Revolutionary Russia

ISSN: 0954-6545 (Print) 1743-7873 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/frvr20

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To cite this article: Yiannis Kokosalakis (2015) 'MERCILESS WAR' AGAINST TRIFLES: THE LENINGRAD PARTY ORGANISATION AFTER THE FALL OF THE ZINOVIEV OPPOSITION, Revolutionary Russia, 28:1, 48-68, DOI: 10.1080/09546545.2015.1053697

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/09546545.2015.1053697

Revolutionary Russia, 2015
Vol. 28, No. 1, 48–68, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09546545.2015.1053697

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

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'MERCILESS WAR' AGAINST TRIFLES: THE LENINGRAD PARTY ORGANISATION AFTER THE FALL OF THE ZINOVIEV OPPOSITION[1]

This article examines the process by which the Leningrad Organisation of the Communist Party returned to orthodoxy after having served as the main power base of Grigory Zinoviev and his allies in their clash with the Party leadership at the XIV Congress in December 1925. Focusing primarily on the first year after the crisis, it provides an account of the Organisation's political priorities based on the stenographic records of its conferences and the protocols of the sessions of the Bureau of the Leningrad Regional Committee. It shows that the new leadership devoted little, if any, time to repressing the Oppositionists, remaining chiefly preoccupied with the task of building a politically reliable and ideologically astute Party base. It argues that Party history is key to understanding the process by which Marxist-Leninist ideology influenced Soviet society.

Although the emergence and defeat of the Leningrad Opposition led by Grigory Zinoviev has received varying degrees of treatment in most accounts of the political struggles that defined the first decade of Soviet rule,[2] the aftermath of the failure of this leadership challenge on the political life of the Leningrad Party Organisation (LPO) itself has attracted little scholarly attention. The history of the LPO after 1925 has largely been overshadowed by the murder of its secretary, Sergey Mironovich Kirov, on 1 December 1934. To a large extent, Kirov's death has been more important for historical research than his active life.[3] As a corollary of this, the history of the LPO under Kirov's leadership has been equally neglected, examined only as a prelude to the murder.[4]

Drawing on evidence from the stenographic records of the two regional Party conferences and the protocols of the Bureau sessions in between, this article suggests that there are meaningful questions to be asked of Leningrad politics in the period immediately after the defeat of the Opposition, specifically regarding the process by which the LPO was reintegrated into the political mainstream. Focusing on the period from the organisation's XXIII extraordinary conference in February 1926 to its XXIV conference in January 1927, it shows that, despite having just emerged from a bitter factional fight, the Party's new regional leadership remained primarily occupied with the smooth everyday running of the region, rather than the persecution of the defeated faction. The new leadership devoted particular attention to the ways in which specific issues affected the

stated ideological goals of the regime, most notably to the way the Party's economic policy affected its relationship with the city's workers. This, it is argued, suggests a preoccupation with both the organisation's internal dynamics and its ability to carry the Party's political line beyond Party boundaries; that is with the nature of the Party as a political, rather than an administrative institution. Ultimately, the purpose of this article is to show that the specific character of the Communist Party as a Leninist party in power is at least as important for our understanding of its place in Soviet society as its nature as a site and instrument of factional struggles. The concluding section of this article considers how a greater appreciation of the specifically political functions of the Communist Party can contribute to our understanding of regime–society relations in the Soviet Union, especially in light of a recent revival of scholarly interest in ideological questions. Prior to this, however, it would be useful to briefly examine the events surrounding the emergence of the Leningrad Opposition so as to gain a basic understanding of the nature of the crisis the new leadership had to confront.

The rise and fall of the Opposition

Perhaps because of its pivotal place in the ascendance of Stalin to political supremacy, this particular Party crisis has traditionally been regarded as a conflict primarily between major Politburo figures, with Leningrad's significance confined to its status as the power base of the eventually defeated faction of Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev.[5] Nevertheless, there are strong reasons to suggest that the roots of the crisis lay far deeper in the fundamentally contradictory character of the New Economic Policy (NEP), and that Leningrad's place at its centre was not simply coincidental.[6] Inaugurated in 1921, when grain requisitions from the peasantry were replaced by a tax in kind, the NEP eventually grew to allow agricultural households to market their surpluses, while also providing for limited private enterprise in light industry and domestic trade. From the outset, the NEP represented a compromise between the Bolsheviks' strategic objective of the construction of socialism and the immediate and more modest goal of averting economic collapse. The NEP was successful with respect to the latter, restoring the economy to respectable growth levels while also pacifying the peasantry and preventing a revolt against Bolshevik rule. Welcome and vital as it was, however, the breathing space afforded by the NEP came at the cost of growing inequalities in both city and countryside, while the growth it delivered was heavily slanted towards light industry, leading to growing resentment among the Party's industrial proletarian constituency and casting doubt on the country's prospects for industrialisation.[7] To make matters worse, influential figures from the Party leadership denied the severity of the situation, downplaying the extent of stratification in the countryside or refusing to recognise the Party's policy as a tactical retreat, thus raising questions about the temporary character of the situation.[8]

Being one of the country's industrial heartlands and the cradle of the revolution, Leningrad was strongly affected by these developments. Rapid inflation and pressure on management to restore profitability by cutting costs – including wages – after the introduction of cost accounting (*khozraschet*) in 1922 led to rapidly deteriorating living standards for the city's workers, fuelling growing tensions in the workplace.[9] Although by the time the crisis came to a head in 1925 the economic situation had started to improve, fears of a new downturn and small-scale industrial unrest were

still troubling the local apparatus.[10] It is therefore hardly surprising that the accusations of capitulating to capital and abandoning Leninism levelled against the Central Committee majority at the XIV Congress would have come from the Leningrad delegation. Freshly expanded by the Lenin levy, the LPO membership was at the time primarily composed of workers from the city's beleaguered industries.[11]

The XXII Conference of the Leningrad Region (*guberniia*) Organisation convened on 1 December 1925, to review the Party's activity in the region, elect office-bearers for the subsequent period and, more importantly, discuss the Central Committee's theses and report to the XIV Party Congress that would take place later that month. The rank-and-file communists who attended the Party Conference could not have foreseen the showdown between their delegation and the Central Committee majority and would probably not have thought of themselves – or their leadership – as constituting any kind of opposition.[12] Although there was little in the Conference proceedings that could have foreshadowed the scale of the subsequent conflict, there were definite indications of significant resentment towards the state of things in Leningrad in particular and the Soviet Union more generally, as well as of a feeling of neglect and alienation from the Party leadership.

Among the first contributors from the floor, Korolev[13] from *Proletarskii zavod* complained about the Central Committee decision to organise the forthcoming Congress in Moscow, despite the relevant XIII Congress resolution stating that it was to take place in Leningrad. His assessment of the decision as demeaning for Leningrad workers was echoed by Bogdanov from the Leonov Tram depot.[14] Far more important politically, however, was the large number of speakers who expressed concern about the rapid growth of social inequality in both city and countryside as a result of the NEP.[15] Although speakers generally refrained from open condemnation of the leadership, there were several warnings about the dangers of political deviations developing within the Party that led to complacency about the growth of kulak and NEP-man power. By far the most scathing criticism along these lines was delivered by Sarkis, secretary of the Moskovsko-Narvskii district organisation. Sarkis, who would play a central role in the subsequent clash, identified a number of issues over which the Party was 'wavering.' Among them were the class character of the Soviet state, the growth of narodnicist (or populist) ideas within the Party, the possibility of socialism in one country and, predictably, the danger of the kulak.[16] He singled out Bukharin as especially guilty of such deviations and, in order to alert his audience to the gravity of the situation, he made anecdotal reference to a by then shelved draft decree by the People's Commissariat of Agriculture (Narkomzem) of the Georgian Republic that reportedly ordered the denationalisation of land.[17]

Yet, although a number of delegates spoke along the same lines as Sarkis, there were several contributions that did not carry the same sense of urgency. Pichurin, from Volodarskii district, suggested that the main weakness of Party work was practical rather than ideological, and was mainly from the inability of rural cadres to promote the Party line among the peasantry accurately. He suggested that '[t]he kulak must be controlled like the NEPman', arguing that this was to be achieved by a reinforcement of Party presence in the countryside, rather than a political reorientation.[18] Petrova, another delegate, went even further, stating that she could not understand the cause of such worries, as in her opinion the Party's work in the countryside was quite strong indeed, given the circumstances.[19] Still others refrained from touching on the

subject altogether, raising instead questions relating to persistent problems of political work, like the chronically low participation of women in Party and mass organisations.[20]

Irrespective of the discontent voiced by several delegates on various aspects of Party work, Zinoviev and his supporters made no attempt to prepare the organisation for a full confrontation with the Central Committee, perhaps indicating that they were not confident in their ability to carry the conference, or even that they had not fully decided on such a course at the time. According to one account, 'Zinoviev appears to have been genuinely anxious to restrain his more aggressive followers.'[21] This is reflected in the final conference resolution, which warned of the danger of the kulak and stressed the need to closely observe social stratification in the countryside, but still condemned the leftist deviation of overestimating this danger and declared the LPO to be 'fully and wholly' in agreement with the Central Committee line.[22] The turning point seems to have come after the Moscow Party Organisation Conference published its own resolution that Zinoviev and his supporters viewed as a direct attack on Leningrad.[23] Nevertheless, despite an escalation of invective against some of the Moscow Party Organisation leadership, the Leningraders did not attack the Central Committee line.[24] This suggests that the Zinovievites were reluctant to move decisively against the centre, perhaps indicating a lack of confidence in their control of the organisation.[25]

Subsequent events would demonstrate the internal inconsistency and relative organisational strength of the opposition in equal measure. Although Zinoviev's minority political report to the XIV Congress marked the high point in the political fortunes of the Leningrad Opposition, the opposition's imperfect grip on its power base became evident when a meeting of the Vyborgskii district organisation activists (*aktiv*) convened to extend its greetings to the Congress and call on the Leningrad delegation to unite with the majority.[26] After their isolation at the Congress had become clear, key members of the delegation hurried back to Leningrad to rally the city's organisations around its beleaguered leadership. Using a mixture of persuasion, intimidation and suppression of information, they succeeded in maintaining control of the city in the short run, organising support rallies of several hundred workers.[27] To re-establish control of the organisation, the Central Committee had to send some of its most recognisable members to tour the city, explaining the decisions of the Party Congress to *aktiv* meetings and calling on the rank-and-file membership to publicly withdraw its support for the LPO delegation.[28]

Although the leftist, anti-NEP views expounded by the Leningrad delegation at the Party Congress could not but have been shared by many a rank-and-file worker living through the hard times of reconstruction, the fact remains that the oppositionists were in clear breach of their conference mandate when they attacked the Central Committee political report. The rise and fall of the opposition in Leningrad can therefore be viewed neither as the work of a scheming leadership nor as a genuine grassroots movement. Instead, it seems that the opposition used the real grievances of its constituents to pursue its own goals, overestimating its strength in the process, or perhaps knowingly gambling against the odds.[29]

The significance of this for the subsequent period is that it set very particular tasks before the new leadership of the organisation under Kirov. Had the opposition been an isolated factional group, it could easily have been defeated by means of administrative measures requiring little, if any, political recalibration, whereas suppressing a truly mass opposition in the country's second city would have required a far-reaching

purge that would probably have paralysed the organisation for a long time.[30] As we shall see, the new leadership trod a middle ground.

Leningrad returns to the fold

Kirov was confirmed as secretary of the Leningrad province committee (*gubkom*) at a Plenum on 8 January 1926.[31] The immediate task of the new leadership was to organise an extraordinary conference of the organisation in order to elect a new *gubkom*, discuss the troublesome events of the opposition's factional struggle and confirm Leningrad's return to the political mainstream and submission to the decisions of Congress. The date of the conference was set for 10 February and the district organisations were instructed to meet a week earlier to elect their delegations.[32]

Despite what one might expect after what was, after all, a bitter power struggle, and notwithstanding the torrents of polemical resolutions that had filled the pages of *Leningradskaia pravda* in the previous month, the conference opened in a conciliatory mood, with revanchist rhetoric and enemy baiting conspicuous by their absence. In a move clearly intended to appeal to the delegates' sense of camaraderie, Kirov started his opening speech by asking everyone to stand in memory of a Soviet diplomatic courier who had recently been murdered in Latvia.[33] Although several speakers took the floor to express their indignation at the oppositionists' attempt to use their control of the organisation to prevent information from Congress from reaching the rank-and-file, Safronov, a delegate from one of the city's power plants, spoke in defence of the Congress delegation, arguing that its supplementary report reflected the organisation's views.[34]

As informative as contributions from the floor are with regard to the mood prevalent within the LPO at the time, it is in the policy reports given by the Party leaders attending the conference that we can find hints regarding the political recalibration affected by the preceding events. Nikolai Bukharin, whose rightist views had been the cause of much alarm among Leningrad communists, delivered a speech carefully tailored to address their political concerns and hack away at residual support for the Opposition. Quoting extensively from Lenin, Bukharin argued that following the defeat of the White movement the Party had been transformed from an organisation of civil war to an organisation of 'civil peace', its main task now consisting of 'peaceful organisational work.'[35] Nevertheless, he shrewdly stressed that this did not entail an underestimation of the extent to which class struggle remained a feature of Soviet society, but was rather a reorientation intended to improve the Party's ability to fight the class enemy in the long run. Foreshadowing what would become a key tenet of later Stalinist policy, Bukharin went on to say that it was possible that the class struggle would, in the future, intensify and that, in such an event, the Party retained and would put into use the same means that had pacified the kulak in 1918.[36] Although we may speculate about the sincerity of Bukharin's radical conversion to the anti-kulak camp, there can be little doubt that his words would have gone at least some way towards addressing the worries of Leningrad communists and therefore undermining lingering oppositionist sentiment, at least on this particular matter.

Another important address to the extraordinary conference by a leading party figure was Felix Dzerzhinsky's report on the state of industry. The head of the Supreme Soviet

of the National Economy (VSNKh) gave what must have been a very reassuring speech to the overwhelmingly proletarian membership of the Leningrad organisation, making it clear that the growth of heavy industry remained the fundamental goal of economic policy. The resolution adopted on the basis of Dzerzhinsky's economic report specifically stated that the tempo of industrial growth must be increased to such levels as to consistently outperform agriculture and, significantly, that this increase was to be achieved in conjunction with closer attentiveness to the everyday needs of workers, rejecting labour intensification in favour of technical improvements and rationalisation.[37]

Apart from Bukharin and Dzerzhinsky, the LPO conference was addressed by such high-standing members of the Communist Party as Viachaslav Molotov, Mikhail Kalinin and Mikhail Tomsky. One can hardly view their presence as anything other than a very strong message of reassurance to Leningraders that their city and organisation were important to the leadership and that their interests would be attended to, notwithstanding Zinoviev's fall from grace. The only stronger indication that Leningrad had the centre's attention would have been Stalin's personal presence. The general secretary made a rare trip to the former capital only two months later, in April of the same year.[38]

In his closing speech, Kirov summarised the political mood in the organisation, stating that '[w]hat is needed is unity, solidity and decisiveness of our Party.'[39] Nevertheless, as much as unity and camaraderie had been the dominant theme of the conference, it remained the case that the organ had been extraordinarily summoned to deal with the aftermath of an organised attempt to defy Party discipline. It would not have been possible for conference proceedings to end without addressing at least to some extent the political implications of the emergence of a factional opposition in the city and prescribing some immediate measures in response to the whole affair. What is of particular interest, however, is the specific manner in which these political conclusions were expressed in the conference's main political resolution. Drawn up on the basis of Kirov's keynote speech the text of the resolution made no mention of administrative disciplinary measures as a legitimate response to this crisis.

The new Leningrad leadership had indicated its intention not to pursue a vindictive agenda against the defeated opposition even before the conference, when a session of the *gubkom* bureau on 19 January 1926 forbade any repressive measures against its rank-and-file supporters.[40] The significance of the conference resolution for future events, however, lay not so much in its clemency as in the terms in which it presented the problem and prescribed the remedy. According to the text, the unity and consistency of the Party had been undermined by the unsound policy of rapid, indiscriminate recruitment that had the effect of swelling its ranks with untested working-class elements that had not had sufficient experience of organised class struggle.[41] This had resulted in a 'radical alteration of the organisational nature of [the] party.'[42] However, if the root of the problem was social, its prescribed solution was political. The Conference resolved that the only guarantee against future manifestations of factionalism was the careful and conscientious studying of Leninism and the decisions of the Party Congress, as well as the strengthening of Party democracy to prevent potential factionalism by local Party leaders.[43] Further, it was declared necessary to raise the quality of the Party's intervention among the non-Party masses, by having the Party become more attentively involved in the work of trade unions, soviets and cooperatives.[44]

The following two points can be made on the basis of this account of the 1926 extraordinary conference. First, the central party leadership recognised that the success, such as it was, of the opposition led by Zinoviev was due to the fact that its rhetoric appealed to actually existing grievances present within the working-class population of Leningrad, including the part of the population that was organised in the Communist Party. Its response was to provide assurances through its representatives to the rank and file both with regard to the fundamental, bread-and-butter economic issues that were the root of workers' discontent and, equally, to the political disquiet created by this situation. Second, as far as the Communist Party was concerned, the emergence of a factious opposition must have been seen as a failure in its vanguard mission. By allowing itself to be swamped by inexperienced members of the working class, it had lost its ability to provide sound leadership to the city's working-class population. In Marxist-Leninist terms, the inability of a large part of the Leningrad rank and file to recognise the long-term interests of the class as embodied in Party policy had left it vulnerable to manipulation by a faction that sought, for whatever reason, to mobilise the organisation on the basis of its immediate, particular interests against the universal interests of the proletariat represented by the Party as a whole.[45] There was only one response to this problem that was consistent with the Party's ideology. The Leningrad organisation had to work towards strengthening its vanguard traits. This could only be achieved by raising the rank and file's awareness of Party policy, its grasp of Leninist theory and its public activism. The following section examines how the new regional leadership went about this task.

The new leadership gets to work

The protocols of the Bureau sessions of the *gubkom* provide a useful, if partial, view of the political priorities of the LPO. Much like its central counterpart, the Bureau was elected by the Plenum of the *gubkom* to run the organisation in between the committee's sessions, implementing but also modifying committee decisions based on circumstances.[46] The items on the agendas of Bureau meetings and the relevant decisions can therefore give us an indication of the general contours of the process of Leningrad's return to orthodoxy.

Although there can be little doubt that the city's political climate remained tense even after the extraordinary Party conference had proclaimed the end of factional infighting, it seems that whatever oppositionist moods remained in Leningrad never reached a scale that would necessitate an organised political response from the new leadership. In fact, factionalism and oppositionist activities are almost entirely absent from the protocols of Bureau sessions for 1926. The only specific mention of oppositional activity comes from a report by Kirov on 5 October, stating that the Zinovievites had been active in the Moskovsko-Narvskii district organisation, but offering little in the way of a response apart from typical condemnations of factionalism and further appeals to unity.[47]

This is not to say that the new leadership treated the defeated faction with magnanimity. In an address to the Central Committee Plenum of 31 March 1926, the former *gubkom* secretary Grigorii Evdokimov listed a number of punitive measures taken by the new leadership including removal of newspaper editors and organisers as well as sackings

of grassroots oppositionists.[48] Furthermore, we have no reason to doubt the veracity of Victor Serge's claims that the opposition faced widespread intimidation at the time, often having its meetings disbanded by activists loyal to the Central Committee.[49] Such measures, however, were within the boundaries of regular party discipline and did not constitute an escalation of repression. The Leningrad press had censored the decisions of the XIV Congress and parallel organising was in open breach of Party rules, so that lack of a heavy-handed response would have been surprising. What is more, some of Evdokimov's claims seem exaggerated and are contradicted by his own evidence.[50]

Nevertheless, although the relatively simple task of mopping up the pockets of organised Zinovievism could be safely delegated to the local organisations, responsibility to prevent the emergence of similarly disruptive political deviations in the future had to rest with the new leadership. We have already seen that the Party conference had implicitly recognised that economic hardship and insufficient political consciousness had been major factors in the development of a factional opposition within the LPO. What had not been addressed during the conference was the fact that the new economic initiative of the Party – known as the Regime of Economy – would, by prioritising improvements in labour productivity, place new pressures upon workers.[51] It was this that necessitated a political approach to the post-crisis situation by the new leadership, as no amount of administrative measures against Zinovievites could prevent workers' discontent from seeping into the Party. In order to succeed in its mission to reintegrate Leningrad into the political mainstream, the regional leadership would have to engage with both the economic troubles of the area and the ideological level of its membership and supporters.

This double concern is reflected in the Bureau protocols, evident already in the first session of the leading organ after the XXIII conference. On 23 February, the *gubkom* Bureau met to discuss the problem of unemployment among Communists and to vote on a resolution concerning the workers and peasants correspondents' (*rabselkor*) movement.[52] The meeting described Communist unemployment as a threat and instructed the regional *orgotdel* (Party personnel department) to liaise with the Trade Union Council and the city executive committee (*ispolkom*) in order to work out immediate measures to alleviate the situation and bring their recommendations to the Bureau in two weeks.[53] The Bureau was similarly alarmed by the situation prevalent in *rabselkor* work. The meeting passed a detailed resolution stating that the movement had been underrated and offered little concrete political guidance, leading in turn to very problematic relations between Party organisations and correspondents' circles in enterprises. Identifying the movement's organisational structure as a key source of weakness, the resolution liquidated territorial associations and postulated that correspondents' circles were to be reorganised on a voluntary basis around specific shop-wall newspapers. General meetings of circles in specific enterprises would elect editorial boards, the oversight of which would be the responsibility of the bureau of the relevant enterprise's Party collective. Finally, district Party committee bureaux and their agitprop organisers were instructed to examine the matter further in order to work out ways to improve the activities of *rabselkory* in their areas.[54]

These issues illustrate the nature of the dual task that lay before the Party in Leningrad. Unemployment, a persistent problem throughout the NEP period, would necessarily erode the support of any ruling party whose primary constituency was the industrial working class.[55] The fact that in this Bureau session the matter of discussion

was unemployment specifically among Communists shows that the new leadership was particularly concerned about the political consequences of unemployment, that is its effect on the Party's ability to govern effectively and reliably.[56] Unemployment not only created fertile ground for the growth of oppositional sentiment, it also sapped the Party's organisational strength. An unemployed member was more likely to spend time looking for work than agitating and the loss of employment entailed a loss of political platform, the workplace being the chief space of communist political intervention. This concern is reflected in the Bureau's later instruction stipulating that unemployed communists were to remain members and take full part in the activities of the Party collective of their last place of employment.[57]

The alarm expressed by the Bureau about the dire condition of the worker correspondents' network was part of the same concern about political performance. The correspondents' movement was not formally connected to the Party but, as was the case with other social movements in the Soviet Union, Communists were expected to take active part in it and provide leadership for its work. The correspondents themselves were ordinary peasants and workers who voluntarily took on the responsibility of becoming shop floor and rural journalists, reporting to the press on the difficulties and achievements of production in their workplace, while also acting as whistleblowers against despotic management.[58] The weakening of what was a useful and generally harmless outlet for public dissatisfaction on the one hand, and a means of mobilisation of support and potential site of cadre recruitment on the other, seems to have troubled the new regional leadership.

The significance of this first post-crisis Bureau meeting lay not so much in the content of the resolutions passed, but in the fact that the dual political strategy of welfare and political education put forward at the conference was here established in practice as the guiding principle of policy formation. Almost every subsequent Bureau session and every major resolution passed concerned economic problems or ways to raise the political level of the Party's membership. Further, the decision to liquidate territorial and city-wide correspondents' associations in order reorganise *rabselkor* activism on a shop-floor basis established what may be called 'delegation to the bottom' as a key element in policy. The bottom-level (*nizovie*) organisations were the primary point of contact between the Party and the ordinary workers and peasants on whose behalf it claimed to govern. It was also the level of organisation at which Party members were most likely to be demographically similar to the non-Party masses and share their concerns. The vanguard character of the Party became least pronounced precisely where it was most important. It was therefore only natural that getting this aspect of political work right was vital to the party leadership.[59]

Virtually every resolution passed at LPO Bureau or *gubkom* plenary sessions in 1926 included some instruction to the effect that the active involvement of the lowest level of Party organisation corresponding to a particular area of work was crucial to success and a matter of priority for the district committee (*raikom*) responsible. This is most evident in the comments and recommendations made by the Bureau in resolutions adopted after review sessions on the work of subordinate Party organisations. These resolutions follow a more or less standard pattern whereby the achievements of the reviewed subordinate body are outlined in the first part of the document, which is then followed by a second section wherein the regional leadership offers its criticisms and recommendations. One such resolution, adopted by the Bureau on 19 October, reviewed the activity of the

Vasileostrovskii *raikom*.[60] The Bureau praised the *raikom* for its successful handling of the post-crisis situation by means of educational and expository work (*raz'iasnitel'naia rabota*) and noted approvingly that the general mood of the working-class population of the district had improved as a result of the activities of party trade union activists (*profaktiv*). These achievements notwithstanding, the Bureau admonished the local organ regarding the sharp decline in meeting attendance over the summer and the rising number of disciplinary infractions, some 650 of which had reached the regional Review & Control Commission. In response to these deficiencies the Bureau instructed the *raikom* to broaden its educational work by recruiting more *agitprop* cadres from the bench (*ot stanka*), strengthen its newly expanded activist base by means of more practical work and create a network of oversight commissions to monitor implementation of directives.[61] Other Bureau reviews of lower bodies during this period identified similar problems in the level of discipline amongst the party's rank and file and prescribed an almost identical remedy of activism and education, with some variation according to the level and location of the reviewed body.[62]

This is particularly important in light of the fact that Bureau agendas were heavily laden with items pertaining to the region's economic troubles.[63] Raising the level of the Party's activist base by means of practical and theoretical training had become an issue of importance comparable with the building of new power plants, controlling rising prices and increasing the productivity of labour. Moreover, the Bureau's records indicate that these were not conceived of as independent matters, and that effective, well-planned activism was seen as a major component of the Party's economic work.

This is reflected in the increasing attention paid by the Leningrad leadership to the development of the fledgling institution of production conferences (*soveshchaniia*).[64] A resolution passed on 30 March on labour productivity and wages noted that the growth rate of the latter outpaced the former in several enterprises, making necessary an increase in labour norms where this was the case. At the same time, however, the resolution stated that workers' production conferences should have a key role in the rationalisation of production.[65] The same idea was repeated in a resolution on the state of Leningrad industry passed a few months later, marking out low levels of labour productivity and discipline as major weaknesses and stipulating that conferences and greater mass involvement were to play a major part in remedying such problems.[66] The Bureau reaffirmed this commitment when it passed yet another resolution in September, this time dealing specifically with the work of production conferences. The document criticised management and specialists for not taking into account the findings of conferences and demanded timely and detailed responses to their recommendations, while further instructing trade unions to free up one paid organiser per enterprise for full-time work on conferences.[67]

Supporting and developing production conferences became a priority for the Bureau at the same time as it was facing mounting industrial unrest. The Leningrad leaders saw no contradiction in prescribing greater workers' participation as a remedy to the lack of labour discipline.[68] They scolded managers both for not controlling their workers well enough and for not involving them in decision-making. Being attentive to workers' grievances while also mobilising their efforts in a way that was beneficial to the enterprise was precisely what a Communist director was expected to do.[69]

The Bureau protocols contain numerous examples like these. Combined with other evidence suggesting that grassroots political involvement and ideological education of

both Party members and non-Party activists was a matter of high priority for the Bureau throughout 1926, the above suggests that rank-and-file activism was at the time viewed by the leadership as a means of governance and a key to the resolution of a variety of problems.[70] This idea was fully consistent with the dual political strategy laid out at the February extraordinary Conference and would be very much in evidence at the organisation's regular conference almost a year later.

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The XXIV LPO conference opened on 25 January 1927, remaining in session until the 29th. Kirov once again opened the conference by asking delegates to stand in memory of dead comrades. The third anniversary of Lenin's death had been marked only four days earlier while much more recently Felix Dzerzhinsky, who had addressed the same organ a year earlier, had died.[71] Unity and a pragmatic, business-like attitude to the tasks at hand were the main themes of the sessions, but the general mood at the event seems to have been rather jovial compared with a year earlier. According to the stenographic record, the traditional opening greetings were interrupted by a group of workers from the rubber factory Krasnyi Treugol'nik, who presented the conference with a rubber toy elephant, which was duly placed on the presidium's desk.[72] Although the opposition and its pernicious activities were mentioned in the main speeches, they received very little attention in the discussions that followed. Molotov, who along with Bukharin and Ian Rudzutak represented the Central Committee, argued that the key task that remained with regard to the opposition was to bring the middle-ranking cadres that had supported it back into the fold and help them to understand the correctness of the Central Committee majority line.[73] Although Kirov did spend some of his main speech warning that the defeat of the opposition only meant that it had transferred its activities underground, the political resolution drawn up on the basis of his report made very little mention of the matter.[74]

Instead, both Kirov's speech and the contributions of most delegates addressed problems relevant to the political priorities that guided Bureau activity throughout 1926, namely Leningrad's economic problems and the Party's level of political education and rank-and-file activism. 'Bureaucratism' in industrial relations was singled out as a particularly thorny issue, with delegates accusing irresponsible managers of proprietary attitudes towards their enterprises, refusing compensation for reasonable expenses to workers and occasionally embezzlement.[75] Ziskin, from the Proletarskii factory, warned that the frequency of industrial disputes was seriously undermining the educational work of Party activists, citing over 3000 cases of wage-related disputes for Krasnyi Putilovets alone.[76]

Training and educating the Party's activist base was declared a major priority of the *gubkom*, but it was conceded that progress on this front had been unsatisfactory. Kirov stated that attendance at Party schools hovered around a dismal 30%, citing excessive workload as a major reason for low participation, while also criticising the badly organised nature of Party meetings, which often operated without a set order of the day.[77] Bogachev from the Baltiskii factory joined Kirov in criticising badly organised meetings, but went on to argue that the meetings activists were expected to attend were just too numerous, many of them pointless and certainly more than people already in full-time employment could meaningfully contribute to.[78] Ratner, from Volodarskii district, argued that training activists was a matter of urgency and stated that 'there are too many directives and too little practical work' to applause from the floor.[79] Others

stressed the importance of focusing on the qualitative improvement of the Party's rank and file. Suzdal'tseva, from Vyborgskii district, condemned the practice of indiscriminate recruitment, claiming that it had flooded the party with unreliable elements, citing the expression of anti-Semitic views by candidate members in the Rabotnitsa plant.[80] Similarly, Shestakov, from the Proletarskii plant, argued 'the activity of the masses must be understood qualitatively and not quantitatively' as even high meeting attendance did not necessarily indicate high political consciousness.[81] He went on to suggest that production conferences were of paramount importance in the development of political consciousness, stating that 'production conference decisions must be taken into account and fulfilled and this must become a political priority for the *gubkom*.'[82] Several speakers shared this opinion, including Kirov, who had earlier praised the work of conferences and described the expansion and further development of this institution as a 'battle question' (*boevoi vopros*) for the LPO.[83]

Kirov's closing speech declared 'merciless war' against all the small deficiencies (*nedostatki*) in the Party's work, stating that important matters often depended on seemingly trivial things (*melochi*).[84] Unlike problems like 'bureaucratism' and badly organised political work, the defeated opposition did not seem to inspire such warlike resoluteness. The XXIV conference of the LPO, much like its extraordinary predecessor a year earlier and the regional Bureau since, appeared to regard the conflict as an unfortunate but bygone event, of no comparable importance to the tasks that lay before the party.

Conclusion

This article has examined the political activities of the LPO as reflected in the records of its leading bodies in the year following the defeat of the opposition movement led by Zinoviev, arguing that, preceding events notwithstanding, the organisation remained primarily concerned with its ideologically determined political tasks throughout 1926. Training and maintaining a politically astute activist base emerges as one of the top priorities of the Organisation, on a par with and not unrelated to remedying the region's economic woes. In contrast, the defeated opposition appears only as a peripheral concern. It elicited neither an administrative response from the Bureau nor the militant invective directed to bureaucrats and bad management by Conference delegates.

A few points can be made on this basis. First, it is evident from the issues discussed and the measures taken that the regional leadership understood the challenges it had to confront – including combating the opposition's residual influence – fully within the contours of the Party's ideology. The Bureau protocols do not reflect a body of bureaucrats trying to get on with their jobs, but a group of Communists trying to find communist solutions to communist problems. Even though it did not partake in the kind of political theorising that central leadership figures engaged in, the Bureau still worked within the conceptual framework of Leninism. Second, because of its conceptual framework, the Bureau came up with solutions to problems that ended up increasing the relative weight of ideology in the overall system. Delegating executive and deliberative tasks to the bottom levels of the apparatus made it all the more important to ensure that the level of political awareness at the bottom was

satisfactory, which in turn necessitated further rounds of educational activities. None of this was particularly new or specific to Leningrad. What was specific to Leningrad was that the city's organisation had rebelled against the rest of the Party. That it was possible – and, as has been argued, necessary – for the new leadership to assume control of the organisation without a major purge after a crisis of such intensity, indicates that the Party was more than a giant staffing agency.

The significance of the above is that it shows it is possible to examine the Communist Party as a political organisation rather than as one more layer of the administrative apparatus. This distinction has been insisted on throughout this article because overwhelming scholarly interest in the Party as an instrument of power has often led to the obfuscation or outright denial of its political traits.[85] This is not to say that the Party was *not* an administrative machine, but rather that an exclusive focus on its administrative function can tell only part of the story. This is particularly important in light of a relatively recent research departure in the field that has stressed the importance of Marxist-Leninist ideology in Soviet history, arguing that most Soviet political initiatives were to a great extent theoretically grounded.[86] While there is no space here to examine the arguments of scholars working on this subject in detail, it can be said as a concluding remark that a refocusing of scholarly interest on Party history seems be both complementary to and a logical consequence of the rediscovery of ideology. The Communist Party was the bearer of Marxist-Leninist ideology in Soviet society and its control over the state apparatus was what in theory guaranteed the communist character of policy. It is unclear how the ideology of Marxism-Leninism can be said to have had a causal effect in Soviet history if not through the Party apparatus; without a mobilising agent, there could have been no 'politics of mobilisation.' The contributions of scholars who have worked in this direction can therefore not be fully absorbed by the field without taking account of the primary channel through which specific ideas were translated into political practice and subsequently modified as they confronted the complexities of social reality.

Party history provides a view of the process by which ideology could seep through the various levels of the Party apparatus, to acquire the causal power attributed to it by some scholars. It also prompts us to ask a number of questions that may open interesting avenues for research. For example, to what extent can we meaningfully speak of ideological uniformity within the Party? How similar was the understanding of key programmatic concepts, like the dictatorship of the proletariat, on different levels of the Party apparatus? What was the effect of such conceptual differences on the implementation of directives? Finally, while the Party's political initiatives were constituted on the basis of its ideology, the same was not true for the social realities they aimed to address. The question that emerges here relates to the impact of social circumstances – both external and internal to the apparatus – on ideological currents, and the extent to which it ended up favouring specific political approaches (and figures) over others. Given the extent, rapidity and violence of social change in the interwar Soviet Union, this seems like a particularly pertinent question to ask of the country's only legal political organisation. A small number of researchers had started to explore these questions towards the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s.[87] This article has attempted to show that revisiting this avenue of inquiry is a timely and fruitful pursuit.

Acknowledgements

This piece has benefited from the insightful comments of Iain Lauchlan, Julius Ruiz, Luca Fenoglio and the two anonymous reviewers. Special thanks must be extended to Neil Bennet for his generous editorial advice.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the XL Conference of the Study Group of the Russian Revolution, University of East Anglia, UK, 3–5 January 2014.
2. See indicatively Carr, *Socialism In One Country*, vol. 2; Daniels, *The Conscience of the Revolution*; Halfin, *Intimate Enemies*; Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*; Nazarov, *Stalin*; Pavlova, *Stalinizm*.
3. Knight, *Who Killed Kirov?*; Lenoe, *The Kirov Murder*; Egge, *Zagadka Kirova*; Kirilina, *Neizvestnii Kirov*.
4. In what is by far the longest recent scholarly study of the Kirov murder, Matthew Lenoe devotes only three out of 15 chapters to Kirov's life. Even there, the account of Kirov's activities is primarily concerned with assessing the extent of political divergence between Kirov and Stalin and whether or not Stalin had a motive to murder Kirov. See for example the discussion of the pace of collectivisation in Leningrad. Lenoe, *The Kirov Murder,* 110–14. Although attempting to do some justice to Kirov's achievements as Leningrad leader, Anna Kirilina devotes over a third of her sympathetic biography to the murder and its aftermath. Kirilina, *Neizvestnii Kirov*, part 3.
5. For example, Robert Daniels asserted that this 'battle of rival Leninists ... was manifestly the product of a contest for personal political advantage' and that '[t]here is no evidence that any bona fide rank and file movement was involved.' Daniels, *The Conscience of the Revolution*, 253, 271. Schapiro is less adamant but still treats this conflict primarily as an episode in Stalin's struggle to bring the vital points of the apparatus under his control. Schapiro, *The Communist Party*, 320.
6. Black, 'Party Crisis' seems to have been the first account to depart radically from this consensus, offering strong evidence for the presence of grassroots oppositionist feeling. My own account here is greatly indebted to Black's article. More recently, a re-evaluation of Zinoviev's political outlook and motives has also considered the concerns of Leningrad's rank-and-file communists. See Lih, 'Zinoviev' and Black, 'Zinoviev Re-examined'.
7. Unable to secure funds for their operation, enterprises often faced closure. A significant number were leased to the private sector, of which 31% to their former owners. Suvorova, *Nepovskaya mnogoukladnaya ekonomika*, 96.
8. In a speech to the Moscow Party Organisation *aktiv* on 17 April 1925, Nikolai Bukharin famously called on the peasants to enrich themselves. Earlier, an article by Vladimir Bogushevskii in *Bolshevik* had argued that 'kulak' was no longer a meaningful category. Bogushevski, 'O derevenskom kulake', 63–64.
9. For a more detailed discussion of the relationship between the economic troubles of Leningrad and the emergence of the opposition, see Black, 'Party Crisis'.
10. On 25 September 1925 the party organiser of the Krasnyi Putilovets factory, Aleksander Aleksandrov, sent a personal report on the political dispositions of workers in the enterprise to the regional secretary and prominent oppositionist Piotr Zalutskii. He

noted that the factors negatively affecting such dispositions were a consequence of the insufficient rate of growth of the factory and that if left unchecked they could potentially turn into a serious danger (*prevratit'sia v groznuiu opasnost'*). Cherniaev, Makarov, Potolov and Rosenberg, *Piterskie rabochie i diktatura proletariata*, 350. See also Black, 'Party Crisis', 110–12.

11. The Lenin levy (*Leninskii prizyv*) was a mass recruitment drive undertaken in the first months of 1924 in order to expand the Party's working-class membership. Its name is derived from the fact that it coincided with Lenin's death on 21 January of the same year. Similar recruitment campaigns were repeated in 1925 and 1927. Some 23,575 new members were admitted to the LPO during the recruitment drives of 1924 and 1925, raising the percentage of workers in the organisation from 61.2% to 72.7% by the end of 1925. Dmitriev, *Leningradskaia organizatsia KPSS*, 25. For the effect of the Lenin levy on the Moscow Party organisation, see Hatch, 'The "Lenin Levy" and the Social Origins of Stalinism'.
12. Black suggests that the strength of the regional party press masked the isolation of the Leningraders' views from the Party mainstream. Black, *Party Crisis*, 122.
13. As a rule, the first names of contributors are not given in the stenographic transcript of the conference.
14. Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii (hereafter RGASPI), fond 17 (Central Committee of the CPSU), opis' 21 (Department of Leading Party Organs. Information Sector), delo 2668, listy. 7–8.
15. Antonov, from Volodarskii district (*raion*), argued that workers could see little if any benefits in the NEP, facing worsening unemployment while capital was enjoying increasing profits. Ibid., l. 9.
16. Ibid., ll. 14–15.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., l. 16.
19. Ibid., l. 15.
20. Kozlova from Krasnyi Treugol'nik. Ibid., l. 48.
21. Carr, *Socialism,* vol. 2, 120.
22. RGASPI, f.17, op.21, d.2668, l. 28.
23. According to Carr, *Socialism*, 124, Zinoviev addressed a closed session that was held after the LPO conference political proceedings had ended, where he accused the Moscow Organisation of a campaign to 'beat the Leningraders'. The actual Moscow Conference resolution, however, contains no direct mention of the LPO or its leaders and was supported by Kamenev who was present at its voting. See *Izvestiia*, 8 December 1928 for the text.
24. Carr, *Socialism*, 128–29. At a meeting in Krasnyi Putilovets, the firebrand Sarkis went so far as to suggest that 'There are no differences between the Moscow and Leningrad organizations and there must not be any'. Black, 'Party Crisis', 10.
25. As shown by Halfin, the Zinovievite Party leadership at the Communist University based in Leningrad appeared reluctant to mobilise the rank-and-file against the centre. Even after Zinoviev himself addressed the organisation at a graduation ceremony, some of its leading members remained unconvinced that there was anything wrong with the Muscovites' view. Halfin, *Intimate Enemies*, 193–94.
26. *XIV S"ezd VKP (b),* 486.
27. See Black, 'Party Crisis' for a discussion of these events with respect to the Krasnyi Putilovets factory.

28. The losing battle fought by the opposition can be observed through the pages of *Leningradskaia pravda*, where the torrent of resolutions produced by both sides was published. The arrival of Central Committee members like Kalinin and Molotov immediately after Congress clearly tipped the balance against the opposition. From 1 January, resolutions condemning the delegation and demanding an extraordinary conference of the LPO started to grow exponentially, reaching 170 by the 15th. The Party collectives of the Karl Marx and Krasnaia Zaria factories demanded decisive measures to strengthen Party unity. See indicatively *Leningradskaia pravda*, 2, 7 and 15 January 1926.
29. The latter seems likely to be the case if Rykov's assessment that Zinoviev's main concern was to maintain relative independence for Leningrad is true. After it became evident that the Politburo majority would not yield on the question of maintaining a single centre and would not grant Zinoviev an independent press organ as a platform for his views, the latter had little left to lose. See Carr, *Socialism*, 128–29.
30. Some clarificatory remarks need to be made here. Carr argued that the rapidity with which the LPO rank-and-file swung away from the Opposition 'suggests neither a genuine ideological conversion nor specific measures of pressure . . . but a widespread readiness to follow the dominant opinion.' *Socialism*, 155. However, while we can certainly doubt that Leningrad Communists had a revelatory moment upon the arrival of the Politburo delegation from Moscow, Carr's formulation turns the rank-and-file into a completely passive mass. Kirov's own account contradicts this assessment. In a letter to Sergo Ordzhonikidze on 16 January 1926, he related the atmosphere of a 2200-strong party meeting at the Krasnyi Treugol'nik factory. Kirov wrote that he had not witnessed such meetings since the revolution and that the tension was such that fistfights broke out in parts of the room. Kirov to Ordzhonikidze, *Bol'shevistkoe rukovodstvo*, 318. Voroshilov related a similar atmosphere, likening it to 1905. Voroshilov to Ordzhonikidze, ibid., 320. In fact, that the prominent party leaders had to tour the city's enterprises to win back the organisation suggests that they did not expect the rank-and-file to readily accept a change in course. What is important for the argument of this article is not that the centre got its way, but that the way it did so was dictated by the nature of the crisis, which in turn determined the manner of work of the new regional leadership.
31. RGASPI, f. 17, op 21, d. 2672, ll. 7–8.
32. *Leningradskaia Pravda*, 31 January 1926.
33. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2669, l. 2.
34. Ibid., ll. 18–19. Safronov's contribution did little to address the accusations of delegates like Gyach from Krasnyi Putilovets, who claimed that oppositionists had used security personnel to forcefully disband shop-floor meetings and even detain *gubkom* members that did not support their faction. l. 22.
35. Ibid., l. 5.
36. Ibid., ll. 5–6.
37. Ibid., ll. 70–72.
38. Stalin attended a Plenum of the *gubkom* and an LPO *aktiv* meeting, reporting on the April Plenum of the CC and the country's economic situation. Stalin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 8, 394.
39. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2669, l. 57
40. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2674, l. 11.

41. There is no contradiction between the argument of the resolution and Black's assessment that the new members' inexperience was a contributing factor to the opposition's collapse. 'Party Crisis', 122. While the influx of new members with specific grievances against the overall direction of the NEP provided fertile ground for the growth of oppositionist feelings, it also reduced the likelihood that the organisation would remain steadfast once confronted with overwhelming political pressure from the centre.
42. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2669, l. 57.
43. Ibid., l. 58. For a discussion of the concept of democracy within the framework of Marxist-Leninist ideology see Priestland, 'Soviet Democracy'.
44. Ibid.
45. This, for Lenin, was the essence of opportunism: 'Opportunism consists in sacrificing vital interests to make temporary, partial gains.' Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 42, 58.
46. A recommendation to reduce the secretariat to three members was amongst the first interventions of the Politburo commission dispatched to Leningrad after the XIV Congress. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2669, l. 7.
47. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2674, l. 189. The importance of the Moskovsko-Narvskii organisation as a stronghold of the Zinovievites has already been mentioned, making the presence of lingering oppositionist sentiment unsurprising.
48. Anderson et al., *Stenogrammy*, 693–702.
49. Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*, 259.
50. Evdokimov wrote of 'a few thousands of the best' cadres having been subject to repression. Astakhova, Gorskaya, and Vatlin, *Stenogrammy*, 696. As an example of such repression, Evdokimov cites the case of Radziuk, a member of the Sovetskaia Zvezda factory organisation. He was removed from his job by the district committee on 13 February and put on paid leave for two weeks before being sent to other enterprises that refused him upon learning the reason for his dismissal. However, according to Evdokimov, Radziuk had already returned to employment by the time his address was composed meaning that he had stayed out of work for less than a month (p. 699). Significantly, Evdokimov does not mention any expulsions.
51. The Party's commitment to raise labour productivity is reflected in the speeches of Dzerzhinskii in his capacity as head of the VSNKh. Addressing a Plenum of the All Union Central Soviet of Trade Unions in February 1926, Dzerzhinskii described the divergence between the rate of increase of wages and that of labour productivity as an alarming phenomenon. Dzerzhinskii, *Izbrannie proizvedenia*, 288.
52. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2674, ll. 21–22.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. The Bureau adopted a resolution identifying the influx of unskilled, mostly peasant labourers into Leningrad as a major cause of the high rates of unemployment and recommended that they be directed to work in construction and renovation projects, while also raising the need to take measures against further in-migration. Ibid., ll. 40–41. See also Weiner, '"*Razmychka?*"'.
56. A similar concern must have inspired a decision taken by the Bureau several months later to increase the wages of low-level party workers to the same levels as those of soviet employees. With few incentives to attract scarce skilled cadres to the apparatus, the leadership had to at least make sure that those already working for the Party

did not leave in search of better terms of employment. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2675, l. 18.

57. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2674, l. 223. The same resolution instructed labour exchange offices to ensure that at least 25–30% of the people they sent to work were communists. According to figures quoted by Kirov in his response to Evdokimov's statement cited above, there had been a steady rise of communist unemployment in Leningrad during the months surrounding the events discussed in this article, beginning with 692 unemployed Communists in September 1925, reaching 1024 in December and 1288 in March. Astakhova, Gorskaya, and Vatlin, *Stenogrammy*, 706. Although low as a percentage of total membership, the persistently upward trend in communist unemployment seems to have worried the leadership. General unemployment trends in 1926 seem to account for this phenomenon. From January to July of that year, overall unemployment in the USSR grew by over 100,000. More importantly, industrial unemployment rose from 18% to 19.4% as a percentage of the total, while unemployment amongst metalworkers grew to account for 5.8% of the total from 4.9% at the start of the year. *Pervie shagi*, 234–37.
58. For a discussion of the broader significance of correspondents' activities in the context of NEP society see Hicks, 'From Conduits to Commanders', and Koenker, 'Factory Tales'.
59. Significantly, when the Bureau revisited the subject of the *rabselkor* movement towards the end of the year, it noted that despite its rapid expansion from 9985 to 16,979 activists, a key weakness remained in that Party organisations had not yet mastered the correct way of leading correspondents' circles, resulting either in too tight control or complete autonomisation of the circles. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2674, l. 244.
60. Ibid., ll. 213–17.
61. Ibid.
62. The party committee of the more rural Trotsky district (*uezd*) was for example instructed to expend more efforts in organising the poor peasantry, while the Party *kolektiv* of the *Skorokhod* factory was told to fix its attention on the education of their candidate members and intensify its political work amongst management and administrative staff. See ibid., ll. 132–33 and RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2675, ll. 8–11 respectively.
63. Apart from persistent problems like unemployment, the Bureau had to respond to some small-scale but acute crises. The first item on the agenda of a 7 December session, for example, was the disappearance of butter from Leningrad markets. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2674, l. 258.
64. Production conferences were gatherings of workers that met to discuss problems of production in their workplace in order to come up with concrete recommendations to factory management. For an extensive account of their functions, see Chase, *Workers*, ch. 7.
65. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2674,ll. 44–44a.
66. Ibid., ll. 77–79.
67. Ibid., ll. 169–73.
68. Production conferences were the Party-sanctioned remedy to the discontent created by the increased demands of the Regime of Economy. Chase assigns conferences a pivotal role in what he describes as the rebuilding of the alliance between the Party and the working class. Chase, *Workers*, 298.

69. Amongst the key achievements of the Vasileostrovskii *raikom* praised by the Bureau in its review was the committee's success in maintaining a strong *aktiv* of red directors and foremen. For a discussion of popular notions of good red directors see Koenker, 'Factory Tales'.
70. It is indicative of the degree of importance attached to political-educational work that the Bureau requested more funding for the Agitation and Propaganda department (*Agitpropotdel'*) of the *gubkom*, asking the Central Committee for permission to raise its annual budget from 332,000 to 557,000 roubles. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2674,l. 230. The only other extraordinary requests for funds in the same year concerned industrial investment, such as the construction of a new hydroelectric power plant on the river Svir', ibid., l. 204.
71. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2670, l. 2.
72. Ibid., l 4.
73. Ibid., l. 43.
74. Ibid., ll. 138–41.
75. Ibid., l. 55.
76. Ibid., l. 54. The giant Krasnyi Putilovets plant employed some 10,000 workers and its organisation was the last to be lost by the opposition. Deteriorating relations between workers and management there had attracted special attention from the LPO Bureau, as growing tensions eventually erupted into riots. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2674, ll. 124–26.
77. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2670, l. 51.
78. Ibid., l. 67.
79. Ibid., ll. 62–63.
80. Ibid., l. 66. Suzdal'tseva referred to this as the Sarkis method of recruitment, in reference to the former Moskovsko-Narvskii district secretary, making a link between the emergence of the former opposition and the qualitative deterioration of the LPO.
81. Ibid., l. 65.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid., l. 51.
84. Ibid., l. 135.
85. Indicatively, Daniels, 'The Secretariat'; Rigby, 'Early Provincial Cliques'. See also Carr's assessment of Stalin as 'the product of a period when stable and orderly administration . . . was the main requirement.' *Socialism,* 201. Pavlova argues that the Party was not a political organisation in any meaningful way. *Stalinizm*, introduction.
86. See indicatively: Depretto, 'Ofitsial'nie kontseptsii'; van Ree, *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin*; Priestland, *Stalinism and the Politics of Mobilization*; Brandenberger, *Propaganda State*; Ryan, *Lenin's Terror.* See also Roh, 'Stalin's Think Tank'.
87. Black, 'Party Crisis'; Chase, *Workers*; Hatch, 'The "Lenin Levy"'; Merridale, *Moscow Politics*; Shimotomai, *Moscow under Stalinist Rule*.

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