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## THE REINTEGRATION OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND THE BOLSHEVIK VIEWS OF "RUSSIA": THE CASE OF THE MOSCOW PARTY ORGANIZATION

IKEDA YOSHIRO

The Bolshevik views of "Russia" had an important effect on the reintegration of the Russian empire and the formation of the Soviet Union. Obsessed by the vision of the European and the world revolutions, the Bolsheviks nevertheless had as one of bases of decision making their own notion of "Russia," and in the years of the civil war this made undeniable impact on Soviet politics generally, and especially in the spheres of the national problem.

This article aims to clarify the main features and the background of the Bolshevik views of "Russia" in the years of the civil war. This task is especially important because of the fact that the governing elites and the intellectuals of the empire themselves had been more and more concerned with the problem of how to identify the Russian empire for the last decades of its existence. In the second half of the nineteenth century, in particular after the defeat in the Crimean War, part of Russian society, including the governmental officials, began to rethink the durability of the governing order of the empire: there, besides ethnicity, antiquated categories of estate and lineage were decisive in determining one's position in the political and social hierarchy.<sup>1</sup> Within the ministerial apparatus some groups began to see in the peasantry pure Russians (*russkie*) who would comprise the core of a reformed society of the empire, thus seeking an ethnically-oriented nation state.<sup>2</sup> Some groups in the War Ministry sought, on the other hand, to make all the subjects of the empire equally bear the obligation of conscription to the army as a citizen, thus seeking a civic-oriented nation state.<sup>3</sup> Each of these alternatives showed the way of redefinition of "Russia," from a non-ethnic, territorial definition to a more ethnic or territorial one

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1 On the traditional governing order of the Russian empire, see, *Каппелер А. Мазепинцы, малороссы, хохлы: украинцы в этнической иерархии Российской империи // Миллер А.И., Репринцев В.Ф., Флоря Б.Н. (ред.) Россия-Украина: история взаимоотношений. М., 1997; Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855 (Berkeley, 1959), esp. pp. 139-141, 227.*

2 Mikhail Dolbilov, "The Emancipation Reform of 1861 in Russia and the Nationalism of the Imperial Bureaucracy," in Hayashi Tadayuki, ed., *The Construction and Deconstruction of National Histories in Slavic Eurasia* (Sapporo, 2003).

3 Joshua A. Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation: Military Conscription, Total War, and Mass Politics, 1905-1925* (DeKalb, 2003), pp. 20-29.

again.<sup>4</sup> The government, for its part, had wavered between conserving the hereditary governing order and reforming the empire toward some type of nation state, or something other. However, before the government reached a final decision, the burden of the World War had torn up the organism of the empire, and it collapsed.<sup>5</sup>

After the years of the civil war much of the former imperial territory appeared to be reintegrated by the Bolsheviks. The process of reintegration itself took the form of the conquest of the peripheries.<sup>6</sup> But the notion of “Russia” remained ambiguous for the Bolshevik regime.

In connection with this we cannot avoid Agurskii’s study on so-called national bolshevism.<sup>7</sup> According to him, in the years of the NEP, an emigrant ideology of national bolshevism, which considered the Bolshevik regime as the only real political power able to reintegrate and develop the “one, indivisible Russia” and called on technocrats to support it, found resonance within the party. By tolerating and even promoting currents of Russian nationalism in culture and politics, the leaders of the party, and especially Stalin, caught up and introduced this ideology into the party policy for the consolidation of the legitimacy of the regime. Thus, Agurskii explained the intensive emergence of Russian nationalism in the USSR of the NEP era. The study of Agurskii is pioneering in making clear many aspects of the underground dialogue between the emigrant statist movement of the Change of Landmarks and the Bolshevik regime. However, if he assumes that the Bolshevik government tolerating the Russian nationalist currents in Soviet society, had been seeking reinforcement of the cultural and political hegemony of the Russian ethnicity (and judging from his attention to the writers whose main theme was the Russian peasantry, he seems to do so), then he is not correct. It seems that in 1920s and afterwards the Bolshevik regime had aimed not so much for the hegemony of ethnic Russians, as for the consolidation of a supra-ethnic entity.

To make this matter clear, I will turn to the recent studies of the Bolshevik nationality policy in the 1920s and later. These studies had made clear that the

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4 Here I depend on the argument of Anthony Smith that “the nation has come to blend two sets of dimensions, the one civic and territorial, the other ethnic and genealogical.” Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno, 1991), p. 15. Especially on the “civic nation,” see, *ibid.*, p. 116.

5 Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation*, pp. 21-38; David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956* (Cambridge, 2002), ch. 1. On the wavering of the government and cultural society in symbols, see, Richard Wortman, “Moscow and Petersburg: The Problem of Political Center in Tsarist Russia, 1881-1914,” in Sean Wilentz, ed., *Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics since the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1985); Hubertus F. Jahn, *Patriotic Culture in Russia during World War I* (Ithaca, 1995).

6 Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923* (Cambridge, rev. ed., 1964).

7 Агурский М. Идеология национал-большевизма. Париж, 1980.

Bolshevik regime had long intended to promote a policy of “nation-making” in the non-Russian republics and autonomous regions.<sup>8</sup> That is, after the formation of the USSR the All-Union government consistently had sought the clarification of inhabitants’ ethnic identity and the administrative partition of the territory along ethnic lines.<sup>9</sup> Even after the revolution from above had pulled down the priority of the affirmative action for ethnic minorities in Soviet politics, ethnicity remained firmly as one of the main indicators of Soviet citizens’ identity. The rehabilitation of the Russian past and culture, which had started from the beginning of the 1930s, did not abolish the promotion of ethnic identity of the non-Russians as such.<sup>10</sup> Then, do these facts mean that the Bolshevik government pursued to construct the USSR simply as a conglomerate of ethnicities? I think not. Rather, they suggest that the Bolshevik strategy of the construction of the USSR was two-storied, that is, the government pursued the promotion of the ethnic identity of each inhabitant, but simultaneously it also aimed to construct a non-ethnic binding political entity, which would be similar to a revised Russian empire unified by the non-ethnic idea of communism and with equal citizens except for distinct counter-revolutionaries.<sup>11</sup> Because of this two-storied strategy, it became possible for the Bolsheviks to utilize and at the same time strictly control the mobilizing capacity of the Russian past and culture, as was shown in the studies of Brandenberger and Brudny.<sup>12</sup>

In this article I will show that the Bolshevik views of “Russia” in the years of the civil war contained the understanding of it as unified non-ethnically and covering much of the former imperial territory. In a word, this is a Russian empire revised on the path of civic-territorial nation building. This vision of “Russia” would be the foundation of an ideal of the non-ethnic binding

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8 An excellent survey on the nationality policy of the Soviet regime is Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, 1993), ch. 3.

9 Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca, 2001). The struggle with the “backwardness” itself in the peripheries was, of course, not abandoned. See, for example, Douglas Northrop, “Languages of Loyalty: Gender, Politics, and Party Supervision in Uzbekistan, 1927-41,” *The Russian Review* 59:2 (2000).

10 Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” *Slavic Review* 53:2 (1994), pp. 436-452; Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, ch. 11.

11 Here I agree with Sanborn saying that the Soviet Union was a nation-state of civic type. See, Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation*, esp. p. 207. Also helpful for me was the argument of Francine Hirsch that Soviet administrators had been “envisioning the mature Soviet Union as a socialist union of denationalized people.” Francine Hirsch, “Toward an Empire of Nations: Border-Making and the Formation of Soviet National Identities,” *The Russian Review* 59:2 (2000), p. 203.

12 Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism*; Yitzhak M. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953-1991* (Cambridge, 1988).

political entity which the Bolshevik government had constantly attempted to build.

Since in the first years of the Soviet regime the Bolsheviks had a great deal of diversity in their worldview, focusing on local conditions will make us understand more clearly the peculiarities of the Bolshevik views of "Russia." As an object of analysis, I chose the activities of the local Bolsheviks in Moscow, not only as the center of Soviet Russia, but also as an example of a large city in the Great-Russian part of the former empire. Located in a region that was historically mono-ethnic, the city had not encountered such an ethnic strain as had been experienced, for example, by the cities along the Volga. Though the city itself experienced the growth of xenophobia in the years of war and revolution,<sup>13</sup> at least within the Bolshevik city organization a cosmopolitan tendency seems to have been strong, as will be shown in section 2 of this article. These factors made Moscow an example of those cities where the national problem was considered a not-so-pressing task for the party. Consequently, I will try to be cautious not to underestimate the ethnic aspect in the Moscow Bolsheviks' activities in general and in their views of "Russia" in particular.

### 1. THE MOSCOW BOLSHEVIKS' VIEWS OF "RUSSIA"

During the year 1917, the Bolsheviks had been counting on the outbreak of the European revolution. The October uprisings in Petrograd, then in Moscow, were seen by them not as an incident of domestic gravity, but an ignition of the worldwide reconstruction of humanity. A manifesto of the Moscow Military-Revolution Committee of 3 (16) November was written exactly in this spirit. "The entire world is going through a colossal crisis. The war evoked by the capital had led to the deep upheaval, stirring up the labor masses of the all countries. The proletarian revolution is growing everywhere. And the great honor of overthrowing first the domination of the bourgeoisie had fallen to the lot of the Russian [*russkii*] labor class."<sup>14</sup> In the manifesto for the wider public, the special role of the Russian working class was hinted at, but in their internal debates the Bolsheviks assigned a far more modest place for Russia. In the discussion on the revision of the party program at the 3 (16) February 1918 MK (the city party committee) plenum A.A. Sol'ts remarked: "Now the only possible program is one for the proletariat of the whole world... We must be just a section of the world proletariat. We are no longer a national party, drafting itself a program suited to the long term and to Russian conditions." Agreeing with him, V.N. Podbel'skii said: "Now our program is just one word, clearly and distinctly stated to the whole world – socialism." At the end of the discus-

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13 On xenophobic pogroms in the city, see, *Рябиченко С. Погромы 1915 г.: Три дня из жизни неизвестной Москвы. М., 2000.*

14 Московский военно-революционный комитет. Октябрь-ноябрь 1917 года. М., 1968. С. 182-183.

sion, the MK decided to request the forthcoming party congress to draft a “Manifesto of the Russian International Marxists – Communists.”<sup>15</sup>

The ratification of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk made the issue of European revolution come off the agenda of the Moscow Bolsheviks for the time being. This never meant for them, however, that Russia anyway in the narrow sense of the word (RSFSR in territorial terms or Russian (*russkaia*) in ethnic terms) appeared as their field of activities. On the one hand, under the pressure of the worsening economic situation in the city, they just began to contract their range of vision very narrowly to the local society of Moscow. The degree of their indifference to the situation outside daily matters was clearly revealed when the news of the revolt of the Czechoslovak Corps brought to the attention of the MK meeting on 10 June 1918 in the midst of the dispute over establishing the food dictatorship. To an extraordinary announcement by Podbel'skii, who now had become People's Commissar for Posts and Telegraphs informing the MK of the liquidation of the Soviet power in Siberia and proposing to start immediate mobilization of activists, the participants of the meeting answered indifferently. D.I. Efremov, one of the leading members of the IK MK (executive commission of the MK), stated: “The IK MK had known privately all about it, but didn't give such an importance to the news. [...] Our opinion is not to undertake anything – the affairs of defense need to be centralized, that is, they are the matter of the Central Executive Committee.” Agreeing with him, I.A. Piatnitskii said: “While there is no plan, nothing should be undertaken.” Thus, the MK had left the problem without any decision.<sup>16</sup> Only with the intensification of the civil war and the development of mobilization by the TsK (Central Committee of the party) and the central military apparatus, did the Moscow Bolsheviks gradually integrate themselves in the broader field of political and military activities.

On the other hand, Russia was for the Moscow Bolsheviks, if mentioned, just the name of a place from where a non-ethnic standardization of human society should be launched. Already in January 1918, one of the members of the MK in 1917, M. S. Ol'minskii, having criticized the administrative partition under the ancient regime as outdated, revealed his own vision of a revised Russia which was as non-ethnically organized as that of the imperial government: “Russia is now going along the way of transformation to the organization of Soviet republics-communes. The partition [of Russia] by the tsars into *gubernii* [regions] had become a thing of the past. Coming into being now are not *gubernii*, but communes: Petrogradskaia, Moskovskaia, Nizhegorodskaia and so on,” “Russia is now a union of Soviet republics.”<sup>17</sup> The orientation to the standard-

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15 ЦАОДМ (Центральный архив общественных движений Москвы), ф. 3 [Московский комитет РКП(б). 1917-1920], оп. 1, д. 21, л. 31-32.

16 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 21, л. 73.

17 ОЛЬМИНСКИЙ М. Что значит «вся власть Советам»? // Правда. 13 января 1918. С. 1; Он же. Нужно ли ждать указки? // Правда. 21 января 1918. С. 1.

ized reorganization of the country appeared more clearly when the Moscow Soviet presidium passed a decision on 11 September to abolish the emblem of the city (St. Georgii on a horse against a red background striking a black serpent with his spear). The decision was intended to promote standardization of symbols on a pan-Russian scale, making clear that: "Only the emblem of the Russian Soviet Republic can exist. Individual cities and provinces cannot have their own emblems."<sup>18</sup> One more example of their universalism in the realm of symbolism can be found in connection with their effort to organize the "monumental propaganda." A remark of L.B. Kamenev, chairman of the Moscow Soviet at the 26 October Ispolkom (Executive Committee) about the plan of the October celebration, deserves special attention. Having mentioned the names of Kol'tsov, Nikitin (Russian poets), Shevchenko (a Ukrainian poet) and Robespierre, the monuments to whom were to be unveiled first, Kamenev said that the unveiling of them pointed out that "the proletariat depends on the old democratic culture," thus subsumed such diverse figures under one category of democracy.<sup>19</sup>

The beginning of the German revolution in October 1918 brought a major change in the range of views of the Moscow Bolsheviks: not only had the issue of European revolution returned to their agenda, but also "Russia" as a territorial unit had gained much more significance facing the possibility of the appearance of other socialist republics in Europe. For the Moscow Bolsheviks it was self-evident from the first that the new republics should be unified, and here it is important that when the problem of unification was touched on, "Russia" often appeared to mean the imperial territory (except for Poland and Finland). On 10 November, for example, the Moscow Soviet Ispolkom mentioned a plan of organization for a "Federated German-Austro-Russian Republic," in spite of a possible revival of the Ukraine Soviet Republic.<sup>20</sup> Even after the clearance of the region from the Skoropadskii regime, the 17 December plenum of the Moscow Soviet adopted an appeal to the Ukrainian soviets stating: "With the overthrow of this hangman [Skoropadskii] of the toiling masses of Ukraine one more step has been taken towards the emancipation and unification of socialist Russia."<sup>21</sup>

The Moscow Soviet served as a center for dissemination and consolidation of the understanding of "Russia" as most of the territory of the former empire. It staged a number of speeches about cooperation between nationalities of the former empire, not only by Moscow activists, but also by activists from the other republics and the central departments. Among the speeches,

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18 ЦГАМО (Центральный государственный архив Московской области), ф. 66 [Московский совет рабочих и красноармейских депутатов], оп. 12, д. 346, л. 58. On the emblem of Moscow, see, Города России. Энциклопедия. М., 1994. С. 265.

19 ЦГАМО, ф. 66, оп. 2, д. 27, л. 32.

20 Известия ВЦИК. 12 ноября 1918. С. 3.

21 Известия ВЦИК. 18 декабря 1918. С. 4.

one made on 11 March by the famous propagandist L.S. Sosnovskii deserves special mention. His speech under the title "A trip around Russia" concerned his journey on an agitation train around Latvia, Lithuania, Belorussia and Ukraine. It shows clearly how the Bolsheviks' ambition to reorganize society along a common standard had reduced their sensitivity to the relevance of ethnic differences:

[The train] had to become a tie between the peoples of Latvia and Lithuania, who had been cut off from the Workers' and Peasants' Russia. It had to be a living link between us and them, and we strove to symbolize externally that Russia for them. All the painted cars, every side of which was something new and unprecedented to them, were tempting and attractive.<sup>22</sup>

From his announcement about the plan for approaching trips to the Donets Basin, the Northern Front, the Volga and the Urals, it appears that for him all of those destinations were constituent parts of the Workers' and Peasants' Russia. The representation of a comprehensively reunified communist Russia was thus actively propagated to the Moscow Bolsheviks.

Then, what kind of outside world did they picture beyond the borders of this imagined Russia? The communist movement in the European countries was just a part of the outside world, which proved to be for the most part hostile to the Bolshevik regime. At the core of this hostile world stood, together with the imperialists, the Social Democrats of the Second International. Consideration of the Bolsheviks' attitude toward them helps us to understand better the characteristic features of the Bolsheviks' world outlook and the place of Russia in it. Special attention should be paid here to an episode in the early months of 1919, involving an abortive plan of the European Social Democrats to send a delegation to Soviet Russia. It evoked an intense response especially from the Bolsheviks of Moscow, where the delegation was due to visit. It is not surprising that they found this visit a chance to demonstrate their own correctness to the working masses of the city. At the 26 February MK plenum, G.Ia. Belen'kii stated that "at meetings we must give Kautskii and Co. the opportunity to make speeches, and after that let comrade Lenin crush them." The MK adopted a resolution to this effect.<sup>23</sup>

However, there were different voices among the Moscow Bolsheviks which expressed a hope that the delegates would come to understand their problems. First of all, at the 22 February Ispolkom meeting Kamenev stated:

We must discredit them in the eyes of the working class. On the other hand, we must give them every chance to be convinced in practice that we don't eat people, that we are a proletarian party, which under the most difficult conditions is partly realizing the program they wrote themselves before they dilled their pen against the imperialist governments.<sup>24</sup>

22 Стенографические отчеты Московского совета рабочих и красноармейских депутатов. 1919. № 8. С. 117-120.

23 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 100, л. 37, 40.

24 ЦГАМО, ф. 66, оп. 19, д. 67, л. 120.



Kamenev was not an exception. For example, a general meeting of the Bolsheviks of Butyrskii raion blamed the “traitors to the mission of the proletariat,” but simultaneously resolved to “express a hope that among the delegates there were people who would understand the necessity of the workers’ and peasants’ power in Russia for the sake of the victory of world socialism.”<sup>25</sup> These statements reflected a lingering feeling of kinship with the Western social democrats among the Moscow Bolsheviks. It might be said that this feeling helped them to find their own position in a world in crisis, because it made the European Social Democrats not heathens, but renegades, thereby heightening the moral authority of their own regime. It happened that the relationship between Russian communism and Western social democracy reproduced the one between the Russian Orthodox Church and Western Christendom.

The dichotomy between Russian communism and Western social democracy was institutionalized by the establishment of the Comintern. Gathering representatives from many European states in the Kremlin did not necessarily blur the centrality of the Russian party in the world communist movement before the eyes of the Moscow Bolsheviks. Reporting on the Congress of the Comintern at the 4 March MK plenum, Belen’kii related the words of Albert, the representative of Germany, that “the upheaval [*perevorot*] of Germany did not have such significance as in Russia.” The MK secretary, V.M. Zagorskii, also conveyed the words of the representative of Austria, Gruber, that “the Austrian communist party independently had put forward those tactics, which were of the Russian communist party.” Moreover, the establishment of the Comintern also seems to have promoted the notion among the Moscow Bolsheviks that it was “Russia” understood as the territory of the former empire that represented them in the international arena. Zagorskii called the representatives of Ukraine and Belorussia simply “Russian national minorities” (*russkie natsional’nye men’shinstva*).<sup>26</sup>

This attitude of neglect toward the official independence of the non-Russian Soviet republics found its resonance in the indifference of the MK to the theoretical problem of self-determination of nations, which was hotly debated immediately after the Comintern congress at the eighth party congress in connection with the revision of the party program. The central antagonists in the debate were Lenin, who insisted on the permission of national self-determination as a party principle within the national problem, and Bukharin, who sought to restrict the right of self-determination only to the working class of each state. The latter made a report at the 8 March MK plenum about the congress and explained their difference of view about the revision of the program, including the matter of the national problem, remarking that he was “an opponent of self-determination of nations, because it means the recognition of rights for the

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25 Правда. 12 марта 1919. С. 3. See also a resolution of the Sushchevsko-Mar’inskii raion Soviet Ispolkom (Известия ВЦИК. 4 марта 1919. С. 4).

26 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 100, л. 45.

Constituent Assembly. I put forth the following formula: 'the right of the toiling people for self-determination'." However, after Bukharin's report the members of the MK, inquiring about the other point under dispute, that is, the revision of the introduction of the program, did not, at least judging from the protocol of the plenum, turn their attention to the problem of national self-determination.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, the documents of the Moscow Bolsheviks from the winter of 1918 to the spring of 1919 show us that particular views of "Russia" clearly existed among them. It was Russia embracing most of the former imperial territory and unified by communism. This view of "Russia" was sustained by the relative indifferent attitude to the national problem in general among the Moscow Bolsheviks. In a word, this was a revised Russian empire integrated by the non-ethnic idea of communism, not the ethnically revived Russian (*rusaskaia*) empire which appears from the argument of Agurskii. In the following section, I will show that the internal party activities of the Moscow Bolsheviks corresponded well to this representation of "Russia."

## 2. THE ETHNIC ASPECT IN PARTY ACTIVITIES IN MOSCOW

Moscow was a *rusaskii* city. In 1912 the ethnic composition of its inhabitants was: Russians (*rusaskie*) including Belorussians 95.3 (percent), Ukrainians 0.2, Poles 1.0, Latvians 0.2, Germans 1.3, Armenians 0.2, Jews 0.4, Tatars 0.6, and others 0.8. Even after the years of war and revolution this Russian majority was sustained, though the percentage of Jews had increased significantly at the expense of the Russians, and this had clearly worsened the mood of the Russian populace of the city against them. In 1920 the ethnic composition of the city was: Russians 84.8 (percent), Ukrainians 0.2, Belorussians 0.3, Poles 1.4, Latvians 0.9, Lithuanians 0.4, Germans 0.6, Armenians 0.2, Jews 2.7, Tatars 0.2, and others 7.4.<sup>28</sup>

As compared to these figures for the inhabitants of the city as a whole, political activists included more non-Russian figures, as the ethnic composition of the members of the Moscow Soviet as of 1 (14) June 1917 shows (Table 1).

After the Bolsheviks had come to power in the city, the situation in general does not seem to have changed, as the ethnic composition of the city Soviet as of February 1920 shows. Besides information of all the deputies, this table also gives the very rough outline of the ethnic composition of the Bolshevik city organization because of 1532 deputies of the Soviet, the Bolsheviks composed an overwhelmingly majority, counting 1320 (including 50 candidates and 50 sympathizers).<sup>29</sup>

27 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 100, л. 49-50. On the debate at the party congress, see, Pipes, *The Formation*, pp. 109-110.

28 Гаврилова И.Н. Демографическая история Москвы. М., 1998. С. 274. Таб. 3.

29 Стенографические отчеты Московского совета рабочих и красноармейских депутатов. 1920. № 7. С. 130. I could not find information about the ethnic composition of the city

**Table 1. Ethnic Composition of the Moscow Soviet, 1 (14) June 1917**

	Members of the plenum		Members of the Ispolkom		Total	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Great-Russians	547	87.52	55	73.33	602	86.00
Belorussians	18	2.88	1	1.33	19	2.71
" <i>Malorossy</i> " [Ukrainians]	10	1.60	2	2.66	12	1.71
Poles	15	2.40	3	4.00	18	2.57
Jews	16	2.56	9	12.00	25	3.57
Latvians	12	1.92	2	2.66	14	2.00
Georgians	3	0.48	1	1.33	4	0.57
Armenian	-		1	1.33	1	0.14
Czech	1	0.16	-		1	0.14
Estonian	1	0.16	-		1	0.14
Karelian	1	0.16	-		1	0.14
Chechen	1	0.16	-		1	0.14
" <i>Kazak</i> "	-		1	1.33	1	0.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>99.97</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>99.97</b>

**Source:** Известия Московского Совета рабочих депутатов. 17 июня 1917. С. 4.

**Table 2. Ethnic Composition of the Moscow Soviet, Feb. 1920**

	No.	Percentage
Russians	1373	89.62
Jews	63	4.11
Latvians	46	3.00
Poles	32	2.08
Armenians	8	0.52
Georgians	2	0.13
" <i>Malorossy</i> "	3	0.19
Germans	3	0.19
Greek	1	0.06
Swiss	1	0.06
<b>Total</b>	<b>1532</b>	<b>99.96</b>

**Source:** Стенографические отчеты Московского совета рабочих и красноармейских депутатов. 1920. № 7. С. 130.

party organization in the years of the civil war. The membership of the Moscow party organization was 20,000 in May 1918, 17,000 in March 1919, and 38,000 (including 4000 candidates) in March 1920. Richard Sakwa, *Soviet Communists in Power: A Study of Moscow during the Civil War, 1918-21* (New York, 1988), p. 135, table 5.1.

Notwithstanding the noticeable presence of non-Russian activists among the Moscow Bolsheviks, the formation of party ethnic sections had made little progress until the autumn of 1918. Only with the defeat of Germany in the World War and the withdrawal of its troops from the western areas of the former empire, did the organization of the regular ethnic sections become an important issue for the Moscow Bolsheviks because of the sudden growth of non-Russian activists departing to their homelands. First, the TsK had undertaken control over the movement of non-Russian activists through the Orgbureau, which was set up at the TsK plenum of 16 January 1919 to centralize the overall distribution of local activists.<sup>30</sup> As one of its first acts, the Orgbureau immediately responded to the uncontrolled movement of the non-Russian communist groups. On 22 January it decided to propose that they not recall their countrymen from work in Russia without the knowledge of the TsK.<sup>31</sup> Then, the Orgbureau made clear its principle about the control of the movement when it refused on 6 February a petition from the party's Belorussian section in Moscow requesting that Belorussians attending propaganda courses in Tambov not be sent to the Southern Front; the Orgbureau insisted that "the standard procedure for redistribution of workers" had to be applied to them, thus subordinating particular ethnic interests to the all-party interests.<sup>32</sup>

In the Moscow party organization the same principle had been applied. For example, in January 1919 the IK MK decided that all members of the party's Moslem section in the city had to belong to one of the raions and the section itself should be registered as a cell in Zamoskvorech'e raion.<sup>33</sup> Then, an MK meeting on 15 February maintained that all ethnic groups in the city should adopt the method of organizational links common to all party organizations,<sup>34</sup> thus emphasizing the application of "the standard procedure for redistribution of workers" to ethnic sections.

Of course, the existence of ethnic party groups itself indicates that the MK recognized ethnic groupings among party members. In reality, the city party organization had not been spared ethnic conflicts. For example, M.I. Latsis, who was once a leading Latvian activist in the city and then became one of the central figures in the VChK (All-Russian Commission for the Struggle Against Counter-Revolution, Speculation and Corruption), remembered the activities of his Latvian social-democrat group of the University of Shaniavskii on the eve of the World War. According to him, in the student party cell of the university, "its various national components" had not tied with each other, "the Latvian part of the cell felt timid before the Russian audience," so "an independent cell

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30 Известия ЦК КПСС. 1989. № 6. С. 174-175.

31 Известия ЦК КПСС. 1989. № 6. С. 176.

32 Известия ЦК КПСС. 1989. № 7. С. 148.

33 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 102, л. 3. In the minutes was written simply "January 1919" by someone's hand.

34 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 100, л. 25.

was formed from the Latvian part and links with Russian comrades and other nationalities were sustained by individual comrades." Then, already after the breakout of the War, because of negligent checking of the membership in Russian party groups of the city, "we began to consider the Russian [*russkaia*] organization as an incidental crowd of people."<sup>35</sup> After this, the Latvian cell seems to have sustained an independent voice in the Moscow party organization, which was shown from the fact that at the MK meeting held on March 22, 1920 the representative of Gorodskoi raion, Latsis (I could not confirm if this was the same Latsis) made a demand to give the raion one more seat in the MK than determined in the regulations because "two foreign groups and the Latvian section are registered to the raion, and many number of passing activists too," a demand that was approved.<sup>36</sup>

A far more remarkable conflict aroused by the ethnic aspect in the Moscow party organization concerned Jews. Special attention should be paid in this connection to a controversy among the city party activists in May 1919. This controversy broke out between the MK and the party faction of the Moscow Soviet on the matter of the definition of each competence.<sup>37</sup> During this controversy one major anti-MK oriented Soviet activist, A.V. Radzivillov, was said to appear drunk in public and remark that "our state is ruled only by Jews [*zhidy*]." Indeed, many leading figures in the MK at that time were Jews, such as Piatnitskii (Tarshis), Belen'kii, and the MK secretary Zagorskii (Lubotskii), a staunch opponent of the Soviet party faction. Afterward the court of honor concluded that "comrade Radzivillov is suffering from nerves and must be given the possibility to receive medical treatment."<sup>38</sup> This episode suggests the existence of underlying anti-Jewish feeling on the part of the Moscow Bolsheviks.

Nevertheless, the ethnic aspect of the city party life essentially did not affect the activities of the Moscow Bolsheviks. The representatives of ethnic sections had seldom made any special "ethnic" demands in the MK; they played their part first of all as Bolsheviks, without considering ethnicity. It is remarkable that in February 1920, in connection with the formation of sections for the "national minorities" (*natsional'nye men'shinstva*) under the agitation-propaganda section of the MK, the MK secretary A.F. Miasnikov got permission from the MK "for registration of the comrades from other nationalities" to include in the questionnaire (probably for registration of party members) an item of nationality, a proposal indicating that until then the MK had not been paying much

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35 Лацис М. Подпольная работа в Москве (1914-1915) // Пролетарская революция. 1925. № 10(45). С. 180, 187.

36 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 156, л. 39.

37 On this controversy, see, Икэда Ё. Феномен советского бюрократизма в годы гражданской войны // Академик П.В. Волобуев. Неопубликованные работы. Воспоминания. Статьи. М., 2000. С. 360-362.

38 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 100, л. 110об.; д. 102, л. 34.

attention to the ethnicity of each communists in the city.<sup>39</sup> The agitation sections themselves had not been connected with the Moscow party life organically because they concerned only ethnic groups with their homelands outside Soviet territory, and their organization, including those of the Baltic nations, was very poor.<sup>40</sup> In this way, the organization of non-Russians Bolsheviks had remained marginal and supplemental to the city party organization. This situation well corresponded to the Moscow Bolshevik views of non-ethnically unified "Russia."

What, then, was the attitude of the Moscow Bolsheviks to activists from the non-Russian regions? This question sheds light on their understanding of Soviet "Russia." In order to answer the question, it is helpful to turn our attention to an incident in Moscow in September 1919: an influx into the city of Ukrainian activists, who had fled from Denikin' troops after the downfall of the Soviet regime there.

Many of them, in particular the second and the third class activists, wanted to move on to the Urals and Siberia, and actually succeeded in doing so. Their uncontrolled movement and poor political quality made serious trouble for the activists of the central departments and the city. One author in "Pravda" of 30 August lamented that many of the activists from Ukraine were just seeking a good place to "gobble up," even indulging in lying about their past, such as "I had been in the party from 1908" or "I had lived exactly in Narym [in exile]" in order to get a mandate to go to Siberia as a high official.<sup>41</sup> Another author reported a communist from Ukraine and his "comrade" SR also from that land talking in a friendly manner on the streets of Moscow about "how commissars here are traveling around in automobiles," and "what is going on at the Sukharevka [black market]: how much bread, rubber and textiles are there?" The author argued, in apologetic tone, that most of the activists from Ukraine were peasants and had not yet mastered how to begin constructing Soviet power.<sup>42</sup>

In fact, the central departments themselves were in part responsible for the uncontrolled movement of those activists, because several departments, especially the People's Commissariat for Food, sent them to Siberia as their own agents. In the middle of August, the TsK tried to control the situation by asking all party organizations and departments not to send activists to Siberia without applying for permission from the Orgbureau.<sup>43</sup> The VTsIK (All-Rus-

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39 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 156, л. 29.

40 Отчет Московского комитета Р.К.П. за январь 1921 года. М., 1921. С. 38-46. Even the Latvian agitation section had much shrunk as a result of mobilization and the return of activists to the homeland. In January 1921 there was not a separate Latvian party cell in the city.

41 В.К. Просим не беспокоиться // Правда. 30 августа 1919. С. 1.

42 Мужик (Т. Дудкин). Кто позаботится // Правда. 6 сентября 1919. С. 2.

43 Известия ВЦИК. 17 августа 1919. С. 1.

sian Central Executive Committee) also published in *Izvestiia VTsIK* on 6 September an order prescribing that all People's Commissariats and departments in Moscow coordinate their activity with the TsK concerning the adoption of activists from Ukraine, Lithuania and Belorussia.<sup>44</sup> However these decisions did not have a successful result.

The MK discussed the problem on 20 September. The discussion vividly shows the view that the leaders of the Moscow Bolsheviks had of the evacuated activists. L.S. Rivlin opened the discussion, saying that only one person was working in a commission for registration of the Ukrainians under the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, that "the Ukrainians are too often snubbed in the raions. We need to distribute them properly to the raions and to look after them." Zagorskii said more pungently: "The arriving Ukrainians are actually snubbed here, but we have to confess that in most cases they deserve to be. If people come to you who instead of talking about work talk about clothes, automobiles for transporting goods, talk that they had been dispatched to work necessarily in the ChK and so on, it's understandable that they can't win confidence." I.V. Tsivtsivadze agreed with him. "At first the material condition of the Ukrainians was really hard, but now they have been supplied with better clothes than the rest of us by the Food Department [of the Moscow Soviet]." S.I. Filler also mentioned that: "these people are in most cases impudent and unfit for serious work. I think it would be better to send at least part of them away from Moscow." Having refused this suggestion, Piatnitskii was also anxious about the poor political quality of those activists. "On the contrary, under no circumstances must we let them go out to the countryside, where they will be out of control." He blamed the People's Commissariat for Food for sending the Ukrainians to Siberia without reference to the TsK. At the end of the discussion the MK decided to set up a new commission for registration of the Ukrainians consisting of one representative each from the MK, the Moscow Trade Union Council and the Ukrainian party's TsK, and to send the Ukrainians to the raions of the city.<sup>45</sup>

These remarks were undeniably colored by an underlying contemptuous attitude to Ukrainians, recognizable from the fact that they lumped together the diverse group of arriving activists under the term "Ukrainians" (*ukraintsy*). In reality many of the disreputable refugees were not native Ukrainians, as was well known to the Moscow Bolsheviks from a report on the situation in Ukraine before the collapse of the Soviet regime. Having fled from there, at the 12 September MK plenum, Ia.Kh. Peters remarked: "From the North the most unreliable people had gone there [Ukraine], in order to eat white bread. Their activities had set the workers and peasants of Ukraine against the Soviets."<sup>46</sup>

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44 Декреты Советской власти. Т. 6. М., 1973. С. 108-109.

45 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 101, л. 62об., 67.

46 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 101, л. 56об.

However, the contemptuous attitude of the MK was turned not so much to ethnic Ukrainians as to the region. In this connection an article of a leading Ukrainian activist, Ia.A. Iakovlev, published in "Pravda" on 5 October is noteworthy. He wrote indignantly: "Every *chinovnik* [bureaucrat] of the cadres of the Soviet bureaucracy considers it his right to cast slurs on the Donets miners, the Ekaterinoslav or Kharkov workers who have turned up in Moscow as a result of one circumstance or another, labeling them all as 'Ukrainian deserters'." Importantly enough, all these places mentioned by Iakovlev were located on the left bank of Ukraine, and most of the workers there had to be ethnic Russians or Russified Ukrainians (Iakovlev himself was a leader of the "right" current of the Ukrainian communists which operated with the support of Russian workers from those places and had a negative attitude toward the independence of Ukraine).<sup>47</sup> If so, the Moscow Bolsheviks and the officials in the central apparatus showed their contemptuous attitude not toward ethnic Ukrainians but the region of Ukraine as a periphery. This attitude toward Ukraine as a peripheral region had become noticeable again at the 24 September 1920 MK plenum where the composition of its Bureau (renamed IK) was debated. There Kamenev opposed the candidacy of M.S. Boguslavskii, who once played an active role in the civil war in Ukraine, then was appointed by the TsK to lead the printers' union in Moscow. Kamenev remarked: "He has to prove himself in Russia first in the Committee [MK] in order that other comrades may be convinced that he is not just an agitator, but also a prominent organizer and political figure." Though T.V. Sapronov, who was a comrade of Boguslavskii as a Democratic Centralist and had an experience of working with him in Kharkov, had introduced his activities in Voronezh, Kharkov and Moscow in order to defend his candidacy, the plenum rejected Boguslavskii.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, the ethnic aspect had not played a major part in the activities of the Moscow party organization in the years of the civil war. The ethnic communist sections remained secondary to the non-ethnic main body of the city party organization. At least judging from their attitude to Ukrainian activists, the discriminative attitude of the MK toward activists of the non-Russian parts of the former empire was not directed to their ethnicity itself, but to the peripheral feature of their region. All these specialties of the activities of the MK show more distinctly the outline of their views of "Russia" as united by communism and embracing much of the imperial territory, where the core of the Great-

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47 Яковлев Я. Надо разбираться // Правда. 5 октября 1919. С. 1. On Iakovlev, see, Деятели СССР и революционного движения России. Энциклопедический словарь Гранат. М., 1989. С. 782-783. On rival currents in the Ukrainian party activists, see, Pipes. *The Formation*, pp. 126-136. On the compositions of the workers on the left bank of Ukraine, see, Nakai Kazuo, *Soveto minzoku seisaku shi. Ukuraina 1917-1945 [A History of the Soviet Nationality Policy. Ukraine 1917-1945]* (Tokyo, Ochanomizu Syobo, 1988), p. 162.

48 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1-а, д. 6, л. 66. On Boguskavskii, see, Деятели СССР. С. 35-42. On Sapronov, see, Очерки истории коммунистической партии Украины. Киев, 1964. С. 288.



Russian land composed the center and the non-Russian regions the peripheries. What “objective” conditions, then, lay behind their views of “Russia”? In the last section, I will analyze this problem.

### 3. CENTRALIZATION OF ADMINISTRATION AND THE BOLSHEVIK VIEWS OF “RUSSIA”

In the years of the civil war, several factors promoted the centralization of Soviet administration of the republics, thereby consolidating among the Moscow Bolsheviks their views of “Russia” as embracing the vast territory of the former empire. Among these factors, military mobilization and food provision were the most critical.

Regarding military mobilization, it is sufficient to mention that carrying out such mobilization on an imperial-wide scale had marginalized in the eyes of the Moscow Bolsheviks the significance of individual ethnic formations in the peripheries. Such marginalization was conducted through a series of military reports made by activists from the front to the audience of the capital. Especially interesting was a report made by a well-known army communist, S.I. Gusev, at the 21 June 1919 MK plenum. First of all, he underlined there the disorganized nature of the armies of the non-Russian republics:

From Petrograd to Odessa, on our side, a whole series of individual national armies exist without unity of command and of provision. These national armies are operating uncoordinatedly, parts of individual detachments don't carry out orders of the Front. [...] Our task is to unify these uncoordinated national armies into a whole. [...] The Lithuanian and the Belorussian armies don't constitute sufficiently organized fighting forces. The Ukrainian army is a chaotic mass.

For Gusev, then, each component of the former empire had lost its specific individuality before the perspective of the world revolution: they were all just objects of utilization for the great cause.

In the Urals and Siberia the mood of the masses is very good now. We must take advantage of it, advancing as far as possible and seizing whatever possible from the Siberian resources. On the contrary, in Ukraine the mood is extremely counter-revolutionary, there we should not go so far now. [...] We exploited Ukraine, now we will exploit Siberia. In a word, we will have been maneuvering in order to somehow hold out until the arrival of help from the West.

The report was supplemented by answers to questions from the floor, in which Gusev once again emphasized the unreliability of the national formations with the example of Lithuanian troops being scattered after they had reached their homeland.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 101, л. 1об.-3об.

The necessity of bringing food to the capital had contributed as much as military mobilization had in consolidating the Moscow Bolshevik views of "Russia" as unified on the scale of the former empire. On this matter the relationship between the RSFSR and Ukraine was crucial.

After the collapse of the Skoropadskii regime in December 1918, the Soviet Russian Government and the Moscow Bolsheviks pinned their hopes on Ukraine for improvement of the food situation of the capital and the country in general. The Moscow Soviet presidium had hastily begun to send food detachments there, and according to a report of the Ukrainian People's Commissar for Food, A.G. Shlikhter, at the 25 March 1919 Moscow Soviet plenum, 2700 workers from Moscow were already operating in various parts of Ukraine.<sup>50</sup>

The close link between the food situation in the capital and Ukraine was symbolized by the expedition of the chairman of the Moscow Soviet Kamenev there. At the end of March, the Defense Council appointed him with plenipotentiary powers to head the food expeditions to Saratov, Don and the South in order to intensify the transport of food to the hungry centers.<sup>51</sup> After the expedition to the Volga ended with little success, Kamenev departed to Ukraine in April.<sup>52</sup> Besides food procurement Kamenev had as his tasks the consolidation and centralization of the food and other apparatus of Ukraine under the direction of the RSFSR. First, he had made an important step towards unifying the food apparatus of the two republics, a process which was already underway.<sup>53</sup> On 27 April he dispatched a telegram to Lenin from Kiev with a proposal that the deputy People's Commissar for Food of Russia, N.P. Briukhanov, should be attached to the People's Commissariat of Ukraine in order to strengthen it, a proposal which was agreed to by the Politburo.<sup>54</sup> In another case, Kamenev reached an agreement with the Council of People's Commissars of Ukraine on the legal position of the Crimea on the lines of its direct subjection to the RSFSR. The Politburo approved this agreement on 28 May.<sup>55</sup> In early May his importance in Ukraine had increased further as a result of his appointment for organizing military mobilization against the Grigor'ev rebellion. At the end of May, Kamenev was called to Moscow to participate directly in further decision-making on the political and military issues of Ukraine.<sup>56</sup>

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50 Собрание постановлений и распоряжений Московского Совета рабочих и красноармейских депутатов. № 6. М., 1919. С. 33; Шлихтер А.Г. Аграрный вопрос и продовольственная политика в первые годы Советской власти. М., 1975. С. 371.

51 ЦГАМО, ф. 66, оп. 19, д. 67, л. 262-263.

52 В.С. Экспедиция Л.Б. Каменева для продвижения продгрузов к Москве в 1919 году // Пролетарская революция. 1925. № 6 (41). С. 116-123; Известия ВЦИК. 13 апреля 1919. С. 3; Известия ЦК КПСС. 1989. № 12. С. 143-144.

53 Известия ЦК КПСС. 1989. № 12. С. 143-144.

54 В.С. Экспедиция. С. 123-126; РГАСПИ (Российский государственный архив социально-политической истории), ф. 17 [Центральный комитет РКП(б)], оп. 3, д. 5, л. 1.

55 В.С. Экспедиция. С. 128; Известия ЦК КПСС. 1989. № 12. С. 163-164.

56 В.С. Экспедиция. С. 138-154.

Thus the necessity to centralize the food provision and other apparatus on the imperial-wide scale had made the Moscow Bolsheviks themselves in the person of Kamenev take an active part in the centralization process, thereby consolidating among them the understanding of the imperial-wide territory as “their” field of activities.

The desperate environment of the civil war had undoubtedly heightened the necessity of centralization of the Soviet administration in the republics and accelerated that process. At the same time, given the organism of the Russian empire as an economically integrated whole entity, it was imperative for the RSFSR government and the activists of the capital to regain in one way or another the unification of the components of the former empire. Furthermore, given the ethnically mixed composition of the subjects of the empire, the Bolshevik regime had to operate ultimately on supra-ethnic logic, though this was not the only logic for the regime. Consequently, what made the imperial government hesitate, even in the last decades of its existence, to stake its destiny on the promotion of ethnic Russian nationalism had the same impact on the Bolshevik regime: the unified, multi-ethnic organism of the Russian empire made the Bolshevik regime in general and the Moscow Bolsheviks in particular seek supra-ethnic centralization of the components of the collapsed empire.

The Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party and the Moscow Bolsheviks had common interests in promoting the centralization of the Soviet administration of the former empire. Nevertheless, the relationships between two had not been spared of conflicts, because finally the local Moscow Bolsheviks were also an object of the centralization drive of the TsK. Sometimes these conflicts shed light on the features of the Bolshevik regime as the heir of the Russian empire from another point of view. Now I turn to one such conflict, in which the central role was played by a representative of the multi-ethnic Russian world, A.F. Miasnikov.

A.F. Miasnikov (1886-1925), or Miasnikian in Armenian, was born to an Armenian petty-bourgeois (*meshchanskii*) family in Nakhichevan-na-Donu. In childhood he spoke the Nakhichevan dialect (an Armenian-Russian-Turkish mixture) and Russian, and only learned Armenian in a monastery school. At first, the Armenian revolutionary-nationalist movement had an influence on him, but in the summer of 1906 he joined the RSDRP. After graduating in law from Moscow University, he became an assistant lawyer, at the same time carrying on Bolshevik party work as a lecturer. With the outbreak of the World War, he was mobilized as a lieutenant in the reserves, and on the eve of the February revolution he was sent to the Western Front. There he became one of the most influential figures in the party committee of the Northwestern Region, which afterward would become the Communist Party of Belorussia. After the October revolution, he was named commander-in-chief of the Front, and was then ordered by the TsK to the Volga to command troops against the Czechoslovak corps.<sup>57</sup> After the German revolution took place, Miasnikov was among the initiators of the unification of the former imperial territory. On 30

December 1918, at the first party congress of Belorussia, he mentioned in his situation report that “these states [Soviet Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Ukraine] [...] constitute one inseparable whole with mighty socialist Russia.”<sup>58</sup> With the establishment of the Belorussian Soviet republic, he became deputy chairman of its Council of People’s Commissars and People’s Commissar for War, and was elected chairman of the Belorussian TsIK at the first all-Belorussian congress of the soviets (2-3 February 1919) which was to be a milestone in the unification process of the Soviet republics.<sup>59</sup> He represented one of the characteristic types of functionaries in the Bolshevik regime: born in a multilingual environment, mobilized first by the imperial and then the Bolshevik government around the vast territory of the empire, becoming a promoter of reunification of its various parts as a military communist.

On 29 March 1919, the Orgbureau decided to include Miasnikov and I.Ia. Tuntul in the MK as representatives of the TsK.<sup>60</sup> Tuntul, a Latvian with experience of party work in the Urals and a participant in a conference for convening the constituent assembly of the soviets of a Tatar-Bashkir republic, was also one of the typical activists in the multi-ethnic Bolshevik regime.<sup>61</sup> The Orgbureau made its decision probably because the need to strengthen the activities of the MK, especially in military matters, was growing with the threat from Kolchak’s troops. This supposition is confirmed by the decision of the IK MK on 26 April that Miasnikov be included in the Military Section of the MK and be given wide powers to organize party work in units of the Red Army.<sup>62</sup> Tuntul also became a member of the Section.<sup>63</sup>

Chosen to join the five-person IK MK on 17 May, Miasnikov quickly became a central figure in the political life of Moscow.<sup>64</sup> His field of activity was not limited to military affairs. As a talented organizer, he had actively engaged in many aspects of the city party organization and devoted particular energy and attention to promoting its centralization through a series of initiatives, including revision of the RKs (party raion committees), re-registration of party members and construction of a scheme of cells.<sup>65</sup>

57 Кнорин В. Александр Федорович Мясников (Биографический очерк) // Пролетарская революция. 1925. № 6 (41). С. 221-229; Деятели СССР. С. 558-559. On the Northwestern Regional Committee of the party, see, Pipes, *The Formation*, pp. 74-75, 152.

58 Мясников (Мясникян) А.Ф. Избранные произведения. М., 1985. С. 60.

59 Кнорин. Александр Федорович Мясников. С. 228; Мясников (Мясникян). Избранные произведения. С. 254; Известия ЦК КПСС. 1989. № 6. С. 174.

60 РГАСПИ, ф. 17, оп. 112, д. 2, л. 9.

61 Исхаков С.М. Российские мусульмане и революция (весна 1917 г. – лето 1918 г.). М., 2003. С. 332; Известия ЦК КПСС. 1989. № 4. С. 143, 155.

62 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 102, л. 27-27об.

63 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 100, л. 77.

64 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 100, л. 92.

65 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 100, л. 97; Мясников А. О партийных ячейках // Правда. 13 августа 1919. С. 1; Мясников А. По поводу «Коммунистической недели» // Правда. 11 сентября 1919. С. 1.

However, exactly this high-handedness toward the raion activists and his background as a military man led to conflicts between him and significant Moscow activists. First, the temporary secretary of the MK, Efremov, having submitted his resignation to the Orgbureau, at the 13 January 1920 MK plenum, after a report by Miasnikov on work of the IK MK, suddenly made a counter-report to state that he had been in a minority within the IK MK. He emphasized that he had sought to respect the views of the activists in the raions, an allusion to slights on the activists on the part of the IK MK and in particular of Miasnikov. The MK chose Miasnikov as the new secretary, but gave him only 24 votes with 17 abstentions.<sup>66</sup>

A second conflict arose between Miasnikov and Piatnitskii, who had become the secretary of the MK in the former's absence because of his mobilization to the Western Front.<sup>67</sup> At the 21 October 1920 MK plenum, Miasnikov made a statement hinting that Piatnitskii had taken his post unfairly. Against this statement Piatnitskii remarked: "Is he really such a disciplined man? Why has he been spending so much time in Rogozhskii raion lately?" Thus, Piatnitskii accused Miasnikov of disorganization and "factional" activities against the MK.<sup>68</sup> Behind the reference to Miasnikov's reputation of "a disciplined man" lay, it seems, a sense of difference on the part of Piatnitskii and other Moscow activists with Miasnikov's military style of conduct, which he brought to the MK as an appointee of the TsK. Piatnitskii touched upon this point at the 2 October 1919 MK plenum. On Miasnikov's draft for an order to the special communist detachments, Piatnitskii commented that the issue of approval of the order "has such a strong military character that it is difficult for us, civilians [*shtatskie*], to assess it." The MK agreed with Piatnitskii to leave the issue to the headquarters of the detachments.<sup>69</sup> This sense of distance between the military and the civilians undoubtedly affected the conflicts in the MK around Miasnikov.

Born in a multi-ethnic environment, a military activist, with a career of running around the former empire, Miasnikov distinctly represented some aspects of the central authorities interfering into the local world: he stood out of the local community, intensely seeking the cause of centralization, being confronted with activists of the locality. However, it should be emphasized that the conflicts between Miasnikov and the local activists of Moscow were deprived of ethnic aspects. The problem at stake was the competence of each level of administration, and Miasnikov's Armenian background, or any other activists' ethnicity, had not affected the conflicts between them. This was be-

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66 By the decisions of 18 and 25 December the Orgbureau accepted his resignation and nominated Miasnikov as new secretary. РГАСПИ, ф. 17, оп. 112, д. 11, л. 27, 35; ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 156, л. 15-18.

67 РГАСПИ, ф. 17, оп. 112, д. 26, л. 2; оп. 3, д. 92, л. 7; ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1-а, д. 6, л. 1.

68 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1-а, д. 6, л. 14, 43об.-44.

69 ЦАОДМ, ф. 3, оп. 1, д. 101, л. 77об.

cause the appointees of the central authorities represented by Miasnikov and the Moscow activists were to the same extent multi-ethnic, and were non-ethnically minded. Accordingly, if the Moscow activists were appointed to other regions, then they would convert easily their role from local activist to representative of the central authorities seeking further centralization (as with Kamenev in Ukraine). Thus, conflicts between them notwithstanding, the activists of the central authorities and Moscow at each level, having become heirs of the unified, multi-ethnic empire, sought to reintegrate the components of that empire.

### CONCLUSION

In the second half of the nineteenth century, more and more officials and intellectuals of the Russian empire began to see the governing order of the state outdated. One part of them sought to revive the viability of the state by making from the empire a nation state with ethnic Russian dominance. Other part of them tried to introduce a civic idea of nation to remake the empire to a nation state with politically equal citizens in a non-ethnic sense. However, the imperial government could never make a final decision, torn between the necessity to maintain the multi-ethnic entity and the temptation of the mobilizing capacity of ethnic Russian nationalism.

The Bolsheviks had inherited the multi-ethnic entity, where ethnic nationalism of the dominant ethnic group had not matured sufficiently. This feature of the Russian empire had a great effect on the conducts and visions of the Bolshevik regime in general and the activists of the capital in particular. In the years of the civil war, the Moscow Bolsheviks had definite views of "Russia" as being unified by the non-ethnic idea of communism and embracing most of the territory of the former empire. The multi-ethnic composition and relative indifference to the ethnic aspect of the Moscow Bolsheviks had corresponded well to this view of "Russia." The necessity to centralize the administration of the components of the former empire had lay behind this view, and this necessity was aroused by the feature of the Russian empire as a unified and multi-ethnic entity. Essentially, the "Russia" represented in the views of the Moscow Bolsheviks was a revised Russian empire with politically equal citizens, the toiling masses, in non-ethnic sense. The choice was made as a strategy to remake the empire into a civic nation state.