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Publication Date

1981

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Reprint No. 195

Reprinted from: *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, 8, Pt. 3 (1981), pp. 360-378.

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*Urban Working Class Life in Early Twentieth Century Russia: Some Problems and Patterns**

Between 1905 and 1917, St. Petersburg and Moscow workers made claims on Russian society and the Tsarist regime for economic justice, political equality, and the recognition of their rights as citizens and as human beings. Many joined the labor and revolutionary movements that presented a formidable challenge to employers and the state. What were the bases of solidarity among urban workers¹ that enabled them to act collectively and to form organizations, such as trade unions, beginning in 1905? How did these workers, most of them migrants from the countryside, acquire a new social identity in the urban milieu?

Although a comprehensive investigation of these questions lies outside the scope of this article, there is much to be gained from taking a fresh look at three issues that have far-reaching implications for interpreting the historical role played by urban workers in the final years of autocratic rule. These include the definition and composition of the urban working class; stratification, status differentiation, and identity formation among urban workers; and finally, the workplace environment and its impact on workers' experiences and perceptions. Focussing, in particular, on the characteristics of skilled workers, both in factories and artisanal shops, I will suggest that the position of these groups at the workplace and in the urban labor force facilitated their involvement in the labor and revolutionary movements from 1905 on. A better understanding of the social and political realities in urban Russia can be achieved, I will argue, by drawing on new sources and theoretical perspectives that have not yet been brought to bear on the study of Russian labor.

* This revised article was originally presented as a paper at the First Annual Meeting, Seminar on the History of Russian Society in the Twentieth Century, University of Pennsylvania, May 1980. I am especially indebted to Professor Reginald E. Zelnik for his comments and suggestions, and to Mark Steinberg for assistance in compiling statistical data. The Institute of Urban and Regional Development, University of California, Berkeley, and the American Association of University Women provided support during the preparation of the article.

1. It should be observed at the outset that this article is limited to a discussion of *urban* workers. Nevertheless, a substantial number of the nonagricultural manual workers were employed in enterprises situated outside the major cities. The study of these workers, many of them located in the dense "factory villages" of the Central Industrial Region and in the mining districts of South Russia, deserves separate consideration. The *kustar*' (rural artisanal) workers in the countryside provide still another important but neglected subject for investigation.

The Problematic of the "Working Class"

In contrast to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, when radical popular movements originated in the artisanal workshop more often than in the "dark satanic mill," the Russian upheavals of 1905 and 1917 marked the beginning of an era involving the revolutionary mobilization of the industrial worker. Western and Soviet scholars alike have recognized that factory workers played an unprecedented part in the events that weakened and finally overthrew both the Tsarist autocracy and the Provisional Government, installing the Bolsheviks in power. But the historic novelty of mass participation by these workers has led some scholars to present an incomplete and imbalanced picture of the urban working class as a whole.²

Since the 1930s, Soviet studies in the Russian labor field—with a few notable exceptions—have concentrated on workers employed in factories and plants, to the exclusion of other strata in the urban hired labor force.³ Ad-

2. It is not possible, in this article, to grapple with the concept of the "working class," a central problem in any labor study. Suffice it to note that my own inclination is to look for the conjunction between structures and social solidarities, in the belief that a class becomes manifest in the concrete actions of groups that, "as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs." E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon, 1964), p. 9. Given this perspective, I am inclined to emphasize the way in which workers, through their own statements and actions, reveal underlying concepts of class and status in Russian society.

3. In characterizing Soviet scholarship in this way, I have in mind studies dealing with various aspects of the pre-revolutionary workers' movement. The standard procedure in Soviet works is to provide a perfunctory survey of the labor force, followed by a substantive discussion of workers' activities that concentrates almost exclusively on the role of factory groups. Illustrative of this pattern are *Rossiiskii proletariat: oblik, bor'ba gegemoniia* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1970); *Rabochii klass i rabochee dvizhenie v Rossii* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1966); G. A. Arutiunov, *Rabochee dvizhenie v Rossii v periode novogo revoliutsionnogo pod'ema 1910-1914 gg.* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1975) and E. E. Kruze, *Peterburgskie rabochie v 1912-1914 godakh* (Moscow-Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1961). Studies of the 1905-07 period are particularly prone to distortion as a consequence of this narrow conceptualization of the working class. Thus the collection *Revoliutsiia 1905-1907 godov v Rossii i profsoiuzy* (Moscow: Profizdat, 1975), with contributions by V. Ia. Laverychev and others, makes only passing reference to the involvement of non-factory groups in the trade union movement, despite the overwhelming evidence of their predominance in these organizations. Iu. I. Kir'ianov's recent study, *Zhiznennyi uroven' rabochikh Rossii* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1979), while rich in documentation, deals exclusively with factory groups. Notable exceptions to the dominant approach in Soviet historiography are U. A. Shuster, *Peterburgskie rabochie v 1905-1907 gg.* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1976), N. I. Vostrikov, *Bor'ba za massy (gorodskie srednie sloi nakanune oktiabria)* (Moscow: "Mysl'," 1966), S. N. Semanov, *Peterburgskie rabochie nakanune pervoi Russkoi revoliutsii* (Moscow-Leningrad: "Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1966). It is also noteworthy that the important statistical compilation by A. G. Rashin, *Formirovanie rabocheho klassa Rossii Istoriko-ekonomicheskie ocherki* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi literatury, 1958), applies a broad definition of the working class, and includes data on such groups as artisans, sales-clerical employees, household servants, day laborers, and workers in transportation, communications, and construction.

hering to unduly simplified Marxist-Leninist assumptions concerning the "progressive" historical role of the "proletariat," these scholars have taken a narrow view of working class, virtually equating it with the factory worker. Less encumbered by such ideological presuppositions, Western scholars have applied a broader definition of the Russian working class, but even here there has been almost no systematic investigation of nonfactory groups in the urban labor force.⁴ The failure to provide a comprehensive analysis of the heterogeneous elements comprising the laboring population in cities such as Petersburg and Moscow has seriously restricted and even distorted our conception of urban Russia.

The urban economy was, in fact, characterized by considerable sectoral and occupational diversity at the turn of the century.⁵ Industrial workers—those employed in enterprises classified by contemporary sources as "factories"—constituted only a minority of the total hired labor force in cities such as Petersburg and Moscow (about 25 percent and 21 percent, respectively).⁶ Within the manufacturing sector, there were not only factory workers but also a large stratum of artisanal workers who are seldom accorded adequate treatment in the literature. Soviet scholars often ignore the role of these workers

4. Western historiography in the Russian labor field is still in its formative stages, with many important works as yet unpublished. Some discussion of non-factory urban groups and their participation in the labor and revolutionary movements can be found in Laura Engelstein, "Moscow and the 1905 Revolution: A Study in Class Conflict and Political Organization," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1976; J. H. L. Keep, *The Rise of Social Democracy in Russia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963); Diane Koenker, "Moscow Workers in 1917," 2 vols., unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1976; Ezra Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale: The Formative Years of the Jewish Workers' Movement in Tsarist Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970); Solomon Schwarz, *The Russian Revolution of 1905* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1969); and Gerald Surh, "Petersburg Workers in 1905: Strikes, Workplace Democracy and the Revolution," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1979. Useful background material can also be culled from James H. Bater, *St. Petersburg: Industrialization and Change* (London: Edward Arnold, 1976), and Reginald E. Zelnik, *Labor and Society in Tsarist Russia: The Factory Workers of St. Petersburg, 1855-1870* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1971).

5. The sectors of the urban economy include manufacturing, transportation, communications, construction, sales and service. Within each of these sectors there was, of course, a wide range of occupational groups engaged in manual work.

6. At the turn of the century, there were 641,656 workers in St. Petersburg and 537,521 workers in Moscow in the following categories: manufacturing, sales-clerical, transportation, communications, construction, and service. *Perepis' Moskvy 1902 g., chast' 1*. vyp. 2 (Moscow: Moskovskii gorodskoi golova, 1906), pp. 46-197; *S. -Peterburg po perepisi 15 dekabria 1900 g., vyp. 2* (St. Petersburg: Izdanie Gorodskoi upravly po statisticheskomu otdeleniiu, 1903), pp. 1-173. 161,924 workers were employed in private and state-owned factories and plants in Petersburg in 1902, or 25 percent of the total hired labor force noted above. In 1902, there were 111,718 workers in Moscow factories and plants, or 21 percent of the total hired labor force. For a discussion of labor force data, see note 11 below.

altogether or relegate them to the ranks of the "petty bourgeoisie."⁷ Even in Western accounts, this segment of the urban population has not yet received the attention it deserves. Yet artisanal workers were among the first to establish organizational bases for collective action in Russia (e.g., mutual aid societies, trade unions), and they occupied a key place in the events of 1905-07. During the interrevolutionary years (1907-16), artisanal workers sometimes provided support for radical political parties such as the Bolsheviks.⁸

Notwithstanding their record of labor and political activism, we know very little about urban artisans. At the turn of the century, when the guild system (never very deeply rooted in Russia) was already in steep decline, artisanal trades retained three distinguishing characteristics: considerable skill, acquired by means of lengthy apprenticeship training; reliance mainly on hand labor, with relatively little mechanization of production and concomitantly, a limited division of labor; and a skilled work hierarchy, with apprentices (*ucheniki*), journeymen (*podmaster'ia*), and master craftsmen (*mastera*).⁹

Because many of the contemporary data sources on which we must rely failed to include artisanal workers in their compilations, the numerical weight

7. See above, note 2, for comments on one Soviet study—*Revoliutsiia 1905-1907 godov*—that virtually bypasses artisanal workers. A leading Soviet study on the subject classifies artisans as part of the "petty bourgeoisie," but emphasizes their "dualistic position" resulting from stratification into employers (*khoziaichiki*) and "toilers" (*truzheniki*). This duality is said to account for their political vacillation between the "proletariat" and the "bourgeoisie." Vostrikov, *Bor'ba za massy*, especially pp. 16-17, 33.

8. On the role of artisanal workers in the Petersburg and Moscow labor movements, and their political orientation, see Victoria E. Bonnell, "Radical Politics and Organized Labor in Pre-Revolutionary Moscow, 1905-1914," *Journal of Social History*, 12, No. 2 (March 1979); *idem*, "Trade Unions, Parties and the State in Tsarist Russia: A Study of Labor Politics in St. Petersburg and Moscow," *Politics and Society*, 9, No. 3 (1980). See also the works by Engelstein, Keep, Koenker, and Schwarz cited above. Further discussion of artisanal workers can be found in my unpublished paper, "The Roots of Rebellion in Urban Working-Class Life: A Study of Artisanal Trades in St. Petersburg and Moscow on the Eve of 1905," presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, New Haven, Connecticut, October 1979.

9. As the foregoing indicates, my definition of "artisanal" is based on the nature and organization of the work process, rather than on the juridical or socioeconomic position of these workers in Russian society. In my unpublished paper, "The Roots of Rebellion," I have discussed the definition and varieties of artisanal trades at the turn of the century. Suffice it to note that artisanal workers were situated in three types of trades: (1) fully artisanal trades (e.g., watchmaking and precious metal working) with only small workshops based primarily on hand labor; (2) modified artisanal trades (e.g., baking and apparel) with small firms based primarily on hand labor and larger "artisanal factories" or manufactories with little mechanization or division of labor; and (3) partially artisanal trades (e.g., metalworking and printing) with both large mechanized firms and small workshops relying primarily on hand labor.

of this elusive and ill-defined group is difficult to establish.¹⁰ According to my calculations, artisanal workers constituted a substantial proportion of the labor force in Petersburg and Moscow, exceeding the number of factory workers in Moscow.

TABLE I
ARTISANAL AND FACTORY WORKERS AND TOTAL POPULATION
IN ST. PETERSBURG AND MOSCOW AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY¹¹

	Artisanal Workers	Factory Workers	Total City Population
St. Petersburg	150,709 (1900)	161,924 (1902)	1,439,600 (1900)
Moscow	151,359 (1902)	111,718 (1902)	1,174,700 (1902)

10. Included in my definition are nonfactory hired workers in artisanal trades, as well as garret masters who worked with members of their own families and *odinochki* or individual workers who produced on a puttingout basis in their own garret. It should be noted that the *odinochki* were a transient group that moved in and out of workshops and subcontracting shops in the course of their working lives and were frequently accepted into trade union membership. Apprentices are included. See "Roots of Rebellion," pp. 15-18, for a discussion of problems of classification and data sources.

11. This table is based on data from *Perepis' Moskvy*, chast' I, vyp. 2, pp. 116-61; Rashin, *Formirovanie*, p. 354; Pogozhev, *Uchet, chislennosti i sostav rabochikh Rossii* (St. Petersburg: Tipografii Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk, 1906), pp. 148-51; *S.-Peterburg po perepisi 15 dekabria 1900 g.*, vyp. 2 pp. 38-173. Unlike the Moscow city census, which distinguished between factory and artisanal workers, the Petersburg city census combined both groups into one total without disaggregating them. The approximate number of Petersburg artisans has been calculated by the following method. First, I have determined the number of workers in private and state-owned factory enterprises in Petersburg and its industrial suburbs Petergof, Shlissel'burg, Poliustrov and Lesnoi. These data are based on figures calculated by Pogozhev for 1902. Pogozhev relies primarily on statistics collected by the Ministry of Finance and its subordinate agency, the Factory Inspectorate, and published in the *Spisok fabrik i zavodov Evropeiskoi Rossii* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia V. Kirshbauma, 1903). Pogozhev has modified the data in the *Spisok* to include several state-owned firms (mainly shipbuilding and munitions plants), some railroad workshops of the Nikolaevskii and Warsaw railways, firms subject to the excise tax (especially vodka and wine factories), and firms omitted by the Factory Inspectorate because the owners contended they were artisanal despite their large size. Even with Pogozhev's additions, however, the data are incomplete because they do not include all of the workers in state-owned metalworking plants and railroad workshops, nor certain factory enterprises that are listed in the *Spisok*. In order to correct these deficiencies, I have disregarded Pogozhev's labor force statistics on metal workers and have calculated a new total based on a combination of the *Spisok* list and my own supplementary data on state-owned metalworking plants. In those cases where Pogozhev's totals for a given category are lower than in the *Spisok*, I have relied upon the latter source as more complete. Furthermore, I have added the large government paper and printing factory, Ekspeditsiia zagotovleniia gosudarstvennykh bumag, whose workers do not appear either in the *Spisok* or in Pogozhev's data. The addition of all of these workers to Pogozhev's figures brings the total Petersburg factory labor force in 1902 to 161,924. This figure was then subtracted from the total number of workers in the Petersburg city census, giving us the approximate number of artisanal workers. Individual garret-masters (*odinochki*) have been added to the artisanal category, making a total of 150,709 artisanal workers in the capital at the turn of the century.

To discount the artisans is to write off five thousand workers in the Moscow printing and binding industry and nine thousand in Petersburg—amounting to 42 percent and 51 percent of the total labor force in this industry in each city, respectively—and over two-fifths of Moscow metal workers, who were employed in metalworking firms that did not qualify as factories according to criteria adopted by the Factory Inspectorate.¹² Moreover, entire categories of workers vanish from consideration when only factory groups are included. At the turn of the century, for example, nearly all the workers in the large garment industry were bypassed by data collections relating exclusively to factory enterprises. More than forty thousand nonfactory garment workers fail to appear in statistical compilations for either Petersburg or Moscow, although they comprised the second largest aggregate group in the manufacturing sector of each city, preceded only by metal and textile workers in Petersburg and Moscow, respectively.

Sales-clerical workers (*torgovye sluzhashchie*) represent another substantial segment of the urban labor force that is virtually disregarded in the literature, despite their strong showing in the labor movement from 1905 on. An ill-defined category that included salesclerks, cashiers, bookkeepers, and others, most of them employed in wholesale, retail, and cooperative firms, sales-clerical occupations shared certain features with artisanal trades, notably, a skill acquired through apprenticeship training, a limited division of labor, a skilled work hierarchy, and dispersion in numerous small firms throughout the city. In 1900 there were 109,000 sales-clerical workers in the capital and 86,000 in Moscow (1902).¹³

Sales workers occupied an ambiguous position in the urban working class. Strictly speaking, from a narrow Marxist perspective they appear to belong to

12. In 1901, the Ministry of Finance instructed Factory Inspectors to classify as a factory any manufacturing enterprise that employed twenty or more workers, regardless of mechanization. But this criterion was applied inconsistently, with both smaller and larger enterprises omitted from the Inspectorate list. For a discussion of the problems and limitations of Factory Inspectorate data, see Semenov, *Peterburgskie rabochie*, pp. 10-31; Shuster, *Peterburgskie rabochie*, pp. 6-11, especially p. 7, note 4; V. Alymov, "K voprosu o polozhenii truda v remeslennom proizvodstve," *Narodnoe khoziaistvo*, Bk. 6 (Nov.-Dec., 1904), pp. 3-6.

13. *S.-Peterburg po perepisi 15 dekabria 1900 g.*, pp. 1-167; *Perepis' Moskvy 1902 g.*, chast' 1, vyp. 2, pp. 46-115. Included in this category are sales-clerical workers in industrial, commercial, financial and government establishments. The principal historian of sales workers is A. Gudvan, the author of numerous books and articles on the subject before and after 1917. His most comprehensive work is *Ocherki po istorii dvizheniia sluzhashchikh v Rossii* (Moscow: Ts. K.S.S.T.S., 1925). See also D. Antoshkin, *Ocherk dvizheniia sluzhashchikh v Rossii* (Moscow: V. Ts. S.P.S., 1921), K. Muromskii, *Byt i nuzhdy torгово-promyshlennykh sluzhashchikh* (Moscow: Tipo-lit. torg. doma Kudinova, Lezina, 1906); P. Losov, *Torvogye sluzhashchie* (Moscow: Knigoizdatel'stvo "Trud i volia," 1906).

the petty bourgeoisie. But sales workers provided some of the earliest and most enthusiastic recruits to the trade unions and Social Democrats took an energetic role in helping them to mount collective organizations.¹⁴ Indeed, contemporaries did not hesitate to grant most of these groups representation alongside other workers in the 1905 Soviets and the Central Bureaus of Trade Unions in both Petersburg and Moscow, although subsequent historians have taken little notice of their activities.

The study of urban working class life must incorporate all of these diverse elements into a comprehensive analysis that takes into account not only the particularities of each subgroup, but also the interrelationships among the constituent parts. Workers employed in factories, artisanal workshops, and commercial firms did not, after all, inhabit entirely separate worlds. There was considerable interoccupational mobility, as workers moved between factories and workshops, from sales occupations to factory employment and so on.¹⁵ It was not uncommon for members of a single family to find employment in different sectors and occupations within the urban economy, while cooperative living arrangements (*arteli*) brought together workers who often shared a common place of origin but were employed in a variety of different occupations and industries.¹⁶ With the advent of workers' organizations after the turn of the century, disparate groups increasingly came into contact with each other through formal and informal networks. These *interrelationships* represent an important but neglected dimension of working class life with implications for the study of stratification, the formation of class consciousness and the bases of solidarity among workers.

Stratification

In Russia as elsewhere, the labor force was highly stratified according to skill, occupational specialization, the type and location of the enterprise, and a host of other factors such as gender, literacy, social origins, and ties with the countryside. The rural-urban dichotomy, in particular, has drawn consider-

14. In his statement to the International Socialist Conference in Brussels, 16-17 July 1914, Lenin supported his claim for Bolshevik hegemony over the Russian workers' movement with the statement that "in [the Petersburg unions of] metalworkers, textile workers, tailors, woodworkers, *salesclerks*, and others, there is the fullest predominance of *pravdisty*." V. I. Lenin, *Sochineniia*, 3rd ed., 40 vols. (Moscow: Partizdat, 1928-37), XVII, 543. Italics mine.

15. On this point see S. Kanatchikov, *Iz istorii moego bytiia* (Moscow-Leningrad: "Zemlia i Fabrika," 1929), Bk. I, pp. 64-68, and P. Timofeev, *Chem zhivet zavodskoi rabochii* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo redaktsii zhurnala "Russkoe bogatstvo," 1906), p. 110-17; E. O. Kabo, *Ocherki rabocheho byta: opyt monograficheskogo issledovaniia domashnegò rabocheho byta*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Knigoizdatel'stvo V. Ts. S. P. S., 1928), p. 35.

16. For contemporary descriptions of the *artel*, see Timofeev, *Chem zhivet*, pp. 13-16, and Kanatchikov, *Iz istorii*, pp. 8-14. The *artel* is also discussed in Robert Johnson, *Peasant and Proletarian* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1979).

able attention from both Soviet and Western scholars, and there is no doubt that the contrast between "peasant" and "proletarian" represented a striking aspect of contemporary urban life. But this was not the only or perhaps even the principal basis for stratification in the labor force, especially when the problem is considered from the vantage point of the workers themselves. It is worth stepping back from the conventional assumptions to take a new look at the workers' own status conceptions and the notions of commonality that provided bases for solidarity and enabled workers to act collectively. In the process, we can also shed light on the question of workers' social identities.

Whereas West European labor studies have long ago investigated problems of internal differentiation within the working class, historians in the Russian labor field (both Soviet and Western) have seldom proceeded beyond the level of broad undifferentiated categories, notwithstanding the fact that generalities such as "metalworkers," "garment workers," or "printers," provide very crude tools of analysis. Yet differentiation along the lines of skill and occupational specialization represented a major basis for stratification in Russian working class life. Each industry or trade had a labor hierarchy. At the summit stood the "labor aristocrats," that is, a small but highly qualified substratum such as metal patternmakers in the metalworking industry, the fabric cutters in the garment industry, and the engravers and machine typesetters in the printing industry.¹⁷ Below them were ranged a variety of skilled occupations—

17. Discussion of the "labor aristocracy" by a Soviet author can be found in U. N. Netesin, "K voprosy o sotsial'no-ekonomicheskikh korniakh i osobennostiakh 'rabochei aristokratii' v Rossii," in *Bol'shevistskaia pechat' i rabochii klass v gody revoliutsionnogo pod'ema (1910-1914)* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1965). There is a substantial but neglected literature on various industries and trades, much of it published in connection with the history of trade unions. Valuable studies of metalworkers, tailors, bakers, and printers include the following F. Bulkin, *Na zare prosdvizheniia: Istoriia Peterburgskogo soiuza metallistov 1906-1914 gg.* (Leningrad-Moscow: Izdanie Tsentral'nogo Komiteta i Leningradskogo soiuza rabochikh metallistov, 1924); Z. Shchap, *Moskovskie metallisty v professional'nom dvizhenii* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo raionnogo komiteta vse-soiuznogo soiuza rabochikh metallistov, 1927); *Materialy ob ekonomicheskom polozenii i professional'noi organizatsii Peterburgskikh rabochikh po metallu* (St. Petersburg: Tipolit I. Dur'e, 1909); S. Gruzdev, *Trud i bor'ba shveinikov v Peterburge 1905-1916 gg.* (Leningrad: Leningradskii oblastnoi soiuza rabochikh shveinoi promyshlennosti, 1929); N. Shev'kov, *Moskovskie shveiniki do Fevral'skoi revoliutsii* (Moscow: "Trud i Kniga," 1927); E. A. Oliunina, *Portnovskii promysel v Moskve i v derevniakh Moskovskoi i Riazanskoi gubernii. Materialy k istorii domashnei promyshlennosti v Rossii* (Moscow: Tovariščestvo tipografii A. I. Mamontova, 1914); *Professional'noe dvizhenie Moskovskikh pishchevikov*, sbornik I (Moscow: Izdanie Mosgubotdela soiuza pischevikov, 1927); V. Ivanov, *Professional'noe dvizhenie rabochikh khlebo-pekar'no-konditerskogo proizvodstva Petrograda i gubernii (s. 1903-1907 gg.)* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1920); Sher, *Istoriia professional'nogo dvizheniia rabochikh pechatnogo dela v Moskve* (Moscow, 1911); *Istoriia Leningradskogo soiuza rabochikh poligraficheskogo proizvodstva, kniga perviaia 1904-1907* (Leningrad: Izdanie Leningradskogo gubotdela soiuza rab. polig. proizv. SSSR, 1925); V. A. Svavitskii and V. Sher, *Ocherk polozeniiia rabochikh pechatnogo dela v Moskve (Po dannym ankety, proizvedennoi Obshchestvom rabochikh graficheskikh iskusstv v 1907 godu)* (St. Petersburg: Imperatorskoe Russkoe tekhnicheskoe obshchestvo, 1909).

metalfitters, lathe operators, smelters and tinsmiths in metalworking, the garment workers in custom-made men's and women's tailoring shops, the *baranochniki* in bakeries, and the typesetters in the printing industry¹⁸—followed by the semi-skilled and unskilled workers.

In all skilled occupations, there was a hierarchical division into apprentices and qualified adult workers. The latter group was sometimes subdivided into journeymen (*podmaster'ia*) and master craftsmen (*mastera*). This arrangement, originating in the guilds, still remained in effect at the turn of the century, despite the fact that most journeymen could anticipate only lateral mobility, not vertical mobility into the ranks of workshop owners.¹⁹

In the year 1900, an apprenticeship system existed in virtually all artisanal trades and skilled occupations, occupying a far more important place in working class life than is generally acknowledged in the literature and exerting a formative influence over workers' conceptions of class and status in Russian society. Most workers who began apprenticeship training were born and raised in the countryside. This was the case not only among factory workers but even among urban artisans who, in contrast to their West European counterparts, were recruited primarily from the village rather than the city.

The apprenticeship system ensured that for many workers, the first introduction to urban life and the workshop or factory regime came at a young and impressionable age. Apprenticeship in artisanal occupations, in practice exempt from state regulatory laws, normally began between the ages of twelve and fourteen. In the garment industry it was not uncommon for children to enter an apprenticeship at the age of ten or eleven. The average age of a beginning Moscow typesetting apprentice was 13.2 years in 1902 and 14.3 years in 1904. Sales-clerical workers also served an apprenticeship that frequently began before individuals reached their teens. In factories, by contrast, apprenticeship usually did not commence before the age of fifteen or sixteen.²⁰

18. The importance of occupational identity can be discerned from a variety of contemporary sources. Appeals issued by trade unions in 1906-07, for example, were frequently directed to specific subgroups within a given industry or trade. Thus, a bakers' union leaflet in the capital addressed "Comrade bakers, pastry makers, *baranochniki*, breadbakers, *kalachniki*"; a textile union leaflet in Moscow was issued to "comrade weavers, spinners, dyers and knitters." Similarly, appeals to printing workers were directed to typesetters, lithographers, binders, and so on. *Professional'nyi soiuz*, No. 14, 1 April 1906, p. 12; M. Zaiats, ed., *Tekstili v gody pervoi revoliutsii (1905-1907 gg.)* (Moscow: Ts. K. Soiuz tekstil'shchikov, 1925), pp. 41, 51.

19. For further discussion of this point, see "Roots of Rebellion," pp. 24-48.

20. Svavitskii and Sher, *Ocherk*, pp. 10, 47; Gudvan, *Ocherki*, p. 125. Sher, *Istoriia*, p. 10, observes that "printers begin work earlier in life than is generally the case among proletarians in big factories." A survey of Moscow printers and binders in 1907 reported that seven out of ten workers in this industry had entered the labor force before reaching the age of fourteen. By contrast, Sher cites a survey conducted at the Tsindel' textile mill in Moscow at the turn of the century, which reported that 24.4 percent of the workers entered employment before the age of fifteen and 38.6 percent began between the ages

Artisanal workers entered the workshop earlier than their factory counterparts and they spent a longer time acquiring the skills of their trade. The training of apprentices in artisanal shops typically lasted four or five years, while skilled factory workers usually served a two- or three-year apprenticeship. In some cases, for example, the textile industry, where mechanization had reduced the requisite skill levels in many occupations, apprenticeship was sometimes completed in a matter of months. Even here, however, there were specialized occupations that required lengthy apprenticeship training, for example, knitting.²¹

The impact of early and prolonged apprenticeship must have been profound, especially for youths recruited fresh from the countryside when barely into their teens. By the time these youths reached the age of seventeen or eighteen, they were often well adapted to the ways of the urban workshop or factory. It is difficult to believe that their formative experience as an apprentice did not make a deep and lasting impression on workers whose rupture with the countryside took place at an age when few knew how to use a wooden plow or had the slightest idea how to plant wheat.²² Their early introduction to urban life must have imparted to some of these workers an awareness, however fragile, of their position as urban workers—a self-image still comparatively rare in Petersburg and Moscow at the turn of the century. There is evidence to suggest that many acquired a craft identification as well, considering themselves for the first time a “typesetter,” a “tailor,” a “metal patternmaker.”²³

It is, of course, difficult to assess the extent to which the new identity as an urban worker supplanted the older self-definition as a peasant, or at least transformed that image to encompass the recently-assumed occupational position. For workers with only nominal ties to the countryside, the new identification probably became quite strong over the years as rural ties were attenuated

of fifteen and seventeen. The belated onset of apprenticeship among factory workers can be attributed to government regulations prohibiting factories from employing children younger than twelve years of age and restricting the employment of children between the ages of twelve and fifteen to eight hours a day at a time when factory shifts generally lasted eleven and one-half hours. As a consequence of these restrictive regulations, factory owners were often reluctant to take on apprentices under the age of sixteen.

21. Zaiats, ed., *Tekstili*, p. 91.

22. Timofeev, *Chem zhivet zavodskoi rabochii*, p. 17.

23. On this point see, for example, Kanatchikov, *Iz istorii*, pp. 14-20. It is interesting to note that Kanatchikov identifies himself as a “patternmaker” very early on, probably during the first year of his apprenticeship at the Gustav List plant which he entered at the age of sixteen, in 1896, coming directly from the countryside. He comments that patternmakers were considered an “aristocracy” within the plant, not because of their wages, which were not as high as other specializations, but due to the exacting intellectual requirements of this occupation. Kanatchikov observes that there were some “peasant-patternmakers” in the factory who retained a rural appearance and attitudes, in contrast to the other more urbanized and cosmopolitan patternmakers. The former groups, significantly did not serve an apprenticeship in the factory. From Kanatchikov’s account, the apprenticeship system emerges as an important socializing factor.

and urban assimilation progressed. For this group, the continuing nominal relationship to the village was often a form of social security. Many held on to a house in the village or a parcel of land, or sent money to relatives in order to maintain a refuge in the event of illness, unemployment, or old age. Without their *pied-à-terre* in the village, as one contemporary pointed out, "they would lose the last refuge during times of unemployment, once and for all."²⁴

But not all workers who continued to send money back to the village did so willingly. Many must have shared the outlook reported by a skilled Petersburg metalworker at the turn of the century:

Once a worker starts earning thirty or thirty-five rubles a month and has almost become a skilled worker, he is no longer so willing to send money back to the village. I have often heard of disagreements between parents in the village and their children working in factories in the town. Often the disputes even end up in court when a father refuses his son a passport for failing to send money back to the village. *As for skilled workers, the majority probably feel that the village is nothing but a burden. At least this was the opinion I personally heard from most of them.* The only exceptions were those with such good land that they didn't have to send money home and those who were the sons of prosperous village artisans and merchants. *All the rest said that the village was more of a hindrance than a help.*²⁵

The acquisition of a skill was for many workers as a matter of decisive psychological importance, particularly in terms of the new identity that individuals developed in an urban setting. In an economy dominated by semi-skilled workers, many of them fresh from the countryside, the possession of a skill acquired through prolonged apprenticeship training gave workers a feeling of mastery, self-respect, and control over the work process.²⁶ Even skilled workers in such a relatively low-status trade as shoemaking felt themselves a cut above the common mill hand.²⁷

Of course, the command of a specialized occupation often coincided with a cluster of other characteristics. Skilled workers generally tended to be literate and male, and due to apprenticeship training, they generally entered the urban labor force at a young age and spent long years there. There is further evidence that in many cases, workers with high levels of occupational specialization

24. Timofeev, *Chem zhivet zavodskoi rabochii*, p. 14.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 17. Italics mine.

26. These points are brought out in the illuminating essay by Reginald E. Zelnik, "Russian Bebels: An Introduction to the Memoirs of Semen Kanatchikov and Matvei Fisher," *Russian Review* (part one), 35, No. 3 (July 1976); (part two), 35, No. 4 (Oct. 1976).

27. *Peterburgskii zapozhnik*, No. 1, 28 March 1906, p. 2.

had more attenuated ties with the countryside than semi-skilled and unskilled workers in the same industry or trade.²⁸

Once in possession of a skill, workers attached enormous significance to their status designations. Until the mid-1880s, the term *masterovoi* was used both officially (by the government and factory administration) and by the workers themselves to refer to a skilled worker. Derived from the traditional guild hierarchy, the term was carried over into the factory setting to describe workers who in many respects could be considered "factory artisans."²⁹ Juxtaposed to the *masterovye* were the *rabochie* or semi- and unskilled strata of the labor force. Among skilled metalworkers, the term *rabochii* had such pejorative connotations that it was often used as a term of opprobrium.

Attempts by factory management to alter these designations encountered bitter opposition from skilled workers who fought to retain their dignified classification as *masterovye*. By the turn of the century, the term *masterovye* was still employed by the workers themselves but in many cases the factory administration now called skilled workers *rabochie*, while the remainder of the work force was classified as *chernorabochie*.

The dispute over the official designation for skilled workers, a reflection of the status consciousness of these groups, represented one aspect of a protracted struggle over the issue of dignity at the workplace. Even prior to 1905, workers repeatedly demanded respectful forms of address by foremen and other manifestations of "polite treatment." By the eve of World War I, these demands were being articulated more frequently and insistently than ever before—a phenomenon whose implications have only begun to be analyzed in the literature.³⁰

Judging from contemporary sources, many workers were keenly attuned to matters of status differentiation. The metalworker Timofeev recounts the

28. There is considerable evidence on this point. See, for example, Oliunina, *Portnovskii promysel*, pp. 172-178, and Svavitskii and Sher, *Ocherk*, pp. 10-14, on tailors and printers respectively.

29. A contemporary discussion of this point, from which the following observations are derived, can be found in Timofeev, *Chem zhivet zavodskoi rabochii*, pp. 5-8. Timofeev dates the shift in official terminology from the industrial legislation of 4 June 1886. However, the term *masterovoi* was still used by the Naval Department in 1903 regulations governing factories under its jurisdiction. See Shuster, *Peterburgskie rabochie*, pp. 33-34. Judging from Timofeev's memoirs and other sources, the term *masterovoi* remained in common usage among the workers themselves at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1906, it was reported that workers at the Obukhov plant in St. Petersburg took offence when they were called *rabochie*: "We are *masterovye*, not *rabochie*," they are reputed to have said. These workers thought that the term *rabochii* implied an unskilled worker. P. A. Garvi, "Peterburg v 1906 g.," unpublished manuscript, Inter-University Project on the History of the Menshevik Movement, December 1961, New York City, p. 10.

30. For a discussion of this issue, see Leopold Haimson, "The Russian Workers' Movement on the Eve of the First World War," unpublished paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, New York City, December 1971.

ordeal of a metalfitter seeking employment in a large Petersburg plant around the turn of the century: "You find the foreman drinking tea in his office, which is located in the workshop itself. You walk up, and stand outside the door respectfully. 'Hey, you, what do you want?' he asks. His form of address will depend on your clothes. If you are well-dressed, he might address you politely."³¹ Clothing provided one visible sign of status distinctions, and skilled workers often presented a different outward appearance from that of their unskilled and semi-skilled counterparts and were accorded more respectful treatment.

In the garment industry the main line of stratification among workers coincided with employment in tailoring shops (*masterskie khoziaev*) and subcontracting shops (*masterskie khoziaichikov*). The former establishments usually operated on the premises of a retail firm and produced custom-made garments. Workers in these firms generally displayed superior skills, wages, and literacy compared to the mass of garment workers employed in subcontracting shops situated in garrets and dependent on orders placed by large marketing firms, usually producing ready-made clothing. One contemporary has described the contrast between these two groups of garment workers: "Tailoring shop workers (in *masterskie khoziaev*) and subcontract workers (in *masterskie khoziaichikov*) dress quite differently. The former, especially those working in the center of Moscow, wear suits, stylish boots, and different coats according to the season. The subcontract workers, on the other hand, wear quilt jackets and felt boots. In these workshops, one can find half-dressed workers wearing nothing but a calico shirt, often torn and dirty, and a pair of faded pants and long underwear. They work barefoot. When they go out, they cover themselves with a jacket."³²

Evidence from contemporary sources further reveals that in many cases skilled workers enjoyed a life style that distinguished them from others in their industry or trade. The patternmaker Kanatchikov observed that skilled metalworkers in Moscow not only attended to their appearance and dressed more fashionably than others, but also attended social dances in their leisure time and sought various cultural and educational activities.³³ Kanatchikov began life as a peasant and entered apprenticeship training as a metal patternmaker in Moscow at the age of sixteen. His description applies to patternmakers and other highly skilled metalworkers, most of them originally from the countryside like himself, who rapidly assimilated to the status and relative prosperity accorded a skilled metalworker at the turn of the century. Many

31. Timofeev, *Chem zhivet zavodskoi rabochii*, p. 22. The reference here is to the use of the forms *ty* and *vy*.

32. Oliunina, *Portnovskii promysel*, p. 241. A similar discussion of apparel worn by different groups of metalworkers can be found in Kanatchikov, *Iz istorii*, p. 18.

33. Kanatchikov, *Iz istorii*, pp. 17-19.

skilled workers attended workers' clubs and theatrical performances, read newspapers and even Russian classics, congregated in certain taverns with others of their position, and shared the outlook of the typesetter, who, "standing at his bench, felt himself to be on a higher level than other workers."³⁴

Research on the organized labor movement in Petersburg and Moscow indicates that shared skills and occupational specialization provided one of the most important bases of solidarity among workers. In 1906-07, when a legal trade union movement first emerged in Russia, seven out of ten legal organizations in Petersburg and Moscow were established on a craft basis.³⁵ Among highly diverse groups in factories, workshops, service, and sales-clerical occupations, the workers' instinctive preference was for unions structured along craft lines.

The prevalence of craft unions reflected a widespread orientation among workers, often referred to as *tsekhovshchina*. The word *tsekh* applied historically to the guilds formed by artisans, segregating them within each city into discrete corporate bodies based on a common trade. By the early twentieth century, the term had acquired broader connotations, and was used pejoratively by intelligentsia labor activists to describe the narrow bases of common identification among many workers, premised on shared work characteristics, a type of enterprise, a district, or even a single firm.

In its broadest manifestation, *tsekhovshchina* could be found among workers with the same or closely related occupation, generally requiring skill. Most unions formed by artisanal workers were based on an occupation such as tailoring, shoemaking, or watchmaking. But occupational similarity also united specialized workers in the construction, service and some factory industries. Even unions organized along industrial lines found it necessary to accommodate the strong inclination toward *tsekhovshchina* by forming separate sections for specialized subgroups.³⁶

Russian workers displayed a strong inclination toward *tsekhovshchina* both before and after the February revolution,³⁷ and the disposition to unionize

34. *Istoriia Leningradskogo soiuza rabochikh poligraficheskogo proizvodstva*, p. 11. On workers' cultural activities, see Kabo, *Ocherki rabochego byta*, pp. 41, 49, 86, 104, 128-32, 190-91.

35. The "temporary regulations" of 4 March 1906, authorized for the first time the formation of legal workers' and employers' associations in Russia. This evidence is drawn from my forthcoming study on the politics of labor in pre-revolutionary Russia.

36. Separate sections existed in the Moscow metalworkers' union for patternmakers, tinsmiths, mechanics, and electrical workers. *Materialy po istorii professional'nogo dvizheniia*, vol. II (Moscow: Izdaniia V. Ts. S. P. S., 1924), p. 253. The hand cloth printers (*ruchnye naboishchiki*) had a separate section in the Moscow textile workers' union. Zaiats, ed., *Tekstili*, p. 180. Other unions in Moscow and Petersburg with craft-based sections included the woodworkers and construction workers.

37. For two different views of the phenomenon of *tsekhovshchina* in 1917 and afterward, see William G. Rosenberg, "Workers and Workers' Control in the Russian Revolution," *History Workshop*, 5 (Spring 1978), and Steven A. Smith, "Craft Consciousness, Class Consciousness: Petrograd, 1917," *ibid.*, 11 (Spring 1981).

cannot be separated from the shop orientation that gave many workers a basis for group identification. A similar phenomenon could be found in Western Europe where the early stages of union formation proceeded along craft rather than industrial lines. What is surprising is to discover that a craft mentality was so widespread among workers in Russia, a country in which the background and context of industrial development was so dissimilar.

In contrast to Western Europe, artisanal traditions were weakly established in Russia and guilds had failed to attain the importance and influence they displayed in urban centers elsewhere. Russian industrialization occurred with exceptional rapidity, bypassing some of the intervening stages in the transition from craft production to a largescale factory system. Furthermore, the labor force in urban Russia was recruited primarily from the countryside.

How, then, can we account for the importance of *tsekhovshchina* in early twentieth-century Russia? The answer, it seems, lies precisely in the circumstances that might have been expected to distinguish Russia from the rest of Western Europe. Since the country lacked a substantial core of urban-born workers with established traditions and organizations, the new workers who flocked to the city could not turn to ongoing institutions or adapt to existing bases of social solidarity. Some, as we know, united around their place of origin, just as immigrant workers in America built communities along ethnic lines. But for many others, the primary and most logical source of identification in the bewildering and unfamiliar atmosphere of the big city was a common position in the work hierarchy or employment in a specialized occupation or type of enterprise.

The workers' strong identification with others sharing common work characteristics was thus a logical outcome of the accelerated pace of economic development taking place in Russia, particularly in urban centers that offered little in the way of preestablished bases of social solidarity to which new workers might have turned. Many workers looked for new sources of shared identity, often finding them in an occupational specialization, a place of employment or sometimes even in a city district. *Tsekhovshchina*, with its discrete and localized allegiances, was not incompatible with the awareness of belonging to a larger collectivity such as a city-wide labor movement, or, indeed, the working class as a whole. It represented a stage in the formation of new social identities—a stage that had its analogue in other societies making the transition from an agrarian to an industrial economy.

To be sure, the bases of solidarity shifted in accordance with the type of collective activity and the overall context in which this activity was conducted. In contrast to the trade unions of 1905-07, strikes and demonstrations appear to have involved a different constellation of participants and a different matrix of social solidarities. Further discussion of this interesting problem must await a detailed empirical investigation of the strike movement, particularly a longitudinal study (comparing strikes in 1905-07, 1912-14, and 1917, for example), that would illuminate the changing collective images and allegiances of workers during the final decades of the *ancien régime*.

The Workplace

At the turn of the century, workers spent the better part of their waking hours at the place of employment. Working time varied considerably according to the industry or occupation, but it was not uncommon for workers (especially those in artisanal workshops and sales firms) to spend as many as twelve to sixteen hours a day at the workplace, six or even seven days a week. Despite its centrality in the everyday life of workers, we know little about the conditions, social interaction, or authority relations at the place of employment. Yet these and other aspects of daily experience at the place of employment must have had a profound effect on the outlook and attitudes of workers.

In a traditional Marxist analysis, it is customary to assume that experiences acquired at the point of production determine consciousness. According to Marx, the elaborate division of labor under capitalism was a key element in the workers' estrangement from the act of production, while labor concentration facilitated class solidarity.³⁸ Thus, he wrote that the working class became ever more "disciplined, united, and organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself."³⁹ Soviet Marxists have adopted this assumption, arguing that the larger and more technologically advanced industries produced workers with "highly developed political consciousness."⁴⁰

We have here a verifiable proposition: were politically conscious workers; as measured by the rate of participation in organizations and mass actions,⁴¹

38. Marx conceived of workers' revolutionary consciousness as growing out of two kinds of experiences, the first acquired at the point of production, the second acquired through collective organization and collective struggle. In writing about the workplace in a capitalist economy, Marx envisioned conditions at the point of production that corresponded to the full development of the productive forces of capitalism, and he indicated the centrality of both a complex division of labor and high concentration of labor. The complex division of labor contributed to the "spiritual and physical misery" of workers because "not only is the detail work distributed to different individuals, but the individual himself is made the automatic motor of a fractional operation, and the absurd fable of Menenius Agrippa, which makes man a mere fragment of his own body, is realized." *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 134, 477.

39. Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1 (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 763.

40. A leading Soviet historian, P. Volobuev, asserts that the core of the Russian proletariat, those with the most highly political consciousness, proceeded from factories with more than five hundred workers. P. Volobuev, *Proletariat i burzhiazii Rossii v 1917 g.* (Moscow: Mysl', 1964), pp. 29, 39. According to another Soviet author, "the large and very large enterprises were the strong point of Bolshevik organizations that spread their influence over the entire working class." S. I. Antonova, *Vliianie Stolypinskoi agrarnoi reformy na izmeneniia v sostave rabochego klassa* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1951), p. 211.

41. There is, of course, a complex issue regarding the criteria for identifying "politically conscious" workers. Soviet historians tend to equate political consciousness with support for the Bolsheviks—a criterion far too narrow to reflect accurately the extent of political awareness among pre-revolutionary Russian workers. But contemporary Social Democrats and representatives of other radical political groups took a broader and more

situated primarily in enterprises with a high concentration and a complex division of labor? While it is not possible to explore this question in the present article, a few brief comments on the nature of the workplace and the labor movement are nevertheless in order.

As a late industrializer, Russia was notable for a high concentration of labor per enterprise in key industries, exceeding the level found in the most advanced societies of Western Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century. This distinctive feature of Russia's economic development has obscured the fact that the country also had a sizeable contingent of hired workers who labored in small workshops, stores, and shops within larger factory enterprises. Artisanal and most sales-clerical workers labored in small and dispersed firms (despite clustering in certain city districts) with a limited division of labor and little, if any, mechanization.⁴² Contemporary descriptions emphasize the insulated and intense environment in these shops, where a small number of people worked and often lived in close proximity.⁴³

It is noteworthy that certain features of the workshop atmosphere could also be found in large factory enterprises, for example, in the metalworking industry where plants were subdivided into numerous small and specialized shops, as described by a contemporary worker: "A large engineering works is like a world in miniature. Some factories contain up to two hundred different workshops. Large factories are usually broken up into several divisions, such as the metallurgical department, the foundry, the locomotive department, the railroad car department. And if we take in turn any one department, say the railroad car department, it will contain a lumberyard, a carpentry shop, a painting shop, an upholstery shop, a roofing shop, a machine shop, a wheel shop, a tire shop, a forge, a foundry, a pattern shop, and so on. Working conditions are by no means the same in the different workshops."⁴⁴

realistic view of the problem. The Mensheviks, in particular, regarded trade unions as the principal arena for politically-minded workers, a view that has been confirmed by my own research on the composition of unions between 1906 and 1916. This assessment was shared by some leading Bolsheviks, such as V. P. Nogin in Moscow, who were active in the workers' movement inside Russia from 1906 on. But it was not until 1912, after Lenin's directives to the Prague Conference, that Bolshevik party workers devoted their full energy to the trade union movement in the hope of winning support among organized workers, an endeavor that yielded impressive results in 1913-14. For a discussion of Bolshevik and Menshevik policies and actions in the trade unions, see Bonnell, "Trade Unions, Parties, and the State," pp. 306-07, 313-18.

42. A discussion of mechanization in artisanal trades can be found in my unpublished paper, "Roots of Rebellion," pp. 32-38. On conditions in sales establishments, see Gudvan, *Ocherki*, ch. 6.

43. For a detailed description of conditions in workshops see, for example, Oliunina, *Portnovskii promysel*, pp. 243-71. Ivan Belousov, *Ushedshaia Moskva* (Moscow: Moskovskoe Tovarishchestvo pisatel'ei, 1927) provides a vivid portrait of artisanal life at the end of the nineteenth century.

44. Timofeev, *Chem zhivet zavodskoi rabochii*, pp. 4-5.

With its small scale and, in many cases, a relatively limited division of labor, the shop in a large engineering works sometimes more nearly resembled an artisanal workshop than a modern assembly plant. The shop provided the real point of reference for workers who served an apprenticeship there, advanced through the ranks, and often retained considerable control over the labor process.⁴⁵ Maintaining its own traditions, authority relations, and a core of proud skilled workers of many years' seniority,⁴⁶ the metalworking shop frequently supplied a close-knit atmosphere that had little in common with the work environment in other industries such as textiles.

It is significant that metalworkers, together with numerous artisanal and sales-clerical groups, succeeded in forming lively and well-subscribed trade unions. For the former group, the solidarity engendered by a small work unit within the larger enterprise undoubtedly contributed to unionization. Among artisanal and sales-clerical workers, employment in small dispersed shops apparently presented no insurmountable obstacle to collective association. Indeed, there is reason to believe that the homogeneity of the labor force in small shops, with their limited division of labor and intimate atmosphere, actually assisted the cause of unionization by creating strong personal bonds that facilitated cooperation.⁴⁷ Moreover, the dispersion of these workers in a multitude of firms placed a high premium on coordination and organization in order to win concessions from employers. Research on the organized labor movement indicates that high rates of union recruitment frequently coincided with a low concentration and relatively limited division of labor in the immediate work environment, where mechanization had not yet displaced hand labor and a skilled work hierarchy was firmly entrenched.⁴⁸ Conditions such as

45. *Ibid.*, especially pp. 1-34, pp. 78-85; Kanatchikov, *Iz istorii*, pp. 14-64. Kanatchikov notes that in the 1890s, patternmakers still worked with their own tools, p. 17. Smith's "Craft Consciousness, Class Consciousness," also contains a perceptive discussion of the interior of a metalworking plant.

46. Kanatchikov, *Iz istorii*, p. 18, observes that in the patternmaking shop of the Gustav List factory where he was apprenticed there was a core of skilled patternmakers employed there for ten, fifteen, or even twenty years.

47. Departing from the usual Soviet practice, Shuster provides a thoughtful discussion of the role of small firms in the strike and labor movements of 1906 in *Peterburgskie rabochie*, pp. 254-55. A social scientist, Mancur Olson, has argued for the significance of small, as opposed to large, firms in promoting collective organization. See *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965). I will discuss this problem at length in my forthcoming study of the politics of labor in pre-revolutionary Russia.

48. The printers and bakers in both Petersburg and Moscow stood in the front ranks of the organized labor movement in 1906-07 when legal trade unions achieved their greatest success. Approximately 66 percent of the printers and 63 percent of the bakers in the capital joined a trade union; in Moscow the recruitment in these industries was 65 percent and 42 percent respectively. Other groups that displayed a high rate of unionization in this period included precious metalworkers (32 percent in Petersburg), plumbers (62 percent in Moscow), button- and hookmakers (37 percent in Petersburg). The percentage of unionized metalworkers was 13 percent in the capital and 14 percent in Moscow. These data are taken from my forthcoming study on the politics of labor in pre-revolutionary Russia.

these could be found in a wide variety of industries and trades at the beginning of the twentieth century.

There is considerable evidence that workers' attitudes and activities were correlated with both their work environment and their position in the work hierarchy. Yet these were not the only aspects of working class experience that exerted a formative influence. The impact of seasonal migration and the continuation of rural habits and beliefs has already received some attention in the literature, but we know very little about the way workers spent their non-working time and how they related to the opportunities—social, cultural, educational, recreational—presented by a major urban center such as Petersburg or Moscow. The important subjects of religion and culture, moreover, remain a *terra incognita* in Russian labor studies.⁴⁹ Without an investigation of these questions we cannot expect to acquire a richer and more nuanced conception of the life and labor of the Russian worker.

In summation, the study of pre-revolutionary Russian labor history has yielded valuable new empirical work in the past decade,⁵⁰ and we are now in a position to reassess conventional conceptions and assumptions and to take a fresh look at the evidence. For this purpose, a comparative perspective can assist in raising new questions and providing a more sophisticated methodological and historiographical approach. In addition, there is much to be learned from the research techniques and analytic orientation of social historians and historical sociologists investigating labor problems in West European societies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In formulating problems for further study—and considering Western research in this field, many topics remain as yet unexplored—it would be well to pursue both macro and micro levels of analysis. While it is important to ascertain the overall structures and patterns of working class life, we must also comprehend the mentality of workers, that is, the ways in which they themselves perceived, interpreted, and acted upon their experiences, both at the workplace and outside it.

The evidence on these questions is not easy to procure and considerable reliance must be placed on such untapped sources as workers' memoirs, correspondence and literary contributions to the trade union and party press, and other contemporary documents and first-hand accounts of working class life. These sources indicate that workers seldom viewed themselves in the manner that intellectuals, both past and present, have chosen to cast them. Without new and imaginative research, it will not be possible to penetrate the lives of workers so remote from ourselves in time and place.

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49. In addition to workers' memoirs and first-hand accounts of working class life around the turn of the century, the trade union press between 1905 and 1917 offers evidence on these questions, as does Kabo, *Ocherki rabochego byta*.

50. Apart from the published and unpublished works already cited, a recent unpublished doctoral dissertation deserves note: David Mandel, "Petrograd Workers in 1917," Columbia University, 1977.

