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The Formation of Working Class Cultural Institutions during NEP

The Workers' Club Movement in Moscow, 1921-1923

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One of the fundamental political legacies of the Russian civil war was the estrangement between workers and the Bolshevik state.[1] This development, which had taken on definite form in the winter of 1920-21, was conditioned by social and material factors and was the source of growing reservations in the minds of Lenin and his colleagues as to the commitment of a profoundly changed working class to the Bolshevik vision of a disciplined, yet enthusiastic, march towards Marx's industrial utopia. On this point, Lenin's concerns were well grounded: exhausted by years of sacrifice and declining living standards and working conditions, scattered by the necessities and dislocations of war, and increasingly estranged from state, party, and trade union elites, workers were singularly unattuned to the party's call for labor sacrifice and discipline. Instead, they wanted an end to hardship, a restoration of pre-WWI living standards, a say over the conditions of work and life, and expanded opportunities for themselves and their children, all as compensation for earlier and current sacrifices.

One of the immediate goals of the post-civil war period, then, was to reconnect the proletariat to the proletarian state and to integrate workers into the new industrial and social systems that emerged out of Russia's revolutionary cauldron. These accommodations had to be attained in ways satisfactory to workers' needs and aspirations and to the state's need for a highly productive and politically motivated workforce. Although transforming Russia's proletariat into a bulwark of socialism required first and foremost the creation of favorable social conditions, Lenin hoped it could be facilitated by the state through mass political education. Experience soon showed the naivete of this view: workers were not very interested in propaganda campaigns, nor did the state have the resources with which to launch them in the first place. But workers and the state did share another goal: the expansion of cultural opportunities and the creation of community institutions around which the working class might organize its social and cultural life, and over which the state might yet exert some ideological leverage.

This paper examines how these considerations governed the worker's club movement in Moscow in 1921-1923. The period was a critical one in the history of Soviet mass culture, for it was the Bolshevik state's first sustained opportunity to confront the legacies of cultural backwardness and working class particularism. This confrontation formed a significant part of the historical context in which the institutional and ideological identity of the Bolshevik state evolved, a process that was inextricably bound to the fate of the working class in whose name, and over whom, it ruled. The revitalization of working class institutions and the complex process of restoring to workers a proprietary sense in those institutions were key to this evolving relationship.

The approach to the institutional and cultural history of the New Economic Policy (NEP) era adopted here is consistent with recent trends in western historiography that place, with some exceptions, material, social, and institutional factors on an equal footing with ideology in explaining how and why state cultural practices evolved as they did. Cultural institutions, such as the press, the schools, and workers' clubs, were not only mediums through which the state hoped to communicate its values and ideologies to various activist and non-activist strata of the population, they also constituted a set of specific, and often conflicting, practices engaged in by teachers and students, performers and audiences, writers and readers, administrators and rank-and-file, each of whom sought to realize the satisfaction of specific needs and responsibilities and the implementation of differing ideological, institutional, and professional visions.[2]

The Club Movement, Workers, and the State

The club movement originated in St. Petersburg and Moscow in 1907 in response to the Stolypin reaction. Along with several other forms of as-

sociational and cooperative activity, it helped sustain and provide continuity to the workers' movement and its contacts with the socialist and non-socialist intelligentsia during the difficult period of repression that preceded the resurgence of the strike movement in 1912. At the same time, the club movement represented an authentic expression of the self-activity of the working class, and it became an organizing focus for working class social and cultural life, providing a setting for various activities aimed at serving the cultural needs of workers and their communities.[3]

The February Revolution ushered in a period of stepped-up labor activism that carried over into organized cultural work. Workers' organizations were active in a number of areas, including the club movement, and many trade unions formed cultural commissions to direct this work. Cultural activities were undermined, however, by the demands of revolutionary politics and industrial production. As one historian explained, in 1917 worker's groups "simply did not have the resources for organization, economic struggle, and, on top of that, culture and education."[4]

Despite the depredations of the civil war period, the club movement emerged from this cataclysm battered, but largely intact. In 1920, Moscow's trade unions ran a network of 182 clubs and 170 libraries in the city and another 20 clubs and 222 cultural circles in the surrounding provincial region.[5] Although the problems confronting the club movement were many, its survival at a time of extreme material deprivation and social and military disruption provides clear testimony to the historic commitment of the trade union movement to workers' cultural needs.

The club movement was recognized by the Bolsheviks as a mechanism through which the state might influence the proletariat's cultural and political development. Why the Bolsheviks felt they needed to effect such an influence had to do with political uncertainties in party-worker relations in the transition period and the long range problem of creating the cultural preconditions deemed important to Russia's successful socialist transformation.

Recent historiography demonstrates that the Russian working class was the major social force behind the urban revolution that propelled the Bolsheviks into power in October 1917.[6] The process of securing this victory had, however, the paradoxical effect of undermining the Bolsheviks' claim to proletarian legitimacy, precipitating what Sheila Fitzpatrick has termed a "crisis of proletarian identity."[7] How this could and did happen is an important question for further research. Yet it is clear that it had a lot to do with fundamental changes introduced by the October Revolution in Bolshevism's relationship to state power as well as with the effects of the civil war on Russia's economy and social structure and on the process of revolutionary state-building.[8] In short, party-worker relations changed dramatically because the party and the working class were themselves dramatically changed. On the one hand, the social base of working-class support for Bolshevism disintegrated; on the other, Bolshevism underwent what amounted to a process of functional (although not necessarily ideological) statization as its immediate political and organizational tasks shifted from making revolution to the quite different ones of consolidating state power and organizing the economy in defense of that revolution.

The contradictions in party-worker relations that grew out of this shift were aggravated by the "de-Bolshevization" of the proletariat. The social conditions for "de-Bolshevization" stemmed partly from underlying demographic and social processes of working class formation and deformation during WWI and the Civil War. Because of the scarcity of skilled labor, most of the expanded job opportunities in industry during WWI were filled by "new" workers drawn from groups traditionally on the fringes of the organized labor movement: women, youth, and peasant newcomers. Although, as some historians note, these workers played an important role in the revolutionary upsurge of 1917, they were difficult to discipline and did not constitute a major source of organized support for the Bolsheviks and other political parties.[9]

The stresses of the civil war period fundamentally altered the social dynamics and political configurations of working class formation. First, the collapse of the national economy reversed the previously feverish rates of urban demographic growth to equally feverish rates of deurbanization as hundreds of thousands of urban inhabitants, including workers and their dependents, left Moscow for the subsistence guarantees of the villages. Between 1918 and 1920, Moscow's industrial work force declined sixty percent.[10] The most important contribution to "de-Bolshevization" was made by the absorption into the state of the working class elements who supported the party. This group consisted of urbanized and skilled (male) workers who were the mainstay of the organized labor movement prior to the revolution and the chief carriers of radical politics in the factories during 1917. The departure of this cohort left the Communists with relatively few active supporters in the factories, a situation that grew worse as the civil war progressed.[11]

What remained was an amalgam consisting of a numerically and proportionately weak Bolshevist segment, a disorganized segment of new and unskilled workers, and a core of urbanized, skilled workers, consisting of those who, for one reason or another, were not eager or able to leave the factories. It was this group that formed the social base for the continuity in the labor movement of non-Bolshevik and non-Leninist political and organizational traditions, including social democracy, independent trade unionism, and workers' control. It also, as Diane Koenker notes, provided the social base for the transmission of pre-revolutionary urban popular culture into the 1920s.[12]

The massive labor disturbances that broke out in the winter of 1920-1921 caught the Bolsheviks off guard, greatly complicating their attempt to extricate the country from the rigors and crises of War Communism.[13] As Lenin soon found out, placing the retreat to "state capitalism" in a favorable light to radical and proletarian sectors of the party was a difficult proposition. Although workers welcomed the dismantling of the militarized industrial regime and the easing of threats to subsistence that

characterized War Communism's latter months, they distinctly resented market-generated pressures on wages and job security introduced by NEP, nor did they particularly welcome the continuing consolidation of managerial authority.[14]

It was in this complex environment that party leaders grappled with the problems of defining the proletariat's relationship to the state and mobilizing labor to the tasks of economic reconstruction and socialist industrialization. For Lenin, "de-Bolshevization" and disintegration raised crucial questions about the proletariat's political stability and social discipline. The tensions of the transitional period militated against the mass recruitment of workers into the party. Instead, he favored a return to classical approaches to consciousness-raising, stressing "qualitative" methods of interaction with workers and a step-by-step process of the training and promotion of worker activists in trade union and state organizations. In his view, the *declasse* proletariat of 1921 was no more able than its pre-1905 predecessor to rise above spontaneity (trade union consciousness). Therefore the ideas and values of socialism had to be transmitted into the working class from outside, not by the revolutionary intelligentsia, as before, but by the state. Only after workers began to think and behave like class conscious proletarians would they again be admitted into the party in large numbers.[15]

The indicator of correct political consciousness had also changed from the militant revolutionism of 1917 to one stressing production discipline and the Spartan subordination of immediate consumptionist demands to the "general class interests of the proletariat." Unfortunately, the disintegration of the proletariat permitted the increased influence within the factories of mentalities and behaviors dysfunctional to a productive industrial work culture. Too many workers lacked the necessary labor skills and discipline vital for a productive economy, and most lacked a clear sense of the centrality of their labor to the goal of economic recovery. In these areas, then, the problems of industrial productivity and political

stability had important cultural and cognitive dimensions that in theory could be addressed by an ensemble of cultural-political activities.

On 18 November 1920, against the backdrop of a growing crisis in industrial production, Lenin issued his "Theses on Production Propaganda." Shortly thereafter, the All-Union Central Trade Union Council (VTsSPS) instructed trade union cultural departments (KO) to ensure their enactment. In early December, the All-Russian Bureau of Production Propaganda (consisting of delegates from the Communist Party central Committee [TsK], VTsSPS, the Main Committee on Political Education [Glavpolitprosvet], and the Supreme Council for the National Economy of the USSR [VSNKh]) was organized; subordinate bureaus were established in all vertical and horizontal levels of the trade union movement. Production cells, composed of "leading workers" and representatives from the factory committee, cultural commission, party cell, and factory administration, were organized in the factories. The agitation-propaganda (*agitprop*) departments of district party committees were instructed to cooperate with the trade unions in developing production propaganda in large scale enterprises. The goal of all this was to create a stratum of "conscious" workers who understood the Communist Party line that the general class interests of the proletariat rested on higher labor productivity and steadfast discipline.[16]

Workers' clubs were to be one of the main mechanisms for the transmission of production propaganda and political education to the factories. Much of the activity specifically devoted to these themes, including lectures and study circles, was slated to take place in clubs. In addition, other forms of cultural activity conducted in the clubs, including artistic instruction and staged performances, were to be infused with the correct ideological content. All this entailed mobilizing the resources of the relevant institutions, including the trade unions, the party, and the state, around the revitalization of factory cultural-political work. The main responsibility for directing this effort was entrusted to Glavpolitprosvet.

Until late 1920, the state's involvement in factory cultural work was minimal. According to the September 1921 Moscow Cultural Conference, a complete breakdown in trade union and state leadership of factory cultural work had occurred.[17] The effort to rectify this situation began in earnest in late 1920, and was signalled by the creation of a new Narkompros agency, Glavpolitprosvet, responsible for the direction of cultural-political activity conducted outside the Communist Party.[18] In November 1920, the Second Moscow Provincial Trade Union Congress called on Narkompros to create a trade union section (*profsektsii*) to coordinate joint work. Subsequently, the Moscow Provincial Trade Union Soviet (MGSPS) established organizational ties between its KO and Moscow Narkompros' (Narobraz) extramural and art subsections and, after Narkompros' reorganization, Moscow Glavpolitprosvet (Mosgubpolitprosvet).[19]

Political-education sections (*sekpolpro*) were set-up in 1921 to institutionalize Glavpolitprosvet's ideological control over trade union cultural activities. Jointly staffed by the trade unions and Glavpolitprosvet, *sekpolpro*'s were organized within the administrative confines of local branch trade unions; however, they were chaired by a Glavpolitprosvet representative whose chief task was to make sure that club activities reflected a "productivist tendency." While their structure ensured Glavpolitprosvet's ideological-programmatic dominance, in recognition of the principle of trade union autonomy, the *sekpolpro* were obliged to conduct all practical work through corresponding trade union cultural departments. They could not, in other words, work directly with factory cultural commissions.[20]

As the respective roles of trade union and state agencies in factory cultural work were being established, a third force, the semi-autonomous Proletarian Culture (Proletkul't) movement, also entered the picture. An offspring of the utopian and iconoclastic wing of Bolshevism, Proletkul't was dedicated to the cultural transformation of the working class.[21] Its approach to mass cultural work was inspired by A. A. Bogdanov's view

that building socialism required not only the economic preconditions of socialized ownership (and the state's productivist corollaries), but also the creation, by workers themselves, of a "proletarian culture" that was independent from and critical of bourgeois culture, and which was essential to the formation of proletarian class awareness. The realization of this goal required autonomy for working class cultural organizations from the class-amorphous state bureaucracy and their insulation from the harmful effects of bourgeois ideology and popular culture.[22]

From its inception in early 1918, Proletkul't found itself involved in a struggle to defend its ideological principles and institutional autonomy from state and party controls. Proletkul't was subordinated to Narkompros in 1919 and assigned to Glavpolitprosvet in late 1920.[23] It nevertheless managed to retain considerable budgetary and programmatic autonomy within the sphere of artistic-creative activity, and was one of the few effective practitioners of factory cultural work during the civil war. Throughout the period, it maintained an energetic tempo in a broad range of cultural activity. In the factories, its work centered mainly on the proliferation of artistic and creative workshops aimed at fostering a renaissance of proletarian culture. These workshops found their greatest appeal among younger workers and other urban youths. Moscow Proletkul't also ran a modest network of clubs, some of which were factory-based, and all of which were dedicated to artistic and creative work. It was natural, therefore, for Proletkul't to take an interest in the "broad field" of activity offered by the trade union-run workers' club movement.[24]

In fact, beginning with Proletkul't's founding congress in 1918, which was attended by a substantial group of trade union and factory committee representatives, the trade unions and Proletkul't appear to have maintained amicable relations based undoubtedly on similarities in their institutional ideologies (both claimed to be working class organizations), practical problems, and relations with the state. The Second All-Russian Trade Union Congress formally sanctioned Proletkul't's involvement in trade union cultural work in May 1919.[25] Proletkul't sought to realize this

first by insinuating its members and workshops into already-existing workers' clubs (an activity that was often supported by Moscow trade union and party authorities and by at least some workers),[26] and then by attempting to assert its role as the watchdog of the cultural interests of the proletariat.

In 1919, Moscow Proletkul't undertook an investigation of 135 Moscow factories. It found that the work of factory cultural commissions was "weak." Particularly disturbing was the fact that the "majority" of the clubs lacked "independence": of nine clubs in the industrial Zamoskvoretskii district, for example, only one had an elected, as opposed to appointed, administration.[27] In August 1920, a Moscow Proletkul't official (Dodonova) proposed to the presidium of the Moscow Provincial Trade Union Council (MGSPS) that it formally involve Proletkul't in trade union cultural work. This suggestion, and that of the All-Russian Proletkul't Conference (October 1920) to "concentrat(e) under (its) authority...the clubs of the industrial proletariat," should be interpreted in the light of these and later reports that clearly pointed to the decay and bureaucratization of trade union cultural work.[28] These proposals elicited a favorable response from local and central trade union authorities. In August 1920, MGSPS sanctioned the establishment of close organizational ties with Proletkul't on the basis of "the necessity and value of the work of Proletkul't as a class-creative organization of the proletariat."[29] In February 1921, the First All Russian Trade Union Conference officially supported Proletkul't's appeal for fusion with the trade unions.[30]

The Social and Material Base of the Club Movement

Conditioned by the effects of working class disintegration and the growing difficulties of everyday life, and marked by a substantial decline in mass participation, the workers' club movement emerged from the civil war

without a viable social base in the factories.[31] According to all-Russian statistics, in 1921-1922 average club attendance dropped 53 percent (from 419 to 199 per 10,000 union members); participation in other forms of organized cultural activity (lectures, general club meetings, and excursions) also dropped substantially (42, 61, and 88 percent, respectively).[32]

Adults composed the largest group of registered club members, but young people (*molodezh*) were the only ones who used clubs on more than a casual basis.[33] R. Ginzburg, head of Moscow Proletkul't's club department, commented on this circumstance in his appraisal of membership trends in 1923. He noted that clubs were utilized by two groups of workers whose motives differed substantially: young workers seeking artistic expression and "average" workers looking for light entertainment. Neither group, Ginzburg asserted, constituted a stable social base of "active club members" capable of and interested in "independently build(ing) club work." At best, among adult workers, club membership was "formalistic" and attendance "uneven." Worker-members attended clubs only three or four times a month.[34]

The findings of surveys conducted in 1924 of the social, sexual, and age composition of club membership at the Hammer and Sickle metal-working factory demonstrate some of these trends. According to one such survey, 67 percent of all club members were between the ages of 16 and 20 (in comparison to the age composition of the metal industry workforce, this figure was grossly disproportionate in favor of younger age groups).[35] The results of another survey for the same club compiled in December 1924 shows that 38 percent of the membership was under eighteen years of age and that another third were members by virtue of family ties to Hammer and Sickle workers and white collar employees (*sluzhashchie*). Most of those in the latter group were eighteen and under.[36] These findings reinforce the notion that clubs appealed mainly to young workers and urban youth and much less so to adults.

Why this was so has to do with a number of factors, including the cultural background and social circumstances of older workers and the

failure of clubs to adequately tailor activities to their particular needs and tastes. One could hardly expect adults to be attracted by the youth center atmosphere of clubs, especially after the daily grind of factory labor.[37] Among adult male workers, a much more popular pastime was to visit the local tavern. The particular family-oriented responsibilities of adult women workers, including child care, made it difficult for them to attend clubs regularly. Finally, new workers coming to Moscow from the villages simply lacked strongly developed habits of involvement in organized cultural activity.

Clubs were better placed to respond to the desire of urban young people for education, creative-emotional expression, and social interaction. In Moscow's textile industry, for example, the 625 participants in artistic and theatrical circles consisted mainly of adolescents.[38] In this, the social base of the club movement resembled that of Proletkul't.[39] Of all the forms of organized cultural activity measured in the survey cited above, only the rate of participation in "study" circles avoided precipitous decline, falling only a modest twenty percent in 1921-1922.[40] As a result, this form of activity increasingly became a main thrust of the club movement. According to a 1923 MGSPS investigation, 84 percent of all circles under trade union auspices were dedicated to artistic-creative themes, including theater, art, and music.[41] Of course, urban youth and young workers were a restricted constituency; in 1922, only 25 of every 10,000 trade union members belonged to a study circle of any kind and in Moscow there were fewer than 10,000 participants in study circles of all kinds offered by the trade unions. This works out to approximately two percent of all registered members of industrial and transport unions, a figure that compares favorably with the three percent of Moscow's trade union membership that consisted of *molodezh* in 1923.[42]

Circles devoted to political themes attracted little interest. Trade union education accounted for less than eight percent of all circles offered by Moscow's unions in 1922.[43] In Moscow's metal industry, artistic-creative and physical culture themes accounted for 66 percent of all circles;

only 21 percent were devoted to political education, and only two percent to trade union education.[44] Despite a concerted effort to increase this number, MGSPS observed that "no more than 50 of the 189 listed trade union circles (were) active" in 1923/24. "There is hardly one circle," G.N. Mel'nichanskii, the MGSPS Chairman, complained, "not one course on the trade union movement; cultural work is not being directed towards emphasizing the education of workers in the essence of conscious trade union membership."[45]

The development of political-education and production propaganda work also proceeded slowly. For example, while one Moscow-area railroad-workers' club had choir and literature circles and two theatrical workshops, the topics of Marxism, production and the economy, and political literacy were ignored.[46] A similar situation prevailed at the Goznak print works club, where there were 300 members of various artistic-creative circles and a total absence of political work.[47] In the chemical industry, half of all circles were devoted to artistic-creative themes while those engaged in trade union and political education were the "worst."[48] Low rates of participation also characterized the experience of production cells.[49]

A number of factors prevented the diffusion of political education, but the absence of a viable social base was perhaps the most important. By and large, adult workers were unwilling to commit themselves to the sustained and active participation required of this form of activity. The authorities tended to account for this by referring first to workers' material difficulties, which tended to divert their energies away from production and public activism, and second, to boring and sterile political lectures and study circles.[50] This does not mean, of course, that adult workers never frequented clubs for other purposes, but it does indicate, as Ginzburg suggested, that on the whole they did not participate in ways consistent with the state's goal of revitalizing the social base of the club movement.

At the same time, the problems of political work also signified a failure of sorts on the part of central institutions to break down worker political disinterest. Overcoming this failure, which must be seen in the context of the larger uncertainties confronting party-worker relations, was made difficult by a number of circumstances: the prevailing material and fiscal conditions of the early NEP, bureaucratic inertia, and institutional and ideological squabbles that were themselves a reflection of the ambiguous social and institutional outcome of the October Revolution. For now, we are concerned with the first of these.

As we have seen, the trade union cultural apparatus emerged from the civil war in bad shape. "Qualified" cultural workers at all levels were scarce, and factory cultural commissions—often staffed by inexperienced, younger workers—presented a "wretched picture" of apathy and disorganization. An examination of factory cultural activists resulted in the rejection of "many;" of the rest, "a large percentage were weakly prepared," revealing that "the selection of (club) workers was completely haphazard ... Many of them find themselves in clubs, not understanding their problems." According to MGSPS, the "absence of qualified cultural workers (was) the most serious question of cultural work." Club activities, aside from those based in the most financially healthy factories (of which there were few) were dismal in concept and execution.[51] The poor material circumstances of the club movement were brought out in an investigation conducted by the Moscow Party Committee (MK) of 40 clubs in Zamoskvoretskii *raion*, which found that most lacked lighting or heat.[52]

The economic crisis that ushered in NEP seriously undermined the development of mass cultural-political work. Severe cuts were sustained in the state budget, precipitating a major crisis that affected virtually all local extensions of the trade union and state cultural apparats. As state agencies, Glavpolitprosvet and Proletkul't were particularly vulnerable to cutbacks, and both had their budgets slashed steeply in 1921. The former was forced to reduce its staff by over fifty percent; as a result, it was unable to sustain coordinated and effective mass political-ideological work and

was faced with the *de facto* collapse of its local bureaucracies.[53] The Moscow Proletkul't absorbed even steeper cuts.[54]

In early January 1922, VTsSPS announced substantial reductions in state subsidies of "almost all types of cultural-educational institutions" due to "the transition of the state economy" to "cost-accounting" (*khozraschet*) and to "general conditions" of the NEP. Local trade unions and state cultural agencies were instructed to reduce their expenditures—"while preserving the interests of the working class"—and to find new, "local" sources of income, including funds negotiated as part of collective wage agreements.[55] Proposals were advanced to eliminate the state subsidies of Glavpolitprosvet and Proletkul't; although the former was able to fend off this drastic solution, the latter was faced with a devastating crisis.[56] Threats to the independent existence of cultural departments were also made by powerful bureaucratic interests in the wage and organizational departments of some trade unions on the grounds that cultural expenditures were "superfluous" given the fiscal crisis. Although central authorities prevented the dismantling of cultural departments, so as "to preserve the interests of the working class," trade union cultural work remained "lost in a forest" of problems of economic and material life.[57] According to MGSPS, "hopeless" financial circumstances of clubs were the primary cause of the trade unions' failure "to develop" cultural work.[58] The MGSPS KO director, Kh. Ia. Diament, observed that trade union cultural work was "nonexistent." "Deepening this work," he insisted, was "one of the main issues of the trade unions."[59]

Initially, the trade unions hoped to offset cuts in central funding by soliciting direct contributions from state-owned enterprises. These contributions, set as a proportion of the general wage fund, were as high as ten percent in 1921. By late 1923, however, they had plummeted to only one percent in a "majority of unions."[60] Moreover, cash flow difficulties and cost-cutting pressures ensured that management would not always make even these lower contributions.[61] In January 1923, central trade union cultural officials acknowledged that enterprise contributions

provided only "insignificant" levels of support for cultural work. More support was actually provided in the form of grants from cooperatives and state commercial and financial institutions.[62] Requests for increased allocations from general trade union budgets and from the Narkompros to make up for these deficiencies were denied.[63]

The collapse of central funding and the failure of industrial enterprises and trusts to make up the difference forced structural adaptations in the trade union cultural apparat. In early 1923, controls over budgets were formally centralized under trade union cultural departments. Opposition to this development was expressed in some unions by local activists who feared that the centralization of budgetary controls would weaken local initiative. This position was rejected by the Moscow metal workers' union on the grounds that "centralized cultural work...would eliminate amateurishness." In his report to the Fifth Moscow Trade Union Congress (November 1923), Diament served notice that, henceforth, budgetary stringencies would require "the adoption of appropriate measures in the area of economizing...resources, dictating the carrying out of the concentration of...cultural resources in the...branch trade union administrations." In theory, only factory committee cultural commissions and clubs located in large-scale enterprises would be allowed to retain direct control over expenditures.[64]

With the centralization of budgetary controls, the unions were now in a position to limit "the uncontrolled proliferation of clubs" which had been underway since 1921, and which had resulted in a doubling of the number of workers' clubs to 500 in Moscow *gubernii* by late 1923. This growth had occurred in the absence of necessary financial conditions and "cultural forces," and it was brought to an abrupt halt. Restrictions were enacted against the creation of new clubs and the existing network was cut by sixty percent, leaving only 156 clubs.[65]

Beyond simply reducing the network, a debate ensued over how best to utilize rapidly diminishing resources. One side argued that rationalization could be achieved by replacing factory-based clubs with "central"

clubs. Advocates of this strategy said it would permit the concentration of scarce resources in a relatively small number of clubs, each of which would, at least theoretically, serve a larger constituency than that provided for by existing factory clubs, thereby improving the quality of cultural work.[66] This argument, which had been successfully used to justify the centralization of budgets in the branch administrations, fared poorly. Defenders of the factory principle pointed out that the "isolation" of central clubs "from the masses" would negate any advantages to be gained through their greater efficiency, resulting either in their "natural death" or in their reorientation towards "the interests of the petit bourgeois segment of (their) membership." In other words, if clubs were inconveniently located, workers would simply not bother attending them.[67] The All-Russian Trade Union Cultural Conference (October 1923) settled this debate in favor of the factory principle.[68]

This outcome suggests the importance of local factors in the structural response to the fiscal crisis. As central institutions disengaged from the local arena, largely for budgetary reasons, clubs were forced back onto local resources, which were slender indeed and dependent upon membership dues and ticket sales. Central clubs would have been poorly placed to tap these sources of revenue.

To get around their funding problems, many unions automatically enrolled their members into clubs and deducted the dues from their wages. This practice was evidently a source of worker resentment, and it was formally forbidden in 1923 on the grounds that it violated the "voluntary principle."[69] The enunciation of the voluntary principle was just one way the club movement adapted itself to the limitations and potentials of local economic conditions and community demand. Another such adaptation was achieved through commercialization. In 1923, for example, the Moscow Textile Workers Union KO announced its intention to permit clubs to offer live performances on a paid admission basis on the grounds of budgetary necessity imposed by *khozraschet*.[70] As this announcement indicates, commercialization was seen by the trade unions as an important

source of revenue. By the late 1920s, it was a mainstay of the club movement.[71]

In order to tap local sources of revenue, club administrators and trade unions also sought to expand the dues-paying membership of clubs. Doing so imposed a specific logic upon club formation that entailed its further departure from strictly ideological and political goals. Attracting a broader membership required adapting clubs to the cultural and social needs of working class communities; in other words, it influenced the functional orientation of the club movement towards community demand and away from state interests. As we have seen, artistic-creative work was a response to the demand of young people; so too was sponsorship of "evening dances" that appealed specifically to the natural sociability of the young.[72] Given this constituency, workers' clubs became redefined as youth centers.

For adult workers, functional reorientation was both more difficult and politically more sensitive. Offering light entertainment and films was one way to attract this group, but as Ginzburg noted, this approach, while consistent with the prevailing commercial pressures, had little relevance to the construction of a stable social base. The problem was rather one of attracting adult workers on a systematic basis, and here, as long as political education seemed to hold little practical relevance for them, there were few options. One was designing club events and circles around the community's informational and educational needs.[73] Given the material and technical weaknesses of the agencies' support of these activities, there was only so much that could be done in this direction at this time. As a result, club administrators resorted to expedients, the most controversial of which was selling beer at club canteens as a way of attracting adult male workers out of the tavern.[74]

Commercial realities demanded that clubs respond to community demand. The retrenchment of central institutions allowed this demand to take on an almost hegemonic influence in the localities, where central controls and resources were weakest. The beer tavern-youth center split

personality of the club movement was just one manifestation of an adaptation that was the cause of considerable alarm among cultural radicals. The threat of "cultural spontaneity" that these pressures posed to the working class prompted Glavpolitprosvet to oppose commercialization and to call for resisting capitulation to popular tastes.[75] It stressed instead completing the transformation of clubs into "schools for communism," and advocated a pedagogical approach that emphasized political education, production propaganda, and guidance about the problems of everyday life.[76]

Under Glavpolitprosvet's direct supervision, the club movement was to "reflect all production life." In the state's most utopian conception, clubs became "forges" of the "new man," centers for his or her "communist re-education." The "psychology of the broad masses" would be transformed through the dissemination of production propaganda aimed at teaching good work habits and improving skills.[77] Nadezhda Krupskaia, the director of Glavpolitprosvet, linked political and production tasks when she insisted that worker's clubs occupied a key position in the struggle against "syndicalism" as places where "backward workers" could be "reeducate(ed)...in the essence of communism" and be taught about "the importance of economic construction, the importance of raising labor productivity."[78]

Proletkul't also argued against lowering club standards in the face of popular demand. Ginzburg (Moscow Proletkul't) opposed relying on a repertoire of evening dances, "petit bourgeois" spectacles, and the sale of beer, all of which appealed only to apolitical workers. According to Ivanov, the head of the club department of Proletkul't's Central Committee, if carried too far, such activities resulted in "an uproar in clubs" (due to hooliganism and alcoholism) that discouraged the attendance of adult workers. Besides, he noted, "if a worker wants to drink beer, he goes to the tavern, where he will drink without limit, (and) where it is possible to drink not only beer."[79]

Proletkul't dismissed Glavpolitprosvet's pedagogical approach on the grounds that it unnecessarily lowered club standards to the level of peasant workers instead of using clubs to raise the cultural levels of "backward elements." V.F. Pletnev, the chairman of Proletkul't, insisted that the central aim of cultural activity was to bring about within the working class the "energetic consolidation" of "the influence of revolutionary Marxist ideology" during a period in which a resurgent "bourgeois ideology" and the broad influence of peasant culture threatened the "purity and firmness" of the proletariat's "class self-consciousness." Achieving this meant rejecting the prevailing reliance on various forms of "narrow, specialized" cultural-educational work, traditionally favored by the trade unions, Glavpolitprosvet, and even Proletkul't itself, in favor of mass forms of work aimed at influencing workers' "production consciousness." This would foster the development of the proletariat's self-awareness of its "general role" in Soviet industry, thereby enhancing its capacity to lead socialist construction.[80]

As the party, trade unions, and local administrators realized, neither Glavpolitprosvet's "school of communism" nor Proletkul't's consciousness-raising approaches were sound bases for launching the social, political, and financial revitalization of the club movement. Whatever their political and cultural merits, these strategies had only limited appeal in the working class, nor were they of much relevance to the financial constraints imposed on the localities. In what was a clear criticism of Glavpolitprosvet, the Moscow Committee's organ, *Izvestiia MK*, stressed the need first to concentrate on establishing comfortable conditions inside clubs so as to improve attendance. Only when conditions were right was it wise to engage in political work.[81] Delegates to a late 1922 Moscow conference on clubs rose to the defense of evening dances, asking why anyone would be opposed to them.[82]

From the standpoint of the authorities, the main threat to socialist hegemony was posed by "bourgeois" culture. The transmission of "bourgeois" cultural values into the club movement was a natural consequence

of the overall weaknesses of the trade union cultural apparat and the strong demand for artistic-creative instruction on the part of youth. The latter demand was such that neither Glavpolitprosvet nor the trade unions could handle it. In fact, only Proletkul't afforded the expertise for this kind of work, but its rapidly diminishing resources, as well as its ideological unorthodoxy, limited its role.

Instead, local club administrators and cultural departments hired "bourgeois" specialists (*spetsy*) to staff trade union cultural departments and teach art to the young.[83] Beginning with the Sunday School movement of the late 1850s and continuing through the early 1900s in the People's House and workers' club movements, liberal and radical *intelligenty* played an active role in raising the cultural levels of urban workers.[84] That they continued to be involved in this activity in the 1920s should therefore come as no surprise.

Popular tastes also came to be reflected in many aspects of the club movement. Clubs were often used as venues for the performances of travelling theatrical troupes who found in them ready audiences for potboilers (*khaltura*) and cabaret (*kafe*). Club administrators allowed all this for lack of alternatives and because revenues could be generated from ticket and concession sales. Although the symbolic and political content of this activity is a topic that demands further study, it is clear that whatever its commercial merits, *khaltura* was considered to be an ideologically retrograde influence on the working class. Glavpolitprosvet warned that "revelry of all sorts of *kafe* and 'light comedy'...(represent) a special danger" given "the background of the extraordinarily weak activities of workers' clubs."[85]

Whatever its source, "cultural spontaneity" contributed to a profound sense of unease among cultural-political activists. While political work died on the vines, budgets dried up, and adult workers ignored clubs, clubs were forced to adapt structurally and functionally in accordance with material and fiscal conditions and the necessity to satisfy popular tastes. They had to do so largely on the basis of locally available resources, in-

cluding "bourgeois" *spetsy* and workers' disposable income. Thus, the rejection by the party and trade unions of the more ascetic prescriptions offered by Glavpolitprovet and Proletkul't did not mean reconciliation with cultural spontaneity. If anything, the prominent role played by commercial, popular, and "bourgeois" cultural forces increased the anxiety of the trade unions and the party over the direction being taken by clubs. At a time when party-worker relations were fraught with uncertainty, cultural spontaneity constituted a political problem, which threatened to widen the cultural divide between the working class Bolshevism, and the state. The only way to prevent this from happening was through vigilance over bourgeois and popular forces.

Glavpolitprosvet and Proletkul't took aim at the staffing of trade union departments by the cultural intelligentsia. In June 1921, Proletkul't's Central Committee warned that trade union cultural departments were "often" coming under the influence of "persons ideologically hostile to the working class." Citing its "moral obligation" to come to the aid of a "kindred" organization in resisting this influence (as well as its practical success in leading factory cultural work), it reiterated its standing appeal for closer ties with the trade unions.[86] *Trud* insisted that, in light of the influence of "bourgeois" ideology in the working class, cultural work should take a primary place among the priorities of the trade union movement, and, in what was probably a reference to Poletkul't, called for the infusion of "new strong forces into cultural departments of unions and local cultural commissions."[87]

Through their role as art instructors, *spetsy* were accused of introducing a variety of deviations into the club movement, including "professionalism," workshop-fetishism (the concentration of artistic-creative activities in small-scale workshops "isolated" from "the general political and trade union work of clubs"), and the tendency to teach art from the standpoint of aesthetics—the so-called "art for art's sake" (*kul'turnichestvo*) "deviation" from the "proletarian line" in club work that exposed the "soul and consciousness" of workers to a "philistine ideol-

ogy."[88] A 1922 conference of club activists organized by Mosgubpolitprosvet called for a struggle against the "prevailing abstractness of artistic-theatrical work in clubs" and the infusion of production propaganda in all such work.[89] The MK criticized the fact that "alien elements" were, in a "majority of cases," leading the work of art and drama circles, a circumstance it blamed on the inattentiveness of party cells and trade union organizations.[90] Moscow's chemical and metal workers' unions called for a struggle against "deviations" in the work of "many art circles," the deepening of their "proletarian" ideological content, and "the most decisive struggle with *khaltura*."[91]

The authorities decided to deal with these problems by strengthening ideological controls over both artistic-creative work and theatrical performances. MGSPS KO announced in March 1923 that henceforth all club workers would be subject to verification by a special commission composed of representatives from the trade unions, Communist Party, and Glavpolitprosvet with a mandate to purge clubs of "alien elements" and unqualified personnel. It was instructed by the MGSPS presidium to strengthen its struggle against *khaltura* by requiring the preliminary registration and monitoring of all performances staged in clubs. It also authorized the formation of officially-sponsored theatrical troupes with approved repertoires.[92] Finally, party organizations were encouraged to involve themselves more actively in factory cultural work in order to ensure the development of "socialist culture" and to put "an immediate end to hooliganism."[93]

The Politics of Club Formation

Social and budgetary factors encouraged the broad penetration of spontaneous cultural forces into the club movement. Spontaneity competed with mobilization, coming out ahead and introducing complications into

what was already a politically uncertain relationship between the Communist Party and the working class. From the standpoint of party-worker relations, mobilizing the club movement against spontaneity was the key political question, but as of 1921, it had received little sustained attention from state and party authorities. After 1921, this changed with the emergence of contending strategies and ideologies of cultural activism. Proletkul't advocated a form of artistic-political work that was especially relevant to the young. Glavpolitprosvet asserted a Leninist political-ideological presence in the clubs. The trade unions were interested in using clubs to assist in their social revitalization.

While Glavpolitprosvet sought to maintain effective ideological controls over the club movement, Proletkul't desired to maximize the autonomy of working class cultural institutions from the state bureaucracy. The trade unions also wanted to defend their autonomy from state controls. Which of these or other organizations (including the Communist Party) would ultimately take direct control of the club movement had yet to be firmly decided. For all of them, the immediate problem was achieving practical results. This meant experimenting with different approaches to cultural activity and creating structures capable of supporting it. As long as these efforts did not intensify political uncertainties in party-worker relations, they were allowed.

Glavpolitprosvet exercised the state's mandate to assert ideological and programmatic leadership over trade union cultural work. For political reasons, the trade unions had to abide by this set-up, but they were interested in limiting Glavpolitprosvet's role as much as possible. In attempting to do so, they revealed a set of institutional priorities that, in some major respects, were quite different from those of the state. On the one hand, both wanted to accelerate the proletariat's cultural and political transformation. But while the state was motivated by productivist concerns, the trade unions were motivated to reconstitute their traditional working class social base. As a November 1920 MGSPS instruction to its

cultural department indicates, this was best furthered by carrying out trade union education as well as state-mandated production propaganda.[94]

To understand why the unions were concerned with their social revitalization one only needs to consider their precarious situation on the eve of NEP. As in the case of the party, and largely for the same reasons, the October Revolution set in motion a chain of events that resulted in the functional (statization) and sociological (bureaucratization) transformation of the trade unions. The result was the estrangement of the working class from its own institutions and the marginalization of many of the traditional, "mass" (including cultural) forms of trade union activity.[95]

The ability of the trade unions to revitalize and mobilize the club movement was problematic for three reasons. The first was the material situation's deleterious effect on the trade union cultural apparat. As we have seen, its leadership was ineffectual, resources non-existent, and the status of trade union education circles quite poor.

The second was the threat posed by statization to the legitimacy of the trade unions as class institutions. Issues regarding the role of the trade unions in Soviet society were raised in the sphere of culture that echoed those of the famous trade union controversy of the winter of 1920-1921.[96] Under the terms of Lenin's "Platform of the Ten," which was overwhelmingly adopted at the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921, the trade unions were assigned a dualistic function. On the one hand, the unions were to serve as "transmission belts" for the diffusion of communist and productivist ideology in the factories and as "schools of communism" for the purposes of improving production and the training of worker cadres in the skills of administration. On the other, they regained some of their traditional functions as class organizations, autonomous from the state and entrusted with the defense of workers' economic interests against "bureaucratic distortions" in the functioning of the state apparatus. What disturbed the unions here was not so much their obligation to play the role of transmission belt, but their structural co-mingling with and direct subordination to Glavpolitprosvet. In the words of a resolution passed at a

May 1921 conference of Moscow cultural activists, the "autonomy" of trade union cultural departments as working class organizations had to be preserved.[97]

The third obstacle to the social revitalization of the trade union movement in general and the club movement in particular was the bureaucracy; that is, the fact that bureaucratic hegemony within the trade union administration (and the state, for that matter) perpetuated insensitivity towards the requirements of mass work. Bureaucratic indifference towards cultural work, as reflected in the "inactivity" of the Moscow Metal Workers' Union KO, was rampant.[98] Factory cultural-educational work was "completely neglected" in Moscow's food-processing industry, and many trade union cultural agencies in the outlying provincial region were moribund.[99] Some trade union cultural departments even found their existence threatened by the arbitrary diversion of their budgets to wage and organization departments and by attempts to "fuse" them with these more powerful departments.[100] Similar indifference and priorities hampered local state and party agencies engaged in cultural work.[101]

From the start, local cultural activists made it clear that this state of affairs was unsatisfactory. For example, the May 1921 meeting of Moscow-area cultural workers criticized MGSPS for its failure to adopt a "clear line" in cultural-educational work.[102] The MGSPS-sponsored First Moscow Provincial Cultural Conference (September 1921) repeated and expanded upon this criticism. MGSPS KO and Narkompros were taken to task for their failure to support cultural work "at any level" and for permitting a breakdown of "creative work" in the factories. The conference urged the unions to give more attention and increased funding to cultural work, and it advocated the implementation of Proletkul't's ideological and practical leadership over the club movement.[103]

MGSPS KO responded to these criticisms by attributing its lack of success in reviving cultural work not to a breakdown in leadership, but to the effects of the broader social and economic crisis on trade union operations, including inadequate budgets and the lack of an experienced cul-

tural *aktiv*.[104] Local trade unions tried to strengthen cultural apparats by increasing staffing and partially centralizing funding controls, but with generally meager results. On the other hand, bureaucratic moves to abolish or emasculate cultural departments were decisively rebuffed.[105]

Anti-bureaucratic and anti-statist sentiments were fused when Diament blamed the "confusion" in the leadership of cultural work on the "concentration" of authority "exclusively" in the hands of district branches of Mosgubpolitprosvet (*raipolitprosvet*). As a result, he said, club activities amounted to "worthless" theatrical productions that contributed little towards the goal of "raising workers' cultural levels." Diament insisted that "the trade unions must more closely approach the question of factory clubs in order to make them actual cells of proletarian life and culture and to thoroughly use them for trade union problems."[106]

The exact cause of the attack on *raipolitprosvety* is unclear, but that they, and not the jointly staffed *sekpolpro* commissions, were the object of trade union ire says something about Glavpolitprosvet's tendency to compensate for institutional weaknesses by resorting to the administrative exercise of authority. The consequence was the intensification of trade union sensitivity over the issue of autonomy and the articulation in Moscow of a clear preference for an alternative institutional structure relying less upon bureaucratic and centralized controls and more upon decentralized forms of work, as advocated by Proletkul't.

As Moscow's trade unions began moving in this direction, Proletkul't found itself under increasing political and ideological pressure from the Communist Party Central Committee for alleged "collectivist" ideological deviations. Although an official investigation absolved it of these charges, the Central Committee placed it under tighter party supervision and revoked the decision of the February 1921 All-Russian Trade Union Conference authorizing Proletkul't to assume the role of the ideological-methodological center for club work.[107] Hard on the heels of these developments, the budget crisis of early 1922 prompted a proposal to end Proletkul't's state subsidy. At its February 1922 All-Russian Conference,

Proletkul't proposed that it be fused with the trade unions in return for financial support.[108]

This, then, was the situation confronting the May 1922 Second Moscow Cultural Conference. In its deliberations, the conference acknowledged the formal ideological leadership of Narkompros and Glavpolitprosvet over cultural-political work. However, it also criticized Mosgubpolitprosvet and its district branches for their failed struggle against the forces of "petit-bourgeois spontaneity" and for "spoiling" matters by "being occupied with administrative efforts to control and boss" cultural work. The conference urged the trade unions to exert greater organizational efforts to ensure its revival. Most important, it called on Proletkul't to assume a leadership role in the "elaboration of all practical questions of extra-mural work," to become its "scientific-methodological center," and, in a clear slap at Glavpolitprosvet, to assume with the trade unions joint responsibility for political education.[109]

Moscow Proletkul't interpreted this mandate ambitiously. At a meeting convened immediately after the Moscow cultural conference, it advocated greater trade union-Proletkul't cooperation and proposed that it be entrusted with "the methodological and ideological leadership of trade union cultural work...as (its) sole center," in return for which it would receive direct financial support from the trade unions. Pletnev played an important role at both conferences, asserting the need to facilitate "the energetic consolidation" of "the influence of revolutionary Marxist ideology" in the proletariat. Dodonova, from Moscow Proletkul't, took aim at the obstacles to this project, including "resistance" from Narkompros, trade union "passivity," and inertia stemming from the widespread reliance on central initiative. Singling out *spetsy* for considerable criticism, she advocated the placement of stronger controls over their activities.[110]

Although Proletkul't's recommendations were more ambitious than those of the Second Moscow Cultural Conference, the two conferences' resolutions revealed the crystallization of a new leadership configuration

that took shape from below, in the context of a general crisis in cultural-political work, and under a convergence between the anti-statist and anti-bureaucratic views of local trade unions and Proletkul't. These circumstances help explain why Proletkul't's fortunes could take an upswing at a time of growing political and budgetary pressures on its "semi-independent" existence. Although the Central Committee had declared its intention to reign in Proletkul't, it had not definitively moved to do so. As a result, local party, state, and trade union officials were left to their own devices in responding to local developments and pressures. This probably helps explain the ambiguous, but seemingly favorable, position adopted by the MK in its 6 May 1922 decision authorizing MGSPS KO to assign designated clubs to Proletkul't.[111]

In the trade unions, as well as among local union and non-union cultural officials, Proletkul't's involvement in the club movement was openly welcomed. The Moscow Textile Workers' Union expressed its "desire" to utilize "the forces of Proletkul't for the organization of cultural work in the localities," and called for rendering it "material support" in return.[112] In July 1922, the Podol'skii provincial district (*uezd*) branch of Mosgubpolitprosvet proposed to a metalworkers' conference that Proletkul't be assigned to leadership of local club work because it had proven its "success in organizing workshops in its own club."[113] By late summer, Proletkul't was leading the work of some 20-30 workers' clubs in Moscow *gubernii*a, was active in others, and was participating in *sekpolpro* and trade union deliberations over artistic-creative work and problems confronting the club movement.[114] With delegates commenting that "up till now (clubs) drag out a most miserable existence, the consequence of which is political illiteracy (and) the complete absence of the development of community habits," the September 1922 Fourth Moscow Trade Union Congress gave final approval to the fusion of Proletkul't with MGSPS KO, citing its necessity due to "the weakness of the working class.[115]

These developments were brought to an abrupt halt when, on 14 September 1922, VTsSPS announced its "decisive rejection" of "the attempt

to transfer the forms and methods of the work of Proletkul't to (trade union) cultural work." It criticized local trade unions for uncritically adopting Proletkul't's methods and instructed them to acknowledge instead Narkompros' leadership and to concentrate their attention on the problems of political education, vocational-technical education, and productivity.[116] The Fifth All-Russian Trade Union Congress (September 17-22, 1922) ratified this decision, accusing Proletkul't of going far beyond its assigned function by assuming "the role as the ideological center of trade union artistic activities" and by attempting to determine the overall cultural program of the trade unions.[117] A barrage of articles critical of Proletkul't's alleged utopianism appeared in the press. Lunacharsky and Krupskaia (representing Narkompros and Glavpolitprosvet, respectively), P. Pel'she, (Director of Glavpolitprosvet's club subsection), and Ia. A. Iakovlev (assistant director of the Central Committee's Agitprop Department) criticized Proletkul't for emphasizing artistic-creative activities at the expense of production propaganda, for seeking to establish an autonomous cultural apparatus, and for separating clubs from the "proletarian community," a development that was deemed "inexpedient from the point of view of the general class interests of the proletariat."[118]

This controversy was not over the merits of working class cultural spontaneity, towards which Proletkul't was as hostile as Glavpolitprosvet. It was rather about decentralization and ideological pluralism. Proletkul't argued that the process of cultural transformation, conducted under conditions of autonomy from the state bureaucracy and insulated from the surrounding petit-bourgeois cultural milieu, would create cultural conditions favorable to the emergence of a class conscious proletariat, self-aware of its historic role in the construction of socialism. Proletkul't's penchant for autonomy, and its ideological iconoclasm and utopianism, made it a ripe target for critics distrustful of its ideological Bogdanovist lineage. Political uncertainties in party-worker relations precluded the kind of structural and ideological autonomy Proletkul't was advocating; it was no more desirable to allow the club movement to succumb to the

extremes of utopianism than it was to allow "cultural spontaneity" to go unchallenged. How could the party allow a free actor to run loose in an important sphere of working class life over which it was itself largely unable to exert influence?

Proletkul't's defeat revealed a set of priorities that a politically insecure regime, whose social base in the working class had contracted to dangerously narrow levels, brought to something as seemingly innocuous as culture. Clearly, the party was setting the political and structural limits beyond which practice was not permitted to evolve. This point was driven home again in early 1923, when *Trud* condemned the appearance of "undesirable" organizational deviations, including "the setting-up...of cultural collegia or cultural commissions that were not accountable to provincial trade union councils and (that) conducted their cultural work...frequently in disagreement with the general trade union line."[119] The point was reinforced once more in the fall of 1923, when the Workers' Truth group, an underground party faction inspired by Bogdanov, was officially condemned and repressed by direct police action.[120]

Because of the moderation exercised by Proletkul't's leaders in the face of rapidly changing political winds, the practical consequences of these events for Proletkul't were relatively mild. Although some critics went so far as to advocate its disbandment, the Politburo decided instead to significantly limit its authority by firmly subordinating it to VTsSPS.[121] Henceforth, Proletkul't would become a "practical organization" concerned with "the organization of mass propaganda...in art collectives."[122] Elements within Proletkul't expressed serious reservations about all this. As Ginzburg observed, its removal from active leadership, and the subsequent monopolization of practical work by the demonstrably inept trade unions, made likely "the same degeneracy and internal breakdown of clubs that occurred in previous years."[123] But by-and-large, Proletkul't reoriented itself to its new role as "technical" advisor to the trade unions. Among other things, it published the journal *Rabochii klub* (Workers'

Club) in which it maintained a steady commentary on the problems of the club movement.

Although Proletkul't had not achieved a dominant position in the club movement (after all, it actively led the work of only 10 percent or so of the workers' clubs in Moscow *gubernii*a), its defeat entailed a deep reduction in the existing potential for creative and effective leadership. The state attempted to fill this vacuum by falling back on Leninist rhetoric and methods and by centralizing ideological controls. At its Third All-Russian Congress in December 1922, Glavpolitprosvet asserted its mandate "to realize party control over all political-education (and) general cultural and art institutions" and reaffirmed the classical formula that "correctly combined the programmatic-methodological forces of Glavpolitprosvet" with the "organizational efforts and rallying energy of the trade unions." Glavpolitprosvet insisted that the authority of its central and local organs to "lead mass enlightenment" be recognized by the trade unions, and that they accept their role as "collaborators and helpers."[124] Earlier, at the Fifth Trade Union Congress, trade union "separatists" were scolded by the VTsSPS KO director (Seniushkin) for their mistaken view that cultural work was an exclusive concern of the trade unions. He reminded them that it was rather the primary responsibility of the state, and that the unions' role was to cooperate with Glavpolitprosvet and to concentrate their energies on training cultural workers and on using the club movement to support the revival of the trade unions.[125]

The attempt to revitalize cultural work under Glavpolitprosvet's leadership was problematic from the start. First, the material and social factors that had undermined centralized controls had not disappeared. A commission organized in late 1922 and composed of Moscow party, trade union, and state representatives found that things had changed little: a majority of clubs functioned poorly, experienced "organizational confusion," and lacked adequate funds.[126] *Pravda* went so far as to say that clubs existed "almost nowhere in practice."[127] According to a 1922 investigation of club activities conducted in Rogozhko-Simonovskii *raion*,

political work was neglected and ideological leadership lacking.[128] As local delegates to the All-Russian Political-Education Conference recognized, Glavpolitprosvet's poor budget outlook and the absence of adequate resources entailed a serious "weakening" of mass political education work.[129]

A second problem with this set-up was that despite the formal rejection by the trade unions of "separatism," it perpetuated squabbling between Glavpolitprosvet and the unions. Shortly after the Fifth Trade Union Congress, MGSPS KO reached an "agreement" with Mosgubpolitprosvet in which the later agreed to limit its involvement in trade union cultural work to the "supervision and observation of all political education" conducted by local cultural commissions."[130] This arrangement was seemingly contradicted by instructions, motivated by the spread of cultural spontaneity, to district party committees and *raipolitprosvety* to pay more attention to club work.[131]

Perhaps because these instructions were taken to heart, March 1923 found the trade unions accusing Glavpolitprosvet of trying to take over the control of all trade union cultural work. In some disputes with the trade unions, Diament noted, *raipolitprosvety* insisted on the right to veto any trade union program in the clubs if it was seen to violate the party line. "What is the point," Diament asked, "of the textile (and) metal workers' unions (and their role as) schools of communism, (the presence of party) bureau fractions (in the trade unions), and party congresses? There is none." The trade unions, he implied, were perfectly able to determine the party line without interference from Glavpolitprosvet. He called for the liquidation of district (*raion*) and county (*uezd*) *politprosvety* and the concentration of Glavpolitprosvet's activities at the provincial level (i.e., in Mosgubpolitprosvet). He also wanted limits placed on the responsibilities of its district instructors so that they "would be unable to pretend to be administrators."[132]

At the 12th Party Congress in April 1923, Krupskaia countered Glavpolitprosvet's critics by accusing them of advocating trade union

separatism. Pointing to the problem of "alien elements" in trade union cultural departments, she insisted on the need for Glavpolitprosvet to assert political control over the selection of cadres. Krupskaia also claimed that Glavpolitprosvet had made it a practice of considering the opinion of trade union representatives and cultural departments in its decisions, and she suggested that if the unions were critical of its work, they should try to exert more influence from within instead of seeking separatist solutions.[133] Krupskaia's reasoning was rejected by central trade union leaders like Seniushkin, who supported trade union autonomy (presumably a non-"separatist" version), and VTsSPS chief M. Tomskii, who observed that the day-to-day functioning of cultural-educational work was the "business of the trade unions."[134]

This squabbling provoked the Moscow Committee's *agitprop* organization to convene a club conference in March 1923. The conference duly noted the lack of contact between *raipolitprosvety* and the unions, and it called on *MK Agitprop* to assume a greater leadership role in factory cultural work.[135] The result was the "elimination" of *raipolitprosvety* and the transfer of their tasks to the *agitprop* departments of district party committees, which were in turn told to organize club soviets consisting of representatives of local enterprises, Mosgubpolitprosvet, MGSPS, and the branch trade unions.[136]

These developments signalled a victory by the trade unions over the state. But the party's intervention in this dispute in favor of the unions was not to give sanction to separatism so much as it was to acknowledge that Glavpolitprosvet's involvement in trade union cultural work created unnecessary political tensions that hurt rather than helped its development. Rather than allow the squabbling to continue, to the further detriment of the leadership of cultural work, or to permit the unions to take over complete control of cultural-political work themselves (something they did not necessarily desire), the party was forced to assume active political direction of mass cultural work, intervening in it as the ultimate arbiter between the trade unions and the state.

Institutional squabbling was just one of the forces compelling the Communist Party to become involved in the club movement. Perhaps even more compelling was the failure of either the unions or Glavpolitprosvet to fill the creative void left when Proletkul't was relegated to technical functions. This theme was highlighted at the Tenth Moscow Party Conference (March-April 1923). Noting that neither factory cells nor the trade unions devoted sufficient attention to factory cultural work, that the trade union cultural apparat was in poor shape, and that local party organizations had failed to become involved in cultural work, the conference instructed district committee *agitprop* departments to assign independent party workers to important factories and called for a review of the "party qualifications" of factory cultural commission members and the assignment of the "best cell workers" to their bureaus.[137] In order to mobilize mass influence, the MK subsequently ordered the creation of party collectives *(komfraktsii kluba)*. To counter cultural spontaneity, *Pravda* urged that this form of organization be replicated in all clubs and organs of Mosgubpolitprosvet.[138]

The theme of party leadership and improved political work was adopted by the trade unions. Speaking at the October 1923 All-Russian Trade Union Cultural conference, Seniushkin warned against the tendency towards what he called the extraordinary development of drama and art circles, especially when their focus diverged from the needs of the trade unions.[139] Mel'nichanskii reiterated the view that "trade unionist enlightenment and...raising the class self consciousness and the general cultural-educational levels of workers...must be the basic content of trade union work."[140] A meeting organized by the Moscow Chemical Workers' trade union cultural department insisted that the increase of drama and art circles at the expense of other aspects of cultural work be stopped and that clubs shift from art to more serious and scientific themes.[141] Diament agreed that serving workers' needs was vital, but he cautioned that how the clubs went about doing so should be conditioned by general trade union interests, and not the demands of "specific groups." The center of

club work, Diament noted, must be trade union education and party members must lead it.[142]

These formulae reflected the traditional concerns of the trade union movement and the political nervousness of the party, but little of the state's productivist ideology. How to create a social base in the club movement for this kind of activity was, of course, another matter, and as part of the reconfiguration emerging in late 1923, political initiatives and structural adaptations were made to address precisely this point. The MK's authorization of political screening of cultural commission members was one such initiative, while the plan to set up *komfraktsii* in the clubs was another, presaging the flooding of clubs in 1924 with new party recruits. Both initiatives were efforts to create a social base and structure for political work in working class cultural institutions.

Similar initiatives were undertaken by the trade unions. One problem had to do with perennial difficulties met in "the selection of club administrators from among trade union *aktiv* and ordinary workers" and the training of those already involved in club work.[143] At the Fifth Moscow Trade Union Congress (November, 1923), Diament stressed that the successful conduct of cultural work was dependent upon lower-level cultural workers. "However," he noted, "a significant part of them at the present time stand at an insufficiently high level of political-cultural development...therefore the verification and selection of members of cultural commissions is an important question of union cultural work..." Diament also called for the creation of activist groups in clubs to assist club administrators in their work.[144]

The creation of a social base that could fuse working class self-activity with political and institutional goals required moving away from bureaucratic to participatory forms of administration. As Pletnev noted, the problem was "not only the lack of instructors...but also the lack of initiative on the part of club administration and club directors."[145] A June 1923 Moscow cultural conference discussed this issue, and although there was some disagreement over whether the entire club administration

should be elective, it agreed to this principle, subject to the verification of election results by factory committees.[146] The Fifth Moscow Trade Union Congress insisted on elected club administrations and forbade the fusion of club administrations with factory cultural commissions.[147] The ability of these initiatives to break down popular resistance to active participation in club construction would be tested in the coming years.

Conclusion

The history of club formation during 1921-1923 tells us first that the creation of working class cultural institutions was held hostage to the period's broader material and social conditions. Second, it tells us that successful mobilization of these institutions to the needs of the state entailed first and foremost the reconstitution of their working class social base. This in turn meant that the cultural practices which eventually comprised the repertoires of workers' clubs had to reflect not only the dictums of Leninist ideology and the dominant interest of the Communist Party, the state, and the trade unions, but also community needs and popular tastes over which these institutions had little control. Popularization and localization were therefore central to the formation of the NEP club movement. There was, however, a contradiction here between the means and the end, between revitalization and mobilization, between, cultural "spontaneity" and political education. Popularization reproduced not the state's discourse, but the multiple cultural discourses and practices of urban (and, for that matter, rural) society, many of which in fact contradicted state and party interests. In these conditions, the question was not so much one of Bolshevizing the club movement, but of preventing its complete popularization.

Ideological tensions therefore arose between radical and utopian desires to rapidly Bolshevize class institutions and proletarian political

discourses and more pragmatic responses to practical necessities imposed by material conditions and the logic of social legitimation. The interests of a politically insecure regime in these conditions meant reining in ideological utopianism, dampening self-destructive institutional squabbling, and limiting, as much a possible, the inroads made by the forces of cultural spontaneity. Doing so entailed strengthening the party's direct involvement in the club movement and shifting the official discourse away from ideological asceticism and revolutionary voluntarism towards one centered on workers' needs and popular demand. The trade unions and local club administrators provided the institutional and social base for this shift; the Communist Party lent it political sanction. As the October 1923 All-Russian trade union cultural conference stressed, clubs were meant to serve the cultural interest of workers and their families and the institutional interests of the trade unions, and were in no way accountable to either factory management or, for that matter, the state.[148]

By 1923, basic issues regarding the governance and goals of the club movement were resolved, and a compromise of sorts had been reached between local and central interests. The party, concerned about the broad political implications of working class estrangement, backed decentralization despite the fact that it facilitated the infusion of commercial, popular, and bourgeois forces into the clubs. In this sense, the crisis of the club movement was part of a much larger crisis of "proletarian identity" which, after 1923, impelled the party into a massive effort aimed at the proletarianization of Soviet institutions, most clearly signalled by the mass recruitment of workers into the Communist Party during the Lenin enrollments in early 1924. Tensions between cultural spontaneity, local initiative, and Bolshevism would continue to preoccupy the party long after 1923. Their existence would raise important questions about the compatibility between institutions whose legitimacy was based upon meeting the spontaneously generated and particular needs of workers and an ideology aimed at the transcendence not only of immediate needs, but of the very social conditions from which they arose.

Notes

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2. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Eng., 1970); *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921-1934* (Cambridge, Eng., 1978), and "The 'Soft' Line on Culture and its Enemies, Soviet Cultural Policy, 1922-1927," *Slavic Review* 2 (June 1974), 267-287; James C. McClelland, "Proletarianizing the Student Body: The Soviet Experience During the New Economic Policy," *Science and Society* 80 (Aug. 1978), 122-146; Lynn Mally, "Blueprint for a New Culture: A Social History of the Proletkul't Organization, 1917-1922", Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1984; Jeffrey Brooks, "Public and Private Values in the Soviet Press, 1921-1928," *Slavic Review* 1 (Spring 1989): 16-35; Larry Homes, "Soviet Schools: Policy Pursues Practices, 1921-1928,: *Slavic Review* 2 (Summer 1989), 234-253; Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (Oxford, 1988). A partial exception to this rule is Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization 1917-1929* (Cambridge, Eng., 1985).

3. Victoria Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion. Workers' Politics and Organizations in St. Petersburg and Moscow, 1900-1914* (Berkeley, 1983), 328-334.

4. Diane Koenker, *Moscow Workers and the 1917 Revolution* (Princeton, 1981), 165

5. *Moskovskaia gorodskaia i Moskovskaia oblastnaia organizatsii KPSS v tsifrakh* (Moscow, 1972), 187.

6. S. A. Smith, *Red Petrograd: Revolution in the Factories, 1917-1918* (Cambridge, Eng., 1983); and Koenker, *Moscow Workers.*

7. Sheila Fitzpatrick, "The Bolshevik's Dilemma: Class, Culture, and Politics in the Early Soviet Years," *Slavic Review*, 4 (Winter 1988), 599-613.

8. See the discussions in Richard Sakwa, *Soviet Communists in Power: A Study of Moscow during the Civil War, 1918-1921* (New York, 1988); and Thomas F. Remington, *Building Socialism in Bolshevik Russia: Ideology and Industrial Organization, 1919-1921* (Pittsburgh, 1984).

9. Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion*; Koenker, *Moscow Workers*.

10. Less than 85,000 of the 206,000 industrial workers employed in Moscow in 1916 remained in 1921. The 1920 employment levels in Moscow's textile industry stood at 30.5 percent of the 1913 level. A.A. Matiugan, *Moskva v period vosstanovleniia narodnogo khoziaistva 1921-1925 gg.* (Moscow, 1947), 7; A.A. Tverdokhlev, *"Chislennost' i sostav rabochego klassa Moskvy v 1917-1937 gg.," Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta.* 1 (1970), 22. See also the relevant discussions in Richard Sakwa, *Soviet Communists in Power*, and William Chase, *Workers, Society, and the Soviet State: Labor and Life in Moscow, 1918-1929* (Champaign-Urbana, Ill., 1987).

11. Sakwa, 134-165.

12. Diane Koenker, "Urbanization and Deurbanization in the Russian Revolution and Civil War," *Journal of Modern History* (September 1985), 424-450.

13. On these disturbances, see Paul Avrich, *Kronstadt* 1921 (Princeton, 1970), 35; and Chase, *Workers*, Chapter One.

14. Chase, *Workers*.

15. For a discussion of recruitment policies during this period, see T.H. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership in the USSR, 1917-1967* (Princeton, 1968). Lenin was never wedded to this approach. Rather, his emphasis on the importance of political education (as a precondition of proletarian activism) varied according to his understanding of the current social composition and historical experience of the proletariat. See John Marot, "Alexander Bogdanov, Vpered, and the Role of the Intellectual in the Workers' Movement," *Russian Review* (forthcoming, 1990).

16. *K otchetu o Moskovskoi gub. konferentsiia R.K.P. (25-28 iiunia 1921 g.)* (Moscow, 1921), 40-41; *Obzor deiatel'nosti Moskovskogo gubernskogo soveta professional'nykh soiuzov za period mezhdu II i III gubernskim s"ezdom (sent. 1920 g.-mai 1921 g.)* (Moscow, 1921), 4; Central State Archive of the October Revolution (TsGAOR, *fond* 5457, *opis* 7, *delo* 97, *list* 1 (24.II.21); E.B. Genkina, *"Vozniknovenie proizvodstvennykh soveshchanii v gody*

vosstanovitel'nogo perioda, 1921-1925 gg.," Istoriia SSSR 3 (1958), 68-69; I.P. Ostapenko, *Uchastie rabochego klassa v upravlenie proizvodstva,* (Moscow, 1964), 20.

17. *Moskovskaia gubernskaia konferentsiia professional'nykh soiuzov* (14-15 sent. 1921 g.) (Moscow, 1921), 67.

18. A.K. Kolesova, "*Deiatel'nost' rabochikh klubov po kommunisticheskomu vospitaniiu trudiashchikhsia v 1917-1923 gg.,*" Ph.D. dissertation, Moscow, 1971, 251-252. Glavpolitprosvet's Moscow provincial branch was formed only in March 1921 upon the fusion of Moscow Narkompros' military committee and extramural sub-department. *Informatsionnyi biulleten' otdela Narodnogo Obrazovaniia Moskovskogo soveta rab. kr. i krasn. dep.*, #10-11 (1-15 June 1921). A club subsection ran Glavpolitprosvet's club network which, in Moscow, included eight Komsomol and seven "adult" clubs in 1923. *Otchet o rabote Gubpolitprosvet za 1924 god* (Moscow, 1925), 14. For a thorough discussion of Glavpolitprosvet's activities, see Kenez, *Propaganda State.*

19. *Moskovskaia gubernskaia konferentsiia RKP 19-21 fev. god. kratkii otchet* (Moscow, 1921), 22; *Obzor deiatel'nosti M.G.S.P.S...(sent. 1920 g.-mai 1921 g.)*, 4; *Biulleten' Moskovskogo gubernskogo soveta professional'nykh soiuzov* 6-7 (1921), 14.

20. *Pravda*, 24 May 1921; *Otchet o deiatel'nosti Moskovskogo gubernskogo soveta professional'nykh soiuzov, gubotdelov, i uprofbiuro (mai-avgust 1921)* (Moscow, 1921), 58-59; *Biulleten' M.G.S.P.S.* 2-3 (July/Aug. 1921), 27, and #6-7-8 (1921), and 9 (18 Dec. 1921), 16.

21. On Proletkul't, see Mally, "Blueprint," and T.A. Khavina, "*Bor'ba Kommunisticheskoi partii za Proletkul't i rukovodstvo ego deiatel'nost'iu,*" Ph.D. dissertation, Leningrad, 1976.

22. James C. McClelland, "Utopianism versus Revolutionary Heroism in Bolshevik Policy: The Proletarian Culture Debate," *Slavic Review* 3 (Sept. 1980), 389-402.

23. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Commissariat*, 89-99 and 104-106; V.V. Gorbunov, *V.I. Lenin i Proletkul't* (Moscow, 1974), 75 and 111-117; *Gudki*, 2 (1919) 25-26, and 3 (1919), 12.

24. At various times in 1919-1921, Moscow Proletkul't maintained sixteen factory-level *proletpunkty* to coordinate workshop activities and between 6 to 11 clubs, although only some of these were directly affiliated with individual factories. Ideally, each club contained separate departments devoted to literature, choir, theater, and experimental art. Khavina, 105; *Kommunisticheskii trud*, 13 Aug., Oct. 1920; *Gorn*, 6 (May, 1922) 152; *Gudki*,

1 (1919), 30; 2 (1919), 27; and 3 (1919), 12 and 30-31; Gorbunov, 89 and 122-125; *Proletarskaia kul'tura*, 15-16 (April-June 1920).

25. Gorbunov, 189.

26. Gorbunov, 70. In one case, Moscow Komsomol handed over the day-to-day leadership of a district club to Proletkul't, which thereupon "transferred its workshops...to the club." Moscow's Presnia district party committee apparently approved of this practice, for it lent "practical" assistance to Proletkul't workshops based in the Lenin club. *Gudki*, 1 (1919), 30, and 2 (1919), 27; *Gorn*, 1 (6) (May 1922), 152. In an incident that substantiates some of the underlying social dynamics behind Proletkul'ts proliferation, workers employed in one Moscow enterprise passed a resolution in 1919 calling for the "unification" of the factory's cultural work with Proletkul't. *Gudki* 2 (1919), 27.

27. *Gorn*, 5 (1920), 73-78.

28. *Kommunisticheskii trud*, 10 Oct. 1920; *Proletarskaia kul'tura*, 17-19 (Aug.-Dec. 1920).

29. *Kommunisticheskii trud*, 13 Aug. 1920.

30. Khavina, p. 81. See also State Archive of Moscow *Oblast'* (GAMO), f. 186, o. 1, d. 575, 1. 2, for the decision of All-Russian Metal Workers' Trade Union Congress to jointly organize *proletkul'tov* and clubs with Proletkul't.

31. This circumstance characterized the trade union movement as a whole. See Jay Sorenson, *Life and Death of Soviet Trade Unionism* (New York, 1969).

32. *Trud*, 22 Nov. 1922.

33. In 1925, a third of the adult portion of Moscow-area club membership never attended clubs. *Rabota Moskovskogo komiteta RKP(b) fevral'-noiabr; 1925 g.. K XIV gubpartkonferentsii* (Moscow, 1925), 76.

34. *Gorn*, 8 (1923), 203; and 9 (1923), 142-143.

35. TsGAOR, f. 7952, o. 3, d. 228, l. 1.

36. TsGAOR, f. 7952, o. 3, d. 228, 1. 19.

37. For the persistence of this phenomenon, see *Pravda*, Feb. 14, 1928.

38. *Pravda*, 28 June 1922.

39. In 1922, 44 percent of the 1,810 participants in Proletkul't's workshops were production workers, while another 36 percent were members of working class families. *Pravda*, 20 Oct. 1922. Another source says that of 1127 workshop participants, 65 percent were workers and 27 percent were children of workers. Of these, 811 belonged to workshops affiliated with clubs. *Gorn*, 1 (6) (1922), 157.

40. *Trud*, 22 Nov. 1922.

41. F.N. Mel'nichanskii, *Moskovskie profsoiuzov v obstanovke NEPa* (Moscow, 1923), 21. In the leather industry, theatrical circles played the "major role" in clubs. *Otchet o deiatel'nosti pravleniia Moskovskogo gubotdela soiuza kozhevnikov dekabr' 1921 g.-sentiabr' 1922 g.* (Moscow, 1922), 53.

42. *Trud*, 28 July and 22 Nov. 1922; *Otchet o deiatel'nosti Moskovskogo gubernskogo soveta professional'nykh soiuzov za 1922-1923 g.*(Moscow, 1923), 9; *Trud v Moskovskoi gubernii v 1923-1925 gg.* (Moscow, 1926), 281.

43. *Trud*, 28 July 1922.

44. *Biulleten' Moskovskogo raionnogo komiteta Vserossiiskogo Soiuza Rabochikh Metallistov*, 12 (Jan. 1923), 12. In the Serp i Molot factory, membership in the club's political literacy circle dropped from 46 to 12 between May and July 1923, while the membership of four artistic creative circles (drama, music, choir, wind ensemble) and the physical culture circle held steady at about 120 apiece. TsGAOR, f. 7952, o. 3, d. 226, ll. 27-31.

45. *Trud*, 2 March 1923. For other reports see, TsGAOR, f. 5451, o. 7, d. 127, ll. 46 and 65; *Otchet Moskovskogo gubernoskogo soveta professional'nykh soiuzov za 1923-1924 gg.* (Moscow, 1924), 113.

46. *Gorn*, 9 (1923), 147.

47. *Izvestiia MK*, 3 (12 Dec. 1922), 56-57.

48. *Informatsionnyi biulleten' Moskovskogo gubotdela Vserossiiskogo soiuza rabochikh khimikov*, 12 (15 Nov 1923), 7 and 21.

49. Averaging only ten to fifteen members and lacking "permanent forms" of mass work, most production cells were "inactive." *Obzor deiatel'nosti M.G.S.P.S...(sent. 1920 g.-mai 1921 g.)*, 43-44.

50. *Pravda*, 28 Jan. 1921; Genkina, p. 71.

51. *K 5-mu gubernskomu s"ezdu Moskovskikh profsoiuzov* (Moscow, 1923), 31; *Trud*, 28 July 1922; *Pravda*, 26 July 1921; *Moskovskii pechatnik*, 5 (15 April 1921), 7; *Otchet Moskovskogo gubernskogo otdela Vserossiiskogo Soiuza Rabochikh Poligraficheskogo Proizvodstva s mai 1921 g. po fevral' 1922 g.* (Moscow, 1922), 52; *Biulleten' M.G.S.P.S.* 1 (23 Jan. 1922); *Otchet o deiatel'nosti Moskovskogo gubernskogo soveta professional'nykh soiuzov za 1922-1923* (Moscow, 1923), 120; *Informatsionnyi biulleten' Moskovskogo gubotdela Vserossiiskogo soiuza rabochikh khimikov*, 2 (20 Dec. 1922), 11.

52. *Izvestiia MK*, 3 (12 Dec. 1922), 56-57.

53. *Informatsionnyi biulleten' otdela Narodnogo Obrazovaniia Moskovskogo soveta*, 6 (1 May 1921), and 10-11 (1-15 June, 1921); Kolesova, p. 241; *Biulleten' Gorraikom R.K. g. Moskva, 5 (Sept. 1921); Sputnik Klubnogo rabotnika* (Moscow, 1922), 97-98; *Pravda*, 21 Feb. 1921.

54. Gorbunov, 123; Fitzpatrick, *Commissariat*, 237-239; *Kommunisticheskii trud*, Sept. 12, 1921; *Pravda*, 8 March and 20 Oct. 1922; *Trud*, 19 April 1922; *Gorn*, 1 (6) (1922), 157. On the shutdown of two Proletkul't factory centers in the Dedo-Guchkovskie section of the Moscow Textile Workers' Union, see TsGAOR, f. 5457, o. 5, d. 96, l.8.

55. TsGAOR, f. 5451 o. 6 d. 45 l. 13 (2 Jan. 1922).

56. Gorbunov, pp. 122-125; Fitzpatrick, *Commissariat*, 237-239; G. V. Veselov, "*Partiinoe rukovodstvo kul'turnym stroitel'stvom v vosstanovitel'noi period (1921-1925 gg.)*," Ph.D. dissertation, Moscow, 1972, 136; Khavina, 92.

57. *Moskovskaia gub konf. prof. soiuzov (14-15 sent. 1921 g.), 9; Trud*, 20 Feb. 1923, warned that "mechanical" reductions in cultural work were "dangerous."

58. *Biulleten' M.G.S.P.S.*, 10 (24 Dec. 1921), 10.

59. *Biulleten' M.G.S.P.S.*, 9 (7 Dec. 1921).

60. *Osnovnye voprosy kul'traboty 4-i Moskovskoi gub. mezhsoiuznoi kul't. konf.* (Moscow, 1924), 12. See also, *Pravda* 23 Feb. and 18 Sept. 1923; *Otchet pravleniia Moskovskogo gubotdela VSRPP ot sentiabra po 1 sentiabria 1923 g.* (Moscow, 1923), 8.

61. *Trud*, 15 June 1921 and 28 July 1922; *Biulleten' Moskovskogo raionnogo komiteta V.S.R.M.*, 1 (Jan. 1923), 12.

62. *Pravda*, 4 Jan. 1923. See also *Trud*, 19 May 1921.

63. *Trud*, 23 June 1922.

64. *Trud*, 30 March 1923; *Otchet o deiatel'nosti Moskovskogo gubotdela Vserossiiskogo soiuza rabochikh khimikov za ianvar' i fevral' mesiatsy 1923 g.* (Moscow, 1923), 7; *Piatyi gubernskii s"ezd Moskovskikh profsoiuzov* (Moscow, 1923), 31-32; *Pravda*, 4 Jan. 1923. MGSPS KO instructed affiliated unions to concentrate control over cultural expenditures in their cultural departments and in large-scale enterprises, to contribute to the MGSPS's inter-union cultural fund, to ensure that economic authorities were paying agreed-upon wages for full-time enterprise-level cultural workers so that they would equal those paid by Narkompros. See, *Trud*, 3 and 16 Jan. 1923; TsGAOR, f. 5451, o. 7, d. 127, l. 49 (13 Jan. 1923). In September 1922, a conference of factory cultural commission representatives convened by Mosgubpolitprosvet called for the creation of twenty *kul'tpunkty* to help centralize and allocate resources for financially weak factory committee cultural commissions. *Trud*, 21 Sept. 1922.

65. *Trud*, 28 July 1922; *Piatyi gubernskii s"ezd*, 32. In 1922, the number of workers' clubs exceeded 300 (up from the 220 in 1920). In 1923, the number was 500.

66. *Pravda*, 26 June 1923.

67. *Pravda*, 9 Sept. 1923.

68. In recognition of fiscal realities, however, it allowed for the unification of smaller clubs into central clubs. *Pravda*, 1 and 5 Oct. 1923. See also, *Pravda*, 19 Sept. 1923.

69. *Rabochii klub*, 2 (Feb. 1924), 20, noted that formal membership procedures may have netted clubs hundreds or even thousands of inactive, but dues-paying members. See also, *Pravda*, 5 Oct. and 3 and 30 Nov. 1923; *K 5-mu gubernskomu s"ezdu*, 32. According to

Diament, club membership fell from 14-15 percent to 10-11 percent of total union membership due to switch to voluntary membership. *Osnovnye voprosy kul'traboty*, 12.

70. *Biulleten' Moskovskii gubotdel soiuza tekstil'shchikov*, 1 (1923), 7.

71. *Rabota Moskovskogo komiteta VKP(b) ianvar' 1928-fevral' 1929 otchet XVII gubpartkonferentsii*, (Moscow, 1929), 60.

72. GAMO, f. 186, o. 1, d. 673, 11. 43 and 46 (19.X.22).

73. See, for example, *Pravda* 5 Aug. 1922 and 23 Feb. 1923; *Otchet o deiatel'nosti M.G.S.P.S...(mai-avgust 1921 goda)*, 67.

74. *Rabochaia Moskva*, 20 April 1922 and 9 Feb. 1923. For a discussion, see my article, "The Politics of Mass Culture: Workers, Communists, and Proletkul't in the Development of Workers' Clubs, 1921-1925," *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, 2-3 (Summer-Fall 1986), 143-144.

75. Kolesova, 242; *Sputnik*, 26.

76. *Gorn*, 8 (1923), 203, and 9 (1923), 142-143.

77. These are the comments of the head of Glavpolitprosvet's club department (Pel'she). *Sputnik*, 17-18 and 26.

78. *Osnovnye voprosy kul'traboty*, 7-8.

79. *Gorn*, 8 (1923), 203; Kolesova, 311.

80. *Gorn*, 1 (6) (1922), 156-159.

81. *Izvestiia MK*, 3 (12 Dec. 1922), 56-57. See also, Kolesova, 302-315.

82. As one noted, "dancing...in clubs is permissible, what is forbidden is only to be surprised by the lack of feeling (towards dances) that still occurs." GAMO, f. 186, o. 1, d. 673, 11. 43 and 46 (19.X.22).

83. *Gorn* 9 (1923), 147; *Kommunisticheskii trud*, 1 June 1921.

84. Susan Bronson, Department of History, University of Michigan, who is currently working on this question, alerted me to this connection.

85. *Trud*, 26 Dec. 1922.

86. *Kommunisticheskii trud*, 1 June 1921.

87. *Trud*, 11 and 13 Aug. 1922.

88. *Trud*, 13 Nov. 1923; Gorn, 8 (1923), p. 203. See also *Rabochaia Moskva*, 21 Feb. 1923; *Pravda*, 16 Jan. 1923; *Moskovskii pechatnik*, (27 Feb. 1924), pp. 2-6; *Otchet M.G.S.P.S. za 1923-1924*, p. 109; and TsGAOR, f. 5451, o. 7, d. 127, l. 65.

89. *Sputnik*, 96.

90. *Izvestiia MK*, 4 (12 May 1923), 7.

91. *Informatsionnyi biulleten' Moskovskogo gubotdela V.S.R.Kh.*, 12 (15 Nov. 1923), 21; *Rezoliutsii VI-go gubernskogo s"ezda soiuza rabochikh khimikov Moskovskoi gubernii* (Moscow, Moskovskii gubotdel VSRKh, 1923), 11; *Materialy III-ei Moskovskoi gubernskoi konferentsii Vserossiiskogo Soiuza Rabochikh Metallistov 5-8 iunia 1923 g.* (Moscow, 1923), 17.
92. *Trud*, 21 March 1923; TsGAOR, f. 5451, o. 7, d. 127, l. 115 (VII.23), and l. 145. (15.XII.23).

93. *Rabochaia Moskva*, 19 April 1922 and 9 Feb. 1923.

94. *Obzor deiatel'nosti M.G.S.P.S...(sent. 1920 g.-mai 1921 g.), 4; Protokoly Zasedaniia prezidiuma Mosk. gub. soveta profsoiuzov 1920* (Moscow, 1920), see circulars dated 28 Sept. 1920, and 20 and 30 Nov. 1920.

95. On the bureaucratization of the trade union movement, see Sorenson, *Life and Death*.

96. See Sorenson, *Life and Death*; and R.V. Daniels, *Conscience of the Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960).

97. *Rezoliutsii i postanovleniia III-go s"ezda professional'nykh soiuzov Moskvy i Moskovskoi gubernii (10-14 maia 1921 goda)* (Moscow, 1921), p. 22.

98. GAMO, f. 186, o. 1, d. 556, l. 37 (meeting of KO Moscow Metal Workers Union [MROVSRM], 12 Nov. 1920.)

99. *Otchet o deiatel'nosti M.G.S.P.S., 10 (mai-avgust 1921 goda)*, 67; *Biulleten' M.G.S.P.S.*, 10 (24 Dec. 1921), 13-14, and 1 (23 Jan. 1922); *Otchet o deiatel'nosti M.G.S.P.S. za 1921-1922*, 78; *Pishchevik*, 18 Dec. 1921; *Pravda*, 28 Jan. and 26 July 1921; TsGAOR, f. 7952, o. 3, d. 226, l. 4 (29.VI.21).

100. *Trud*, 3 Feb. and 13 April 1923; GAMO, f. 180, o. 1, d. 238, l. 209 (7.III.22); *Informatsionnyi biulleten' Moskovskogo gubotdela Vserossiiskogo soiuza rabochikh khimikov* 12 (15 Nov 1923), 6. A front page *Trud* article criticized those who believed that cultural expenses were a waste of money or that too much was spent on this activity. Based on Moscow figures, the author showed that very limited resources and small portions of general trade union budgets went to cultural work and argued that working class cultural needs were not being satisfied at existing rates of expenditure. To reduce cultural deductions, he concluded, would deprive the working class of even minimal satisfaction of its cultural needs. See, *Trud*, 20 Feb. 1923.

101. *Pravda*, 2 April 1921. See also *Pravda*, 22 June, 1923.

102. *Rezoliutsii...III-go s"ezda...*, 1 and 22.

103. *Moskovskaia gubernskaia konferentsiia professional'nykh soiuzov* (14-15 sent. 1921 g.), 67; *Kommunisticheskii trud*, 10 Sept. 1921.

104. *Biulleten' M.G.S.P.S.*, 6-7 (1921), 14.

105. *Pravda*, 24 May 1921; *Biulleten' M.G.S.P.S.*, 6-7 (1921), 10, and 14, (24 Dec. 1921), 10; TsGAOR, f. 5457, o. 5, d. 96, l.8, and f. 5451, o. 7, d. 127, l. 144.

106. *Biulleten' M.G.S.P.S.*, 1 (1922), 5.

107. On Proletkul't's relations with Lenin and the Party, see Gorbunov; Veselov, 134, and Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow, 1963), XLII, 12. On collectivism, see Robert C. Williams, "Collective Immortality: The Syndicalist Origins of Proletarian Culture, 1905-1910," *Slavic Review*, 3 (Sept., 1980), 403-425. Proletkul't claimed its complete exoneration of charges of ideological deviationism. *Pravda*, 4 Feb. 1922.

108. Veselov, 136; Khavina, 92; *Pravda*, 4, 5, and 8 Feb. 1922; Fitzpatrick, *Commissariat*, 237-239.

109. *Trud*, 12 May 1922; *Pravda*, 10 May 1922; *Gorn*, 1 (6) (1922), 159.

110. *Gorn*, 1 (6) (1922), 156-159; Veselov, 137.

111. Veselov, 255; Gorbunov, 180-181; *Trud*, 22 Aug. 1922; *Rabochaia Moskva*, 28 July 1922.

112. *Tekstil'shchik, k stanku* 14 (26 July 1922). (Moscow Textile Workers' Union Cultural Conference, 8.VII.22).

113. GAMO, f. 186, o. 1, d. 673, l. 73.

114. The number of clubs in its own network had declined to five in Moscow and another four in the provincial region. GAMO, f. 186, o. 1, d. 673, ll. 35 and 46; *Rabochaia Moskva*, 28 July 1922; *Gorn*, 1 (6) (May 1922), 152; *Biulleten' M.G.S.P.S.* 1 (1922), 6. MGSPS expressed an intention to transfer an additional 10 clubs to Proletkul't in *Trud*, 22 Aug. 1922.

115. *Trud*, 7 and 9 Sept. 1922.

116. *Pravda*, 14 Sept. 1922.

117. *Trud*, 29 Oct. 1922, *Stenograficheskii ochet patogo vserossiiskogo s"ezda professional'nykh soiuzov* (Moscow, 1922), 531; Khavina, 88.

118. *Pravda*, 27 Sept. and 8 and 24 Oct. 1922; *Izvestiia*, 3 Nov. 1922. *Trud*, 2 March 1923; *Sputnik* (1922), 8-13; Gorbunov, 176; Khavina, 92-93. To illustrate Proletkul't's failings, *Rabochaia Moskva* reported on a meeting organized at the Kauchuk chemical works by Proletkul't to commemorate Bloody Sunday. Although workers expected revolutionary orations, they instead were presented with political satire, light entertainment and popular music. "Comrad from Proletkul't," *Rabochaia Moskva* asked, "you are the ones who shout about proletarian culture, what kind of right do you have to spoil (sorvat') our great holiday?" In defense, Proletkul't noted that revolutionary poems by Maiakovskii were read at the gathering and that its theme centered on political satire and was not meant to be either revolutionary or frivolous. *Rabochaia Moskva*, 9 February 1923. For criticism of

Proletkul't's opposition to a 1922 VTsSPS decision to invite the "Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia" to work in the factory clubs see, *Trud*, 21 Sept, 1922.

119. *Trud*, 7 March 1923.

120. In November 1923, *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik* noted the arrests in Moscow of 400 members of the *Workers' Truth*, a dissident Party faction consisting of factory committee members, *rabfak* students, komsomoltsy, and Party intellectuals. *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 23 Nov. 1923. See also the accounts in Jay Sorenson, *Life and Death*, 177; and Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (New York, 1971), 280-281. Bogdanov was linked to the Workers' Truth by both *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 23 Nov. 1923, and *Pravda*, 30 Dec. 1923. The *Pravda* account refers to only a handful of adherents to Workers' Truth.

121. Veselov, 136; Khavina 92; *Gorn*, 8 (1923), 235.

122. *Gorn*, 9 (1923), 147; and 8 (1923), 230, 259. GAMO, f. 186, o. 1, d. 673, 1. 60; Veselov, p. 139.

123. *Gorn*, 8 (1923), 203.

124. *Trud*, 26 Dec. 1922.

125. *Trud*, 29 Oct. 1922, *Stenograficheskii otchet piatogo vserossiiskogo s"ezda professional'nykh soiuzov* (Moscow, 1922), 531. The renewed emphasis on trade union propaganda may be found in, TsGAOR, f. 5451, o.7, d. 127, 1. 46 (5.1.23, MGSPS Presidium meeting); *Pravda*, 4 May 1923; *Trud*, 20 Feb. 1923.

126. *Izvestiia MK*, 3 (12 Dec 1922), 8.

127. *Pravda*, 12 April 1923.

128. *Rabochaia Moskva*, 20 April 1922.

129. *Trud*, 26 Dec. 1922.

130. GAMO, f. 186, o. 1, d. 673, 1. 46.

131. *Rabochaia Moskva*, 20 April 1922; *Pravda*, 23 Feb. 1923; *Izvestiia MK*, 3 (12 Dec. 1922), 49.

132. *Izvestiia MK*, 4 (12 March 1923), 75-76.

133. *Pravda*, 6 July 1923; Kolesova, 248-249.

134. *Pravda*, 22 July 1923.

135. *Izvestiia MK*, 4 (12 March 1923), 128.

136. *Piatyi gubernskii s"ezd, 31-32; Otchet Krasno-Presnenskogo raikoma RKP(b) za period s 1-go ianvaria po 1-e iiunia 1923 g.* (Moscow, 1923), 53.

137. *Pravda*, 22 June 1923.

138. *Pravda*, 4 Sept. 1923.

139. *Pravda*, 2 Oct. 1923.

140. Mel'nichanskii, *Moskovskie profsoiuzov*, 21.

141. *Informatsionnyi biulleten' Moskovskogo gubotdela Vserossiiskogo soiuza rabochikh khimikov*, 11 (10 Oct 1923), 5; *Rezoliutsii VI-go gubernskogo s"ezda soiuza rabochikh khimikov Moskovskoi gubernii* (Moscow, 1923), 11.

142. *Rabochaia Moskva*, 21 Sept. 1923.

143. *Pravda*, 2 Oct. 1923.

144. *K 5-mu gubernskomu s"ezdu*, 30-32.

145. *Gorn*, 9 (1923), 147.

146. *Trud*, 12 June 1923.

147. *Professional'noe dvizhenie*, 1 (Jan. 1924), 34.

148. *Pravda*, 5 Oct. 1923.

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