

Working Norms and Practices of the Soviet Elite in Leningrad during the late Stalinist Period

A. A. Amosova

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The study of the history of Leningrad of Stalin's period was subjected to a rigid ideological impact, which is why, for a long time, it was examined selectively, in accordance with strict party attitudes. For the reason of the decades-long process of rehabilitation of the victims of the "Leningrad affair", there were no approaches in the scholarship to assessing normative and extreme everyday life in the corps of Leningrad state cadres. The article aims to present the research of the Soviet elite working norms and practices in 1945–1950. The main attention is paid to the political biographies of the Chairmen of Leningrad Local Government. The research is based on the oral history and the emotionology methods, documents from St. Petersburg, Moscow and Crimean archives. The generation of Leningrad leading cadres came to the state positions in the late 1930s, after the repressions of the "Great Terror". Members of the Soviet elite underwent testing of their professional skills during World War II and the siege of Leningrad; directed the accelerated postwar recovery of the national economy. In the late 1940s, they became the victims of the so-called "Leningrad affair". Understanding normative working routine and everyday life under crisis involves identifying and analyzing feelings and associated behavior. Analysis of everyday life involves identification of events and processes that recur in the personal and professional life of Soviet nomenclature workers. Understanding extreme everyday life involves identification and analysis of feelings and associated behavior in extreme conditions (such as conflicts, fabricated criminal cases, arrests, etc).

Keywords: Soviet elite, late Stalinism, Leningrad, *Leningrad affair*, history of emotions, everyday life.

Нормы и практики служебного поведения советской элиты Ленинграда в эпоху позднего сталинизма

A. A. Amosova

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Alisa A. Amosova — PhD in History, Associate Professor, St. Petersburg State University, 7–9, Universitetskaya nab., St. Petersburg, 199034, Russian Federation; a.amosova@spbu.ru

Алиса Анатольевна Амосова — канд. ист. наук, доцент, Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет, Российская Федерация, 199034, Санкт-Петербург, Университетская наб., 7–9; a.amosova@spbu.ru

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История Ленинграда сталинского времени испытала жесткое идеологическое воздействие, поэтому в течение долгого времени она изучалась выборочно, в соответствии со строгими партийными установками. Вследствие растянувшегося на десятилетия процесса реабилитации жертв «ленинградского дела» в научной литературе не сложилось подходов к оценке нормативной и экстремальной повседневности в корпусе ленинградских государственных кадров. Целью статьи является исследование норм и практик служебного поведения советской элиты СССР в период с 1945 по 1950 г. Основное внимание сосредоточено на изучении политических биографий председателей органов Ленинградского городского и областного советов депутатов трудящихся. Ключевыми фигурами, вошедшими в советскую правящую элиту между 1939 и 1950 г., были П. С. Попков, П. Г. Лазутин, Н. В. Соловьев, И. С. Харитонов, И. Д. Дмитриев, А. А. Кузнецов. Исследование основано на устной истории и методах эмоциологии, документах из архивов Санкт-Петербурга, Москвы и Крыма. В статье также затрагивается ряд вопросов, связанных с эпохой позднего сталинизма и аспектами кадровой политики, реализуемой коммунистической партией, «ленинградским делом». Поколение ленинградских руководящих кадров пришло на государственные посты в конце 1930-х годов после репрессий эпохи Большого террора. Представители советской элиты прошли проверку своих профессиональных навыков во время Второй мировой войны и блокады Ленинграда, руководили форсированным послевоенным восстановлением народного хозяйства. В конце 1940-х годов эти представители ленинградской элиты стали жертвами «ленинградского дела». Анализ повседневной жизни советской элиты в данной статье предполагает выявление событий и процессов, которые повторяются в личной и профессиональной жизни советских номенклатурных работников и обычно связаны со стабильностью, повторяемостью, рутинной. Понимание экстремальной повседневной жизни включает в себя выявление и анализ чувств и поведения в экстремальных условиях (таких как конфликты, фабрикация уголовного дела, аресты и т. д.).

Ключевые слова: советская элита, эпоха позднего сталинизма, Ленинград, «ленинградское дело», история эмоций повседневность.

Introduction

This study presents an analysis of the daily working reality of the Soviet elite in Leningrad and Leningrad Region in 1945–1950. This problem will be considered in terms of its political, social and emotional aspects. The political context will be used to provide more clarity as to the operation of the local governments (Soviets) during the period under question, and offer some insights into the causes of the Leningrad Affair. By analysing the social component, we will be able to deepen our understanding of the social roles and statuses of the Leningrad officials during the Stalinist period as well as the aims and nature of their working contacts. Finally, by investigating emotional norms and standards we will be able to characterise members of the Soviet elite as individuals with human virtues and human weaknesses. Many researchers believe that most feelings are socially and culturally conditioned¹. This is particularly true of the elevated (“high”) emotions experienced by Soviet top officials: their boundless loyalty to “the Father of the Nations”, their love of Leningrad, their camaraderie, and their pride in work achievements. “Low” emotions, primarily fear, are less markedly modulated by social relations and can be used to explain the motives of political acts and work behaviour.

¹ See, for example: *Rosenwein B.H.* Worrying about Emotions in History // *American historical Review*. 2002. No. 107/3. P. 821–845. DOI: 10.1086/532498; *Kelly K.* Pravo na emotsii, pravil'nye emotsii: upravlenie chuvstvami v Rossii posle epokhi Prosveshcheniia // *Rossiiskaia imperiia chuvstv: Podkhody k kul'turnoi istorii emotsii* / eds Ia. Plamper et al. Moscow, 2010. P. 74.

Historiography and sources

The daily working routine of the Soviet elite in Leningrad and Leningrad Region in 1945–1950 is a subject largely overlooked by historians. There are two principal reasons for this omission. Firstly, studies focusing on the Stalinist period tend to gravitate towards political rather than social history due to the complex, controversial nature of political reality of that time on the domestic and international scene. Secondly, legal, political and moral rehabilitation of the Leningrad Affair victims, which has spanned several decades, made research on the personalities as well as the state and political activities of the defendants a tacit taboo.

Studies by international researchers (primarily British and American) relating to the post-war history of Leningrad, and human resource policies of the Stalinist era appeared long before this field was first explored by Russian historians. Foreign publications were unaffected by censorship restrictions and taboos². Although their critical assessments of Stalin's policy and the Soviet system carry the indelible stamp of the Cold War ideology, these publications were also largely free from stereotypes and personal preferences, which often confound the real picture of historical events.

Increased interest in the biographies of the politicians that ran Leningrad during World War II and the post-war period emerged in the late 1980s as part of broader research pursuits centred on the Leningrad Affair, which were initially supervised by the Communist Party³. The 1980s saw a number of newspaper publications which analysed the causes for repressions, and shared biographical data about the key defendants⁴. Some attempts were made to provide a comprehensive picture of the activities of Leningrad government and Communist leaders in connection with the Leningrad Affair⁵.

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, a number of studies were conducted which looked at members of the party and governmental apparatus as a social class⁶. Another valuable source is memoirs by the children of the top local and national government officials of the 1940s. These publications were motivated by the legitimate desire on the part of the officials' families to understand the causes of the tragic events of the past by relying on a range of sources including personal reminiscences and impressions⁷.

² *Conquest R.* Power and Policy in the USSR: the Study of Soviet Dynasties. London; Macmillan; New York, 1961; *Salisbury H.* The 900 Days: The Siege of Leningrad. New York, 1969. P.571–583; *McCagg Jr. William O.* Stalin Embattled, 1943–1948. Detroit, 1978; *Hahn W.* Postwar Soviet Politics: the Fall of Zhdanov and the Defeat of Moderation, 1946–53. Ithaca; New York, 1982.

³ *Kutuzov V.A.* Leningradskoe delo // Dialog. 1987. No. 18. P.15–21; No. 19. P.15–23.

⁴ *Afanasev A.* Pobeditel' // Komsomol'skaia pravda. January, no. 15. 1988; O tak nazyvaemom "Leningradskom dele" // Izvestiia TsK KPSS. 1989. No. 2. P.128; *Garmash P.* 1) V Krymu // "Leningradskoe delo" / eds V.I. Demidov, V.A. Kutuzov. Leningrad, 1990. P.241–260; 2) Zhivaia pamiat' // Krymskaia pravda. 1988. October. No.28; 3) Sekretar' obkoma // Krymskaia pravda. 1988. August, 17; *Demidov V.* "Leningradskoe delo": Popytka rekonstruktsii // Zvezda. 1989. No. 1. P.144–145; *Zimarina N.* "Leningradskoe delo" // Argumenty i fakty. 1988. April. No.23. P.6; *Sidorovskii L.*: 1) Chestnoe imia: zhertvy "Leningradskogo dela" — glazami rodnikh, blizkikh, strokami dokumentov // Smena. 1988. June. No. 24; July. No. 25; 2) Neskol'ko stranits iz "Leningradskogo dela" // Avrora. 1989. No. 4.

⁵ Leningradskoe delo / eds V.I. Demidov, V.A. Kutuzov. Leningrad, 1990.

⁶ *Voslenskii M.S.* Nomenklatura. Gospodstvuiushchii klass Sovetskogo Soiuz. Moscow, 1991; *Pikhoia R.G.* Sovetskii Soiuz. Istoriiia vlasti, 1945–1991. Moscow, 1998. P.65–66; *Pyzhikov A.V.* Leningradskaiia grupa. Put' vo vlast' (1946–1949) // Svobodnaia mysl'. 2001. P.92–96; *Chistikov A.N.* Partiino-gosudarstvennaia biurokратиia Severo-Zapada sovetskoi Rossii 1920-kh godov. St. Petersburg, 2007.

⁷ *Malenkov A.G.* O moem ottse Georgii Malenkov. Moscow, 1992; *Zhdanov Iu.A.* Vzgliad v proshloe: Vospominaniia ochevidtса. Rostov-on-Don, 2004; *Voznesenskii L.A.* Bezzakonie... "po zakonu" // Sud'by

The contemporary vision of the political role played by the Leningrad leaders, a vision based on newly discovered historical sources, found its reflection in works by Russian researchers⁸. The publications analyse the functioning of the Soviet elite by looking at the activities conducted under the leadership of Leningrad governmental and party officials.

Recent works by British and American historians have identified four key approaches to the causes of the Leningrad Affair: ideological⁹, nationalistic (“Russian-centred”)¹⁰, “Leningrad-centered”¹¹ and “bureaucratic” (patron-client)¹².

Before finally being quenched in the early 21st century, this “hunger for research” unfortunately gave rise to multiple low-quality publications where dramatic effect on the readers had priority over accurate historical analysis; many of these publications were founded on an extremely limited number of historical sources, sometimes grossly misinterpreted¹³. Possible ideological bias, combined with hyperbolic ideas resulted in fact-bending claims and sensationalism¹⁴.

liudei. “Leningradskoe delo” / ed. by A. M. Kulegina. St. Petersburg, 2009. P. 26–27; Vospominaniia Valeriia Filipppovicha Mikheeva // Sud’by liudei: “Leningradskoe delo”. St. Petersburg, 2009. P. 96–114; *Mikheev V. F., Mikheev G. F.* “Leningradskoe delo” (po materialam sledstvennykh del) (chast’ I) // Noveishaia istoriia Rossii. 2012. No. 3; 2013. No. 1.

⁸ *Zubkova E. Iu.* Kadrovaia politika i chistki v KPSS (1945–1956) // Svobodnaia mysl’. 1999. No. 4. P. 104; *Kutuzov V. A.* “Leningradskoe delo”: mify i realii // Sud’ba liudei. “Leningradskoe delo” / ed. by A. M. Kulegin. St. Petersburg, 2009. P. 49; *Shulgina N. I.* “Leningradskoe delo”: Ne pora li snimat’ kavychki? Mnenie arkhivista // Ekologiya. 2009. No. 1–2. P. 281–289; *Boldovskii K. A.*: 1) Apparat Leningradskoi gorodskoi partiinoi organizatsii i ego mesto v sisteme vlastnykh otnoshenii v SSSR, 1945–1953 gg. Avtoref. dis. ... kand. ist. nauk. St. Petersburg, 2013. 28 p.; 2) Padenie blokadnykh sekretarei: partapparat Leningrada do i posle Leningradskogo dela. St. Petersburg, 2018; *Amosova A. A.* Predannyy zabveniiu. Politicheskaiia biografiia Petra Popkova. St. Petersburg, 2013. P. 168–189; *Pavlov M. Iu.*: 1) A. A. Kuznetsov i organy gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti: k voprosu o prichinakh vozniknoveniia “Leningradskogo dela” // Istoricheskie, filosofskie, politicheskie i iuridicheskie nauki, kul’turologiia i iskusstvovedenie. Voprosy teorii i praktiki. 2015. No. 7–2 (57). P. 127–132; 2) “Leningradskaia grupa” i narushenie stalinskikh printsipov vlasti // Nauchno-metodicheskii elektronnyi zhurnal Kontsept. 2015. No. 11. P. 111–115; *Sobolev G. L., Khodjakov M. V.* Publikatsiia novykh dokumentov kak vazhnyi faktor dal’neishego izucheniia oborony i blokady Leningrada // Noveishaia istoriia Rossii. 2019. Vol. 9, no. 1. 2019. P. 8–34.

⁹ *Yorlizki Y.* Ordinary Stalinism: The Council of Ministers and the Soviet Neopatrimonial State, 1946–1953 // The Journal of Modern History. 2002. Vol. 74. No. 4. December. P. 699–736.

¹⁰ *Brandenberger D.* Stalin, the Leningrad Affair, and the limits of postwar russocentrism // Russian review. 2004. Vol. 63, no. 2. April. P. 247–254.

¹¹ See, for example: *Ruble Blair A.*: 1) Policy Innovation and the Soviet Political Process: The Case of Socio-economic Planning in Leningrad // Canadian Slavonic Papers. Revue Canadienne des Slavistes. 1982. Vol. 24, no. 2. June. P. 161–174; 2) The Leningrad Affair and the Provincialization of Leningrad // Russian Review. 1983. Vol. 42, no. 3. July. P. 304–313.

¹² See, for example: *Parrish M.* The Lesser Terror: Soviet State Security, 1939–1953. Westport, 1996; *Tromly B.* The Leningrad Affair and Soviet Patronage Politics, 1949–1950 // Europe-Asia Studies. 2004. Vol. 56, no. 5. July. P. 707–729.

¹³ See, for example: *Mironin S. S.* Stalinskii poriadok. Ser. “Zagadka 37 goda”. Moscow, 2007; *Prudnikova E. A.* 1953. Rokovoi god sovetskoi istorii. Moscow, 2009; *Kremlev S.*: 1) Imia Rossii: Stalin. Moscow, 2008; 2) SSSR — imperiia dobra. Moscow, 2009; *Rybas S. Iu.* Moskovskie protiv piterskikh: Leningradskoe delo Stalina. Moscow, 2013; *Kuznechevskii V. D.*: 1) “Leningradskoe delo”: naivnaia popytka sozdat’ etnicheskii chistoe russkoe pravitel’stvo byla potoplena v krovi. Moscow, 2013; 2) Stalin i “russkii vopros” v politicheskoi istorii Sovetskogo Soiuza. 1931–1953 gg. Moscow, 2016.

¹⁴ The analysis of these works is presented in the article: *Amosova A. A., Brandenberger D.* Debates over the 1949 “Leningrad Affair” in the Contemporary Russian Popular Press // Europe-Asia Studies. 2015. Vol. 67, no. 9. P. 1487–1497. DOI: 10.1080/09668136.2015.1083744.

Studies, recognizing justified repressions against the Leningrad leadership, due to violations of party ethics, were recently published¹⁵. Such articles would seem at first glance to be rather serious work by professional historians, however, most arguments presented by the authors directly contradict the facts and have been disproved¹⁶.

The late 20th century saw an increasing interest in the history of everyday culture in Russia. However, research on everyday phenomena had been conducted within individual research disciplines at least since the second half of the 19th century. Everyday culture receives in-depth theoretical treatment in works by M. V. Lukov¹⁷. One of the most noteworthy studies of everyday reality of the Soviet people was undertaken by I. B. Orlov¹⁸.

The past two decades have seen an upsurge in research projects focusing on the everyday life of the Soviet people, their work and leisure (E. Iu. Zubkova, N. B. Lebina, A. N. Chistikov, V. L. Piankevich, F. K. Iarmolich)¹⁹.

A valuable contribution to our knowledge of domestic and work reality of the Soviet elite between the 1930s and early 1950s was made by T. N. Nikonorova²⁰. Following the approaches practiced by British and American historians, her dissertation refers to a set of documents issued by the disciplinary Communist Party Control Commission (KPK) — an agency the author boldly compares with the closed “class court”. The cases of Communists that had lost political trust were first heard by the KPK, which was entitled to decide whether formal prosecution was required. T. N. Nikonorova focuses much of her work on KPK documents, often reading them as decent but not fully reliable sources²¹.

The dissertation includes a section focusing specifically on the “Leningrad affair”. T. N. Nikonorova points to possible economic abuses on the part of the leadership of Leningrad as the major reasons for fabricating “the Leningrad Affair”. To confirm her hypothesis, she provides statistical data on the non-targeted expenses in 1946–1949: on banquets, gifts, furniture²². However, as a result of a detailed analysis, the researcher comes to the

¹⁵ *Sushkov A. V.* Neboľshoe otstuplenie ot pravil ili vyzov stalinskoi sisteme vlasti? O nekotorykh aspektakh “leningradskogo dela” // Rossiia XXI. 2018. No. 1. P. 82–107; *Sushkov A. V., Bedel’ A. E.* “Leningradskoe delo”: k voprosu o kadrovoy politike Smol’nogo v pervye poslevoennye gody // Manuskript. 2018. No. 10 (96). P. 60–68.

¹⁶ *Brandenberger D.* O nekotorykh aspektakh “Leningradskogo dela” // Rossiia XXI. 2018. No. 2. P. 66–77.

¹⁷ See, for example: *Lukov M. V.* Kul’tura povsednevnosti. K istorii voprosa // Bibliotechnoe delo. 2010. No. 7 (131). P. 6–13.

¹⁸ *Orlov I. B.* Sovetskaia povsednevnost’: istoricheskii i sotsiologicheskii aspekty stanovleniia. Moscow, 2010.

¹⁹ *Iarmolich F. K.*: 1) Organizatsiia intellektual’nogo dosuga zhitel’i gor. Leningrada v kontse 1940-kh — nachale 1950-kh gg. // Vestnik LGU im. A. S. Pushkina. Vol. 4, no. 2. Istoriia. 2012. P. 145–153; 2) Kul’turno-prosvetitel’skaia organizatsiia dosuga leningradtsev v kontse 1940-kh — nachale 1950-kh gg. // Sovetskoe obshchestvo i sovetskii chelovek: mify i real’nost’ // Sbornik dokladov mezhdunarodnoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii. Kazan’. 2012. P. 158–163; *Lebina N. B.*: 1) Entsiklopediia banal’nostei: sovetskaia povsednevnost’: kontury, simvoly, znaki. St. Petersburg, 2008; 2) Sovetskaia povsednevnost’: normy i anomalii. Moscow, 2015; *Zubkova E. Iu.* Poslevoennoe sovetskoe obshchestvo: politika i povsednevnost’. 1945–1953 gg. Moscow, 2000.

²⁰ *Nikonorova T. N.*: 1) Konstruiruia Roskosh’: Bytovoe prostranstvo sovetskoii nomenklatury, 1940–1952 gody // The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review. 2016. No. 43. P. 219–242; 2) Dokumenty Komissii partiinogo kontroliia pri TsK VKP(b) (1934–1952 gg.) kak istochnik izucheniia ekonomicheskoi prestupnosti v srede partiinoi nomenklatury. Dis. ... kand. ist. nauk. Moscow, 2018.

²¹ *Ibid.* P. 201.

²² *Ibid.* P. 176–178.

conclusion that although certain abuses did take place, their interpretation by investigators and KPK supervisors was biased and opportunistic²³.

History of emotions, or emotiology, is considered to have emerged in the 20th century although trends of the “inward turn” were visible in academic discourse in the mid-19th century or even earlier. International publications that appeared over the past 35-plus years have shaped history of emotions as an independent area of historical research²⁴. Nevertheless, emotiological studies of Soviet history remain quite scarce²⁵.

The majority of studied personalities did not have the opportunity to write memoirs due to the political repressions of late Stalinism. That is why, the autobiographies from archive personal files, public speeches and communiques are used as ego-documents in the article. However, “...today the history of emotions uses almost all kinds of sources that historians have at their disposal...”²⁶. For this reason, the source base has been expanded by normative documents and institutional records supplemented by sources of personal origin, including oral narratives (based on interviews given by relatives), audio records and photographs from archives in St. Petersburg, Moscow and the Crimean Republic.

Norms of work behaviour

Sociocultural norms are standards of socially approved and expected behaviour which help to ensure social stability of a given cultural or political system. Norms are commonly classified into two varieties: formal (“written”), set out in regulatory documents, and informal (“unwritten”), grounded in traditions and customs. Compliance with formal norms is ensured through the law enforcement system; adherence to unwritten norms is regulated by social practices (approval or disapproval).

Formalized norms of working behaviour for top Soviet officials and Communist Party members in the USSR over the 1930s and 1940s were determined by the 1936 Constitution²⁷, the Programme and Charter of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of the Soviet Union (VKP(b)), the Short Course on party history and regulatory documents issued by the VKP (b) Central Committee²⁸.

The documents listed above formed a normative framework for the job conduct of top governmental officials and delimited their duties, which included adherence to oc-

²³ Ibid. P. 183.

²⁴ Passions in Context: International Journal for the History and Theory of Emotions. 2010. No. 1; Plamper J. *Istoriia emotsii*. Moscow, 2018.

²⁵ Thematic issue of the journal: *Slavic Review (Emotional turn? Feelings in Russian History and Culture / ed. by J. Plamper // Slavic Review. 2009. Vol. 68. No. 2. P. 229–334; Rossiiskaia imperiia chuvstv: podkhody k kul'turnoi istorii emotsii / eds J. Palmer et al. Moscow, 2010; Delaloi M. Emotsii v mikromire Stalina: sluchai Nikolaia Bukharina (1937–1937). Tipy bol'shevistskoi muzhestvennosti i praktika emotsii // Rossiiskaia imperiia chuvstv: Podkhody k kul'turnoi istorii emotsii / eds J. Plamper et al. Moscow, 2010. P. 455; Ivantsov I. G. Povsednevnost' provintsial'nogo goroda 1920–1930-kh godov, kul'turnaia istoriia emotsii v dokumentakh organov partiino-gosudarstvennogo kontroliia VKP(b) // Kul'turnaia zhizn' Iuga Rossii. 2014. Vol. 2. No. 53. P. 68–72; Piankevich V. L. Liudi zhili slukhami. Neformal'noe kommunikativnoe prostranstvo blokadnogo Leningrada. St. Petersburg, 2014.*

²⁶ Plamper J. *Istoriia emotsii*. Moscow, 2018. P. 56.

²⁷ *Konstitutsiia (Osnovnoi zakon) Soiuza Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik, 1936 // Sbornik zakonov SSSR i ukazov Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR. Moscow, 1956. P. 3–17.*

²⁸ *Postanovlenie TsK VKP(b) ot 2 avgusta 1946 g. "O podgotovke i perepodgotovke rukovodiashchikh partiinykh i sovetских работников" // Partiinaia zhizn'. 1946. No. 1. P. 476–484.*

cupational and governmental discipline,²⁹ observance of the principles of democratic centralism³⁰, criticism and self-criticism³¹ as well as close contact with the working masses³².

Occupational and governmental discipline encompassed (“*sobliudenie trudovoi i gosudarstvennoi distsipliny*”), firstly, compliance with the established institutional regulations and continual professional growth, and secondly, the ability to resolve key issues of local economic and cultural development accurately and on a timely basis³³ as well as to duly implement the Communist Party’s policy and the resolutions made by the party bodies³⁴. The seniority principle governing relations between officials was a mandatory expression of occupational and governmental discipline.

Respect for seniority was also required by the *principle of democratic centralism* (“*printsip demokraticeskogo tsentralizma*”) from heads of municipal and district councils; it involved executing resolutions of the USSR Supreme Council and the Council of Ministers, as well as compliance with the 1936 Constitution³⁵.

Criticism and self-criticism (“*kritika i samokritika*”), regarded as the most important instrument for improving the quality of party and governmental work, implied the detection of errors and deficiencies in the work of institutions, organizations or individuals leading to corrective measures and problem elimination³⁶; any mistakes had to be openly and honestly admitted by the culprits³⁷. Criticism and self-criticism served as an instrument of control over the work of the party and political elite as well as over the whole Soviet people. Critique by one’s colleagues at party meetings could lead to tragic consequences: the person so criticized could lose their job or party membership and often face trial, not to mention moral distress during the collective discussion of their “mistakes”. The accused would normally resort to self-criticism: they were expected to show remorse, “come clean”, explain the causes of their moral degradation, and promise to atone for their misdemeanor.

In keeping with the *principle of contact with the working masses* (“*printsip sviazi s trudiashchimisia massami*”), governmental officials were expected to listen to workers, identify their needs, educate the working class and learn from it³⁸. Soviet officials had to be extremely open and approachable, without a “vener of bureaucracy”³⁹.

Let us now pause to consider the unwritten norms applicable to the ruling elite of the Soviet period. The political system that formed in the USSR shortly before World War II (in the late 1930s) operated under the sole leadership of Joseph Stalin, who remained Secretary of the VKP (b) Central Committee in 1934–1952. Historians have described this power structure as authoritarian or neopatrimonial⁴⁰. The terms interchangeably denote a

²⁹ Programma i ustav VKP(b). Moscow, 1937. P. 42.

³⁰ Istoriiia Vsesoiuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii bol’shevikov: Kratkii Kurs / pod red. komissii TsK VKP(b). Moscow, 1938.

³¹ Ibid. P. 345.

³² Ibid. P. 345–346.

³³ Konstitutsiia, 1936. P. 13.

³⁴ Programma i ustav VKP(b). P. 42.

³⁵ Konstitutsiia, 1936. P. 6–9.

³⁶ Samokritika // Bol’shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia. Vol. 50. Moscow, 1944. P. 189–190.

³⁷ Kratkii Kurs. 1938. P. 345.

³⁸ Ibid. P. 345.

³⁹ Ibid. P. 346.

⁴⁰ Gorlizki Y. Ordinary Stalinism: The Council of Ministers and the Soviet Neopatrimonial State, 1946–1953 // The Journal of Modern History. 2002. Vol. 74, no. 4. P. 699–736.

system created by Stalin towards the end of 1930s where all key political decisions on the national level remained his personal prerogative. Apart from official documents, Stalin's "political will", which set the standards for work behaviour among the top governmental officials, was articulated through dictums, notes and even toasts.

Stalin himself was seen as a role model for holders of governmental and party offices. His outward modesty and asceticism remained one of the principal unwritten behavioural norms which mirrored Stalin's own way of life with its disapproval of luxury and extravagance. Stalin imposed irregular work schedules on his subordinates: "This lifestyle, which was not particularly healthy and often involved work at night hours... was forced on almost the whole of the Communist and governmental apparatus across the country..."⁴¹ Soviet officials were supposed to stand by for a responsible governmental assignment at all times, even in their country houses (*dachas*) telephone sets (*vertushki*) for the secure government communication were installed⁴².

Governmental and Communist Party officials received considerable material privileges and incentives from the state, enjoying a higher level of comfort compared to rank-and-file Soviet citizens: they could take advantage of spacious apartments and cosy country houses filled with well-designed furniture (paid for by the state) in addition to having access to better food supplies and medical services. Officials were entitled to one or more chauffeured cars; many had household staff such as a cook or a housekeeper.

After Stalin's cult of personality was firmly established, party comradeship emerged as a social norm in the USSR: the very term "comrade" (*tovarishch*), once used to refer to party associates and fellow-thinkers, became a universal form of address to any non-imprisoned person irrespective of their social standing. The absence of this prefix from official documents or newspaper publications usually signalled that the person in question had fallen outside of the Soviet normative field and been politically discredited⁴³.

Unwritten norms also included love of comrade Stalin as well as faith in his infallibility, wisdom and justice.

Work-related practices

The Leningrad City Council and the Leningrad Region Council were the supreme bodies of the Soviet power in Leningrad and Leningrad Region. Within the framework of the Soviet system, these two institutions were both typical and exceptional: local government maintained direct links with the RSFSR Council of Ministers in Moscow. In practice, it meant that Leningrad had considerable advantages in industrial development, housing construction and public utility improvement as well as in a number of other areas⁴⁴. In terms of status, Leningrad governmental and party institutions were more similar to their Moscow counterparts than to regional organizations. Following an unwritten arrangement, governmental agencies invariably played a subordinate role to party structures: the Soviets handed over a significant part of their powers to the Communist Party, limiting themselves to economic and managerial functions.

⁴¹ Nasledniki // Leningradskoe delo. 1990. P. 25.

⁴² Interview conducted by the author with G. F. Mikheev, 8 August, 2018. St. Petersburg.

⁴³ Postanovlenie Politbiuro TsK VKP(b) o sniatii s dolzhnostei A. A. Kuznetsova, M. I. Rodionova, P. S. Popkova. February, 15, 1949 // Sud'by liudei. "Leningradskoe delo". St. Petersburg, 2009. P. 61.

⁴⁴ Cattell D. T. Leningrad: Case Study of Soviet Local Government // The Western Political Quarterly. 1964. Vol. 17, no. 2. June. P. 189.

Non-members of the Communist Party had no chance of ever occupying leading positions in the government during the Stalinist period. Party membership was awarded at the suggestion of the party cell and always required an extensive approval process. Candidate members had to go through a lengthy trial period during which the candidate's ideological and moral qualities were carefully assessed, and references were sought from their previous employers.

The Party membership card opened many doors for social, professional and personal growth: "If you want to be a boss, you have to become a Communist"⁴⁵. Party members were given priority treatment when it came to education, including tertiary-level: the best universities in the country had to keep slots open for Communists. Young people that previously had no opportunity to complete a course of secondary education could prepare for the higher education institution by enrolling at so-called workers' faculties⁴⁶. Young Communists with university degrees were regarded as highly eligible for top governmental positions and were given a fast track up the career ladder.

Despite the proclaimed transparency and democratic character of the Soviet election system, a reputable Communist had to be put forward for a responsible position by influential senior officials. Ranging from direct appointments to recommendations and approvals, the nomination practice (*vydvizhenie*) became widespread from the 1920s onwards and remained the single most important condition in the recruitment of governmental and Communist cadre⁴⁷. The choice of the candidacy depended on a number of factors, including family background (working class or peasant), ideology (hesitancies in following the party line, involvement in political opposition or repressions, military captivity⁴⁸), and political activities (track record; prior elected offices).

Following the assassination of Sergei Kirov in 1934 and the subsequent mass repressions, many leading positions in Leningrad fell vacant. Kirov was succeeded as the First Secretary of the Leningrad Regional and City Party Committees by Andrei Zhdanov, a politician nurtured by Stalin. Having been transferred to Leningrad from Gorky (Nizhny Novgorod), he "... had no knowledge of the human resources available in Leningrad at that time"⁴⁹ and created his team from young Communists with working class or peasant backgrounds and low-level management experience, who had originated from other regions across the USSR. "...It often happened in those days; some people were reluctant even to accept those appointments... However, refusing was not an option... there were factories to develop... there was a real need in experts..."⁵⁰

Some of the key figures that joined the Soviet ruling elite during that period were: P. S. Popkov, born near Vladimir (Chairman of the Leninsky District Council in Leningrad since 1937⁵¹); P. G. Lazutin, born in the Akmolinsk province in Kazakhstan (Head of the

⁴⁵ Interview conducted by the author with G. F. Mikheev and T. A. Mikheeva, 10 October, St. Petersburg.

⁴⁶ Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia / ed. by A. M. Prokhorov. Vol. 21. Moscow, 1975. P. 308.

⁴⁷ Chistikov A. N. Partiino-gosudarstvennaia biurokратиia Severo-Zapada sovetsoi Rossii 1920-kh godov. P. 169.

⁴⁸ Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv istoriko-politicheskikh dokumentov Sankt-Peterburga. F. 1728. Op. 1. D. 196640. L. 3–4.

⁴⁹ Demidov V. I., Kutuzov V. A., Kutuzov A. V. Andrei Zhdanov. Ocherki politicheskoi biografii. St. Petersburg: Sankt-Peterburgskaia akademiia sledstvennogo komiteta. 2017. P. 66.

⁵⁰ Interview conducted by the author with A. Ia. Kapustin and G. F. Mikheev, 15 November, 2013, St. Petersburg.

⁵¹ Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Sankt-Peterburga. F. 7384. Op. 34. D. 1783. L. 4.

Trade Department at the Leningrad City VKP(b) Committee since 1937⁵²); N. V. Soloviev, from Nizhny Novgorod (Secretary of the Leningrad Regional VKP(b) Committee since 1937⁵³); I. S. Kharitonov, born in the Tver Governorate (the First Secretary of Primorsky District VKP(b) Committee in the 1930s⁵⁴); I. D. Dmitriev (from Leningrad Region) was appointed Secretary of the Luzhsky District VKP(b) Committee in 1939⁵⁵. In November 1941, Andrei Kuznetsov, a young Communist born near Tambov, became the new director of the industrial giant Izhora Works in the environs of Leningrad⁵⁶. The new appointees would head the governmental structures in Leningrad and Leningrad Region between 1939 and 1950. “The Leningrad team created by Zhdanov in 1936–1939 would bear on its shoulders all the hardships of World War II and the 872 days of the Leningrad siege...”⁵⁷

In the wake of the war, the Leningrad government faced the difficult task of ensuring fast recovery of the devastated local economy. The Executive Committee of the Leningrad City Council was headed by Petr Popkov, appointed its Chairman in 1939. Nicknamed “the Gypsy”⁵⁸ by other Leningrad members because of his dark hair and skin, Popkov was frequently described as an outgoing, friendly, and democratic person with an upbeat sense of humour⁵⁹.

The graphological analysis⁶⁰ of Popkov’s signature shows him to be a thorough and determined individual; the letters slant markedly to the right, which is commonly seen in extroverted and outgoing natures; the broad horizontal lines are typical of enthusiastic people, while the sharp angles indicate an ambitious character (fig.1).



Fig. 1. The signature of P.S. Popkov. January 1946 [Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF). F. 7523. Op. 48. D. 44. L. 8]

The years of running the besieged, war-stricken city transformed the young nominee into a strict and competent professional; the brisk, critical manner in which Popkov presided over the sessions of the Leningrad Executive Committee makes a good point in case⁶¹. However, despite his superior position and vast experience of public presentations, Popkov sometimes failed to express his thoughts clearly — a feature Zhdanov caustically described as “definitely not it” (“*tipichnoe ne to*”)⁶².

⁵² TsGAIPD St. Petersburg. F. 1728. Op. 1. D. 196640. L. 1.

⁵³ TsGA St. Petersburg. F. 7179. Op. 13. D. 1128. L. 4.

⁵⁴ Kratkie biograficheskie svedeniia o litsakh, repressirovannykh po “Leningradskomu delu” // Sud’by liudei. “Leningradskoe delo”. P. 144.

⁵⁵ Ibid. P. 150.

⁵⁶ TsGAIPD SPb. F. 25. Op. 93. D. 865. L. 1–2.

⁵⁷ Volynets A. Zhizn’ zamechatel’nykh liudei: Zhdanov. Moscow, 2013. P. 223.

⁵⁸ Interview conducted by the author with E. I. Kharitonova, 19 October, 2018, St. Petersburg; Kapitsa P. Eto bylo tak // Neva. Leningrad, 1988. No. 5. P. 139.

⁵⁹ See, for example: Shumilov N. D. V blokade. Moscow, 1977. P. 156; Mashanskii F. I. Surovyi ekzamen // Listki blokadnogo kalendara. 1988. Iss. 1. P. 60.

⁶⁰ Hereinafter the article presents excerpts from detailed graphological analysis, carried by Bulakhova A. D.

⁶¹ See, for example: Stenogrammy zasedanii ispolkoma Leningradskogo gorodskogo Soveta. Zapisi obsuzhdenii, zamechaniia k proektam, resheniia, noiabr’ 1941— dekabr’ 1942 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov. St. Petersburg, 2017. 439 p.

⁶² Leningradskoe delo / eds V. I. Demidov, V. A. Kutuzov. Leningrad, 1990. P. 41.



Fig. 2. Mrs. C. Churchill and P.S. Popkov at the map. April 9, 1945, Leningrad [Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv kinofotofonodokumentov Sankt-Peterburga]

According to an implicit arrangement, Popkov represented Leningrad at formal events and functions during that period⁶³; his imposing and pleasant appearance (“Popkov was very good-looking”⁶⁴) may have had as much a role to play here as his high official status (fig. 2).

Popkov’s official postwar speeches are full of pride in Leningrad and the economic successes achieved under his control (“tangible positive outcomes”, “successfully and ahead of schedule”, “considerable achievements”⁶⁵). His love of Leningrad also manifests itself in his reports: “Our city’s streets and avenues are growing more beautiful and convenient by the day”⁶⁶, “...labour towards a better life in Leningrad...”⁶⁷. Local patriotism was typical among the Leningrad wartime governmental and party elite: “During the war, local patriotism was promoted by Moscow nationwide. In Leningrad, however, it developed on a more fertile soil, shaping the core of regional identity”⁶⁸; this very attitude was used as a basis for allegations of separatism during the Leningrad Affair.

In 1944, Petr Lazutin was appointed Deputy Chair of the Leningrad City Executive Committee; unlike his boss, Lazutin was unsmiling, modest, serious and taciturn, always absorbed in his work⁶⁹ (fig. 3).

⁶³ Vruchenie ordena Lenina predstaviteliam goroda Leningrada // Leningradskaja pravda. 1945. January. No. 28.

⁶⁴ Interview conducted by the author with E. I. Kharitonova.

⁶⁵ Popkov P.S. Predsedatel' ispolkoma Leningradskogo gorodskogo soveta deputatov trudiashchikhsia // Leningradskaja pravda. 1946. January. No. 27.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Popkov P.S. O vosstanovlenii i razvitii gorodskogo khoziaistva Leningrada // Propaganda i agitatsiia. 1945. No. 14–15 (July — August). P. 27.

⁶⁸ Smirnov A. P. “Leningradskoe delo”: portret pokoleniia // Sud'by liudei. “Leningradskoe delo”. P. 15.

⁶⁹ Interview conducted by the author with N. P. Sivtsova (Lazutina). 27 October 2018. Moscow.

According to their contemporaries, the Chairman and his deputy maintained a good working relationship and even visited each other's homes together with their families⁷⁰. Their colleagues and relatives jocularly nicknamed them Peter I and Peter II⁷¹, like Russian emperors of the 18th century. Lazutin's signature betrays a perfectionist and determined character. The austere, balanced geometry of his handwriting signals psychological balance and strong willpower. The vertical lines predominating in the signature are mainly typical of introverted personalities avoiding excessive display of emotions (fig. 4).

In 1938, the post of the Chairman of the Leningrad Regional Executive Committee was entrusted to Nikolai Soloviev, a blunt, decisive man, who demanded a lot from the others and even more from himself⁷². Soloviev ranked as the third most important official in Leningrad after the First Secretaries of the Leningrad Oblast and Leningrad City Party Committees (after Kuznetsov and Popkov).

The national government highly valued Soloviev's contribution to the revival of local agriculture. In February 1946, the chairman of the Leningrad Oblast Executive Committee received a Traveling Red Banner from the Sovnarkom in recognition of the excellent performance of Leningrad Oblast in the 1945 agricultural competition among the oblasts, krais and republics of the Soviet Union⁷³. Soloviev also presented a detailed analysis of the goals of post-war economic recovery and the development of agriculture in a series of reports⁷⁴.

Rebuilding the local economy, severely affected by the war, was a daunting task: the pressure for a faster pace of economic growth as well as the tight control on the part of the USSR government and the VKP(b) Central Committee created a tense working atmosphere. The children of Soviet and Communist officials often described their fathers as extremely busy: "I rarely saw my father — he didn't come home until very late"⁷⁵, "...the only way I remember him is at work... he was always busy writing something, even at weekends; his study was completely crowded with papers; he smoked a lot... he never took any holidays"⁷⁶. One would be justified in thinking that this lifestyle offered a sure



Fig. 3. Petr G. Lazutin, the early 1940s. From the archive of Lazutin — Sivtsov family

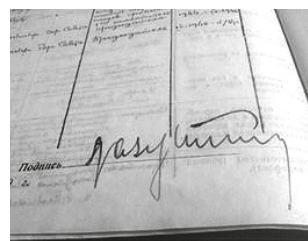


Fig. 4. Signature of Petr Lazutin, 1946. [TsGAIPD St. Petersburg. F.1728. Op. 1. D.196640. L.6 (turnover)]

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² From the personal conversation of Garmash P. with M. M. Maksimenko (1947–1952 — the Head of the Culture Department of the Crimean Regional Executive Committee) in: *Garmash P. Zhizn' i sud'ba // Vetluzhskii krai*. 2003. April. No. 18. P. 3.

⁷³ Leningradskoi oblasti vrucheno perekhodiashchee Krasnoe Znamia Sovnarkoma SSSR // *Leningradskaja pravda*. 1946. February, 3.

⁷⁴ See, for example: *Solov'ev N. Vozrozhdenie khoziaistva Leningradskoi oblasti // Propaganda i agitatsiia*. 1945. No. 1. P. 17–22.

⁷⁵ Interview conducted by the author with E. I. Kharitonova.

⁷⁶ Interview conducted by the author with N. P. Sivtsova (Lazutina).

path towards emotional burnout⁷⁷. However, children of the Leningrad governmental officials remember them as active and passionately committed to their work⁷⁸.

The Leningrad leaders were not in the slightest degree armchair politicians. Active involvement in solving work problems, some of them highly complex, became de rigueur among the Leningrad government during World War II and the siege. Leningrad leaders of the post-war period undertook numerous public duties, attending countless official events and meeting with workers. In 1945–1946, Popkov successfully performed representative functions in keeping with the Stalinist principle of contact with the working masses. Lazutin's daughter, Natalia, provides the following account of her father's work in the aftermath of the war: "My dad loved Leningrad and its residents; he wanted to do as much as possible to revive the city and its industry as well as to improve the quality of life here ..."⁷⁹ (fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Petr Lazutin on the tab of the memorial plaque at the base of the monument to N. G. Chernyshevsky, from the personal archive of Lazutin — Sivtsov family

Soloviev's daughter, Clara, remembered that after his new appointment to Crimea her father never used a car to travel to work; he would always go on foot and resented spending too much time in his office — a habit he acquired in Leningrad⁸⁰.

In the years following World War II, many of Leningrad's top officials were promoted in recognition of their selfless labour during the war and siege. In 1946, Popkov and Soloviev were elected deputies of the 2nd Supreme Soviet (Soviet of the Union); Lazutin joined the Soviet of Nationalities in 1947⁸¹.

In March 1946, Popkov (at Zhdanov's insistence) was appointed⁸² the First Secretary of the Leningrad City and Region VKP(b) Committees, becoming a new Communist

⁷⁷ The concept of "staffburn-out", implying a growing emotional exhaustion, was introduced into psychology in 1974, by the American scientist G. Freidenberger.

⁷⁸ From the author's personal conversations with N. P. Sivtsova (Lazutina), K. N. Solovyova, E. I. Kharitonova — the daughters of Leningrad leaders of 1940s.

⁷⁹ Interview conducted by the author with N. P. Sivtsova (Lazutina).

⁸⁰ From the author's personal conversations with K. N. Solovyova.

⁸¹ TsGAIPD. F. 25. Op. 5. D. 1214.

⁸² From the personal conversations of the authors with I. M. Turko in *Leningradskoe delo* / eds V. I. Demidov, V. A. Kutuzov. P. 41.

Party leader of Leningrad. He had to compete for the position with Ia. F. Kapustin (the Second Secretary of the Leningrad City VKP(b) Committee) and I. M. Turko (the Second Secretary of the Leningrad Region VKP(b) Committee), both of whom were Kuznetsov's ex-deputies and vied for the appointment following the established practice of that time.

Popkov's less successful colleagues often doubted his management capabilities and continued to seek consultancy from their ex-boss Kuznetsov, who was appointed head of the Communist Party Personnel Directorate in Central Committee structures in 1946. "...I was repeatedly bypassed as they thought I had no knowledge of party work. Then they would report to me saying 'Comrade Kuznetsov recommends it,'" Popkov remembered bitterly⁸³.

On 26 February 1946 Lazutin was appointed Chairman of the Leningrad City Executive Committee⁸⁴. He accepted his new appointment with satisfaction⁸⁵, seeing it as a well-deserved reward for his achievements and professional qualities. Rumour had it that Lazutin's candidacy was even considered for the position of the Minister of Food Industry⁸⁶; however, the appointment never materialized — much to the delight of Lazutin, who was unwilling to relocate to Moscow.

In 1947, Lazutin delivered a speech at a rally held in commemoration of Moscow's 800th anniversary⁸⁷. The surviving audio record provides some useful material for the analysis of his rhetorical skills and emotional state during the address. The opening part of his speech is deliberately reserved and business-like. However, several slips of the tongue and the gradually rising volume of his voice betray the speaker's intensity of feeling. Lazutin's speech emphasizes the contribution Russians made to the country's history and is punctuated by phrases "Russian people", "Russian lands" and "the Russian nation"⁸⁸.

References to Russianness and the Russian people were a common vein in speeches made by Leningrad politicians of the post-war period, who may have been inspired by Stalin's famous toast (pronounced during the celebratory reception held in the Kremlin in May 1945) praising the outstanding historical significance of the Russian nation in the development of the country. The "Leningraders" may have interpreted this statement as a new vector of the Stalinist ideological policy. The post-war years also saw Zhdanov initiate a discussion among the official circles concerning the possible opening of a RSFSR bureau of the VKP(b) Central Committee, with headquarters in Leningrad. The project rested on a solid foundation: Russia was the only constituent republic of the USSR which had no party organization of its own.

Lazutin concludes his speech with a peroration: "Long live great Stalin, the leader and teacher of the Soviet people"⁸⁹. The public exhibition of love for Stalin was more than just an accepted norm — it was required by the political system. This love was in fact a symbiosis of reverence and fear of losing Stalin's political trust; the latter could have far-reaching consequences ranging from a "warning" to the suspension of party membership⁹⁰.

⁸³ TsGAIPD St. Petersburg. F. 24. Op. 49. D. 4. L. 19–20.

⁸⁴ Ibid. F. 1728. Op. 1. D. 196640. L. 1.

⁸⁵ Interview conducted by the author with N. P. Sivtsova (Lazutina).

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv fonodokumentov // RGAF. F. 1. Op. 1. Ed. khr. 81(5).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ For more information about the hierarchy of USSR Party punishment see: *Cohn E.* The high title of a communist: Postwar Party discipline and the values of the soviet regime. Dekalb, 2015. P. 33–41.



Fig. 6. Nikolai Solov'ev, photo from the personal file, 1946 [Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Respubliki Krym (GARK). F.P-1. Op. 2. D.3761. L. 11]



Fig. 7. Il'ia S. Kharitonov in the late 1940s. From the Kharitonov's family archive

After the war, Lazutin was granted a personal audience with Stalin⁹¹: the successes of the Leningrad industry were remarkable, the urge to showcase them too strong to resist⁹². The meeting, however, did not come up to the expectations. “Comrade Stalin said, ‘You are not doing enough to develop the fuel base’”, Lazutin himself remembered. “I replied that we had issued a memorandum addressing this problem...”⁹³

1946 also brought a promotion to Soloviev, who was elected First Secretary of the Crimean Communist Party Organization on 30–31 July 1946 in Simferopol⁹⁴ (fig. 6).

It is believed that Soloviev was nominated for this elevated position by Kuznetsov (the Central Committee secretary), with whom Soloviev had maintained close working contacts since his previous assignment in Leningrad. As Soloviev wrote in his autobiography, “From 1935 onwards, my work was personally monitored and supervised by Comrade A. A. Kuznetsov”⁹⁵.

On 16 July 1946 Soloviev was succeeded as the Chairman of the Leningrad Regional Executive Committee by Ilya Kharitonov, former Secretary of the Leningrad City Committee of the Communist Party⁹⁶. His daughter, Ella, describes her father as active, hardworking, kind and considerate⁹⁷ (fig. 7).

The newly appointed heads of the Leningrad City and Regional Councils had to oversee the restoration of the shattered local economy in accordance with the 4th Five-Year Plan for 1946–1950 approved in March 1946⁹⁸.

Following Zhdanov's death in August 1948, the Leningrad group was deprived of its protector and patron. The rift that formed among the used-to-be associates made them even more vulnerable to political competitors like L. P. Beria and G. M. Malenkov. Hidden conflicts emerged between Popkov and A. A. Kuznetsov, between Popkov and his subordinates (Ia. F. Kapustin, I. M. Turko) undermined the cohesion of the Leningrad elite.

⁹¹ Information about the joint visit of Kapustin Ya. F. and Lazutin P. G. to Stalin was obtained from their official speeches (TsGAIPD. F. 24. Op. 49. D. 5). According to Stalin's visitors log (published in: *Na prieme u Stalina: tetradi (zhurnaly) zapisei lits, priniatykh I. V. Stalinym (1924–1953 gg.)* / ed. by A. A. Chernobaev. M., 2008. P. 495), Kapustin visited Stalin in December 10, 1947. Also in the list of visitors instead of Lazutin P. G., Lazutkin P. G. was mentioned. Apparently it should be considered as a typo.

⁹² Rokovoi plenum // *Leningradskoe delo*. 1990. P. 83.

⁹³ TsGAIPD. F. 24. Op. 49. D. 5. L. 163.

⁹⁴ GARK. F. 1. Op. 1. D. 4285. L. 240–262.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* L. 6.

⁹⁶ TsGAIPD. F. 1728. Op. 1. D. 311298/4. L. 25.

⁹⁷ Interview conducted by the author with E. I. Kharitonova.

⁹⁸ *Ocherki istorii Leningradskoi organizatsii KPSS: v 3 t. T. 3. 1945–1985*. Leningrad, 1985. P. 7.

Zhdanov's main protégé, Kuznetsov claimed to his patron's position as the ideological leader of the Leningrad Communist Organization. In his turn, Popkov, who had been suffering from covert sabotage at work, suggested that Nikolai Voznesensky, Head of the State Planning Committee, should be a more appropriate "unofficial leader" (chief) of Leningrad⁹⁹. This move can be regarded as an ill-conceived attempt at political intrigue with the aim to find a new patron, instead of Zhdanov. Voznesensky rejected the proposal. As a result, Popkov "...began to focus on Kuznetsov again. I did not want this, but had focused on Kuznetsov completely"¹⁰⁰. Popkov's rash move received a radical interpretation in the run-up to the Leningrad Affair.

The formal cause for launching investigation as part of the Leningrad Affair was an anonymous report filed to the Central Committee shortly after the 10th Leningrad regional and 8th Leningrad city Party conference, held in December 1948, where the members of Committees had to be elected¹⁰¹. A tally commission member informed the Central Committee that the election returns had been rigged: although the winners were declared as elected by unanimous vote, four votes in fact had been cast against Popkov, two against Lazutin, with a small number of "against" votes received by Kapustin and the Second Secretary of the region Committee G. F. Badaev (the total number of votes cast for the winning candidates exceeded one thousand)¹⁰².

Another episode closely associated with the Leningrad Affair was the National Trade Fair organized by the Leningrad City Executive Committee on 10–20 January 1949. Attended by representatives of Kazakhstan, Georgia, the Baltic republics, Ukraine, and Belorussia, the National Trade Fair event was held in compliance with the Resolution of the Bureau of the USSR Council of Ministers "On Measures for Improving Trade" issued on 11 November 1948, which contained no provisions restricting participation of Union constituent and autonomous republics, national districts, krajs or oblasts¹⁰³.

The fabrication of the criminal "case" had started before 1949: "The politicians who were in the list of defendants felt that their work problems were carefully organized by someone..."¹⁰⁴ According to Popkov's colleague, who met him in Smolny shortly before Popkov was dismissed from his office, "The person seated at the desk where Kirov and Kuznetsov used to work looked like a very sick person. I was particularly struck by his shifty eyes and pathetic smile of a lost man pleading for condescension"¹⁰⁵.

I. S. Kharitonov was the first to be removed from his post: in December 1948. Since that moment and until his arrest in November 1949, Kharitonov attended a course at the School for Secretaries of Regional VKP(b) Committees and Chairpersons of Regional Executive Committees. Referrals to such schools were frequently issued with the sole aim to sever and isolate the accused from their environment, and ultimately, to facilitate their arrest.

In 1948, Kharitonov was succeeded as the Chairman of Regional Executive Committee by Ivan Dmitriev, who used to be a school teacher in Luga prior to his party career¹⁰⁶.

⁹⁹ Leningradskoe delo. P.78.

¹⁰⁰ TsGAIPD St. Petersburg. F.24. Op. 49. D.4. L.18.

¹⁰¹ Zimarina N. "Leningradskoe delo" // Argumenty i fakty. 1988. No. 17.

¹⁰² Demidov V.I., Kutuzov V.A. Poslednii udar... // Leningradskoe delo. Leningrad, 1990. P.5–174.

¹⁰³ О так называемом "Leningradskom dele". P.C 127.

¹⁰⁴ Afanas'ev A. Pobeditel' // Reabilitirovan posmertno. Moscow, 1988. P.461.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. P.463.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

During the war, Dmitriev had headed the local VKP(b) Committee and coordinated the partisan movement in the Luzhsky District.

On 15 February 1949 the Politburo issued the resolution “On Removal from Office of A. A. Kuznetsov, M. I. Rodionov, and P. S. Popkov”¹⁰⁷. The names of the accused featured in the document without the prefix “comrades”. Popkov was charged with anti-governmental activities relating to the National Trade Fair¹⁰⁸, and with failing to ensure contacts between the Central Committee and Leningrad Party organization, bypassing the Central Committee and engaging in “profiteering schemes” facilitated by self-proclaimed Leningrad chiefs.

On 22 February 1949, Popkov addressed the joint plenum of the Leningrad Regional and City VKP(b) Committees held with the aim to discuss the Politburo resolution. In keeping with the self-criticism principle, Popkov admitted supporting the plans to create a Communist Party of Russia in a bid to assist the Central Committee in its hard work¹⁰⁹. Popkov faint-heartedly shifted the responsibility for the 1949 National Trade Fair to his ex-deputy: “All the talks were conducted by Comrade Lazutin behind the backs of the City Party Committee, and I knew nothing of what was going on”¹¹⁰.

Popkov also made a number of unpleasant comments targeted at Iakov Kapustin, mentioning his abuse of alcohol. Having completed his speech, Leningrad’s highest-ranking politician, utterly demoralized and discredited in his colleagues’ eyes, stepped awkwardly off the stage and took his seat among the audience rather than returning to the Presidium. The joint plenum released Popkov from his position and gave him a reprimand. Like many other demoted “Leningraders”, he was sent to Party Courses run by the Central Committee.

The Politburo Resolution was disseminated among other Communist Party organizations. V. Simarzin, the Head of the Special Unit of the Crimean Regional Party Committee, describes Soloviev’s reaction to the Resolution:

“Soloviev opened the records of the Decree... the moment he got to the paragraph about the anti-Communist behaviour of Kuznetsov, Popkov, and Rodionov, he turned pale, became stiff and looked positively disorientated... he was agitated; he mentioned that he had had several conflicts with Kuznetsov back in Leningrad and heard Kuznetsov make rather indecent comments targeted at Beria; Soloviev also pointed out that he had been amazed to receive the news about Popkov’s appointment to the post of the Leningrad City and Regional Committees... it was the first time I had seen Soloviev so unsettled”¹¹¹.

On 16 June 1949 Lazutin, too, was relieved from his duties by the Politburo¹¹². After removal from office, he did not lose heart, and said that he hoped to be given a new appointment in his home city of Alma-Ata¹¹³. The optimism he showed to his family and friends may have been less than genuine; Lazutin struggled to conceal his distress from his wife and daughter. A shrewd, experienced politician of the Stalinist school, Lazutin may have foreseen what lay ahead. The new chairman of the Leningrad City Executive

¹⁰⁷ Postanovlenie Politbiuro TsK VKP(b) o sniatii s dolzhnostei A. A. Kuznetsova, M. I. Rodionova, P. S. Popkova 15 fevralia 1949 g. // Sud’by liudei: “leningradskoe delo”. P. 50–51.

¹⁰⁸ PGASPI. F. 17. Op. 163. Ch. 2. D. 1520. L. 125.

¹⁰⁹ *Kutuzov V. A. Tak nazывaemoe “Leningradskoe delo” // Voprosy istorii KPSS. 1989. No. 3. P. 56.*

¹¹⁰ TsGAIPD St. Petersburg. F. 24. Op. 49. D. 4. L. 12.

¹¹¹ GARK. F. P-1. Op. 1. D. 3008. L. 264.

¹¹² Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial’no-politicheskoi istorii. F. 17. Op. 3. D. 1076. L. 58.

¹¹³ Petr G. Lazutin was born not far from Almaty, in the Petropavlovsk town.

Committee, Andrei Kuznetsov (appointed in June 1949) remained in this position for just over a year until July 1950¹¹⁴.

On 5 August 1949 Soloviev was summoned to Moscow, where he was officially removed from his post¹¹⁵. As his wife Vera remembered later, “on 4 August Nikolai unexpectedly called from Simferopol. He sounded nervous: ‘I have been urgently summoned to the Central Committee. I am flying out tomorrow. How about meeting in Moscow?’ Not suspecting anything serious, I said, ‘I can’t go right now: Clara [our daughter] has an exam in just a few days. Call me from Moscow, please.’ ‘All right...’ This was our last conversation”¹¹⁶.

In summer and autumn 1949, most officials accused as part of the Leningrad Affair were arrested; their apartments, where the families of the suspects still lived, were searched. A question haunting both popular and academic publications is whether the Leningrad leaders of the 1940s had really committed abuse of power, participated in corruption schemes? Were any of the repressions conducted during the Leningrad Affair justified, at least with regard to economic mismanagement? In struggling to answer this question, one should bear in mind that the sentence passed on 30 September 1950 by the Military Collegium of the USSR Supreme Court to the core group of the Leningrad Affair defendants¹¹⁷ did not refer to any articles relating to economic crimes.

Although this issue remains outside the scope of our study, we need to acknowledge that banquets and gift-giving in Stalin’s time used to be (and still remain) an unwritten norm of work practice, serving team-building and networking purposes. On the legislative level, Decree No.11 “On Prohibiting Allocation of Funds for Banquets” issued on 2 January 1945 by USSR Soviet of People’s Commissars was aimed at restricting the banqueting campaign; however, dinner receptions held in Moscow by the USSR Government and the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1946–1949 sent an unequivocal message to Regional Communist organizations that banquets continued to remain the tacit norm¹¹⁸.

There is information about gift-giving and taking among the Leningrad state officials in 1946–1949. For example, when the First Secretary of the Leningrad City and Region Party Committees Popkov visited Pskov in 1949, “a celebratory dinner was given in his honour; he was also presented with two chests of apples and one chest of smelt at the expense of the local executive committee”¹¹⁹. However, there is no reason to suggest the significant scale of economic abuse during the postwar period. Such behavior was kind of unwritten norm throughout party organizations across the USSR.

Children of the Leningrad ruling elite frequently mentioned that they had grown in modest living conditions¹²⁰. Investigators conducting searches in the defendants’ apart-

¹¹⁴ TsGAIPD St. Petersburg. F.25. Op. 93. D. 865. L. 2.

¹¹⁵ *Garmash P. V Krymu // “Leningradskoe delo” / eds V.I. Demidov, V. A. Kutuzov. Leningrad, 1990. P. 242.*

¹¹⁶ *Garmash P. Zhizn’ i sud’ba // Vetluzhskii kraï. 2003. April. No. 18.*

¹¹⁷ Prigovor Voennoi kolegii Verkhovnogo suda SSSR tsentral’noi grupe obviniaemykh po “Leningradskomu delu” ot 30 sentiabria 1950 g. // Sud’by liudei. “Leningradskoe delo”. P. 59–62.

¹¹⁸ *Nikonorova T. N. Dokumenty Komissii partiinogo kontrolya pri TsK VKP(b) (1934–1952 gg.)... Moscow, 2018. P. 179.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid. P. 183.*

¹²⁰ Interview conducted by the author with G. F. Mikheev and T. A. Mikheeva; Interview conducted by the author with E. I. Kharitonova; Interview conducted by the author with N. P. Sivtsova (Lazutina).

ments found that nearly all property items were with inventory numbers printed on them; personal belongings were mainly limited to books and state decorations.

The criminal investigation lasted for nearly a year, during which the accused were tortured, severely beaten, and subjected to extreme psychological coercion. On 30 September 1950 the main defendants including Popkov and Lazutin were sentenced to death, among the main six defendants, executed in Leningrad. Soloviev, Kharitonov and a number of other officials were shot down in Moscow between 28 and 31 October 1950. All of them had been sentenced to capital punishment under Article 58 of the USSR Criminal Code as traitors of the motherland, spies, and subversives. In November 1950, I. V. Dmitriev was also convicted during the Leningrad Affair and sentenced to 3,5 years of imprisonment.

Out of six top officials that ran Leningrad and Region in 1945–1950, Andrei Kuznetsov was the only one to avoid repressions. This may have been due to the fact that he did not maintain any close working contacts with the Leningrad ruling elite, remaining the director of the Izhora Works until 1949; alternatively, he may have been forced to cut a deal with the investigators... In 1950 he was given “a severe reprimand and warning” by the Central Control Commission, yet never had to stand trial.

Following Stalin’s death, on 30 April 1954 the Military Collegium of the USSR Supreme Court revoked the sentence passed on the Leningrad Affair as based on false accusations; the top governmental and Communist leaders featured in the case were rehabilitated, some of them posthumously.

Conclusions

The political context introduced in the study has enabled us to highlight and analyse the social and emotional aspects of the working routine of the Soviet elite. Candidates to responsible positions in the government and party structures in Leningrad, as in the whole USSR as well, were selected in strict compliance with the established requirements relating to the social background, party membership, track record, etc. Some of the appointments, however, were a matter of chance: one such example was the rise of Andrei Zhdanov, who had no trust in the older Leningrad cadre and preferred to build his team around young Communists with regional backgrounds.

The working practices of the government officials during the late Stalinist period did not always conform to rigid institutionalized norms. In some instances legally prohibited activities (e.g. banquets) were unofficially regarded as a norm. Although the list of “written” and “unwritten” norms presented in our study may be extended, it reflects the key requirements for top governmental officials which existed under the Stalinist system.

Adherence to established norms of work conduct was a standard associated with the social role of a Soviet official; some manifestations of this adherence could be partly performative (love of Stalin, enthusiasm), others — sincere (love of Leningrad). The “low” emotions associated with the work reality of the Soviet elite were dramatically manifested during the Leningrad Affair, and included fear of demotion and of loss of job and Party membership, fear for one’s life and the wellbeing of one’s family; apathy; enmity towards ex-colleagues; cowardice and treason. The study focuses on the emotional life of the Soviet elite both as part of the normal working routine and under crisis.

Can the Leningraders be said to have suffered for their post-war transgressions against the Stalinist norms of state discipline and respect for seniority? Hardly. The Leningrad Affair arose from the nation-wide power struggle. Some relatives of the Leningrad Affair victims are convinced that the case was primarily targeted against Alexei Kuznetsov, whom Stalin had named as his successor¹²¹. However, the close interaction and support that existed between Leningraders who later filled positions in local governments across the country were seen by Stalin's entourage as a threat to its might and influence as the national leader. It is possible that Kuznetsov's colleagues from Leningrad were prosecuted to inflate the political importance of the Leningrad Affair. The case had to send a clear signal to all party organizations nationwide: no political initiative ever goes unpunished¹²².

Despite Zhdanov's many personal shortcomings (including weakness, cowardice often ascribed to him, as well as his loss of contact with the common people), he succeeded in consolidating the Leningrad elite and became an indisputable authority. The working relations built under his leadership among the ruling elite of Leningrad during the dramatic times of World War II and the siege were based on trust, friendship and emotional bonds. By contrast, Kuznetsov failed to gain as much influence as Zhdanov among his Leningrad colleagues despite all his experience and achievements, not to mention Stalin's support. Other top officials valued his work qualities, yet refused to see him as an equal to their previous patron: "In their private conversations [governmental and Communist officials] could refer to 'Kuznetsov' or 'Popkov', but they always said 'Comrade Zhdanov'; Zhdanov remained an unchallenged figure"¹²³. After further career promotions and, more importantly, after Zhdanov's death, the personal ties among the former wartime comrades gradually waned due to undercover working and personal conflicts, and ultimately accelerated the fabrication of the Leningrad Affair, which had tragic consequences not only for the defendants and also for the whole Leningrad.

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¹²¹ Interview conducted by the author with G. F. Mikheev, 8 August, 2018.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Interview conducted by the author with G. F. Mikheev and T. A. Mikheeva.

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