its foundation in 1921 to the May Thirtieth Movement of 1925. In a report to the Comintern on 30 June 1922 Chen Duxiu said that there were about 50 members in the city out of a national membership of 195.<sup>187</sup> This fell to 44 members by July 1923, of whom 10 were said to be inactive. In these early years the Socialist Youth League (SYL) overshadowed its parent party. In May 1924 it had 180 members in Shanghai, organized into eleven

<sup>185</sup> *Laodongjie*, 24, 23 January 1921.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 21, 2 January 1921.

<sup>187</sup> *Zhongguo gongchandang diyici dahui*, p. 37.

branches.<sup>188</sup> Only in the autumn of 1924 did membership of the CCP start to rise and by November there were 109 members organized into eight branches, 23 of them in the Shanghai University branch.<sup>189</sup> On the eve of the May Thirtieth Movement there were 297 members organized into 26 branches, including the cities of Nanjing, Hangzhou and other towns in the Yangzi delta.<sup>190</sup>

In these first years, the CCP was mainly a party of male students and teachers. Most came from gentry, merchant or rich peasant families in areas of China where Western influence was strong. Most had been exposed to Western-style education in provincially-run middle and normal schools.<sup>191</sup> Among the leaders of the party were some of China's finest intellectuals, notably Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao and Qu Qiubai. At this stage, there were few workers in its ranks. The printer, Xu Meikun, claimed to be the first worker to join the CCP in Shanghai. Having joined the SYL in 1920, at a time when he was still an anarchist, he made contact, at Chen Duxiu's suggestion, with Shen Yanbing (the writer, Mao Dun), who worked in the publishing department of the Commercial Press. Through him he got a job at this powerhouse of the New Culture Movement.<sup>192</sup> In May 1924 there were still only 8 workers out of 47 members in the Shanghai region, but by October this had risen to 32 out of 109, 14 of them shop employees.<sup>193</sup> In an effort to "make our party a party of the masses", the CCP in January 1925 eased restrictions on worker recruitment by requiring only a one-month probationary period for workers as against three months for intellectuals.<sup>194</sup> This, together with the strike in the Japanese-owned mills of the city, led to a sharp increase in the proportion of workers in the Shanghai CCP, so that by May 57.3 per cent of the 297 members were proletarian.<sup>195</sup> It was the May Thirtieth Movement, however, which

<sup>188</sup> *Zhongguo gongchandang Shanghai shi zuzhi shi ziliao, 1920.8-1987.10* [Historical Materials on the Organizations of the CCP in Shanghai, 1920-87] (Shanghai, 1991), p. 4.

<sup>189</sup> Huang Zhirong, "Guanyu yijiuersan nian zhi yijiuerqi nian Shanghai daxue dangzuzhi de fazhan qingkuang" [Concerning the conditions of development of party organization at Shanghai University in the years 1923 to 1927], *Dangshi ziliao*, 2 (11) (1982), pp. 98-99.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>191</sup> Robert C. North, *Kuomintang and Chinese Communist Elites* (Stanford, 1952), pp. 46, 51 and 63.

<sup>192</sup> *Shanghai shangwu yinshuguan zhigong yundongshi* [The History of the Labour Movement at the Shanghai Commercial Press] (Beijing, 1991), pp. 143 and 153-154.

<sup>193</sup> Shen Yihang, Jiang Peinan and Zheng Qingsheng, *Shanghai gongren yundong shi* [A History of the Shanghai Labour Movement], 2 vols (Liaoning, 1991), 1, pp. 172-173.

<sup>194</sup> J.P. Harrison, *The Long March to Power: A History of the Chinese Communist Party, 1921-72* (London, 1972), pp. 64-65; C. Martin Wilbur and Julie Lien-ying How, *Missionaries of Revolution: Soviet Advisers and Nationalist China, 1920-1927* (Cambridge, MA, 1989), pp. 531-532.

<sup>195</sup> Zhao Pu, "Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhi shi ziliao" [Materials on the history of the organizations of the Chinese Communist Party], part 5, *Dangshi yanjiu* [Research on Party History], 4 (1982), p. 30.

transformed the CCP nationally into a mainly working-class party. The movement erupted on 1 June 1925 after British police in the International Settlement fired on unarmed demonstrators. The "triple strike" (*sanba*) of workers, traders and students which ensued was the broadest of the anti-imperialist struggles to date, and led to the rapid growth of a trade union movement under the auspices of the Shanghai General Labour Union (*Zonggonghui*). By September membership of the CCP in Shanghai had risen to 1,080, of whom 78.5 per cent were workers.<sup>196</sup> Thereafter membership continued to grow, although it was always heavily constrained by persecution from the foreign police and warlord authorities. By 10 January 1927 there were 3,075 Communists in the city, though this did not make it a mass party. Only in March, after the CCP briefly seized control of the Chinese-administered areas of the city, did the party experience a big surge in membership. By 4 April the Shanghai region had a membership of 8,374 in more than 140 branches.<sup>197</sup> Just over a week later, it was smashed by Chiang Kai-shek.

Whereas the first worker recruits to the CCP had been among artisans, such as printers and mechanics,<sup>198</sup> and shop employees, after the May Thirtieth Movement, the party concentrated its efforts on the main industry of the city, cotton textiles. By April 1926 an astonishing 73 per cent of the city's 1,493 members were textile workers; and in September 47 out of 87 worker branches were in the cotton mills.<sup>199</sup> A report of December 1926 stated that the 2,963 members in Shanghai consisted of 1,592 (54 per cent) textile workers, 151 students, 351 employees in city government, 10 merchants and one soldier. This leaves the occupations of 858 members unaccounted for, and it seems likely that many of these were workers in other trades.<sup>200</sup>

Throughout the period from mid-1925 to April 1927, as many as three-quarters of CCP members in Shanghai were workers, yet few were represented in leadership. A letter of 17 March 1927 from three Comintern delegates in Shanghai complained that the regional committee of sixteen contained not a single worker. Full lists for 1926 and February

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>197</sup> Ren Jianshu, "Chen Duxiu yu Shanghai gongren sancu wuzhuang qiyi" [Chen Duxiu and the Three Workers' Armed Uprisings in Shanghai], *Dangshi ziliao*, 4 (13) (1982), p. 76; *Shanghai gongren sancu wuzhuang qiyi* [The Three Workers' Armed Uprisings in Shanghai] (Shanghai, 1983), p. 451.

<sup>198</sup> Perry, *Shanghai on Strike*, p. 87.

<sup>199</sup> *Shanghai fangzhi gongren yundong shi* [The History of the Labour Movement among Shanghai Textileworkers] (Beijing, 1991), p. 474; "Zhonggong Shanghai quwei youguan Shanghai gongren sancu wuzhuang qiyi de wenxian qi pian" [Seven Documents from the Shanghai regional committee of the CCP concerning the three workers' armed uprisings], *Dang'an yu lishi* [Archives and History], 1 (1987), p. 2.

<sup>200</sup> Harrison, *Long March*, p. 92, citing *Zhongguo Gongchandang zhi Toushi* (Taipei, 1962), pp. 80–82.



1927 of members of the bureaux and commissions of the regional committee and of secretaries of the district committees confirm the general picture. In February only five of the fifteen members of the labour-movement commission can be identified with certainty as workers.<sup>201</sup> And in contrast to St Petersburg, where the trade union movement acquired a degree of autonomy from the RSDLP after 1905, the Shanghai General Labour Union (GLU) was basically an adjunct to the party. Its top positions were occupied by Communist intellectuals: Li Lisan was chair and Liu Shaoqi was head of the general office (*zongwu ke*), as well as head of the Shanghai branch of the National General Labour Union. In 1926 Wang Shouhua was chair.<sup>202</sup> Liu Hua, who headed the alternative executive of the GLU, was rather more representative of trade union members. Born into a peasant family in Sichuan, he became an apprentice printer at the Zhonghua Book company in August 1920 before enrolling as a part-time student at Shanghai University in August 1923. He was executed in late 1925, having just passed his twenty-fifth birthday.<sup>203</sup>

Workers were better represented in second-ranking positions in the GLU. Sun Lianghai, deputy to Liu Shaoqi, had lost his job as a cotton worker as a result of his activities in the Pudong weavers union in 1921. In 1924, whilst working as a bank guard, he joined the CCP and became vice-chair of the West Shanghai Workers Club.<sup>204</sup> Liu Guanzhi, a former worker at the Fengtian cotton mill and secretary of the West Shanghai Workers Club, was head of the GLU's propaganda section.<sup>205</sup> One of his deputies was Zhang Zuochen, who had formerly worked at the Dakang mill. At the Third National Labour Congress in May 1926 Zhang was elected to the executive of the National General Labour Union. He was just 21 when he was executed by the Guomindang in June 1927.<sup>206</sup>

The cotton workers who became office-holders in the GLU did not have the same high levels of skill and education as their counterparts in St Petersburg. Nevertheless they were more experienced and educated than the average worker. Few, for instance, came from the ranks of the illiterate, poverty-stricken migrants from Subei, who dominated the

<sup>201</sup> *Shanghai gongren sanci wuzhuang qiye*, pp. 112–113 and 148. The list for 1926 is in Wang Jianying (ed.), *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao huibian* [Edited Materials on the Organizational History of the CCP] (Beijing, 1982), pp. 39–40.

<sup>202</sup> Huang Zulin, *Liu Shaoqi qingshao nian shidai* [Chronicle of Liu Shaoqi's Youth] (Beijing, 1991), p. 141.

<sup>203</sup> Xu Haojiang, "Liu Hua", *Zhongguo gongren yundong de xianfeng* [Pioneers of the Chinese Labour Movement], 1 (Beijing, 1983), pp. 71–100.

<sup>204</sup> Shi Bing, "Deng Zhongxia", *Zhongguo gongren yundong de xianfeng*, 2 (Beijing, 1983), p. 58.

<sup>205</sup> *Wusa yundong shiliao*, 2, pp. 8–11.

<sup>206</sup> *Shanghai fangzhi gongren*, pp. 575–576.

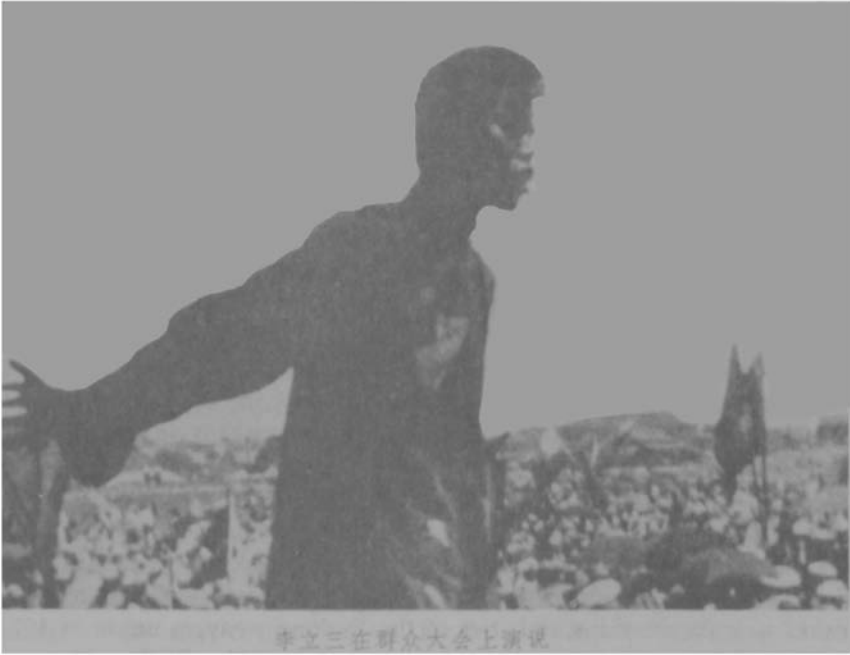


Figure 2. Li Lisan speaking to a crowd during the May Thirtieth Movement (Source: Tang Chunliang, *Li Lisan Zhuan*, Heilongjiang, 1984)

worst-paid positions in the labour force.<sup>207</sup> Tao Jingxuan, a worker at the NWK No. 15 mill and chair of the West Shanghai Workers Club, had learnt to read and write in a private academy.<sup>208</sup> Shi Liqing (1896–1927), chair of the union and CCP branch at Shenxin No. 1 mill in 1926–1927, had studied for two years in a private academy in Wuxi.<sup>209</sup> A few even came from relatively comfortable families whose fortunes had declined. Li Zhong (1897–1951), an apprentice ironsmith at the Jiangnan arsenal and founder of the first mechanics union, was the son of a failed examination candidate in Xiangxiang county in Hunan, and had trained as a teacher.<sup>210</sup> Yang Peisheng (1883–1927), the son of a

<sup>207</sup> Emily Honig, “Native-Place Hierarchy and Labor Market Segmentation: The Case of Subei People in Shanghai”, in Thomas G. Rawski and Lillian M. Li (eds), *Chinese History in Economic Perspective* (Berkeley, 1992), pp. 271–294.

<sup>208</sup> *Shanghai heshi xiaozhuan* [Brief Biographies of Shanghai Martyrs] (Shanghai, 1983), pp. 15–16.

<sup>209</sup> *Shanghai fangzhi gongren*, pp. 570–573.

<sup>210</sup> “Li Zhong xiaozhuan” [Short Biography of Li Zhong], in *Shanghai jiqi ye gongren yundong shi* [A History of the Labour Movement in the Shanghai Machine Trades] (Beijing, 1991), pp. 332–335.

poor scholar near Shanghai, was forced to get a job as an apprentice at the Qishang machine works in 1906, aged 23, and by 1925 was leader of the ironworkers union.<sup>211</sup>

If workers were underrepresented in the leadership of the CCP, the lack of female representation was even more striking. Of 120 top party leaders in early 1927, only five were female, and none seems to have been of working-class origin.<sup>212</sup> In part, this was a reflection of the extremely low proportion of women in the party. At its peak in April 1927 only 8.27 per cent of the 57,967 members were female.<sup>213</sup> Moreover, the few women in leadership were mainly involved in the women's programme. Xiang Jingyu was head of the Women's Bureau, established in 1922, and in this capacity served unofficially on the CC. Yang Zhihua, a graduate of Hangzhou Women's Normal School, was head of the women's section of the GLU, and either head or deputy head of the cotton workers federation.<sup>214</sup> The number of working-class women who joined the party was tiny, and the number who rose to positions of influence infinitesimal. Among thirty delegates from Shanghai to the Third National Labour Congress were at least three women workers, including Zhu Yingru, who fought to undermine the "yellow" union of silk workers.<sup>215</sup> Wang Genjing (1906–1939) was elected in March 1927 to the short-lived provisional government set up after the CCP took power. Born into a poor peasant family near Shanghai, she began work in a cotton mill at the age of eight in 1914. In 1921 she moved to the Yihe mill and two years later began to attend night school. In 1924 she joined the SYL, and in 1925 the CCP.<sup>216</sup>

Many worker leaders from this period perished because of their political activism. Tao Jingxuan was shot by Sun Chuanfang for his part in the first armed uprising in 1926. Sun Lianghai, Shi Liqing, Yang Peisheng and many more were killed in the wake of the 12 April coup. Others, like Li Zhong, dropped out of political activity after Chiang Kai-shek's purge. Someone like Chen Yun (1900–1995), an employee of the Commercial Press, who joined the CCP in 1924 and the GLU in 1925, and who rose to become a member of the Politburo by 1931 and China's leading economic planner after 1949, was altogether exceptional. After 1928, according to C. Martin Wilbur, more "men of humble background,

<sup>211</sup> *Shanghai jiqi ye gongren yundong shi*, pp. 322–326.

<sup>212</sup> Harrison, *Long March*, p. 99.

<sup>213</sup> *Zhongguo gongchandang di erci dao di liuci quanguo daibiao dahui wenjian huibian* [Compilation of Documents on the Second to the Sixth National Congresses of the CCP] (Beijing, 1981), p. 115; *Dangshi yanjiu*, 2 (1983), p. 40.

<sup>214</sup> Christina Gilmartin, "Gender in the Formation of a Communist Body Politic", *Modern China*, 19/3 (1993), p. 316.

<sup>215</sup> Shen Yihang, *Shanghai gongren yundong*, p. 283.

<sup>216</sup> *Shanghai fangzhi gongren*, p. 577. See also Steve Smith, "Class and Gender: Women's Strikes in St Petersburg, 1895–1917 and in Shanghai, 1895–1927", *Social History*, 19/2 (1994), pp. 162–167.

little education but natural talent” rose to positions of leadership in the CCP, but they still remained a “small proportion.”<sup>217</sup>

### Tensions between workers and intellectuals within the CCP

We have seen that as a consequence of the May Fourth Movement radical intellectuals turned towards the people, especially towards the working class, in the hope of finding a vehicle of national salvation and a social role for themselves. In 1920 Zhou Enlai penned some mordant words about the credulity of those who dreamed of living a “common life” with the workers. In a poem, published in the magazine of the Awakening Society of Tianjin students, he wrote:

The northwest wind is howling, Winter is here. Going out I hire a rickshaw. The cartpuller is wearing a cotton padded jacket, I am wearing a padded jacket. I do not feel warmth from my padded jacket. The puller feels that his is a cumbersome burden And takes it off, placing it on my legs. I am grateful that he is considerate of my welfare. He thanks me for helping him out, for doing him a favour. Is that sharing a common life together? The labour of the living, The happiness of the dead.<sup>218</sup>

By joining the CCP, Zhou thought that he was breaking with the naivety prevalent among his peers. Yet thirty-seven years later, he reflected on how inexperienced he too had been. “I had never taken any direct part in productive work. I had only been to France and worked as party cadre in Guangdong, only seen workers working at one remove. I came from a feudal family and had certainly never been in the village. I couldn’t tell beans from wheat.”<sup>219</sup>

The CCP appealed to radical youth as an organization dedicated to action, an organization whose effectiveness had, seemingly, been proved by the October Revolution. They were stirred by the party’s call to shun “academic-type study (which) denies that theory is born of practice” and to “surrender to the proletariat”.<sup>220</sup> In a report on the February 1925 mill strike a CYL member wrote:

we learnt a lot from the experience, and with our bodies engaged in hard work, our spirits were genuinely raised. In the normal course of things, the pursuit of problems through books is often dry and uninteresting, but participating in the movement demonstrated the contrast between book learning and practical activity. Ordinarily, although we know intellectually and can articulate verbally

<sup>217</sup> C. Martin Wilbur, “The Influence of the Past: How the Early Years Helped to Shape the Future of the Chinese Communist Party”, in J.W. Lewis (ed.), *Party Leadership and Revolutionary Power in China* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 60.

<sup>218</sup> *Juewu* [Awakening], 1 (1920). Cited in Leung, “Work-Study”, p. 176.

<sup>219</sup> Xu Baofang and Bian Xingying (eds), *Shanghai gongren sancì wuzhuang qiyi yanjiu* [Research Materials on the Three Workers’ Armed Uprisings in Shanghai] (Shanghai, 1987), p. 368.

<sup>220</sup> Wilbur, *Missionaries*, pp. 527–528.

what labour conditions are like, it is not authentic, so if you want to know vividly what it is like, there is no alternative to taking part in a movement such as this.<sup>221</sup>

These radical intellectuals had a romantic approach to political activity. Qu Qiubai wrote: "I was born a romantic who always wanted to transcend the environment and accomplish some miraculous deed which would amaze and move people."<sup>222</sup> A manual on party training, produced by the Moscow branch of the CCP sometime before February 1925, identified romanticism as the prime defect of party intellectuals: "Systematize thought and study – oppose romanticism. Romanticism is a condition which destroys organization."<sup>223</sup> This proscription had little to do with the vogue for literary romanticism. It was aimed at a style of political activity which had been influential in the first decade of the century, a style exemplified by Qiu Jin, executed for organizing an uprising against the Qing in 1907. Her style of individualist, idealist and emotional political action was the polar opposite of that advocated by the aspiring Leninist party.<sup>224</sup>

By the time the CCP was founded in 1921, a view of the intelligentsia as inveterately "petty-bourgeois", along with a counter-model of a "party intelligentsia", was firmly entrenched within the international Communist movement. Unlike the Bolshevik Party, the CCP did not work out a policy for itself towards the intelligentsia, it inherited one ready-made from Moscow. From the first, intellectuals were required to undergo self-criticism and purge themselves of petty-bourgeois traits. In July 1922 the Second Congress of the CCP stressed the indispensability of "military discipline": "Every comrade should sacrifice his own opinions, feelings, and advancement to protect the unity of the party [. . .] He should not possess any individual interest apart from that of the party."<sup>225</sup> The party saw intellectuals as the source of a contagious individualism which was antipathetic to "military discipline". The training manual pronounced: "We should absolutely collectivize and adapt our lives and will to the masses. There is absolutely no such thing as individual life or individual free will." "We must not have excessive self-confidence. We must have the psychology of thoroughly trusting the organization – it is counter-revolutionary conduct not to trust the organization."<sup>226</sup> Yet though this was a model developed for the entire world Communist movement, it may have had particular relevance in the Chinese context. For it was precisely those most exasperated by the tendency of the May Fourth intelligentsia to "indulge in loud and empty talk" (*gaotan-kuolun*)

<sup>221</sup> *Wusa yundong* [The May Thirtieth Movement], 3 vols (Shanghai, 1991), 1, p. 7.

<sup>222</sup> Pickowicz, *Marxist Literary Thought*, p. 46.

<sup>223</sup> Wilbur, *Missionaries*, p. 527.

<sup>224</sup> Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries*, pp. 40–46.

<sup>225</sup> Quoted in Harrison, *Long March*, p. 40.

<sup>226</sup> Wilbur, *Missionaries*, p. 528.

who were most likely to join the party. Certainly, the imposition of a Comintern model served to spur intellectuals to remake themselves into a “party intelligentsia” that had no precedent in China.

Many intellectuals who joined the party were selfless and hard-working. According to S.N. Naumov, Soviet political adviser to the Huangpu Military Academy, writing in 1926: “Most party workers are members of the educated class, but they lead a poor and hard life, sometimes even harder than that of workers. Their spirit of self-sacrifice is rarely equalled but they understand little of the workers’ interests and living conditions.”<sup>227</sup> The CYL report on the February 1925 mill stoppage struck the same note: “Although the majority of comrades set to work with enthusiasm, they had not ordinarily studied the conditions in the factories or the psychology of the workers, and many therefore found themselves unable to cope with the actual situation, unable to find the right words, unable to get to grips with the work.”<sup>228</sup>

This emphasis on the inability of intellectuals to communicate with workers was a recurrent theme of contemporary observers. In Mao Dun’s novel, *Midnight*, the young female Communist, Ma Chin, gives a speech to striking silk women. “Although Ma Chin had done her best to ‘purge’ her speech of formulas and jargon, it was still an ‘intellectual’s’ speech and so it had not made an immediate appeal to the girls’ hearts.”<sup>229</sup> Qu Qiubai accused the “cadres of revolutionary literature” of not having a “common language with Chinese working people”, of speaking as though they were “almost foreigners”.<sup>230</sup> And Xu Meikun, the first worker to join the CCP in Shanghai, was caustic about the intervention of students in the successful strike at the Nikko mills in April 1922: “Li Qihan, Zhang Guotao, Yang Mingzhai and others rented a room and bought a gramophone, thinking to draw in the workers with music. But the workers, seeing their Western clothes, went home as soon as they had finished listening to the music.”<sup>231</sup> As this example suggests, the failure of communication was not merely a linguistic one: it sprang from the intellectuals’ cultural Westernization. As products of the New Culture Movement, they embodied a style of individuality, expressed in dress, gesture and deportment, that was alien to ordinary Chinese. A photograph of Wang Shouhua, chair of the GLU in 1926, shows a handsome young man wearing a shirt and tie, a belted rain coat and carrying a trilby hat.<sup>232</sup> The bobbed hair worn by women

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 462.

<sup>228</sup> *Wusa yundong*, 1, p. 7.

<sup>229</sup> Mao Dun, *Midnight* (Beijing, 1957), p. 381.

<sup>230</sup> Pickowicz, *Marxist Literary Thought*, p. 99.

<sup>231</sup> Xu Meikun, “Jiang-Zhe quwei chengli qianhou de pianduan huiyi” [Fragmentary Recollections from around the Time of the Foundation of the Jiangsu-Zhejiang Regional Committee], *Dangshi zillao*, 2 (7) (1981), p. 27.

<sup>232</sup> Shen Yihang, *Shanghai gongren yundong*, frontispiece.

students was a powerful marker of cultural difference. Female students who interviewed factory girls from villages on the eastern edge of Shanghai in 1930 were told that short hair was fine for college students but not for them.<sup>233</sup> And when Wu Xianqing, a school teacher from Hangzhou, went to organize women mill workers in Yangshupu district in late 1924 she deemed it prudent to wear a false pigtail as well as workers' clothes. Whether the mill women fell for the ruse is uncertain, but when she was arrested in January 1925 they besieged the police station to demand her release.<sup>234</sup>

If a Westernized cultural style set a barrier between intellectuals and workers, there were elements within Chinese culture which worked in the opposite direction. Communist intellectuals were not averse to trading on the prestige customarily accorded scholars, as their habit of wearing long gowns on public demonstrations indicates. The mail sorter, Shen Mengxian, recalled with amusement how workers mistook him for a student when he was sent on his first party mission: "They saw that we were wearing long gowns and looked rather refined, and took us for students. They said to one another in low, excited voices, 'the students have come'. Their warmth and hopefulness moved us a good deal."<sup>235</sup> Intellectuals who combined scholarly prowess with an engaging personality or good looks were particularly well received by workers. Liu Hua could, apparently, get a working-class audience to eat out of his hand because of his fine features and skills as an orator.<sup>236</sup> And Yang Zhihua thrilled mill women with her speeches.<sup>237</sup> This was not merely ingrained deference on the part of workers, it was a pragmatic recognition of the value of the skills of organization, publicity and financing which intellectuals could bring to their struggles.

Like their Russian counterparts, however, though not to the same extent, Shanghai workers could occasionally exhibit hostility to "long gowns". The first chair of the West Shanghai Workers club, Xiang Ying, a hard-working party member and student at Shanghai University (who may, however, once have been a printer), was said to have the mien of an intellectual and to be distrusted by the workers. And the mill women of Yangshupu later turned against the teacher Wu Xianqing.<sup>238</sup> Anarchist and right-wing GMD labour leaders, many of whom had better working-class credentials than the Communists, tried to stir up distrust of intellectuals as a means of weakening the CCP. The Shanghai

<sup>233</sup> *Chinese Economic Journal*, 9/4 (1931), p. 1075.

<sup>234</sup> *Shanghai fangzhi gongren*, p. 90.

<sup>235</sup> *Wusa yundong shiliao*, 1, p. 577.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289.

<sup>237</sup> Liu Guanzhi, "Guanyu 1924-1925 nian Shanghai gongren yundong de huiyi" [Recollections of the Shanghai Labour Movement in 1924-25], *Zhongguo gongren yundong shiliao* [Historical Materials on the Chinese Labour Movement], 1 (1960), p. 37.

<sup>238</sup> *Wusa yundong shiliao*, 1, pp. 289 and 374.

Federation of Syndicates (*Gongtuan*), which from 1922 to 1924 successfully promoted anti-class-struggle nationalism in the Shanghai labour movement, was particularly scathing about “long gowns”.<sup>239</sup> Ma Chaojun, whose career as a labour organizer stretched back to Sun Yat-sen’s Alliance Society, condemned callow youths who preached about labour without having experience of it.<sup>240</sup> Yet how far propaganda against the intelligentsia struck a chord among workers in Shanghai is unclear. There do not appear to be reports similar to those emanating from Guangzhou of demonstrations in which workers shouted “Down with the Intellectuals!”.<sup>241</sup>

Although the labour movement derived very tangible benefits from its contacts with intellectuals, workers within the CCP laboured under many disadvantages. Not only did differences in education, political style, degree of Westernization and social prestige mark their inferiority to the intelligentsia, other differences in lifestyle, such as those in sexual mores, underlined the social division. For intellectuals, for example, the CCP represented an oasis of sexual freedom in a society hidebound by rigid gender roles, whereas for workers arranged marriages and the patriarchal family continued to be the norm. At the time of the May Thirtieth Movement the Central Committee was riven by sexual jealousies. Zhang Tailei ran off with Wang Yizhi, wife of Shi Cuntong, who chased the couple to Changsha and Qingdao, causing havoc in local party ranks. Peng Shuzhi, husband of Chen Bilan, a member of the EC of the GMD in Shanghai, had a much-publicized affair with Xiang Jingyu, wife of Cai Hesen. In June animosity between Peng and Cai reached such a pitch that Chen Duxiu sent Cai to the Soviet Union out of harm’s way, and deprived Xiang Jingyu of her unofficial standing on the CC.<sup>242</sup> For educated women, especially, the liberal ambience of the party was particularly welcome. A divorced woman such as Yang Zhihua, for example, would have been subject to heavy censure in the “bourgeois” world. And the party offered such women – albeit on a less generous scale than men – scope to use their education and develop their talents.<sup>243</sup> For working-class Communists, by contrast, gender segregation remained rigid, and extramarital affairs taboo, and the sexual liberalism of the party merely highlighted the fact that workers could not escape

<sup>239</sup> Deng Zhongxia, *Zhongguo zhigong yundong jianshi* [A Short History of the Chinese Labour Movement] (Beijing, 1957), p. 119.

<sup>240</sup> Ma Chaojun, *Zhongguo laodong wenji* [Problems of Chinese Labour] (Shanghai, 1925), p. 6.

<sup>241</sup> *Guowen zhoubao* [National Literary Weekly], 3/28, 25 July 1926, p. 9.

<sup>242</sup> *Xiandai shiliao* [Historical Materials on the Contemporary Era], 1 (Shanghai, 1934), pp. 226–227; Ding Ling, “Qu Qiubai”, *Yi Qiubai* [Recollections of Qiubai] (Beijing, 1981), pp. 134–140; Gilmartin, “Gender”, p. 316.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310.



the constraints imposed by social position as easily as the intelligentsia.

Other features of the cultural context, not operative in the Russian case, may have served to blur the social distinction between intellectuals and workers. The party training manual called on Communists to transcend loyalties to family, locality and nation, but in reality the CCP was criss-crossed by networks of patronage based on native place and alma mater. At the heart of the SYL, for instance, was one of those study groups based on common regional origin, whose importance to the early CCP has been stressed by Hans Van de Ven.<sup>244</sup> When Zhang Qiuren, a well-known intellectual from Zhuji county in Zhejiang, arrived in Shanghai in 1920 he made contact with his schoolfriends and fellow countrymen, and this network became the core of the SYL.<sup>245</sup> In 1922 Zhang Tailei recruited Qu Qiubai, his schoolfriend from Changzhou in Jiangsu province. Similarly, many of those active in the West Shanghai Workers Club and the GLU hailed from Hunan province, including Li Lisan, Deng Zhongxia, Cai Zhihua and Liu Shaoqi. Such native-place ties were a useful way in which the party could establish the *bona fides* of new recruits, but from our point of view, they may also have served to lessen the social and cultural divide between workers and intellectuals, at least in cases where they came from the same region. In 1924 the postal sorter, Shen Mengxian, became the “apprentice” of Shen Zitian, a primary school teacher from his home province.<sup>246</sup> Such discipleship may have been a good way to counter infiltration by *agents provocateurs*, but in the Chinese context it could easily lead to clientelism. Zhou Enlai, for example, was accused, perhaps scurrilously, of promoting his clients after becoming head of the military bureau of the Central Committee in 1927. Those officer cadets with whom he had been associated at the Huangpu Academy were said to have been elevated “like the dogs and geese of one who has become a buddha”.<sup>247</sup> Native-place and patronage networks were antithetical to Leninist norms, but they were entrenched in the party and may have helped bridge the gulf between workers and intellectuals by subordinating differences of education and culture to loyalties of region and of pupil and teacher.

Despite the low proportion of workers in leadership positions, there is no evidence that workers clamoured to reverse this situation. Party leaders justified the low proportion in terms of their lack of education and experience. In June 1923 Chen Duxiu told the Third CCP Congress: “workers [. . .] show a tendency to keep apart from the intellectuals,

<sup>244</sup> Hans J. Van de Ven, *From Friend to Comrade: The Founding of the Chinese Communist Party, 1920–1927* (Berkeley, 1991), p. 55.

<sup>245</sup> *Zhonggong gongshi renwu zhuan*, 9, pp. 164 and 171; Perry, *Shanghai on Strike*, p. 73.

<sup>246</sup> *Wusa yundong shiliao*, 1, p. 575.

<sup>247</sup> *Dangdai shichuan* [An Abbreviated History of the Contemporary Era] (Shanghai, 1933), p. 272.

and often lack any aspiration to seek knowledge".<sup>248</sup> In July 1926 the second enlarged plenum of the CC complained that the policy of opening up the party to workers had led to a decline in the quality of members.<sup>249</sup> In 1927 a CC member could explain, apparently without embarrassment, that: "workers cannot read, cannot write, cannot speak, and cannot understand anything".<sup>250</sup> Such attitudes suggest that while the party intelligentsia might idealize the proletariat, it could be extremely patronizing towards it in practice. Mao Dun captures this in his novel, when at a crucial party meeting to decide whether a strike should continue, the one worker in attendance is ignored: "It had cost Chen Yueh-ngo a great deal of effort to find words to express what she wanted to say, but neither Ke Tso-fu nor Tsai Chen paid the slightest attention to her."<sup>251</sup> Communist intellectuals thus continued to assume that their education gave them the right to command and Communist workers seem to have acquiesced in this. As Hua Gang put it: "Prior to the April 1927 plenum [. . .] party leaders decided, and the rank-and-file carried out decisions without question. There was absolutely no opportunity for expressing opinion, no internal democracy and no self-criticism in the party."<sup>252</sup> This judgement, by no means disinterested since it was designed to discredit party leader, Chen Duxiu, is confirmed by other sources. All of which suggests that the fierce expression of worker antagonism towards intellectuals in the formative phase of the Bolshevik party may have been a healthy sign, the symptom of the development of a more equal relationship between workers and their mentors, whereas the silence that hung over that relationship in the Shanghai case suggests that workers acquiesced in their subordination and that intellectuals failed to reflect critically on their role within the party.

### Conclusion

Before exploring the implications of the differences between the two cases, it is worth pausing to consider the strong similarities between them. In the Bolshevik party in St Petersburg and in the CCP in Shanghai intellectuals, at least until challenged by aspiring workers, monopolized decision-making roles, justifying this on the ground that workers did not have the requisite educational and social skills for leadership. And even when, as in St Petersburg, workers challenged

<sup>248</sup> "Erda" he "Sanda": *Zhongguo gongchandang dier-san daibiao dahui ziliao xuanbian* [Selected Materials on the Second and Third Congresses of the CCP] (Beijing, 1985), p. 171.

<sup>249</sup> Wilbur, *Missionaries*, p. 733.

<sup>250</sup> Harrison, *Long March*, p. 99.

<sup>251</sup> Mao Tun, *Midnight*, p. 425.

<sup>252</sup> Hua Gang, *Yijiuerwu nian zhi yijiuerqi nian de Zhongguo da geming shi* [A History of the Chinese Revolution, 1925–27] (Shanghai, 1931), p. 525.

that dominance, tension between them and intellectuals persisted. The evidence suggests that this tension had its roots in sociological factors, such as the cultural and educational advantages which intellectuals enjoyed over workers, and the division of labour which this produced within party activity. In emphasizing sociological differences, however, we should not forget the independent effectivity of the politico-organizational characteristics of the Leninist party. The emphasis on theory, the distrust of worker spontaneity, the enthusiasm for centralism and the focusing of revolutionary ambition on the state, all created additional pressures towards intelligentsia domination, in spite of Lenin's animus towards intellectuals in general.

Noting such tendencies, some have argued that Communist regimes marked the full flowering of the intelligentsia's will to power. As early as 1898 the disillusioned Polish Marxist, Jan Machajski, argued that the outcome of any socialist revolution would be to create a new class society in which the possessors of education and expertise, the intelligentsia, would supplant the owners of capital, the better to exploit the working class.<sup>253</sup> And faced by the enduring subordination of the working class and peasantry in actually existing Communist societies, some critics later came to very similar conclusions.<sup>254</sup> Undoubtedly, the possession of education and expertise continued to be an important principle of social stratification in Communist societies, but it is hard to agree that Machajski's prediction came true. Both the CPSU and CCP dealt the old intelligentsia a resounding blow, since its commitment to freedom of speech and enquiry proved an impediment to the parties' consolidation of power. And even the "party" intelligentsia, which had long since grown to hate its native class and the values of critical thinking associated with it (values, incidentally, which had led it to join the party in the first place) was not immune from attack by the party-state. In both countries "Old Bolsheviks" – especially those who had organic links to the intelligentsia – tended over time to be supplanted by workers and peasants who had risen through the party ranks on the basis of their

<sup>253</sup> These ideas were set out in the essay, "The Evolution of Social Democracy" (1898), which became the basis of the book, *The Intellectual Worker* in 1904. See V. Volkii (Machajski), *Umstvennyi Rabochii* (Geneva, 1905); J.W. Machajski, *Le Socialisme des intellectuels*, ed. and trans. A. Skirda (Paris, 1979).

<sup>254</sup> For the argument that the intelligentsia evolved historically from an estate into a stratum and then, under Communism, into a ruling class, see George Konrad and Ivan Szelenyi, *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power* (Brighton, 1979). A recurrent theme of the work of the historian Richard Pipes is the fundamental conflict of goals between intellectuals, bent on the revolutionary transformation of society, and workers, whose aspirations are said to be merely for "intellectual and economic self-improvement". See R. Pipes, *Social Democracy and the St Petersburg Labor Movement, 1885–1897* (Cambridge, MA, 1963), and *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime, 1919–1924* (London, 1994), pp. 497–501. The *locus classicus* of this view is Selig Perlman, *The Theory of the Labor Movement* (1928; New York, 1970).

abilities. As Lenin had intended, the “party intelligentsia” came increasingly, though by no means exclusively, to recruit from workers and peasants to the detriment of those who had joined the party already possessed of a high level of education. By the 1930s in Russia and the 1950s in China, party leaders such as Chubar’ or Chen Yun were more typical of the ruling stratum than Lunacharskii or Li Lisan.

In addition, a comparative analysis, by drawing attention to differences, and not just similarities, between cases cautions against drawing a straight line from the tutelary relationship of intellectuals to workers in the pre-revolutionary parties to the supposed dominance of the intelligentsia as a ruling class under Communism. The differences between St Petersburg and Shanghai – as well as differences in each case over time – suggest that the relationship between workers and intellectuals was a complex and shifting one, whose dynamics cannot be reduced to those of intelligentsia domination and worker subordination. It was a relationship that was psychologically complicated, involving elements of admiration and emulation, hope and trust, suspicion and self-doubt, contempt and self-delusion. It was a mutually empowering relationship, and yet also a deeply exploitative one. Moreover, the differences between the two cases are telling. In St Petersburg workers succeeded in gaining control of the Bolshevik party, at least at city and raikom level, though this requires some qualification if one looks at the Central Committee. In Shanghai, by contrast, intellectuals remained firmly in the saddle, although even here, one can speculate about what would have happened to the layer of rising worker leaders had they not been decimated by Guomindang repression and war. In view of this, one might expect relations between workers and intellectuals to have been smoother in the Bolshevik party, where intellectual domination was less, yet the reverse was true.

It is interesting to pursue the paradoxes further by speculating on how differences between the two cases were related to the cultural and historical context. *Prima facie*, there are at least three reasons why examination of context might lead us to predict that intelligentsia domination would be greater in the Russian than the Chinese case. First, the Russian intelligentsia, even as it idealized the popular masses, seldom wavered in its conviction that they were a “dark” and elemental force which must be elevated to their own level. By contrast, although the May Fourth generation inveighed against the “slave mentality” of the common people, they were never as obsessed by the need to raise the cultural level of the masses. To take a somewhat idiosyncratic example: Communists in Shanghai had no qualms about using popular entertainment as a means of drawing workers into common people’s schools. At the Yangshupu district people’s school in 1924 entertainments included singing, *shuanghuang* (a double act in which someone speaks or sings while hiding behind a person who does the acting), *tanhuang* (a form

of local opera associated with boatmen) and Beijing opera.<sup>255</sup> The Communists who ran the school seem to have viewed popular culture as a badge of Chinese identity, valuable in a city where the allure of Western-style entertainment was so seductive.<sup>256</sup> In Russia, by contrast, the term popular culture was almost oxymoronic, at least until the early twentieth century when *style russe* acquired a certain vogue. A second facet of context which might lead one to predict greater intelligentsia domination in Russia derives from the fact that Russian intellectuals took immense pride in the high culture of the nineteenth century, mastery of the literary canon being the hallmark of intellectual development. Radical intellectuals in China possessed few such cultural certainties. Profoundly ill at ease with the dominant Confucian tradition, they experimented restlessly. And under the sway of anarchism, they grappled with the division between mental and manual labour that ran so deep through Confucian culture, acutely aware, in a way their Russian comrades were not, of the ways in which cultural achievement was built upon the labour of the common people. Thirdly, in China the radical movement aimed to unify the country against the warlords and eject the foreign imperialists. Nationalism served as a cement to unite intellectuals and workers (together with the petty bourgeoisie and elements of big business) in a common struggle. Class tension within the anti-imperialist movement could, on occasion, be acute, and lay behind Chiang Kai-shek's decision to smash the CCP in April 1927, yet it was generally subsumed by a sense of national purpose. The semi-colonial context thus muted perceptions of difference between Chinese and magnified the difference between "us", the Chinese, and "them", the imperialists. By contrast, nationalism proved unserviceable in the Russian context, since its association with the autocracy and the political right was too strong. An "all-nation struggle" was waged in 1905 in the name of democracy, but it ran aground on the reef of class conflict in the wake of the October Manifesto, and was finally wrecked after the February Revolution.

In highlighting three aspects of the national context which might lead us to predict a greater degree of intelligentsia domination in the Russian than the Chinese case, I am deliberately proceeding counter-factually, in order to convey the multilayered character of this context and the difficulty of inferring determinacy from it. In reality, of course, domination by intellectuals was greater in the CCP than the Bolshevik party. And as the preceding analysis has already hinted, there *were* contextual features which can explain why this was so. First, the Chinese intelligentsia was less heterogeneous in terms of social background, and less marginal to the power elite than its Russian counterpart. The Russian

<sup>255</sup> *Wusa yundong shiliao*, 1, p. 275.

<sup>256</sup> During the Cultural Revolution traditional forms of entertainment came under fire in the campaign against the "four olds".

intelligentsia was losing socio-cultural homogeneity in this period, which weakened its claim to speak on behalf of "society" and led to soul-searching about its political role, especially after 1905. In China, by contrast, though the intelligentsia might feel uncertain about its cultural orientation, it continued to believe in its right to speak out on political matters and to feel confident that it would be listened to. Chinese intellectuals were not prey to the same self-doubt concerning their political role as their Russian counterparts, and nowhere was this more evident than in respect of the sharply contrasting roles played by students in the two countries.<sup>257</sup> Secondly, although in its embryonic phase the Chinese intelligentsia, like its Russian counterpart, was alienated from state power, in the course of its evolution, especially from the late 1920s, it came increasingly to identify with projects of state- and party-building, believing that these alone could save the nation. Since both the Guomindang and the CCP based these projects on mass mobilization this led, to some extent, to a marginalization of the intelligentsia. But the development of new political and military institutions, based on the masses, also strengthened the role of the "knowledgeable elements" by multiplying and institutionalizing the sites on which they could exercise public leadership. Thirdly, the social gulf between the educated elite and the masses was always greater in China than in Russia, though this is not immediately self-evident. In Russia in 1917 popular hostility to the educated classes was intense, without parallel in China until the Cultural Revolution. Yet it is best understood in conjunctural terms, as a consequence of the way in which the popular classes were temporarily mobilized by a language of class. By objective criteria of schooling, literacy and access to the printed word, the Russian masses were less cut off from the intelligentsia than their Chinese counterparts. And the existence of an influential layer of "conscious" workers helped to close this gap. "Conscious" workers existed in Shanghai, too, but their social weight was slight and they were unable to challenge the hegemony of the intelligentsia. The gulf between intelligentsia and masses only deepened once the CCP moved from the cities into the countryside, thereby ensuring that the Mencian right of the educated to rule continued unchallenged.

What does this imply for the issue raised at the beginning of the article? Why did the intelligentsia in the PRC attract greater odium from the party-state than its counterpart in the Soviet Union? How far can we extrapolate from differences in relations between intellectuals and workers in the pre-revolutionary period to developments after the two parties took power? As already stated, the complexity of these relations rules out any unilinear or teleological reading, as does the fluidity of the cultural-historical context. Again, it would not be unrea-

<sup>257</sup> Wasserstrom, *Student Protest*, p. 124.

sonable to expect that persecution of the intelligentsia in Soviet Russia, regularly castigated by Lenin for its indiscipline, spinelessness and its trailing behind the times, would have been more severe in the USSR than the PRC. Such an inference would be borne out by the virulence of worker antagonism to intellectuals in the pre-revolutionary Bolshevik party. And from the moment they seized power in October 1917, the Bolsheviks did steadily increase control over the intelligentsia, although it was not until the 1930s that it lost its autonomy completely.<sup>258</sup> Yet with the possible exception of the so-called “cultural revolution” of 1928–1932, there was always some recognition given to the literary, technical or managerial expertise of the intelligentsia.<sup>259</sup> The Bolshevik aim was to open up its ranks to the working class and peasantry. This was, to be sure, a very different conception of the intelligentsia from that of Lavrov, but it preserved some elements of the nineteenth-century tradition. In spite of purges, war, censorship and imprisonment, the values of the Russian intelligentsia were never completely snuffed out. The old intelligentsia may have come under heavy attack, but its “courage, self-sacrifice and moral authenticity” continued to inspire.<sup>260</sup> And during destalinization, it was, to some extent, reborn as a “distinctive social body providing a critical public to the men of state”.<sup>261</sup> In China, where the prestige of the intelligentsia had been so much greater, the onslaught against it was correspondingly more fierce. From the first, campaigns were launched in the PRC against the “old-style intellectuals” who had tried to divert China’s youth from its revolutionary path by holding up before it the “returned student’s dream” of personal fame and fortune.<sup>262</sup> By the end of 1957 over 300,000 intellectuals had been labelled “rightists”, and many sent to labour camps and jails.<sup>263</sup> This campaign culminated in the second half of the 1960s in the hysteria of the Cultural Revolution, when intellectuals were demonized as “freaks and monsters” (*niugui-sheshen*) and the “stinking ninth category”. Although much of the energy of this revolt derived from young people combating “revisionism” in the party-state, one of its deepest wellsprings was hatred of the age-old association of learning with power. The further association of Chinese intellectuals with Westernization – “fawning on foreign things” – served to intensify such hatred. Some commentators have suggested that the intelligentsia bore some responsibility for its

<sup>258</sup> For the relative restraint of the early Soviet period, see Diane P. Koenker *et al.* (eds), *Party, State and Society in the Russian Civil War* (Bloomington, 1989), section 4.

<sup>259</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921–1934* (Cambridge, 1979), chs 9 and 11.

<sup>260</sup> Christopher Read, *Culture and Power in Revolutionary Russia* (London, 1990), p. 233.

<sup>261</sup> V. Andrie, *A Social History of Twentieth-Century Russia* (London, 1994), pp. 235–244.

<sup>262</sup> Grieder, *Intellectuals*, p. 339.

<sup>263</sup> Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York, 1990), p. 572.

fate, since it never broke with a tradition of consensus rather than pluralism.<sup>264</sup> But too much emphasis on the conformism or “complaisance” of the intelligentsia towards state power seems misplaced.<sup>265</sup> In the last analysis, the reason for its weakness lay in the pounding it received at the hands of the party-state.<sup>266</sup> In more recent times, things have started to look up for the intelligentsia. The government of the PRC is unable to survive without their skills and, though it continues to resist claims to autonomy, it has since the 1980s proved powerless to prevent the rebirth of a “communal critical self-consciousness of the intelligentsia”.<sup>267</sup>

<sup>264</sup> Tu Wei-ming, “Intellectual Effervescence”, p. 266.

<sup>265</sup> Schwartz, “The Intelligentsia in Communist China”, p. 171.

<sup>266</sup> Even Merle Goldman, while emphasizing that only a minority of intellectuals ever felt a sense of responsibility to address political issues, tends to play down the extent of repression, emphasizing rather the ways in which liberal and radical elements of the intelligentsia allied with different factions in the party, thus bringing nemesis upon themselves. Merle Goldman, *China's Intellectuals: Advise and Dissent* (Cambridge, MA, 1981).

<sup>267</sup> Tu Wei-ming, “Intellectual Effervescence”, p. 260; Wang Gungwu, “To Reform a Revolution: Under the Righteous Mandate”, *Daedalus*, 122/2 (1993), p. 85.