



The Transnational World of the Cominternians

Brigitte Studer



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Brigitte Studer

University of Bern, Switzerland

Translated by

Dafydd Rees Roberts

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(Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2012). An earlier version of Chapter 2 appeared in Michel Dreyfus et al., eds, *Le Siècle des communismes* (Paris: Editions de l'Atelier, 2000) and in a later, expanded edition under the same title (Paris: Seuil, 2008). Chapter 3, 6 and 7 include reworked versions of parts of my contributions to Brigitte Studer and Berthold Unfried, *Der stalinistische Parteikader. Identitätsstiftende Praktiken und Diskurse in der Sowjetunion der dreißiger Jahre* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001). Chapter 4 includes extracts from my chapter 'Die Begegnung mit der "Zivilisation des Selbstberichts": Ausländische Parteikader in der Sowjetunion der 1930er Jahre', in Eva Maeder and Christina Lohm, eds, *Utopie und Terror. Josef Stalin und seine Zeit* (Zürich: Chronos, 2003), pp. 113–132. And an earlier version of Chapter 5 was published as 'L'être perfectible. La formation du cadre stalinien par le "travail sur soi"', *Genèses. Sciences sociales et histoire* 51 (June 2003), pp. 92–113.

List of Acronyms

(The transliteration of Russian words follows the Library of Congress system. Exceptions are made when a proper name is familiar in a standard English form.)

A-UCP(b)	All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)
AIZ	<i>Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung</i>
CC	Control Commission
CI	Communist International
CP	Communist Party
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
DÖW	Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance, Vienna (<i>Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes</i>)
ECCI	Executive Committee of the Communist International
GARF	State Archive of the Russian Federation, Moscow (<i>Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii</i>)
GDR	German Democratic Republic
ICC	International Control Commission
ILS	International Lenin School
IRA	International Red Aid
KJV	Communist Youth Organisation (<i>Kommunistischer Jugendverband</i>)
KPD	Communist Party of Germany (<i>Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands</i>)
KUNMZ	Communist University of the National Minorities of the West
MEGA	Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe
MOPR	International Red Aid (<i>Mezhdunarodnaia organizatsiia pomoshchi bortsam revoliutsii</i>)
NEP	New Economic Policy

NKVD	People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (<i>Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del</i>)
OGPU	Joint State Political Directorate under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR (<i>Ob'edinënoe gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie</i>)
OMS	Department for International Liaison (of the Comintern)
PCF	French Communist Party (<i>Parti communiste français</i>)
RGASPI	Russian State Archives for Socio-Political History, Moscow (<i>Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv social'no-politicheskoi istorii</i>)
ROSTA	Russian Telegraph Agency (<i>Rossiiskoe telegrafnoe agentstvo</i>)
RUNA	A clandestine communist press agency (<i>Rundschau Nachrichten Agentur</i>)
SAAK	Archive of the Academy of Art, at the German Federal Archives, Berlin (<i>Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste</i>)
SAPMO	Archive of the Parties and Mass Organisations of the GDR, at the German Federal Archives, Berlin (<i>Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR</i>)
SSA	Swiss Social Archive, Zurich (<i>Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv</i>)
TASS	Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union
Torgsin	All-Union Association for Trade with Foreigners (<i>Vsesoiuznoe ob'edinenie po torgovle s inostrantsami</i>)
TsAOD	Central Archive of Social Movements, Moscow (<i>Tsentral'nyi arkhiv obshchestvennykh dvizhenii</i>)
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VEGAAR	Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the Soviet Union
VOKS	All-Union Society for Cultural Ties Abroad (<i>Vsesoiuznoe Obshchestvo Kul'turnoi Sviazi s zagranitseï</i>)
WEB	West European Bureau
WIR	Workers' International Relief
YCI	Young Communist International (KIM in Russian)

Introduction

Paris, late summer 1933: in an office in the neighbourhood of Les Halles three men were working together on an ambitious political project. All three were in exile: the German Willi Münzenberg, whose genius in propaganda had built up for the Comintern the third largest media empire in Germany; his close collaborator, the Bohemian-born Otto Katz, more than likely also keeping an eye on him on behalf of the organization; and the Hungarian-born journalist Arthur Koestler, who had just come back from a year and a half in the USSR. Their goal was to counter the propaganda machinery of the Nazis, inflicting a political defeat on them over the Reichstag Fire Trial. Following the success of the London counter-trial and of the first *Brown Book*, designed by John Heartfield, which had sold more than 500,000 copies in 17 languages, a second *Brown Book* was to be published in 1934. Koestler was responsible for collecting press cuttings and other materials, a job he found somewhat tedious, but he hardly had any choice. He had of course to make a living, but more than that, as a Communist, he had no moral right to refuse the Party when it called on him. Later, the careers of these three men brought together in the service of the Comintern would again diverge. Koestler would leave the Party in 1938, after having spent several months in a Franquist jail, narrowly escaping with his life. He would become a well-known writer, a fierce critic of totalitarianism. From 1936, Münzenberg would find himself disagreeing with the growing sectarianism of the line adopted by the new leadership of the Communist Party of Germany (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*, KPD) and becoming a critic of the Moscow trials. Having answered a summons to appear before the International Control Commission in October 1936, he later refused to return to the USSR. In January 1939, he resigned from the KPD before he could be expelled, and then

violently denounced the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact. He died in 1940, in unexplained circumstances. Only Katz, alias André Simone, alias Rudolph Breda and almost 20 other names, continued to work for the Comintern. In 1935, he was in the United States, in 1936 in Spain and then back in France. In 1940 he fled to the United States with his wife Ilse Katz; upon their expulsion they went to live in Mexico. When the war ended, on Moscow's orders, the couple moved to Prague. There, in 1952, Otto was arrested in connection with the Slánský trial, condemned to death, and executed.

The history of inter-war Communism, and of international Communism more particularly, is at one level made up of such transnational biographies. Those involved in the Comintern between its foundation in 1919 and its dissolution in 1943 must number in the tens of thousands, but any estimate can only be approximate, even after the opening of the Russian archives to researchers. Professional revolutionaries, they devoted all or part of their lives to a distinctively total political commitment, and sometimes lost them for it, too. Some passed but a brief time with the organization, while others remained faithful to their posts so long as Stalin allowed. Many lived a nomadic life, moving on from mission to mission, from exile to exile, some of their own choice, others compelled by events in a Europe torn by violent ideological and political conflict. Even those who hailed from countries at relative peace might lead a life that could be termed transnational for its perpetual migration, one such being Jules Humbert-Droz of Switzerland, crossing and recrossing Europe in clandestinity; settling illegally, with wife and children, in France and then Italy; making discreet visits to Latin America; travelling back and forth between his native country and the USSR.

Whether obscure or well explored, these biographies are not at all uniform, whatever may be suggested by prevailing images of the 'Comintern agent'. There were women, too: while a minority, they sometimes occupied important positions, like Dolores Ibárruri, well-known as 'La Pasionaria'; or they might play murkier roles, like the beautiful Tina Modotti, actress, photographer and cadre of International Red Aid. In 1933, she too was in Paris – a key site of Comintern activity – with a Costa Rican passport, sent from Moscow to assist in the campaign in support of Dimitrov. There she took charge of the illegal work of the West European Bureau (WEB), which had moved from Berlin. Attempting to cross the frontier to Spain in October 1934, she was stopped and her passport found to be false. Having succeeded nonetheless in passing herself off as a tourist, she was able to return to Paris, and from there to Moscow,

before again setting off for Spain. She is presumed to have been working for Red Army intelligence, as she carried out her responsibilities at International Brigade headquarters. She would die in Mexico in 1942 after an evening spent with her lover Vittorio Vidali, suspected of involvement in the assassinations of Julio Antonio Mella and Leon Trotsky. Most, however, played intermediate roles. Münzenberg's partner Babette Gross headed the Neuer Deutscher Verlag publishing house in Berlin, part of his media empire, and then from 1933, in Parisian exile, the Éditions du Carrefour. Like her sister Margarete Buber-Neumann, who had been working at Inprecor since 1928, and who paid a short visit to Paris in 1933, on her way from Moscow to Madrid, she had turned her back on her wealthy upper-class origins to live the life of a militant. Jenny Humbert-Droz, for her part, didn't just follow her husband's movements, but worked as a translator for the Comintern, and afterwards, when they had returned home, for the clandestine Communist press agency RUNA, which had moved to Switzerland in 1933. These women, and many like them, crossed gender boundaries just as they crossed others: national, cultural and social.

The experiences of these actors who worked for the Comintern are at the centre of this book, whose concern is to examine a type of political commitment which – though it put its stamp on the whole of the 20th century, and not on its political history alone – took on a particular form in the period before the Second World War.¹ Adapting Reinhard Koselleck's reflections to our own ends, we may understand 'experience' as a historical category. Commitment to Communism is one of those collective experiences that have left their mark on modern Western societies. If it influenced the global relationship of political forces by sustaining a mass working-class movement, it also influenced the imaginary of industrialized capitalist countries. Many are the intellectuals and artists whose works have been marked by it, producing a corpus of cultural references that have continued to resonate long after the Comintern was gone. The far-left organizations and the new social movements that emerged in the wake of 1968 all drew on these, as they did on certain political practices, even if often in a critical spirit. Today, there are groups and movements that still make reference to this tradition. In this sense, the world of inter-war Communism is a 'present past'.² Here, more empirically, we will be concerned with the individual and collective experience of this group of militants, an experience fundamentally conditioned by the 'expectation' they had of their commitment. In Koselleck's words: 'at once person-specific

and interpersonal, expectation ... is the future made present; it directs itself to the not-yet'.³ This 'expectation' was the very condition of their commitment, just as it reflected their [personal] emotional and intellectual investment. 'Hope and fear, wishes and desires, cares and rational analysis, taken for granted understandings and curiosity: all enter into expectation and constitute it'.⁴ For Communist militants, commitment was synonymous with finding a key to understanding 'the world' and helping to make history. It offered membership of a group and with it a social identity – an identity that even allowed one to escape one's origins and place in society. According to Raphael Samuel: 'To be a Communist was to have a complete social identity, one which transcended the limits of class, gender, nationality'.⁵ Recently, the writing of history has begun to attend to the place of emotion in politics. Political engagement – especially when total, as was the case with the Communist parties of the 1920s and 1930s – does not rest on rational choice alone. It can also be the result of sympathy for a milieu, a sense of duty, personal relations or attractions, family environment, the need to respond to injustice, or even a local fashion or collective enthusiasm for certain forms of cultural practice. Disappointment at the collapse of their revolutionary project (the failure of the German October in 1923, then the rise of Fascism and Nazism), but also at the eradication of internal democracy, to be followed by Stalinist repression – could be as profound as expectations had been high. The Communist experience, as we know, was also an experience of violence, a violence far from limited to the seizure of power by force foreseen by the programme. Violence was something concrete, encountered first in confrontation with opponents, but also as deployed by one's own side, whether in the USSR or elsewhere, such as in Spain, the more tragic from the psychological and historical point of view.

A 'world party of the proletariat' was to be the means of the globalization of the class struggle, and in Spring 1919, when the 'Wilsonian moment' (Erez Manela) ended, that is, when colonial peoples' hopes of self-determination came to naught,⁶ the Bolsheviks institutionalized this idea in the Comintern, an international organization that would in a sense parallel the League of Nations and International Labour Organization of the capitalist states. In doing this, they established a presence at every scalar level of political space: the international, with the programme of universal proletarian revolution and a tendentially global network of activity; the transnational, with dense exchanges of persons and information; and finally the national, where the struggle was actually played out, the site of concrete political action.⁷ In the

years immediately following the October revolution, the Soviet Union itself was no exception. According to Gleb Albert, internationalism was omnipresent, not only in its leaders' thinking but also in Soviet public practices.⁸

The historiography of the Comintern and of the Communist parties has generally failed to take space as either object or problem, treating it as a given, as a mere 'fact'. Many works have confined themselves to the national paradigm, assuming a 'methodological nationalism': for Annie Kriegel, what did not fit this Procrustean bed could only be a foreign element, a 'graft'.⁹ Communism's international dimension has generally been taken as either supplemental to the national, a 'plus' (or indeed a 'minus', that is, a problem; or even a scandal, from an anti-Communist point of view), or simply as one of the realities of Communism, a set of institutions that existed alongside the national parties. Later approaches have seen relationships within the international in terms of a dichotomous relation between 'centre' and 'periphery'.¹⁰ Admittedly, most leading bodies and their administrative and technical staffs were concentrated in Moscow (as a result of particular historical developments), yet there were others elsewhere, and here too the narrowness of historiographical focus needs to be remedied. Relationships were indeed asymmetrical, but there was no unilateral centralization. (Of course, some of the attention paid to the Moscow 'centre' has been the result of the relatively recent opening of the Russian archives). In reality, the Comintern network was based on a number of sub-centres and sites of political interaction outside the Soviet Union, and future research needs to view the Comintern and its organizations in all their geographical dispersion, taking account of the properly transnational nature of their activities.

But does it make sense to apply the notion of a 'transnational space' to an organization that defined itself as 'international'? To answer this question, we need perhaps to clarify our terms before considering their applicability. The Comintern, the 'world party of the proletariat', was made up of national parties, united by a centralized structure. It was neither a transnational emanation of civil society nor an international organization of states.¹¹ It did bring together national organizations (with their own distinctive organizational scales), though one of these was in fact the *de facto* representative of a State. Yet the Comintern had another dimension, one that escapes the framework of national and international. It was transnational in being what Jürgen Osterhammel termed 'a social space extending beyond the national cultures that configure it',¹² traversed in Akira Iriye's words by 'movements and forces

that ... cut across national boundaries'.¹³ And at yet another level, Robert Frank argues that 'International relationships or phenomena are or become transnational when they exceed ... not the state dimension, but the limits of national identities, when there emerge processes of identification with "others" mediated by mechanisms of transfer and reappropriation'.¹⁴ A transnational approach to the Comintern should not, however, lead to a neglect of the different scales. The organization constituted a multiple reality that extended from the local to the global. And not all members of the Communist parties affiliated to the International were directly involved with it: most worked at the local or perhaps regional level, others at the national, while a small minority only operated at the international. The spatial distribution of Communist activity has thus to be taken into account.

The Comintern from the beginning took the whole world as its field of action. Its goal was global, even if its activities at first focussed on Europe, the United States and certain parts of Asia and Latin America. If the foundation of the Communist International can be understood as a response to endeavours to create a capitalist world order, an attempt at a different globalization, it was also the product of the distinctive history of the labour movement. It was thus an instance of a general orientation and a form of political action that gained momentum in the late 19th century, *internationalism* as opposed to the principle of nationalism. As a revival of the earlier tradition, it aimed to operate across state boundaries to promote the transnational, 'horizontal' solidarity of the working class, a vocation the Second International had failed to live up to. The Third International was endowed with stricter regulations and stronger organizational structures to avoid any repetition of such a betrayal of 'proletarian internationalism'. It therefore deployed a modern logic of discipline, centralization and bureaucratization (in the Weberian sense of rationalized administration).

Yet it could not for all that renounce the national as a field of activity: most of its activity indeed took place at the national level (and within that, of course, at the local and even microsocial level of the neighbourhood or place of employment). Ideally, action was to be coordinated internationally, but ensuring the line was followed was by no means a simple matter, as witnessed by the by now well-known interventions of the International's emissaries in the politics of national parties. There were failures of centralization, though between 1921 and 1934/35, the Comintern became increasingly intolerant of deviation, or of the adoption of general orientations or specific campaigns tailored to the distinctive political cultures of the different countries. It was a stratified space

whose different layers – like those of puff pastry, one might say – did not all perfectly adhere.

This aspect of relations between Communist parties and the Comintern has been foregrounded in the first research following the opening of the Russian archives. Bert Hoppe, for example, talks of a ‘collision of cultures’ in his history of the relationship between the German Communist Party (CP) and Moscow.¹⁵ There can be no question of closing one’s eyes to the imposition of a Soviet ascendancy over the Comintern or to the asymmetry of the relations between the Soviet party and other national parties. Nor of ignoring the fact that Stalin and his entourage shared a conception of the world increasingly alien to that of the West generally, as has been emphasized by Sheila Fitzpatrick.¹⁶

But one can equally counterpose to this historiographic perception or interpretation the evidence of borrowings and transfers, of two-way East-West traffic even, between the USSR and the capitalist world. Through the prism of a transnational approach, the Soviet Union appears in all its complex interdependence with capitalist societies. The two opposed systems resembled each other in a number of ways, not least in their faith in technological progress, and exerted a fascination on one another across the divide. Like Nazi Germany, with which it shared a pervasive internal violence, the Soviet Union was guided by the ideas of modernity and modernization. They both referred to a discourse shared by all European societies, as noted by Katerina Clark and Karl Schlögel: ‘The German and Soviet discourses are part of a genuinely European intellectual landscape – from the New Man and *Lebensreform* to redesigning nature and nations’.¹⁷ The ideas of rationality and rationalization equally linked the Soviet Union to the United States,¹⁸ and from this point of view, one can undoubtedly speak of the Soviet Union as representing an alternative road to modernity, different to that of the capitalist countries but maintaining a certain relationship to it.¹⁹ A relationship that can be characterized as ‘borrowing’ from each other, alternating between mutual observation and wilful blindness, between competition and exchange.²⁰

It was through the Comintern that the Soviet Union became the centre of a worldwide zone of circulation. It was indeed one of the chief agents of the cross-border traffic between systems. Communists abroad were greatly involved in the Soviet Union’s efforts, under Lenin and even more under Stalin, to find support among Western countries. It was they who ensured the working of an international political organization that spanned many regions of the world, carrying out its many activities. And among them were a great number who lived the

transnational lives of professional revolutionaries and Comintern emissaries. The organization itself served as a particularly effective channel for the circulation of norms and representations. An example is the cult of personality, imported and adapted to local circumstances by a number of Communist parties, the larger ones in particular.²¹ Another might be the heroic model of the Communist militant. The Spanish Civil War thus saw numerous screenings, on the Republican side, of the films *My iz Kronstadta* ('We from Kronstadt' – 1936) and *Chapaev* (1934). The author of the novel on which the latter was based, the dashing political commissar Dmitri Furmanov, had already attracted a following in the USSR – in vestimentary terms, at any rate. As Lise London recalled, the mode among Western communists in Moscow was for the khaki dress and military boots of the 1919 civil war.²² Models also traveled in the other direction. Soviet citizens, for example, were encouraged to identify with the Republican fighters. The USSR sent two correspondents to Spain: Mikhail Koltsov for *Pravda* and Ilya Ehrenburg for *Izvestiia*; accounts of the fighting in Spain were published in the Soviet press; and Spanish plays were performed in Moscow.²³ The sense of identity and shared belonging was also supported by the universalization of certain local customs and the common celebration of key events. The Communist calendar was thus marked by the annual commemoration of the October Revolution and, from the 1930s, by the celebration of Stalin's birthday. In 1924, as was noted in *L'Humanité* of 28 January, 'Across the countries of the world, millions of workers yesterday held a global funeral for Lenin'.²⁴

For all these actors, however, not only political orientations but modes of action and intervention were located within a cross-border frame of reference. The Comintern displayed an impressive capacity for international campaigning, resorting to such tactics more frequently and more effectively than any other political force, for example in defence of Sacco and Vanzetti,²⁵ the Scottsboro Boys (nine unemployed young black men framed for rape and condemned to death in 1932, eventually freed in 1935),²⁶ or comrades suffering Fascist persecution in Italy or Germany. In the face of repression, the Comintern organized a transnational network of lawyers to defend imprisoned militants, while national sections of International Red Aid established law centres.²⁷ These initiatives were far from being mere implementations of policy decided in Moscow or subordinated to such. Set up by Willi Münzenberg in 1921, in response to a request by Lenin, Workers' International Relief was the expression and intensification on a new scale of transnational workers' solidarity. Münzenberg himself could be

called an 'entrepreneur of internationalism'. He developed new techniques of mobilization. In the United States, he created committees for trade unions, women, children, musicians, gymnasts and others to gather money and political support for Soviet Russia.²⁸ He rallied well-known intellectuals, artists and scientists around common causes: Albert Einstein, Henri Barbusse, Heinrich and Thomas Mann, Käthe Kollwitz, Anatole France, Arthur Koestler and Manès Sperber among many others. This material and symbolic support, which served as much to nurture transnational worker solidarity as to aid distressed populations, did not flow in one direction only. In 1923, support was channeled to the German workers suffering from the galloping inflation of that period. These campaigns varied in their scope and reach, but for Communists international solidarity was not just a duty but an integral element of their party culture. Furthermore, as a result of their shared orientation to the USSR and its unconditional defence, Communists' political imaginary extended beyond national frontiers. This was one of the fundamental characteristics of the Communism of the inter-war years and to some extent even beyond. The projection of political hope onto 'the workers' fatherland' not only tied communists in the West to those in the Soviet Union, it also bound them together in their vision.

But Communism was not just a temporal and spatial projection of a radiant future prefigured in the USSR. If the history of Communism between the two World Wars is the history of a political programme and of the interests of the Soviet state, it is also, importantly, a history of interactions between party and State apparatuses in the Soviet Union and the bureaucracies of parties elsewhere; of 'horizontal' dealings between national communist parties; of the cross-border network formed by a range of ancillary organizations and individual activists all over the world; of how the top-down coordination of policy was effected through the relations between these different elements; and finally, it is the history of a certain kind of militancy. The degree to which the Comintern developed into a single, shared cultural space is thus one of the key questions of the history of Communism, an answer to which can only be found by mapping the circulation of practices and ideas within it. To do this, I suggest that one needs to attend to four major channels of circulation: the processes of formation and imposition of common political objectives; structural links tending to organizational unification and centralization; the exchange of personnel; and, finally, the formation of a culture through the integration of communists into a global system and specific way of life, in accordance with the

French communist writer Paul Nizan's observation in *La Conspiration* (1938) that 'Communism is a politics, but it's also a style of life'.²⁹ To join the party was to adopt not just a political orientation, but also a set of practices. The struggle against capitalism, fascism or even 'social fascism' and colonialism was only one expression of commitment to Communism. Commitment also meant 'giving oneself' and 'working on oneself', devoting oneself body and soul to the Party and killing off the 'Old Man' (as opposed to the 'New') within. Yet this meant more than self-sacrifice. In many cases it also brought social advancement, and it offered to those who so chose a transnational mode of life with its opportunities for travel, for living abroad, for contact, discussion, intellectual stimulation, adventure. The costs could sometimes be high, in terms of danger, the solitude of clandestinity, material precarity, and distance from family and friends. It often meant the separation of partners or of parents from children, and attachments were strained and sometimes broken under the pressure of political commitment and international mobility. At the same time, one sees great solidarity in relation to the children of comrades killed or imprisoned for 'the cause', such children often being adopted by couples or into existing families. In addition, the formation of patchwork families was by no means uncommon, as comrades separated and formed new relationships within the milieu.

Communism as cause called for an administrative and technical infrastructure to match its global ambitions. The Comintern, which had 67 national sections in the early 1930s,³⁰ was a complex organization: protean and highly ramified, it was subject to at least five major reorganizations of its bureaucratic apparatus before its eventual dissolution on Stalin's orders. It was not at all a unified space, but rather a 'differentiated and uneven landscape', to apply Pierre-Yves Saunier's formulation to another context, 'a circulation catchment of changing contour in which the value of regions (places, institutions, associations) and their "inhabitants" is tied to their degree of integration into the configuration and their role within it'.³¹ While it involved hundreds of thousands of activists spread across several continents, all engaged to varying degrees in a wide range of political, trade-union, propaganda and cultural activities, the gravitational cluster that was the Comintern was also markedly hierarchical. Work at the Profintern or Communist Youth International did not rate as highly as work at the Comintern itself. To belong to the Irish CP was not the same as to be a member of the German party. But the ecology of the system changed continuously, and sometimes suddenly, in response firstly to the international conjuncture and

secondly to political developments in the Soviet Union. Before 1933, it was in Germany that the Communist Party was most active and the Soviet presence strongest. In the mid-1930s, France and Spain replaced Germany as centres of political attention and activity. With this there emerged new 'continental' if not 'global' cities where militants gathered or grew greatly in numbers, Paris and Barcelona replacing Berlin, the European anti-colonial capital of the 1920s,³² and Vienna. Moscow for its part retained until the years of the Great Terror its status as the cosmopolitan centre of world revolution, even if this status chimed increasingly badly with growing Russian nationalism.

The Comintern was in fact an organization in continuous transformation, both structural and political. There were a number of reasons for this: the lack of previous experience, the shortage of suitably qualified (and disciplined) personnel, changes of leadership or political line, conflicts of interest, group rivalries ... Other factors, and not the least important, were the difficulty of its tasks and the complexity of its bureaucratic apparatus, not to mention the changing demands of the Soviet state or the disorganization consequent upon the mass arrests of the mid- to late 1930s. The historian Franz Borkenau, who left the KPD and the Comintern in 1929, was one of the first to periodize the changes, distinguishing three phases in his 1938 history of the Communist International. At first, the Comintern served as a means of promoting the world revolution, then became a tool in Russian factional struggles, before eventually becoming primarily an instrument of Soviet foreign policy.³³ This process has generally been described as 'Stalinization'.³⁴ Hermann Weber, whose redefinition and deployment of this term marked an important milestone, speaks of a 'dictatorship of the apparatus' (*Apparatdiktatur*).³⁵ This supposes a qualitative change that saw the Communist parties lose all internal democracy under pressure from Stalin. 'Stalinization', according to Weber, 'meant the transformation of the internal structure of the Party, the establishment of a monolithic, strictly disciplined and centralized organization, in which the leadership, assisted by the hierarchically structured party apparatus (that is, the high-ranking officials in the pay of the Party), dominated the membership and decided policy in accordance with the wishes and in line with the instructions of Stalin's CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union]'.³⁶

While the definition is too one-sided, ignoring the specific complexities of the different national situations, the authoritarian trend is undeniable. The question arises, then, of why Stalinism should have proved attractive to so many. Why, for instance, should British Communists

have dedicated themselves, in Henry Pelling's brutal phrase, 'to the service of dictatorship in another country'?³⁷

To attempt an answer, it is not enough to reconstruct the outward manifestations of this international organization: the bureaucratic apparatus, its cadre, the number of functionaries, the political resolutions, the changes of line. One also has to take into account the role of the Soviet Union in the political reality and the political imagination of the time. While the Comintern remained a multilocal system, operating through a number of geographical bases, it gradually came to revolve about only one centre. The USSR represented a counterweight to the capitalist world. The historic mission the Communists had made theirs could only be achieved thanks to its example, protection, and support. For them, and for many 'fellow-travellers', the USSR was that 'other space' that Michel Foucault spoke of, an elsewhere, a counter-space.³⁸ The USSR served the activists of the time as a 'heterotopia', a concrete localization of utopia. In the words of the engineer Zara Witkin, one of the Americans who left for the Soviet Union in the early 1930s to help construct a more just society (and also to win the heart of the Russian actress with whom he had fallen madly in love after seeing her in a film, at home in California): 'For the first time in history a great nation was rationally remoulding itself'.³⁹ This reference to the Soviet Union had several functions. It mapped out 'the conditions of symbolic possibility'⁴⁰ in the social realm and hence the political objectives the communists wanted to achieve. By referring to the Soviet model, communists could shape a representation of themselves and of their political project that transcended their own cultural reality. In doing so they formed in imagination a collective identity that not only made them a coherent group but also distinguished them from all other political groups. Reference to the Soviet Union, where all the demands for the emancipation of proletarians and women had seemingly been realized, or were on their way to it, helped legitimize the political goals of communists in the West. It also had a psychological function as an incentive for party members. The goals they strove for were not as unrealistic as their political opponents would have it, for they had been realized in the Soviet Union. Many were those who hung on to the hopes they had projected onto the country, even after their disappointment with Stalinism. In his letter of resignation from the Party, Koestler asked: 'What's left? The Soviet Union is left. Not Stalin, but the Soviet Union. It's the only hope offered by this miserable century. It's the foundation of the future. Whoever goes against the Soviet Union goes against the future'.⁴¹

The Western myth of the Soviet Union as the land of the future, of colossal construction and accelerated modernization, was, however, a rather later and artificial construct.⁴² It arose as a result of two factors, one being the propaganda efforts of the Soviet regime – in other words, the opening of a cultural front – the other, the rise of Fascism in Europe. Both encouraged the emergence after 1933 of an anti-Fascist culture that made Western intellectuals committed defenders of the Soviet Union. Only in the second half of the 1920s, with the stabilization of the regime and the abandonment of immediate prospects of revolution in Europe, did the Soviet Union open itself up further to the West. Decisive in this was the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution, celebrated in Moscow with great pomp. Around this time, the Soviet authorities developed a whole series of organizations to promote cultural relationships with foreign countries, among them the All-Union Society for Cultural Ties Abroad (*Vsesoiuznoe Obshchestvo Kul'turnoi Sviazi s Zagranitsej* – VOKS) in 1925, and Intourist in 1929. While VOKS was above all a propaganda operation (distributing publications, photographs and films and promoting exhibitions abroad) based on the model of the Alliance Française,⁴³ also handling foreign travellers and guests, Intourist was specifically set up to promote and to organize inbound tourism. Already in 1926, the VOKS was responsible for more than a thousand foreign visitors (among them 227 Americans and 95 British). By the interwar high-point in the mid-1930s, Intourist handled 10,656 in a year, the figures thereafter falling away again.⁴⁴ By 1937, Koestler's 'pink decade' must have seen several tens of thousands visit the 'land in the making'.⁴⁵ Not infrequently enthusiastic, thanks to Soviet 'techniques of hospitality', their reports on their experiences shaped the prevailing image of the USSR among the Western Left and even bourgeois circles.⁴⁶ For those who remained at home, the monthly magazine *USSR in Construction*, published between 1930 and 1941 in English, French, German and Russian supplied sugar-coated images and reports on Soviet 'realities' to nourish belief in the utopia. For German-speaking readers, the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*, a weekly newspaper published by 'red media mogul' Willi Münzenberg between 1921 and 1938 provided visual images of the good life in the land of socialism. Its aesthetic contributed to the development of modernism in literature, photography and the graphic arts, a modernism greatly indebted to German-Soviet exchanges in these fields.

This cultural propaganda reached its peak in the first half of the 1930s. Around 1931–1932, culture became a distinctive terrain of political struggle, as Katerina Clark argued recently in her *Moscow, the*

Fourth Rome.⁴⁷ The Soviet Union's efforts were not confined to winning over Western left intellectuals, the leadership aiming rather at a double appropriation: of contemporary Western European and American culture, certainly, but also of the classical culture of Europe and Russia proper, which was 'reworked, reinflected for the specifics of Marxism-Leninism and the Stalinist epoch'.⁴⁸ Yet this embrace of the world did not last long. In 1936 there set in a climate of distrust marked by a growing nationalism, and foreigners were hit by a wave of barely concealed xenophobia. VOKS was ordered to increase its vigilance, and the organization had now to ask the approval of the Central Committee, the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, the NKVD, for any project.⁴⁹ Abroad, however, even the Moscow Trials, the Terror, and Stalinist repression in Spain did little to cloud an irenic vision of the Soviet Union. Foreign communists working in the USSR, on the other hand, were not at all spared by the repression that really took off in 1937/38. For Stalin, the Comintern was an important focus for his paranoia about foreign spies: 'All of you there in the Comintern are playing right into the enemy's hands', he wrote to Dimitrov in February 1937.⁵⁰

It is to these foreign communists and Cominternians, the chief object of this study, that we now must turn. There were several thousand of them living in the USSR, alongside the specialist workers the country had imported for the First Five Year Plan. Particularly after 1933, the Germans represented the largest national contingent, with around 4,000 émigrés, followed by the Austrians with some 730 Schutzbündler (not counting their wives and children), who after 1939 and the end of the Spanish Civil War lost their second place to the Spaniards, who by then numbered some 2,000.⁵¹ The USA and the other countries of Western Europe, on the other hand, had only a few nationals living in the Soviet Union. Most of them were either political office-holders or administrative employees at the Comintern, party representatives, or students enrolled in one of the international cadre schools. Committed militants put their energies into strengthening the 'world party'. Others hoped to help 'build socialism' by sharing their skills and knowledge, for example by putting their ideas about educational reform into practice at Moscow's Karl Liebknecht School (1924–1938), by creating 'revolutionary art', by building model homes and new towns, or by developing a 'proletarian literature'. Soviet reality, however, hardly resembled the images they had brought with them. Disillusion set in, but rarely found overt expression, for that would have been to admit a double defeat, both personal and political.

The USSR in the 1930s was one vast construction site. The collectivization of agriculture and the need for labour induced by the programme of forced industrialization brought an uncontrollable flood of people into the cities, ruralizing urban culture and disorganizing the economy. The country's food supply was catastrophically disrupted. The regime reacted in an ad hoc, improvised fashion, alternating repression, mobilization and bonuses. The improved living standards and increased social status offered to the most productive were matched by tighter control for the generality of the population, and eventually terror, more or less bringing to an end the two-way traffic of cultural mobility. Unlike tourists and visiting fellow-travellers, émigré communists in the USSR had no option but to face up to the 'other' that was Soviet reality. With few opportunities to return home or to opt out of the coercive rules of the Party they had to find ways of coping with the conditions of life under Stalinism, its cultural codes, its daily practices and its cognitive references. This implied developing mental strategies to fit these contradictions into their world-view.

This involved on the one hand a personal everyday negotiation, but there was also institutional provision, such as the international cadre schools, for the inculcation of officially sanctioned beliefs and behaviours. Subject to a certain time-lag, these schools took up practices that emerged within the Bolshevik Party and would eventually also be adopted by the West European communist parties. As the locus of formation of a certain elite (the cadre of the Communist International and its member parties), these schools can serve as a kind of magnifying glass, illustrating in explicit detail the changing expectations of the future Stalinist party manager during the inter-war period and the techniques used to ensure conformity to them. Like the party cells inside the Comintern, these schools represent a site of encounter and confrontation between Soviet and European cultural norms that informed the relationship between the Soviet party and the foreign communists studying in the USSR.

For the latter, conditions of life in the 'workers' fatherland' were not the only issue. They could not help registering, either, that the political practices of the Soviet Union were foreign to them, despite the supposed universality of communist culture. The methods of cadre education and control they encountered within the Comintern or at the international cadre schools would have been previously unknown to them. Indeed, like all Soviet party members, foreign communists were regularly asked to write an autobiography (the *avtobiografiia*), to fill in forms and questionnaires (the *anketa*) or to present a self-critical and

comprehensively detailed self-report before the party or school collective and to make their self-criticism during purges (the *samootchet* and the *samokritika*), reviewing everything they had done in the light of the norm of 'truly Bolshevik' conduct. All this was recorded and preserved. As in any other Soviet institution or concern, the Party maintained files, called 'cadre files', on its members. The process was ambiguous in nature, as it deployed not only educational but also disciplinary methods. The line between the 'purge' that expelled 'opportunists' from the Party and the 'purge' that eliminated them altogether grew thinner and even disappeared in the 1930s.

This leaves the historian with a vast quantity of sources. Given the scale of this documentary activity, the French historian Nicolas Werth described Stalinism as a 'civilisation of report'.⁵² It is important to note, however, that these files are not simply accumulations of evaluations (*kharakteristiki*) made by the representatives of political power and authority. They were also nourished by the observations and judgments of numerous 'informants', third parties who might be colleagues, party comrades, friends or relatives. But above all, it is the subjects themselves (in the sense of those concerned) who 'speak' in these documents. So much so that Stalinism could also be described as a 'civilisation of self-report'.

These texts become properly meaningful only when one takes into account their process of production and the context in which they were used.⁵³ For the historian, they are witnesses of performed deeds. They were integral elements of complex bureaucratic and political practices. Although the personal and biographical data collected and recorded derived in great part from the information provided by the individual concerned, these files maintained at the heart of the Comintern apparatus were the basis for the relationship between the institution – the Soviet Communist Party, in the last analysis – and its members. Authority's interest in everything about the life of its subjects was intended to ensure what Claude Pénnetier and Bernard Pudal called the Soviet system's 'biographical grip' (*emprise biographique*) on its citizens, a taxonomic interest adopted by other Communist parties as well, even if in a minor mode.⁵⁴ For this, the Soviet power required the 'collaboration' of the individual, who had to communicate what he or she 'knew'. Thus the documents on which this book principally relies differ from the ego-documents generally exploited in the growing corpus of studies of personal writings in the Soviet context.⁵⁵ They are the product, in fact, not of individual diarizing but of institutional practices that involved individual participation. They are based on a co-production

between authority and individual. In that sense, the more recent term 'autobiographical acts' would be a shade more appropriate in its reference to situated self-narration,⁵⁶ though it still does not capture the specificity of the sources exploited here, in that these were produced under a very particular institutional constraint.

This kind of scrutiny and evaluation of members could be viewed as merely repressive in nature,⁵⁷ yet it can also be seen as productive, in the Foucauldian sense – a perspective from which the biographical logic so widely deployed by the party-state takes on another significance beyond the mere collection and storage of personal data (as practiced, of course, to a greater or lesser degree by every modern state and every institution with an administrative interest in sociological knowledge). While serving the biographical obsession characteristic of modern political power, the situations in which Communists had to 'speak' of themselves had also a productive aspect for those engaged in them, relying as they did on the individual's participation and his or her self-adaptation to party norms, the explicit objective being to get rid – to 'purge' oneself – of all remains of 'petty bourgeois' attitudes and beliefs.

These practices may thus be understood as a means of ensuring the conformity of individual behaviour with party norms, or as the site of a more or less subtle but in the end unequal negotiation between the member and the party. All involved a confluence of self-understandings and external understandings; in Foucault's terms, they effected both subjectivation and objectivation.⁵⁸ For while on the one hand the individual member was given the opportunity to present him or herself to others, on the other the party as institution was able to register this identity, interpreting it according to its own rules and perceptual schemes.

For cadre control was more than a biographical filter. Cadre control techniques also operated as 'biography generators' (Alois Hahn).⁵⁹ Through these various forms of self-thematization (in dialogue with the party in the autobiography, in interaction with the group in self-criticism and self-report) comrades received institutional recognition. At the same time they were confronted with the expectations and reactions of others. Party members in the Soviet Union in the 1930s were thereby set in an attitude of permanent self-observation, whose yardstick was the party collective. They learnt what behaviours, dispositions and interpretative schemes were appropriate to the 'real Bolshevik' – the guiding ideal of the Stalinist cadre. These practices in fact placed them in a position of existential insecurity in which they had continuously to defend their position in relation to the Party. They had to account for their

origin, trajectory, acts and political opinions. In speaking of themselves, they were not only 'negotiating' their identity with the Party, they were also creating their own narrative of themselves. Such self-reflexivity in society, it is assumed, is the basis of subjectivity. In this sense, 'speaking', that is writing and reporting about oneself or defending oneself in public, as well as recording one's actions, thus 'objectifying' oneself, also had a subjectifying effect. From another angle, too, Foucault provides an important theoretical tool for conceptualizing how the subject constitutes itself within society with his notion of 'techniques of the self'.⁶⁰ He draws our attention to the connection between the constitution of the social order and the constitution of the self through self-discipline. To this end, individuals have to monitor their own behaviour by speaking of themselves in the vocabularies of context-specific 'instituted modes of self-knowledge'.⁶¹ Although Foucault does not refer to the Soviet Union, this study takes it that in its techniques of cadre formation the Stalinism of the 1930s produced and applied specific techniques of self-examination. These stand at the interface between disciplinary mechanisms and a new form of subjectivation. One is not concerned here, then with an originary, autonomous subject, but with a subject produced through 'conscience and self knowledge' but for all that no less 'subject to someone else by control and dependence'.⁶² In fact, practices of the self with their technical armamentarium and their knowledge effects are regulated by systems of power.

As well as looking at how these practices worked, we shall also, and more especially, be looking at how the persons concerned responded – simultaneously objects and subjects. I will argue that what was going on in these concrete interactions was a form of 'work on the self'. Since the time of the early Bolsheviks, a Communist – embryonic prototype of the 'New Man' – had been defined as a person in the making, a 'perfectible being'. To become a 'real Bolshevik' one had to 'work on the self'. The eradication of the 'Old Man' by means of improving the self was a goal shared by every Communist. With the imperative of industrial production, Stalinism revived and accentuated this fundamental feature of Communist anthropology, coupling it with promises of social advancement and even proposing it as a model for society as a whole. This anthropology based on 'work on the self' – what one might call a constructivist vision of the human being – stamped its mark on the Communism of the 1930s. In the words of Alfred Kurella, one of the chief directors of the Comintern's cultural policy, 'Marxism ... conceives the human and its essence as the result of a process in which the concrete, sensual, active, reflective individual is simultaneously object and

subject, his own creature and creator'.⁶³ Such a conception of the individual as a product of his or her own efforts was indeed applicable to all members of the Party, but all the more to the cadre of the Comintern and to those enrolled in cadre schools, the 'true believers', the backbones of Communist organization.

From this follows the question of to what extent these Communists are to be considered as active agents. If my approach evokes something like the 'normative self', drawing on Foucault's work on the creative (and not simply repressive) function of power/knowledge,⁶⁴ distinctions have still to be made. First of all, there are the questions about the normative efficacy of discourse that have been a particular concern to the French history of practices. Bernard Lepetit's observation that norms are plural, polysemic, unstable indeed, and cannot be analysed in terms of pure imposition, is equally applicable, despite everything, to the Stalinist world.⁶⁵ 'Norms ... constitute for actors a set of reference points by which to situate oneself and resources to mobilize under the constraint of situations'.⁶⁶ The question is, then, how did men and women act and react when confronted with the Soviet situation? Indeed, this interplay of self- and external observation, of institutional scrutiny and individual compliance, demanded of the actors a pragmatic approach, one adapted to the situation. The rapidly changing Soviet party practices at the turn of the 1920s and in the 1930s were not simply routines but generally operated as improvisations that required knowledge and use of the relevant codes. In other words, they required actors' 'competence'.⁶⁷ By this word Lepetit means

the capacity to recognize the plurality of normative fields and to identify their respective contents; the ability to single out the relevant features of a situation and the character of the protagonists; and lastly the ability to slip into the interstitial spaces that exist between the different set of rules and to mobilize to advantage the most suitable normative or taxonomical system and to construct on the basis of disparate rules and values the interpretations that will organize the world in a different way.⁶⁸

Applied to the Soviet Union, this means that faced with the party cell or the student collective at a cadre school, the foreign communist had to deploy these skills to position him- or herself as a 'true Bolshevik' in terms of total devotion to the party and a correct understanding of the line. Some party members were practised in this, while others would have to improvise.

Depending on the situation, the repertoire of possibilities allowed more or less room for interpretations of one's own, even if it was impossible to dissociate oneself from it entirely, as the French historian Michel de Certeau has suggested. Speech – enunciation – is the expression of 'a nexus of circumstances, a nexus adherent to the 'context'.⁶⁹ Learning to 'speak and act as a Bolshevik'⁷⁰ proved an onerous task, even in the heart of power. To do so one had not only to appropriate the language, involving the development of some scheme of translation between old and new frames of reference, but also the Bolshevik habitus. Though the members of Western communist parties did share certain cultural norms and values, in particular the stress on education and personal development, they were largely unaccustomed to the Soviet practices of screening individuals. It was an ideological programme that foreign communists were generally quite willing to follow, as dedicated party members, but they often tripped up in its practical realization, failing to meet the ever-growing expectations of the Stalinist party which, in fact, required of its members a total surrender of the self.⁷¹ The environment began to change rapidly in the late 1920s, and even more so in the 1930s, to the point of becoming practically unintelligible to actors. Individual members' room for manoeuvre shrank with the growing paranoia of the Soviet authorities, disappearing almost entirely in 1937–1938, by which time the rules were disarrayed, where they had not been entirely rescinded. It was, then, the 'interstitial spaces', the plurality of norms and subjective interpretations, that 1930s Stalinism tended to reduce or even to eradicate. Despite this reduction in the margin of manoeuvre, actors must still be accorded a variety of attitudes, behaviours, and even strategies, as Lepetit stresses. In applying his methodological injunctions to the study of the closed world of the Stalinist organizations, one can see that actors' 'freedom is determined by the position they occupy at the time, the multiplicity of worlds to which their biographical experiences afford access, and their powers of inference'.⁷² It is these situated actions that the sources exploited here reveal.

The second point concerns the question of subjectivity. If party members were undoubtedly prepared to work on their selves, it doesn't follow that they were always pursuing that goal with the same intensity. Even a Communist cadre was more than a faithful 'party functionary', his or her identity (as the sum of social status, individual roles and personal beliefs) was far from one-dimensional. Other identities coexisted in his or her person: mother or father, Sunday painter, reader of 'bourgeois' novels, friend of a social democrat, even of an 'oppositionist'.

Following Yves Cohen, the 'I' of the communist, convinced and committed as it might be, always included other 'mes' grounded in other contexts and other needs.⁷³ Yet the party demanded a singleness: the political 'me' was meant to come to dominate and control all the other 'mes' in a process guided and directed by the Party. With the transformation of self-criticism into self-accusation and 'Bolshevik vigilance' into witch-hunt, external power intruded ever more deeply upon inner life. Paradoxically, for many Communist cadres a space of doubt and questioning emerged between their political convictions on the one hand and the ideological demands of Stalinist institutions on the other. This real or supposed distantiating was no doubt what was at stake when the cadre policy that had been an instrument of control and discipline became an instrument of repression and terror: nearly half the party members in the Comintern fell victim to it.

To grasp the scalar multiplicity (Jacques Revel's *jeux d'échelles*) of the Comintern's transnational dimension we start with an overall view, then focus on the gender organization of communist activity, before finally 'zooming in' on the international communists who lived in Moscow or spent some time there. The first chapter presents the institutional context within which the foreign communists worked, the Comintern and its associated organizations. The second examines the opportunities for political engagement opened up to women by Communist organizations, and the limits to them. Chapter 3 plunges into the everyday life of these foreign professional revolutionaries in an increasingly distrustful Moscow. Chapter 4 then looks at the establishment of mechanisms of ever closer control over them. The fifth chapter reconstructs the techniques of 'work on the self' employed in the formation of 'Bolshevik cadres' at the Comintern's international schools, while the sixth explores the place of the private and the role of gender in the party meetings at which one had to 'speak about oneself'. Chapter 7 shows the development of the mechanisms that would eventually destroy the transnational enclave represented by the foreign communists in the USSR, ironically almost at the very moment that the Comintern turned to the more open politics of the 'Popular Front'. The Epilogue, finally, reflects on the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, which marks not only the failure of one of the most powerful political organisations of the early 20th century but also the end of a distinctive, transnational cultural milieu and the collective experience it had embodied.

1

The Bolshevik Model

Founded in 1919, the Comintern was global in its political ambitions. Taking a clear distance from the prevailing nationalism of the period of the First World War and indeed rejecting the very idea of the nation, the organization defined itself as *internationalist*. In this, it situated itself in the radical tradition of the European workers' movement. Internationalism was both the necessary condition and the goal of a revolutionary organization that would soon stand at the head of some hundred Communist parties ('sections') across the world. In terms of organization and activity, of course, the national aspect could not be ignored. The 'world party with national sections' was thus characterized by a two-level hierarchy: at the top, the Comintern understood itself as a *supranational* and *transnational* world movement which, at the level beneath, adopted the subordinate national section as its principle of organization.¹ While the Comintern – as a field of communication and action over and between national frontiers – may rightly be described as inter- and transnational, like the biographies of its militants its activities were nonetheless equally grounded in national space. Further underlining the hybrid complexity of the Comintern was, from the beginning, the central and fast-growing role of the hegemonial Soviet Russian state which blurred the lines between state and non-state actors.² The utopian project of a new society rested on ideas not only of political but also of bureaucratic organization.

1.1 Global architecture and multilocal activity

Research faces practical and theoretical difficulties arising not only from the asymmetry of power between the Soviet Union and the Communist 'sister parties' and between the international and national levels, but

also from the very different realities represented by what was, on the one hand, a worldwide movement whose cultural appeal extended even to non-Communists (one has only to think of the many sympathetic intellectuals, writers and artists), and a centralized, Moscow-based bureaucratic apparatus on the other. Around its leading body, the Executive Committee of the Communist International, (ECCI) was an array of administrative offices, political committees and also, increasingly, informal if not secret decision-making bodies.³

Things are made no simpler by the fact that this highly ramified structure was several times radically remodelled. Among the directing bodies – to mention only the most important – were the Presidium of the ECCI, the Secretariat of the Chairman or the Secretary-General of the ECCI (1921–1926; 1935–1943) and the Political Secretariat or Politsecretariat (1926–1935), the Political Commission of the Political Secretariat (1929/1930–1935), and the Organization Bureau or Orgbureau (1921–1926). Auxiliary functions were carried out by departments defined by specialist role (the Organization Department, the Agitprop Department, the Information Department, the Publishing Department, the International Liaison Department-OIS) and by territorially defined regional secretariats (1926–1935), sometimes as many as 13 in number. Communications between the ECCI and the national sections passed via secret couriers, sometimes even the ordinary mail, as well as through the emissaries and instructors sent by Moscow to different countries. The larger parties had their own permanent delegations or representatives in Moscow. Of these, the Russian-born Frenchman Boris Souvarine, expelled in 1924 for supporting Trotsky, is no doubt one of the best known. In the following decade, the parties' Moscow representatives were generally of another type, less intellectual and generally of working-class origin. In the case of the British party, this was the Scotsman Peter Kerrigan, a keen boxer and footballer in his youth, who had left the Glasgow shipyards for the Lenin School. He joined André Marty's secretariat (responsible for the Anglophone countries) in 1935, before leaving for Spain as a political commissar. Organized as technical departments were the Library, the Translation Department, the Archive, the Bureau of the Secretariat, the Administrative Department, the Publications Department, the Garage and the Hotel Lux. The Comintern also had numerous representations around the world that enjoyed a degree of regional decision-making power, within the general line established at the centre, among them the West European Bureau (WEB) in Berlin, Brussels and Paris, the Far Eastern Bureau in Shanghai, the South American Secretariat in Buenos Aires and Montevideo, and the Caribbean Bureau, to mention only

a few. Operational between 1927/28 and 1933, the WEB served as an outpost for the coordination of activities in Western Europe. With Hitler's accession to power in 1933, Germany became too dangerous and Comintern activities in Europe were concentrated in Paris, Prague and Copenhagen, though presences also existed in other cities such as Stockholm, Basel and Zurich. The Spanish Civil War then saw a shift of activity to the Iberian Peninsula. Networks were established to convey volunteers first to the recruiting centre in Paris and then onward to Albacete, where the International Brigade headquarters were established. This whole venture represented an organization in itself and a distinctive space of transnational communication with its cross-border contacts and exchanges. One that had to remain secret, trustworthy and secure, while still remaining capable of improvisation. The hierarchical but polycentric internationalism of the early days, however, gave way in time to a concentration on Moscow. From the mid-1930s onward, and more particularly during the war, propaganda activities were increasingly directed from the Soviet Union, via radio and telegram.

To this network also belonged the many international mass organizations, each concerned with a particular area: trade unionism (Profintern); social service (International Red Aid, Workers' International Relief); colonialism (the League against Imperialism); and with youth, women, cooperatives, sport and so on. According to the present state of research, there were some 60 such organizations with international responsibilities and relations.⁴ Though they might not all have been Communist organizations in outward appearance, their Communist members were obliged to act as an organized fraction. The multiform and highly ramified yet centralized architecture of this transnational organization for revolutionizing the workers of all countries also included printing shops, publishing houses and newspapers across Western and Central Europe. In Paris, for example, the Comintern owned the publishing houses *Éditions Sociales* and *Éditions du Carrefour*, in Berlin Verlag Karl Hoym and *Neue Deutsche Verlag*, in London Martin Lawrence Ltd. In 1929, there were at least 18 Comintern-owned publishing houses, which in 1929–1930 were responsible for printing 448 titles across all the European languages, totalling 22 million books in all.⁵ And last but not least, the Comintern also created 'knowledge institutions', its own international schools and universities.

Before the 'New Man' could be brought into being, one had to work with the old. According to the latest research, almost 16,000 people worldwide worked for the Comintern international apparatus at one time or another,⁶ some 500 or 600 at the heart of the organization,

in Moscow. The Moscow apparatus reached its maximum in the early 1930s, with 524 people (though one report gives 666)⁷. At that time, there were two technical staff for each of the 175 political staff. Adding to these the secret International Liaison Department, the publishing staff and the party leaderships that were in Moscow, as well as the personnel of the Hotel Lux, none of which were included in the ECCI headcount, the figure rose to 800, according to a highly confidential report by the Cadre Department.⁸ According to more recent research, however, the whole ECCI apparatus accounted for 591 people in August 1939 and 513 in March 1940.⁹ In any event, in early 1943 there were 161 people working in the (central) Press and Radio Department alone.¹⁰ There were significant variations through time, attributable not only to the many reorganizations and the effects of the Terror, but also to staff turnover. This was particularly high during the 'Stalinization' of the Comintern, as old party cadres were replaced by others, younger and committed to the new line. Records for 1929, for example, show 140 departures and 147 new arrivals, and for the following year 206 and 241 respectively. The period saw a significant increase in numbers, to meet the needs of increasing control over cadre recruitment to the Communist parties and to the Comintern itself. Under the direction of the Cadre Department, which by the middle of the decade had as much say in personnel policy as the ECCI Secretariat itself, the recruitment of Comintern functionaries was subject to strict rules and requirements. In 1936 the already strict procedures were made even more stringent, calling not only for multiple certifications, questionnaires and a detailed evaluation (*kharakteristika*) but also testimonials from other members.¹¹

In the early 1930s, however, such detail was not yet the order of the day. A staffing report was aware of 'roughly 500' Comintern employees, but had precise details for only 331 of them.¹² Personnel information was at that time neither regularly updated nor centrally controlled, with the Special Department of the OMS and the Cadre Section of the Organization Department maintaining separate personnel files. These mainly covered functionaries in the secret departments of the Comintern or other posts of particular importance, while 'technical' and temporary employees received hardly any attention. Only with the creation of a specialized Cadre Department in early 1932 was it decided to demand autobiographies from all newly recruited staff.¹³

Nonetheless, those then responsible for personnel matters within the Comintern were able to use the data available to offer a snapshot of those employed in the apparatus.¹⁴ In terms of party membership, nearly two-thirds were members of the Soviet party, while a third were

members of 'sister parties', though there is evidently some uncertainty here, as another third apparently declared themselves as not belonging to any party. Accounting for a good fifth of Comintern employees, the German Communists even then formed the largest national group apart from the Russians, who accounted for almost half. A whole series of other nations were also represented, but by significantly smaller contingents.¹⁵ However, the figures are again not completely straightforward, as, in accordance with Soviet practice, the report distinguishes between citizenship and nationality. By nationality there were 152 Russians, 48 Jews, 38 Germans, nine French and five Poles (among others), while by citizenship there were 206 Soviet citizens, 30 German, six French and six Polish (again among others). These relative magnitudes are partly confirmed and partly qualified by a recent systematic longitudinal study of data on 580 leadership cadres between 1919 and 1936.¹⁶ While the shares of the Russians (115) and the Germans (50) are in fact still the largest (followed by the French with 33, the Czechoslovakians with 30, the Americans and the Poles with 28 each, and the British with 22), the Russian share declines with time from 45 per cent in 1919 to 14 per cent in 1937. According to the same report, oral communication must have presented some problems, for 123 – more than a third – spoke only Russian, 14 understood nothing but German, two spoke only English and two only French. This linguistic deficit would however have likely been compensated for by the more polyglot cadres, among them the 107 who spoke both Russian and German, the 52 trilinguals who added French to the other two, and the further 21 whose English represented a fourth language.¹⁷

The questions about social class were answered in a very unsatisfactory manner, says the report-writer, a third describing themselves simply as workers, two-thirds as white-collar employees. Even so, 25 had a university degree, while 13 had at least started on a university education.¹⁸ A good half had attended secondary school, a third had received an elementary education only, while at the very far end of the scale were the 22 people who were barely literate. In terms of occupational category, there were 67 skilled workers, 40 unskilled, 36 party functionaries, 69 white-collar employees, 16 journalists or publicists, six editors, two doctors, 12 teachers and 31 persons without occupation.¹⁹ Changes in the figures through time reveal, however, a striking decline in cadres who had received secondary or tertiary education. Between 1920 and 1937 the proportion fell from about two thirds to one third, with the share of those having received only an elementary or vocational education rising from one third to two thirds.²⁰

The self-descriptions reported here probably represent a mixture of current and previous occupations. That most respondents were 'professional revolutionaries' is shown by the answers to the question about the last place of employment. Even before working for the Comintern, a good two-thirds were working for the Party or an associated organization either in the Soviet Union or elsewhere. Only 24 came directly from a factory, 19 had been working in other contexts, 19 were in their first employment, and 15 had not yet completed their vocational training. How unsystematic the implementation of cadre policy was in the early 1930s is also shown by the fact that, of 189 people, a clear majority had found a position with the Comintern on their own individual initiative, with only 52 having been recommended to the Comintern by 'sister parties'.

1.2 Centralization, discipline and loyalty

From the individual actor's perspective, the Comintern was a voluntary community of goals and solidarity that offered access to political-intellectual and financial resources, though one that indeed brought certain obligations with it. The original, utopian aim was clear in activists' minds, and clearly set down on paper: this was nothing less than 'world revolution'. As the Swiss representative at the Comintern's founding congress in Moscow in 1919 put it: 'We believe in the victory of the proletarian revolution, and we look with enthusiasm to the East, where our Russian comrades in struggle have already seized power'.²¹

This statement makes direct reference to two problematic features that characterized the project from start: the belief in a speedy victory, and the advantage the Russian comrades enjoyed over the other parties not only in terms of the political capital represented by their successful takeover of power but also in the real capacity to exert influence by means of the human, material and symbolic resources that this made available to them. This had two consequences. Firstly, with the failure of the 'German October' in 1923, the original goal increasingly gave way to that of the protection of the Soviet Union. Despite the Communist International's expansion in Asia and elsewhere, in 1924 nearly three-quarters of its membership outside the Soviet Union was to be found in only four countries: Germany, Czechoslovakia, France and Yugoslavia. In the years that followed, the Comintern's following in Europe declined continuously. Only in the 1930s did the Communist parties once again begin to grow in numbers, above all the French, with the turn to the Popular Front policy. Communists all

over the world thus came to see unconditional support for the Soviet Union as a priority. This hierarchization of revolutionary efforts, however, brought with it a *de facto* conflict of goals, even though Western Communist parties were not in a state of permanent preparation for a revolutionary upsurge. Secondly, it meant that within the Comintern, different social realities, historical experiences, societal traditions and political and party cultures came together in a single field of action, where they combined only with difficulty. Here the symbolic, cultural and above all political dominance of the Soviet party came into play, as its representatives imposed their own political experiences and reasoning.²² A key driver here was the struggle for power inside that party, in which control over the Comintern's policies was an important asset, as Stalin evidently realized, ensuring that he could exert his influence on the organization through personal ties to its leadership. Zinoviev, chairman of the ECCI from 1919–1926, was his ally against Trotsky after 1923. Bukharin, who replaced him, was quickly sidelined as soon as he came into conflict with Stalin, while Dmitry Manuilsky, *de facto* head of the organization from 1927 onward, was a close collaborator of the Soviet leader's. As for Dimitrov, it was on Stalin's orders that he was made general secretary in 1935, and it was to Stalin that he turned when any change in strategy or tactics was in question, as can be seen from his diary.²³ Another medium of Soviet party influence was the so-called 'Russian delegation' to the ECCI, whose existence is documented from 1926 onward but which probably dates back to 1919.²⁴ Including such figures as Zinoviev, Rykov, Bukharin, Manuilsky, Lozovsky and Molotov, with Piatnitsky as its secretary, it apparently controlled *de facto* all central decision-making by the Comintern.²⁵ Finally, Stalin's influence can be seen in the transfer to the Comintern of his conception of leadership, whereby matters were settled in personal consultation with dependent subordinates rather than by the collective decision-making of elected bodies.²⁶ The reorganization of the ECCI apparatus in 1935 mirrored this shift to a vertical hierarchy, a change that also found expression in its contacts with the Communist parties. Replacing the larger plenums and their discussions, from then on leaders were called individually to Moscow to make their report.²⁷

For Western party officials, 'Moscow' undeniably represented an international beacon by which they could set their course, yet they had to steer their parties through different waters, with their very different reefs and channels. Their national and local context, with its political system, social challenges and intellectual culture, its specific labour

market conditions and the expectations of the party membership, had also to be taken into account. The Comintern – and here we get to the object of this study – formed on the other hand a world of its own, a social milieu inhabited by a party elite drawn from many countries, which at the interface between the Soviet and (primarily) the Western worlds²⁸ generated specific norms and values, modes and patterns of behaviour, and roles to be occupied. While it did borrow key features from the Soviet party and remained dependent on Soviet institutions, it was at first primarily a product of the Western workers' movement.²⁹ The difference in culture also reflected the fact that Western Communist functionaries in Moscow on the whole lived cut off from Soviet society and for a long time even from the Soviet party (if not from its practices). Something, as we shall see, for which they came to be reproached in the 1930s.

For the Comintern, centralization was from the beginning both a principle of operation and a goal yet to be attained. So it was that in 1922 the ECCI decided that its resolutions should henceforth be binding on all sections, after they had – in accordance with the principle of 'democratic centralism' – been discussed at the World Congress or other international meetings where appropriate. This was justified in the language of practicality. For a fighting organization of the proletariat characterized by an 'us-against-them' attitude, this followed from the imperative of effectiveness and impact through discipline and unity. This anticipated certain principles of the later Bolshevization, though that term would be applied to organizational measures (the move to workplace cells and with it the 'proletarianization' of the party) only in 1924. The 21 prerequisites for admission to the International agreed at the second World Congress of 1920 had already prescribed the Russian or Bolshevik model of the party and its operation as the only one acceptable.

The transformation of the Comintern's culture to bring it into accord with the Soviet model was a process that extended over the whole of the 1920s and 1930s. When after the ebbing of the revolutionary tide in 1923 the West European Communist Parties – very likely realistically – estimated their chances of success to be minimal, Soviet officials continually urged on them, until the later turn to Popular Front politics, an approach little suited to the democratic, pluralist societies they were operating in. In their eyes, Western political culture was infected by social-democratic or democratic – that is to say bourgeois – illusions, as one example (of many) will illustrate. In 1933, the 31-year-old D., a member of the German Communist party since ten years earlier and

a student at the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West (KUNMZ), was criticized at a purge hearing for his failure to distance himself from social democracy: 'When D. arrived, he understood nothing of the issues here in the Soviet Union. He was active, but passive in party work. Social-democratic illusions. He said that Germany was the most democratic country in the world'.³⁰ The forms of political activity adopted by West European Communist parties were accordingly characterized as naively legalistic and their attitude to the bourgeois state and to their political opponents denounced as wishy-washy.³¹ In the 1930s, the Stalinist party leadership would accuse émigré cadres of maintaining a bourgeois lifestyle.

Two interventions or 'disciplinary processes' initiated by the Russian side represent key moments in the formation of asymmetrical power relations within the Comintern. With Bolshevization, it became customary for the Comintern leadership to stigmatize what they regarded as wrong positions taken by Communist parties as the expression of 'petty-bourgeois residues'; resolutions repeatedly urged parties to shed their 'social-democratic remnants'. If neither binding resolutions and directives nor the admonitions of the emissaries sent to refractory parties proved sufficient, 'Moscow' could turn to coercion, deposing entire party leaderships, as happened in the German, Swiss and French Communist parties in the late 1920s.³² Scholars disagree as to whether this process is to be considered as an intensification and further development of Bolshevization, or as a distinctive 'Stalinization', a qualitative change occurring in the late 1920s.³³ In favour of the first it may be said that there are unambiguous continuities in patterns of thinking between the 1920s and the 1930s, particularly in the attitude towards social democracy.

It would, however, be misleading to see in these processes a one-sided and univocal narrative of the constant cultural and political subordination of a passive Comintern and its functionaries and party leaders. The 'Bolshevization' and 'Stalinization' of the Western parties also encountered resistance. On the other hand, the Western parties also supported the international synchronization of political demands and the principle of standardized rules of operation for Communist organizations. This, they hoped, would not only make them more politically effective but provide them with a distinctive political image to differentiate them from their social-democratic competitors. And the main asset guaranteeing the 'uniqueness' of the Communist parties was the Soviet Union. It was *the* central element of the whole project. Loyalty to the 'Workers'

Fatherland' was therefore not only a matter of political programme, but may be said to have become a constitutive political principle of the Comintern.

Western party leaders like Ernst Thälmann, Maurice Thorez and Harry Pollitt acted in their own countries as agents of the Moscow line.³⁴ Thälmann was in Hermann Weber's words 'on the one hand the shepherd of the KPD's adaptation to Moscow and on the other the product of this development'.³⁵ As a reward for faithful service all three were built up as national figures, but by the middle of the decade, and in Thälmann's case as early as 1933, they had lost their places in the higher ranks of the Comintern leadership.³⁶ The transformation of the Comintern into a tool of the Soviet state can therefore not be understood as a Manichaean story of Moscow against all the other parties. Nor was it a purely linear process, either in terms of political chronology or in terms of the development of party cadres' own thinking. Harry Pollitt's rejection of the Comintern line against 'imperialist war' in September/October 1939 shows that even those cadres propelled to leadership positions by Stalinization were not simply spineless 'creatures of Moscow', with individuals again and again stepping out of line and provoking rifts in the consensus.

Changes in political line sometimes even accorded with the needs of the sister parties. The turn to the Popular Front policy in the mid-1930s had to some extent already been anticipated by the French party in its struggle against the far right.³⁷ The new line required that Communist parties should again take into account distinctive features of the national culture.³⁸ Responding to Dimitrov's demand at the seventh World Congress that the present-day struggle of the working masses be 'linked to their people's revolutionary struggles in the past', the German section of the International Lenin School (ILS) very soon afterwards published a prospectus that bore the title 'The German Classical Poets and Philosophers Testify Against Fascist Barbarism'.³⁹ Recourse to the once again politically-correct classical literary tradition offered emigré German writers, many of them in the Soviet Union, and others in Paris, the opportunity to associate their own language and intellectual tradition with an anti-fascist and cosmopolitan position, as Katerina Clark has shown.⁴⁰

If we have so far discussed, in general terms, how – under pressure from above, but also as a consequence of principles that they themselves supported (centralization, discipline, obedience, hierarchy, unity, efficiency ...) – the Comintern's national sections increasingly lost their

political autonomy, the question has also to be asked how they came, on the whole, to accept it. Four reasons can be put forward:

- Firstly, the Western parties and their members shared for the most part the political convictions and goals of the Comintern, even if there were sometimes tactical differences and constant individual disagreements.
- Secondly, with the rise of fascism the Communists felt increasingly threatened and closed ranks.
- Thirdly, as should not be forgotten, for party leaders a break with Moscow put their career at risk.
- Fourthly, there emerged, more particularly in the 1930s, a Communist/Stalinist culture that offered party members not only a sense of belonging through shared norms and values, but also a sense of distinction thanks to identification with exemplary figures and not least with the Soviet Union both as stronghold against fascism and as pioneer of an alternative modernity.⁴¹

Such shared references were diffused from the mid-1930s onward through the publication of exemplary biographies, such as that of Maurice Thorez. Like Stalin, Maurice Thorez embodied the party – rather than his mere self – in such a manner that individual party members were permanently confronted by the demand to measure up their own life against that of the leader.⁴² According to Bernard Pudal, the model derived its power of conviction from, on the one hand, a radical distancing from the supposedly bourgeois or petty-bourgeois ‘values of the cult of the original, the unique, the brilliant, the distinguished, the complex, the subtle’, and, on the other, from its appropriation of the worker ethos of the social democratic tradition and its adaptation to the Communist Party, the latter upholding the values of ‘the concrete, of experience, practicality, simplicity, plain-speaking and masculinity (energy; hardness; steeliness)’.⁴³

Other Comintern political-cultural ‘offerings’ for party members were aimed only at particular groups. There was thus established in the Soviet Union a series of international schools for (prospective) middle cadres.⁴⁴ Communists sent to Moscow by their parties there discovered that in order to gain access to the cultural order of Stalinism they had to learn new cognitive and behavioural patterns embodied in countless rules, so also acquiring the capacity to recognize and to handle ‘insider knowledge’ as precisely that – that is, as strictly confidential. A tactic that within a few years would give way to a more fearful and corrosive ‘Bolshevik vigilance’.

1.3 Conspiracy and secrecy

Max Weber remarked upon a tendency to secrecy shared by all bureaucracies, the inclination to protect the knowledge they produce from outsiders,⁴⁵ while in his admirable study of official secrecy and the figure of the spy the French sociologist Alain Dewerpe noted that the relationship of tension between openness and secrecy is constitutive of the modern state;⁴⁶ this is symbolically undergirded by a worldview of 'us against them', and of 'inside' against 'outside'. The propensity to secrecy was all the more pronounced in the Communist parties – and especially in the Bolshevik party, which had operated in illegality – which had frequently been subjected to repressive measures. And in 1930s Stalinism this found expression in a scheme of 'friend or foe', while the boundaries between inside and outside became unclear.

Rules of confidentiality mean nothing if their implementation is not policed, and for this one needs an administrative apparatus. The Comintern was a bureaucratic apparatus, even if a chaotic one,⁴⁷ as Hugo Eberlein lamented as early as 1922, as he contemplated its first reorganization. In 1926, ECCI documents show, a new attempt was made to impose more order and to establish administrative procedures, at least on paper.⁴⁸ An effort repeated in another reorganization in 1929, and again in 1936. Behind this, however, lay more than a concern to create a well-functioning organization. The Comintern archives from that point on are full of instructions regarding who has access to what classified documents, how long they can keep them, and how compliance with regulations governing secrecy is to be ensured. One thus reads in a Politcommission decision of January 1932, for example, that 'those who issue the materials must draw up for the document security officers a list of those who receive them, and that those officers make an official copy of that list and ask for the material back the next day'.⁴⁹ In issuing such instructions the Comintern was following the Soviet party, which in the late 1920s had introduced rules of access and standardized schemes of distribution for all party documents.⁵⁰ In the Comintern, there had been a secret section of the archive ever since its reorganization in 1921. In late 1929, a secret instructors' section was set up within the Department for International Liaison (OMS), responsible for training in and supervizing the management of secret records in all departments and regional secretariats of the ECCI, the Executive Committee of Youth International, and associated organizations. Its instructions on the way secret records were to be managed were binding on all Comintern staff.⁵¹ The first thing that foreign students at the cadre schools had to

learn was the rules of conspiracy. Set down in the smallest detail, these practices of secrecy applied to every organ of the Soviet state and every organization in contact with them. Thus in December 1930 the OGPU informed the Central Committee of the Soviet Red Aid that 'documentation on politemigrants (*ankety*, autobiographies and *kharakteristiki*)' was to be 'stored in accordance with the instructions of the *Spetsotdel*' and 'access to them ... restricted to a narrow circle'.⁵²

Such examples may easily be multiplied. Yet what were the functions fulfilled by these decisions on classification levels and on document security and its supervision? They didn't just protect confidentiality, for the circulation of information in accordance with standardized schemes of distribution also had the effect of establishing an internal hierarchy. Only certain cadres had access to documents classified as secret. In addition, it compelled the representatives of foreign parties to conform to Soviet practices of secrecy, to disciplinary effect. Such people were constantly being reproached, in the 1930s, for 'loose talk' (*boltovnia* or 'chatter') and non-compliance with the 'rules of conspiracy', because imagining themselves in supposed safety in the Soviet Union they failed to guard their tongues and thus played into the hands of the enemy.⁵³ With the advent of the Terror, such 'lapses' became a pretext for arrest. Opportunities were not few, as is evidenced by the following instructions to members of foreign parties issued by the president of the purge commission at the ILS. Regarding the writing of the autobiographies for the purge that was to take place in the first two weeks of October 1933, they were told: 'You must not use your own family names. You must not name any one of the families with whom you have lived. If you have been involved in illegal activity in your own country, do not give the name of the country either. Do not name any prison in which you may have been locked up. Any mention of technical or party information in the field of anti-militarist work is strictly forbidden. In general, you should never mention anything that could be prejudicial to the Party'.⁵⁴

While 'vigilance' had once been necessary for illegal work, it later became, most especially after the First Moscow Show Trial of 1936, a vigilance against enemies who had succeeded in penetrating the Soviet Union ('Trotzkyite-Zinovievites'). But 'Bolshevik vigilance' was mostly no more than a vague appeal, a repetitive formula only rarely associated with any practical directives regarding behaviour. So it was in a resolution of a party meeting of the International Lenin School on 10 October 1936, which declared: 'Vigilance consists in seeking out the political roots of any wrong behaviour'.⁵⁵ In Stalinist terms, this meant

simply that behind every lapse was an anti-Party motive. Even without such interpretative guidance, 'Bolshevik vigilance' functioned among the arbitrary and sometimes subtly shifting normative landmarks of the cultural order of the mid-1930s Soviet Union as an overwhelming moral imperative to mutual surveillance and likewise self-supervision that compelled every party member to continuously police their own and others' behaviour for any deviation from party discipline, central committee directives, the general line or even customary social behaviour.⁵⁶

Governed by the rules of conspiracy, the availability of information shrank as the production of documents increased, not only in the Comintern apparatus but also as between the ECCI and the national sections.⁵⁷ While deliberation and decision-making within the Comintern had in the 1920s been to some extent 'open', there occurred a gradual shift to smaller and ever-more specialized bodies or ad hoc committees.⁵⁸ From the early 1930s onward, directives to national sections followed discreet internal channels – a development institutionalized with the further centralization and personalization of decision-making brought about by the reorganization of the ECCI apparatus in 1935.⁵⁹ During the war, communication between Moscow and European Communist parties came to rely almost exclusively on coded telegrams.⁶⁰ The staff resources and administrative channels necessary for this were provided by the International Liaison Department, whose leadership had since June 1937 been in the hands of ex-NKVD cadres; the money came from the Soviet state apparatus.⁶¹ The vulnerability of these lines of communication (whose terminals in each individual country had had to be improvised in the illegality in which the majority of European Communist parties then found themselves) underlay ever stricter directives regarding secrecy. Restricted to the inner leadership circle, access to decoding keys was another sign of insider status that sparked off massive power struggles.⁶²

The early 1930s saw a rapid shift in the significance of secrecy as it applied to the Moscow apparatus. Breaches of the rules of conspiracy and failures of Bolshevik vigilance became grounds for expulsion, now coming before an International Control Commission (ICC) that in the 1920s had been chiefly concerned with questions of factional struggle and offences against party discipline. In the mid-1930s these were joined on the roster by newly serious offences of 'betrayal' and 'provocation'.⁶³ The rules of *konspiraciia* were the operating key to the all-embracing and ubiquitous principle of secrecy that governed Bolshevik organizations. From this it followed that any information about party

or Comintern matters had to be hermetically sealed off from the 'outside'. This wasn't easy for the Western students, more especially the young ones, not only because they weren't accustomed to it in their own parties, but also because neither at home or in Moscow were they allowed to say anything about where they lived or what they did, not even so much as hint at it. Criticisms and self-criticisms at the cadre school were thus riddled with reproaches against such 'failings', as the documents testify.⁶⁴

The requirements resembled those demanded of secret agents:⁶⁵ discretion, discipline, steel – these weren't only the virtues of Rakhmetov in Chernyshevsky's *What Is to be Done?*,⁶⁶ but those of the Bolshevik cadre. Except that the cadre was not an isolated fighter. He or she did not act alone in the silence of the night, but was a loyal member of a Party, prepared to sacrifice himself or herself for its sake. But like the secret agent, too, the 'enemy of the party' could be identified only through clues. At this point, we may turn to the work of the sociologist Alois Hahn, who has proposed that wherever great importance is attached to secrecy there develops an art of interpretation of signs. This was undoubtedly true of the Comintern (and of the Stalinist party more generally), which tried many different ways to define the fine line between reality and appearance, conceived under Stalinism as radically dissociated.⁶⁷ According to the historian Carlo Ginzburg, a new hermeneutics emerged in the late nineteenth-century human and social sciences, based on a method of interpretation focussed on the analysis of singular cases, reliant upon minor details taken to be highly revealing. The symptom thus stood for the whole, the effect for the cause.⁶⁸ The Communist organizations seem to have drawn on the same paradigm. They developed a comparable method in which those involved learned to 'read the clues' so as to be able to track down the 'enemy'. Breach of the rules of conspiracy (concerned for the most part with minor matters such as 'loose talk' that allowed one to be identified as a student at the Lenin School, and so on) was no longer just a matter of the behaviour itself, but took on a further meaning, connected to something deeper, or even 'concealed'. It stood in particular for lack of discipline, described in Comintern-speak as the 'expression of residual petty-bourgeois individualism'. For Cadre Department officials, however, it meant even more, revealing someone unreliable, someone who had no regard either for the rules, that is, for direct instructions, or for the informal norms, the customary expectations, someone lacking both the ability to integrate into the collective and the inflexible commitment to party loyalty

that represented the supreme virtues of the Stalinist universe. So it was that control led to repression.

1.4 Surveillance and punishment

Originating essentially in the prerevolutionary period when the Bolsheviks operated in illegality, the rules of conspiracy changed in significance under Stalinism. In the 1930s, surveillance, discipline and repression formed a continuum. Not only did the 'screening' (*prosvechivanie* – 'fluoroscopy') of Communist cadres effect a symbolic suspension of the division between public and private to the advantage of the institution,⁶⁹ but with time the instances and techniques of control became yet more efficient and far-reaching.

The disciplinary techniques characteristic of the modern period have been familiar since Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*. Discipline and punishment in abundance one certainly found in the Soviet Union.⁷⁰ While surveillance of the population began as early as 1918, with the establishment of the Cheka,⁷¹ surveillance of the membership of the Bolshevik Party started in the early 1920s with the introduction of cadre control and the establishment of the Cadre Department of the Central Committee. As for the Comintern, it was in the late 1920s and the early 1930s especially that ever more stringent practices of political control were introduced.⁷²

Party members working for the Comintern first came under systematic control and surveillance with the establishment of its Cadre Department in 1932, though a start had probably been made as early as 1928, by other organs, more particularly the Cadre Section.⁷³ A similar body was set up in the ILS in December 1933.⁷⁴ The Cadre Department was one of the really powerful bodies within the Comintern. The data it collected and recorded flowed directly into the surveillance system of the Soviet state security organizations. Already in 1933, the Comintern and the International Red Aid (MOPR) were passing lists of 'dubious persons' to the NKVD.⁷⁵ Co-operating with the International Control Commission and to an increasing extent the party organization within the Comintern, which could expel members or impose other sanctions, it became one of the key institutions in the repression of Comintern cadres.⁷⁶ The Cadre Department's extensive and expanding powers in the 1930s⁷⁷ derived from its functions, defined as the 'prospection, selection, education and retention of cadres'.⁷⁸ This involved, among other things, 'support for the organization of international schools, the

direction of the same, control of the composition of their apparatus, and organizing the selection of student contingents for them'. Like the rest of the Comintern, the Cadre Department got caught up, in both the substance and manner of its activity, in the spiral of suspicion and repression that would culminate in the Great Terror. In 1936, two new tasks were confided to it: 'Supporting the parties in the struggle against provocation and espionage ..., struggle against the infiltration of enemy agents into the party', and 'supporting the parties in the organization of work among the political emigration to unmask class-enemy elements infiltrated into their ranks'.⁷⁹ (In the course of the Communist parties' assimilation of the model prescribed by the Comintern, similar institutions of cadre-surveillance were established within the individual national sections, as they were in the French party.⁸⁰) The ICC similarly reformulated its tasks that same year: 'in order to organise the work of the ICC more effectively, it is necessary that ... foreign and enemy elements, elements that have degenerated or decayed, scoundrels, traitors and *agents provocateurs* be ruthlessly driven out of the party'.⁸¹ A year later, the list of sins of omission and commission was even longer, with talk of 'traitors, alien and enemy elements, deceivers, degenerate elements, crooks, incorrigible factionists and party members who systematically breach the party conspiracy'.⁸² (With these developments, the ICC's tasks came to change significantly from what they had been on its establishment in 1921, when it had operated as a court, as it were, initiating investigations in cases of malfeasance, breach of discipline or other transgressions, while its judgment might also be invited from 'below' in cases of conflict between comrades.)

The new tasks required the registration, evaluation and categorization of cadres, every one of whom had to have a personal file, comprising the *anketa*, the *avtobiografiia*, written reports or certificates (*spravki*) and evaluations (*kharakteristiki*) emanating from different persons and organizations and, finally, relevant extracts from any documents referring to the individual concerned.⁸³ Moreover, every 'verification' and every transfer of membership to the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (A-UCP(b)) contributed to lists of those who had passed the 'cleansing', those who had not, and those who had been otherwise sanctioned by the party. At the Comintern schools, records were also kept of achievements in 'party and production work'.⁸⁴ The Comintern archives hold an estimated 120,000 of these 'cadre files'.⁸⁵ Even militants with few responsibilities sometimes prove to have an impressive dossier, especially if they were ever the object of an inquiry.

The cadre file of Sophie Kirschbaum, a Swiss woman working in the Comintern Press Department between 1935 and 1937, extends to well over 100 pages.⁸⁶

Though diverse in its origins, the corpus represented by the 'cadre files' is highly intertextual in nature, the documents mostly referring to one another. Factual data, third party information, and judgments or assessments of the member concerned were carried from one to the next, sometimes with modifications, sometimes copied wholesale. The social and political identity of the cadre thus found itself formed and reformed as interventions – by the member himself or herself as well as by others – succeeded each other. For even if the process of negotiation was dominated by the power of the party apparatus, members took part in it by filling in forms and supplying other personal information. Their degree of compliance varied, manifesting differing degrees of negotiated self-abnegation and self-revelation, as Claude Penetier and Bernard Pudal concluded from their examination of the autobiographies of French communists.⁸⁷ The chapters that follow will introduce us to the reality of those Communists who chose to work for the Comintern in the 1920s and 1930s – starting first with the women, less numerous than the men, but among whom such political commitment was also far less common at the time.

2

The New Woman

Amongst many others, American socialist and liberal journalists like Jessica Smith, Anna Louise Strong and Louise Bryant visited Russia and wrote enthusiastically of the revolution in women's roles. Gender relations, in particular women's position in society and politics, in the labour market and the family, were a domain of Soviet life where foreign visitors and communists coming to Moscow for the first time expected to see great advances. Since the time of early socialist Charles Fourier the status of women is taken as an index of progress, a view shared by communists and fellow travellers alike. In 1937, for example, the German writer Lion Feuchtwanger reported on his visit to the USSR, the 'fatherland of socialism'. 'How cheering it is', he wrote, 'to meet those young people who have been able to reap the first benefits of their Soviet up-bringing ... The future lies before them like a well-defined and carefully tended path through a beautiful landscape ... When, for example, a young woman student of the technical college, who a few years back was a factory worker, says to me: "A few years ago I could not write a single sentence of correct Russian, and today I can discuss with you in passable German the organization of an American automobile factory" ..., their pride seems justified'.¹

It was the expansion of professional, intellectual and cultural opportunities open to women that was for Feuchtwanger the true measure of the progress made by Soviet society. In invoking the advancement of women as tangible evidence of the success of the Soviet project, he mobilized an interpretative scheme in which the socially constructed difference between masculinity and femininity served as a signifier of progress: women commonly lagging behind men in their human development, their emancipation became a preferred indicator for the depth of social change.² For the communist parties, especially

those of the industrialized countries of Western Europe, this scheme both structured perceptions of the Soviet Union and functioned as an image of the communist future for capitalist countries. To promote such emancipation, specific structures were set up within communist organizations to carry out work in connection with women: the *Zhenotdel* (the Women's Department of the Central Committee Secretariat of the Soviet Communist Party) in 1917, the International Women's Secretariat of the Comintern in August 1920, and also women's sections within the communist parties. In the Soviet state's self-representation, its efforts were highly successful. Indeed, the new Constitution of December 1936 stated that women had achieved equality with men, a view echoed in the communist press the whole world over. Yet, the relation between the egalitarian political imaginary and social and symbolic practices was ambiguous, and often conflictual. Women's equality figured on the programmes of the Comintern and of communist parties almost from the start, yet there were hardly any women in party and Comintern leaderships.³ Pennetier and Pudal's 'feminism without feminism' sums up the contradictions of the situation well. The party wanted women to be involved, and took concrete steps to promote this, but its efforts were sapped by the lack of attention to gender difference and the absence of any theoretical grounding.⁴ It advocated companionate marriage, but left this to private arrangements. Dora Black, a British socialist soon to become Bertrand Russell's second wife, who visited the Soviet Union with him in 1920, identified the problem: 'One question which, as a good feminist, I put to the comrades was: How would women benefit from this new system? They were vague on this point; they had, apparently, not given it much thought. Of course women would be 'free' like other citizens, but they supposed that they would go on as usual'. A notable exception to this inattention was Alexandra Kollontai, she notes.⁵

One is prompted to ask, then, how gender relations were negotiated in the early decades of Soviet and international Communism, what space of political action was allowed to women within the Comintern, and how women did or did not make use of it. Indeed, while social and political actors appropriate and reproduce societal norms, discourses and dominant representations, they are also involved in their production. Actions are not a simple reflex of dominant norms, and historical research cannot assume a deductive one-to-one relation between norms and individual attitudes, for in any situation there is more or less room for individual options, critical adjustments and partial appropriations. No direct line can then be drawn from the level of norms to the level of

practices, and historians have to look for the logic of translations and the modes of mediation between these different registers.

2.1 New but still limited opportunities

The Bolshevik Revolution had established the principle of legal equality of the sexes.⁶ And the new regime was also busy imagining a welfare state responsive to women's needs – a radical innovation in politics, compared to the Western world of the 1920s and 1930s.⁷ In addition, the context of revolution followed by civil war had opened a space of political and social action to women. The Western communist parties reflected not only this promise of emancipation and the practical opportunities as yet non-existent in most countries, but also their real limits. The opening of political organizations to women's participation was one of the gains of the worker's movement, but was still far from being the norm in the political space of the time. Though varying from country to country, the communist parties early attracted a relatively large number of women activists and set up women's departments led by women, as exemplified in Britain by Helen Crawford.

At the Comintern, only about four per cent of the leadership were female,⁸ but a few women did rise to the top: Angelica Balabanova, from the Zimmerwald Left (1919), the German Clara Zetkin (1920–1933), then, during the Popular Front period, the motherly figure of Dolores Ibárruri and, during the war, Maria Krylova. The Communist University for National Minorities of the West (KUNMZ) was headed by a woman, Maria Frumkina, between 1925 and 1936, before her arrest in 1937. So were the International Lenin School (ILS) under Klavdiia Kirsanova, and International Red Aid (MOPR) under Elena Stasova, (until 1938), the latter a perfect German-speaker who, under the name of Lydia Wilhelm, had been head of Red Aid in Germany from 1921–1926. But women found particular opportunities for political office in the newly created International Women's Secretariat, staffed by former officials of the Socialist International and of the women's movement, such as the Australian Dora Montefiore, a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) leadership and a delegate to the Fifth World Congress of the Comintern in Moscow in 1924, Henriette Roland Holst from the Netherlands, Lucie Colliard from France and Rosa Bloch from Switzerland, as well as Russians no less famous, among them Nadezhda Krupskaya and Alexandra Kollontai. The French feminist Madeleine Pelletier noted this when she travelled to 'Communist Russia' in 1920–1921: 'Russia does not refuse women the right to concern

themselves with public affairs, as France does for example'. But in Soviet society, gender remained a constitutive feature of social relations, one that articulated relationships of power.⁹ She also noted that inside the ministries the women were mostly young typists; leadership positions were still reserved for men: 'Only men on the rostrum at the few public meetings I was able to attend; women were in the audience and they did not speak'.¹⁰ One aspect of this observation is confirmed by Barbara Evans Clements' prosopographical study of women Bolsheviks. She too concludes that there was an ongoing 'tacit understanding that it was the men's role to set policy and the women's to handle administration'.¹¹ Women were not passive. But they were not meant to exercise power.

The same sexual division of labour was to be found in the Comintern: few women in leadership positions, many more in administrative or what were called 'technical' functions (secretariat, translation, courier service). A highly detailed document on the composition of the apparatus on its complete reorganization in 1935 makes this clear.¹² Of the 12 staff in the secretariat of Dimitrov, officially secretary-general of the Comintern since the 7th World Congress, two were women: the stenographer and the typist. The ECCI section with the highest proportion of women was undoubtedly the translation section. Its organizational plan shows 62 posts, 28 of them for explicitly female typists. In fact, many other women worked there as translators or proofreaders, but the job titles in this case do not indicate gender. If the hierarchy remained dominated by men, a whole series of women nonetheless occupied intermediate positions. To cite only a few examples: Ana Rasumova, earlier editor of the journal *L'Orient Arabe* in Paris, was specialist analyst (*referent*) for the colonies in Manuilsky's secretariat, the German Martha Moritz, employed by the Comintern since August 1934, for the Scandinavian countries in Florin's secretariat. The latter would fall victim to the Terror in 1937.¹³ Two women were analysts in the powerful Cadre Department, the Bulgarian Stella Blagoeva responsible for the southern Latin countries (Italy, Spain, Portugal) and the Russian Varia Lebedeva, an employee of the Comintern since 1927 and Manuilsky's companion, for France, Belgium and Luxembourg. Another woman, the Ukrainian Serafima Hopner, at the Comintern since 1928, was deputy head of the Cadre Department, responsible within it for the cadre training section. This was not her first post of responsibility, for she had earlier been head of the Comintern's agitation and propaganda department. Women were often used as couriers, no doubt because the traditional representation of gender pictures them as innocent and apolitical. Bertha Zimmermann of Switzerland, at the Comintern

since 1924, thus worked for OMS, the communications and courier service of the Communist International, from 1931 onward. After missions abroad, to Prague and Paris amongst other destinations, in 1935 she became head of the courier section of the OMS in Moscow.¹⁴ The Frenchwoman Mounette Dutilleul, appointed a member of the cadre commission of the PCF in 1937, served early in the Second World War as liaison agent between the Paris Centre and Brussels, from where she was also sent on a clandestine mission to Moscow.¹⁵

2.2 Class against gender: the struggle as masculine

The promise of emancipation and the real though limited possibilities of acceding to salaried posts or offices of responsibility within communist and associated organizations were seized upon by many women, both in Soviet Russia and the West. At the base, too, communist organizations attracted women activists, not all of them workers. Under the influence of the tradition of social-democratic feminism, housewives too had their place in the party. Was the exploitation of wife by husband not also exploitation? The Bolsheviki advocated the socialization of domestic labour through the establishment of collective facilities or the provision of salaried services. Admittedly, it wasn't a question of making men do the work. The work would still be done by women, even if their double burden was denounced together with unequal pay. In the Soviet Union the sections of the *Zhenotdel* organized delegate meetings to try and mobilize less organized women such as housewives, white-collar workers, domestic servants and workers' wives. These 'schools of Communism' were intended to provide them with their first political experiences and an opportunity to acquire a certain amount of theory.¹⁶ In Germany in particular, where in 1928 women accounted for a sixth of the 130,000 party members, there developed strong women's organizations which campaigned for the decriminalization of abortion and for access to contraception with slogans such as women's right to control over their own bodies.¹⁷ In France, where the proportion of women was much lower, perhaps three or four per cent or even less in 1924, the party campaigned for women's suffrage.¹⁸ As Atina Grossmann comments on the initial dilemmas of communist politics concerning women, 'a women's program that simultaneously promised "women's liberation from pots and pans" and "protection for mother and child" proved difficult to negotiate'.¹⁹

However, these ambivalent, even contradictory, and hence conflicting and so negotiable discourses quickly become more homogeneous.

In the communist iconography of the second half of the 1920s, whether Soviet, British, French, German or Swiss, the working class is male. It is the man with the raised fist who represents the communist parties' image of themselves; it is he who stands for ardour in struggle, courage in physical confrontation, steeliness in the face of the 'class enemy'. The combative, even paramilitary ethos of certain communist parties brought about the masculinization of the modes of stylization and display of Bolshevik identity. The German communist party in particular organized itself for street-fighting. From the mid-1920s, women were excluded from the *Rotfrontkämpferbund* (Red Front Fighters' League), because they apparently had a detrimental effect on fighting spirit and more generally on the image of the organization. It was Ruth Fischer, secretary to the political bureau and so leader of the German communist party since May 1924, who communicated this decision to her women comrades.²⁰

The 'Bolshevization' of the communist parties – officially inaugurated in 1925, but in reality begun earlier²¹ – and the 'class against class' policy adopted three years later were aimed almost exclusively at 'proletarians'. With the strong militarization of political activity that they entailed, they appealed to the masculine. The characteristics required of militants were hardly applicable to women, if not as mere auxiliaries. From language to visual image, everything converged to depict activists and their militancy as male.²² 'The party' had to 'fight as one man'.²³ This masculinization did not go unopposed. Many women communists in Weimar Germany, former members of the Red Front Fighters' League, refused to renounce their militancy and continued to perform militaristic rituals in the Red Women and Girls' League, much to the annoyance of the leadership of League and Party alike.²⁴

As Elizabeth Wood contends, gender relations were exploited in the course of 'Bolshevization' as a means to control and discipline the parties of the Communist International. Thus Zinoviev announced in 1925 that parties would henceforth be judged on their success in organizing women workers.²⁵ Yet no concrete criterion of evaluation was established, which left the matter open to arbitrary judgment. Those who possessed the power of definition within the Comintern thus owned an instrument of domination of the first importance. In fact, communist parties risked being dressed down for 'passivity' if their results were not considered adequate, or for 'deviation' if they took too many initiatives.

During this same period, in the Soviet Union of the New Economic Policy (NEP), the last debates on the 'New Woman' and the 'new

morality' amongst the youth would soon more or less bring to an end the experimentation with new forms of everyday life (*byt*) and sexual reform – all the more as these positions were associated with Trotsky's Left Opposition. Alexandra Kollontai, the figure who more than anyone embodied this thinking for the West, would never again make a public statement on the question. The new Family Code of 1926 already reflected in part a more traditional and more conservative image of woman, in associating her with familial dependence. If the terms of the law did not give this explicit expression, the debate that preceded it certainly did.²⁶ The image of the woman commissar, in vogue during the period of civil war, had to give way to a more traditional representation.

The propaganda of the Western communist parties, for its part, adopted a miserabilist depiction of the female proletariat under capitalism, in total contrast with the happiness of Soviet women. Exploited proletarian, underprivileged mother, only Communism will free you! When the Swiss party celebrated International Women's Day in 1932, its press depicted the grim situation of women workers in capitalist countries in general and in Switzerland in particular.²⁷ It then submitted to its readers an extensive list of all the legal reforms required to realize sexual equality in Switzerland. It ranged from the introduction of women's suffrage and equal pay to the decriminalization of abortion and generous maternity provision. But the accompanying comment must have left the reader wondering why the demands were presented at all, claiming as it did that women had no hope of achieving any of these things under capitalism. The situation was, however, quite different in the Soviet Union, where Russian²⁸ women had enjoyed all these rights for years. So there 'is another horizon for you [women] ... and it is towards that you must now turn ... Look at what is being done now in this great country of Russia'.²⁹

In fact, communist organizations had experienced from the beginning a certain difficulty in the definition of female identity. If the traditional staging of femininity in terms of elegance, jewellery and make-up could only be considered bourgeois, the adoption by women of masculine styles was also rejected, and androgyny too was out of the question, not only because Communism had not given up its gendered representation of the world, but also because such a conception was associated with feminism. And with Bolshevization the communist parties were tireless in marking their distance from what they stigmatized as a 'bourgeois movement'. (Only after the shift to the Popular Front policy in 1935 did communist parties allow their cadre to work on women's issues with non-party feminist organizations.)

A woman's interest independent of the workers' interest was suspect, the key criterion for communist politics being class rather than gender. Which in turn led to a real problem of classification. In what social category should women workers be placed? Woman, or proletarian? And more complicated again: what about housewives? The organization of women, one could say, posed epistemological problems for the communist parties. In fact, their conceptualization of the situation rested on the premise that women were either afflicted by 'false' consciousness, or had no class consciousness at all. That they were 'passive' or 'indifferent' was the assessment of the Communist International at its Third Congress in 1921, largely devoted to 'the women's question'. It concluded that 'the masses of passive working women who are outside the movement – the housewives, office workers and peasant women who are still under the influence of the bourgeois world-view, the church and tradition, and have no links with the great liberation movement for communism' represented a 'great danger'.³⁰ Unlike the *Zhenotdel*, which claimed for women an important role in the transformation of society, party leaderships in both the Soviet Union and the West tended to think of them as a negative influence.³¹

The place accorded to women in the political struggle was determined by the communist definition of class consciousness. This tended to a double exclusion of women. On the one hand, class consciousness was primarily associated with the workers in certain sectors, such as iron and steel or construction, on which political activity was increasingly specifically focussed. Such occupations hardly matched dominant conceptions of femininity, and few women were employed in them. On the other hand, the communist parties tended to locate the expression of class consciousness exclusively in the party and the unions, organizations governed by the expectation of a paroxysmal and cathartic confrontation between classes. These were sites socially and culturally dominated by men. Forms and spaces of activism produced by male socialization were thus taken for the expression of 'class consciousness'. By contrast, the modes of political action characteristic of female identity were not generally so understood.³² A housewives' boycott of a shop that was overcharging would not be as valuable as a steelworkers strike. To understand why women had only a secondary role in Bolshevik politics, one has to remember that Communism, in its structuring of the space of power, denied almost any symbolic capital to gender, when it was not considered antinomic to that of class.

If in the early years the communist parties had maintained a certain haziness and displayed in practice a certain tolerance regarding the

representation of class identity, Bolshevization would put an end to this. First of all, the criterion of class belonging was no longer interpreted as intellectual commitment to a political project, but as a matter of social origin. From this perspective, doubt was cast on the loyalty to the working class of women militants from middle class professional backgrounds: doctors, teachers, journalists, lawyers. Whether single, or married to a man himself in a professional or intellectual occupation, it was often through their involvement in middle-class voluntary work or in the social democratic left that this kind of woman joined the party in the early 1920s.³³ With the turn to 'class against class', they were increasingly considered as potential foreign bodies. The party now turned its attention to women workers and, in accordance with the assimilation of wives to their husbands, workers' wives were regarded as presenting the best opportunities for recruitment. The initial conceptual dilemma was thus dissolved *de facto* with the workerist turn of the mid-1920s. It was to 'the other half of the *proletariat*' that Bolshevized organizations addressed themselves, not primarily the other *gender*. The Czechoslovak Communist Party, which could boast of the highest proportion of women members (24 per cent in 1924, more even than the Soviet party), was thus criticized because they were chiefly housewives rather than women workers.³⁴ When in June 1931 Kuusinen called on communist parties to organize delegate meetings for women, delegates were to be elected by 'meetings at the workplace' and in 'rayons' and 'districts' – and 'only one-fifth of them should be unemployed or housewives'.³⁵

The conflict around communist women's organizations ended in their clear subordination to the party's political objectives. They became, in Stalin's terms, a simple 'transmission belt' between the party and 'the masses'.³⁶ Their relative organizational autonomy was gradually squeezed out through ever-increasing centralization by a technology of power that constantly set them in competition with the unions.³⁷ The communist organizations had to adopt the Soviet model of the delegate meetings, whose goal and effect was to tie the women's movement more closely to party cells.³⁸ *Die Kommunistische Fraueninternationale*, the Comintern monthly for women, published in 10,000 copies, was closed in 1925. The last International Congress of Communist Women took place in 1926. The women's sections of the communist parties were replaced by simple commissions in the second half of the 1920s. Despite the protests of its staff, the international secretariat led by Clara Zetkin, and afterwards by another German, Hertha Sturm (her real name Edith Schumann, a doctor of political science), lost its autonomous status to

become a department of the Comintern in 1926. Its new head, Varvara Moirova, was one of the leading members of the women's section of the central committee of the Soviet party. And in another sign of growing Soviet ascendancy, the headquarters moved from Berlin to Moscow. The women's department of the Soviet Communist Party was abolished in its turn in 1930, chiefly to accommodate the conservative attitudes of the population. The 'women's question' was declared to be settled, for women were now on an equal footing with men in the process of production. In the words of Lazar Kaganovich, first secretary of the party's Moscow city committee, propaganda was henceforth to treat the Soviet woman 'not as woman but rather as party worker, fully equal'.³⁹

The effort to impose a homogeneous model of representation on the Comintern and the national parties had met with some success by the late 1920s.⁴⁰ This was true not just in terms of the Stalinization of the political line, but also in terms of social standardization, a phenomenon on which considerable research remains to be done. We must limit ourselves here, then, to a few unsystematic observations. In the Soviet party, after Stasova's replacement by three men in 1920, no other woman would be secretary of the Central Committee.⁴¹ In most European communist parties, the numbers of women would fall, as would their representation on leading bodies, while those who remained would be less socially diverse. In the Swiss CP, the proportion of women members fell from 15.4 per cent in 1921 to 12.5 per cent in 1927, and then to seven per cent in 1935.⁴² In France, where the proportion of women had been particularly low from the start, it even fell to 0.6 per cent in 1929. At the highest level of the party, their share was simply non-existent: in 1937, not one of 50 members of the Central Committee was a woman.⁴³ The American CP fared better, with 26.1 per cent of the membership and 12.8 per cent of the Central Committee being women in 1936.⁴⁴ In the British Party, women's share rose from 11 per cent in 1922 to around 15 per cent in 1934 and even to a comparatively high 26 per cent by the end of the war.⁴⁵ No doubt, the attraction for women of liberal, professional or reformist socialist backgrounds was partly due to the generally progressive tenor of Popular Front policy.⁴⁶ This was not the case for other legal parties such as the French or the Swiss, in countries where women did not yet have the vote.

In substance, it would appear that it was single women and middle-class women who disappeared from the party in the early 1920s, or at least slipped towards the fringes – notwithstanding the various national appropriations of the Comintern line. Many had played leading roles, especially, but not only, in women's organizations, like Dora Montefiore.

In the Swiss case, people like Rosa Grimm, the ex-wife of Socialist Party leader Robert Grimm, a woman of Russian Jewish origins who had been the cultural editor of the party's main daily paper in the 1920s, or Minna Tobler-Christinger and Paulette Brupbacher, both physicians who fought for sexual reform and women's rights, found themselves marginalized, though they did not leave the party. This erosion in women's membership and involvement is explained in part by the party's increasing workerism, as a good number came from middle-class backgrounds and worked in the professions. But it was also the result of the party's ever more vehement rejection of the feminist as cultural model, as represented by Madeleine Pelletier in France, Stella Browne in Great Britain and Alexandra Kollontai in the Soviet Union.⁴⁷ This was the model adopted by the young French militant Jeannette Vermeersch, who sought to mark her status as an 'emancipated woman' by smoking, wearing trousers and cutting her hair short. The French Communist party leader Maurice Thorez, who at the beginning of the 1930s undertook the 'party education' of his new lover, objected to this symbolic project: 'But why do you cut your hair like that, and why do you smoke? ... You know very well that the women of the Nord [the French *département* of her birth], the women factory workers, don't go for that kind of look, they won't recognize you when you go back'.⁴⁸

2.3 Gender within class: a woman's place

Towards the end of the period of the so-called 'cultural revolution' of 1929–1931, characterized by a millenarian voluntarism and the proletarianization of elites and social relationships, Stalinism proposed to Soviet women a specific mode of identification.⁴⁹ Their loyalty was to be gained by the prospect of new career possibilities. The 'woman shock-worker' received official public recognition and her standard of living improved markedly thanks to the linking of wages to productivity.⁵⁰ According to Thomas Schrand, this followed the positing of a link between the employment of women and the fulfilment of the five-year plan,⁵¹ women coming to be considered as an economic resource. Similarly, the collectivization of agriculture led to the feminization of the peasantry, eroding the patriarchal structure of the agricultural production unit both symbolically and substantively and prompting a vast exodus of men to the urban centres.⁵²

In the 1930s, visual representations of Soviet life took a turn to the feminine, as the journals *USSR in Construction* and *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* amply testify, even if there was a diversity of gender images.

Photographs of women shock-workers and laughing women tractor-drivers were also widely circulated through the Western communist press.⁵³ Gender was not only a tool of domestic mobilization and foreign propaganda, it also became a means to represent the relationship between the State and the people. In many triumphant Socialist Realist paintings, the State was represented by Stalin, 'Father of the Nation', while the nation itself was represented by women.⁵⁴

This recourse to gender difference was not only figurative. The values and dispositions customarily ascribed to women were revalorized, the Stalinist system now designating women's supposed preparedness for self-sacrifice for the sake of the family as essential to the viability of Soviet society, while the identification of woman with her role as housewife and mother that the Bolsheviks had viewed as reactionary in the years following the Revolution was now promoted in consequence:⁵⁵ this was no longer a potential threat to the regimes' policy and objectives but on the contrary a means to their realization. Alongside the promotion of behavioural norms emphasizing rationality, hygiene, responsibility, discipline and commitment to effective work and continuing education, Stalinism reintroduced a form of 'traditional' femininity based on family, motherhood and the artifice of beauty.⁵⁶ In the effort to 'civilise' Soviet society – to promote *kul'turnost*, or 'culturedness' – the chief role fell to the 'New Woman'.⁵⁷ The 'return of the lampshade' (Svetlana Boym) brought with it the valorization of motherhood. It was women's role to 'embellish' life, as Stalin put it. It was their duty too to reproduce it through motherhood, a social role valorized by the inclusion of 'state protection of the interests of mother and child' as a fundamental premise of women's exercise of their rights in the Soviet Constitution of 1936 (Art. 122). Yet women's contribution to production remained as indispensable as ever. In the second half of the 1930s, the place of worker and peasant women in Stalinist society was thus defined in terms of both production and reproduction. Despite the new emphasis on child-rearing, however, women's role in the workforce was still the main concern of official efforts. According to Roberta Manning, in 1936 *Pravda* published more pictures of women at work than of women as mothers. While there were 13 pictures of women pilots and 99 pictures of Stakhanovite women, only 15 showed mothers.⁵⁸ As *USSR in Construction* puts it: 'The joy of motherhood and the joy of work are not contradictory but complementary in the USSR'.⁵⁹ The price to be paid was the reinforcement and quasi-official validation of the 'double burden' borne by women as the crèches and other services promised failed to materialize.

How did foreign communists in the Soviet Union and the Western European communist parties react to this ideological turn? Any assessment must take account of at least two aspects. Firstly, while the communist world was a transnational world characterized by common political orientations and shared cultural values, rules and codes, it was also one in which Comintern directives were regularly transmitted from Moscow to the national sections. But while technologies of power and inherent organizational mechanisms promoted conformity, such institutional constraint does not explain everything. Throughout the 1930s, the Soviet Union remained despite everything a model for all the communist parties. Secondly, however, the return to a certain conservatism in matters of gender was not limited to the Soviet Union, especially in the second half of the 1930s. State concern about birth rates and consequent reinforcement of family structures and values were to be found not just in Fascist Italy and National Socialist Germany but also democratic countries such as Switzerland and France.⁶⁰ Approval and adoption of the new Soviet policy by Western European communists thus expressed not only adjustment to developments in the USSR but also an adaptation to their own immediate cultural environment.

Cognitive adjustment to the Soviet turn was not for all that a frictionless process, illustrating the fact that the definition of social reality involves a process of negotiation between various groups of agents. The law 'On the Protection of Motherhood and Childhood' of May 1936 that prohibited abortion and the campaign in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* that preceded it were often met by incomprehension on the part of Western communists living in the country.⁶¹ And although some among the foreigners agreed with the new legislation, there was also criticism expressed. The Frenchwoman Lise London, then a shorthand typist at the Comintern, remembers the indignation and protest of her female colleagues, which, however, did nothing to stop them voting approval of the law at an official meeting.⁶² Dissenting voices were also heard at the Ernst Thälmann Club for Foreign Workers (their most important meeting-place in Moscow), at workplace meetings, and at party meetings at the Hotel Lux.⁶³ If these often raised practical objections such as those canvassed in the Soviet press (the shortage of housing, the lack of contraceptives or of child-care facilities), there was also opposition in principle. The Hungarian Communist Ervin Sinkó, who lived in Moscow from May 1935 to April 1937, noted for example his disconcertion at the anti-abortion campaign that preceded the legislation.⁶⁴ It was especially a shock for women doctors like Martha Ruben-Wolf, who had been a leading militant in the campaign for the legalization

of abortion in Germany and had been providing abortions herself.⁶⁵ How could something that the communist parties of the capitalist world were demanding as an emancipatory right for women find itself abolished in the Soviet Union? This puzzled not just Sinkó and Ruben, but a meeting of foreign car-workers in Gor'kii. Their resolution, followed by a letter to one of the big Moscow papers, 'that there shouldn't be legislation in the Soviet Union that we have fought against in the capitalist countries', earned the head of the Foreigners' Office a reprimand for not having prevented the whole business; and the organizer of the meeting was informed upon his imprisonment some years later that that was why he was being locked up.⁶⁶ According to Lise London, the German Josef Eisenberger, head of the Comintern's Translation Department, described the criticisms expressed at a party meeting as remnants of anarcho-syndicalism.⁶⁷ In 1937–1938 criticism of the new law was interpreted as expressing an 'anti-Soviet' attitude. Under interrogation, a Polish feminist émigré confessed to the NKVD that she 'had anti-Soviet feelings concerning some measures of the Party and the Soviet government – the law prohibiting abortion, the arrest of foreigners'.⁶⁸ Measures were also taken against those who did not denounce women having abortions. This happened to the party secretary at the International Lenin School when he knew that a student had had an abortion but did not report it to the *partkom*.⁶⁹ There also seems to have been something of a gender split in views about this political decision (or at least in some public statements on the matter). As Ervin Sinkó recalls, Friedrich Wolf, another well-known German communist physician who had proudly presented him and others his Moscow clinic where abortions were performed, some time later publicly argued in favour of a severe ban in a *Pravda* article.⁷⁰

Voices were raised against the new legislation in certain communist parties, but these opponents, mostly women, remained in a minority and had little real influence on decision-making bodies, where women were little represented. This was the case, for instance, in the Swiss Communist Party. Some individual reactions were, however, quite severe in their condemnation, a letter to the French-language weekly *La Lutte* even describing the decision as 'a brutal regression to the capitalist system'.⁷¹ But these dissenting positions quickly vanished. The French CP followed the Soviet change of orientation and dropped the demand for abortion rights just as the Popular Front came to power.⁷² And in May 1936, the very month the proposed Soviet anti-abortion legislation was published, the high-circulation communist magazine *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* offered a double-page photo-reportage entitled

'A Soviet Citizen Is Born' with pictures full of bonny babies and happy mothers.⁷³ A little earlier, it had printed an article by Anna Louise Strong, an American journalist who had lived in the Soviet Union for years, a report on Soviet women and marriage first published in the magazine *The American Mercury*. In this the author claimed that the most important aspect was bringing up children together, for 'No normal person wants to be childless'.⁷⁴ In Western Europe, though, not all the 'old guard' had taken the new line on board. At precisely the same moment, the then already relatively marginalized Rosa Grimm made fun of Mothers' Day in the daily paper of the Swiss CP. For her, it was just another hypocritical capitalist invention to boost sales and distract attention from the miserable life of many mothers.⁷⁵

The Western communist parties, however, quickly adapted to the new Soviet orientation. The celebration of the family found notable expression in the self-presentation of French communist party leader Maurice Thorez, and this performative appropriation of 'family values' was echoed in the rhetoric and programme of the French CP.⁷⁶ Other communist parties did not lag behind. In the second half of the 1930s, for example, the visual imagery of the Swiss CP valorized the social and individual stability associated with family life. The family was as important to men as to women, but if the father's responsibility was evoked and reinforced – 'a true communist looks after his family' – this was done on the basis of an attribution of roles that assigned to the woman the chief responsibility for the care and upbringing of children.⁷⁷ And despite the symmetry that might be suggested by the attention also paid to the paternal role, the maternal role was taken to be not so much a social function as a 'natural' characteristic of women.⁷⁸ At this time, a woman communist was also a mother, this role being more frequently highlighted. When one such was condemned to death by the National Socialists in Germany, the women's newspaper of the Swiss CP presented her first of all as 'an attentive mother' who 'with touching care, after a hard day's work' would 'learn what her baby had done that day, its state of health'.⁷⁹ While Communist motherhood might be modern and rational, it was always a feminine role, and this appeal to the feminine did not go unanswered among the membership. 'It must never be forgotten that the woman activist is not just a comrade in struggle, but also a woman', one reads in another Swiss communist publication in 1937. 'That is the way of nature. Socialism changes nothing of that'.⁸⁰

A life of Communist activism, and life in the Soviet Union more particularly, would, however, often entail a very different reality. For an international activist like Ana Pauker, the needs of the organization

took priority over her role as mother. Sent to France by Manuilsky in autumn 1930, as special organizational instructor of the ECCI, she had to leave her two children (Vlad, born in 1925, and Tatiana, born in 1928) in a MOPR children's home in the Soviet Union. She stayed two years in Paris, where she met Eugen Fried, also on a secret mission for the Comintern. Their child Maria was born in Moscow in December 1932, but would be brought up by the parents of Fried's new partner, Aurore, at that point still Maurice Thorez's first wife, and then, from the age of six onward, by Aurore herself, who looked after her till the end of the war, alongside her own son by Thorez.⁸¹ Dolores Ibárruri, the famed 'La Pasionaria' of Spain, four of whose six offspring died in childhood, decided to send 11-year-old Amaya and 14-year-old Rubén, the two survivors, to the Soviet Union for safety, while she remained in Spain.⁸² For her it was a painful personal 'sacrifice', as she wrote in her memoirs, which she accepted for the sake of the revolutionary struggle. She would rejoin them at the end of the Civil War. The two American communists Gene and Peggy Dennis, on the other hand, had to leave their child in Moscow when they went back home in the late 1930s. Their five-year-old son spoke only Russian, since the Ivanovo and Monino homes for the children of foreign communists had no teacher of English or Spanish. This was why, Elena Stasova wrote in a letter to André Marty, Comrade Ryan's boy (Ryan being Eugene Dennis's pseudonym) had completely forgotten his mother tongue. 'Such a mistake should not be repeated,' she declared.⁸³ The Comintern leadership thus thought he would represent a danger, revealing his parent's links to Moscow. The latter were grievously unhappy, but they complied.⁸⁴ In another case, Stasova wrote to the German Wilhelm Pieck, the Comintern secretary responsible for the Balkans, that a Comrade Stroganova wanted to see her children in the children's home, but had not been allowed to. To which Pieck answered that the two children were not to be returned to her, as 'she ha[d] no aptitude whatsoever for educating the children in the Soviet spirit'.⁸⁵ In this, Pieck was following official directives, though giving them a twist of his own: in 1936, Manuilsky had written to Yezhov that the Comintern now had to make sure that political émigrés coming from communist parties working in illegality received a Bolshevik education,⁸⁶ and Pieck seems to have applied this to their children as well.

As the responsibility for looking after and bringing up children always fell primarily if not exclusively to women, their commitment to politics was always tinged with ambiguity and contradiction, for both them and the organization. Indispensable to the operation of the communist

parties and the Comintern apparatus, women were, however, for the most part relegated to subaltern functions. In the Communist parties, they mainly fell into the category of 'supporters', as Sue Bruley has called them. They did work that could be seen as servicing the party branch rather than being directly political in itself.⁸⁷ Those who nonetheless occupied posts of responsibility, 'cadres', were an oddity, even if in principle they enjoyed equal rights. They were accorded somehow the status of 'honorary men', as one woman who had worked as a journalist on the *Daily Worker* put it.⁸⁸ But most women activists were occupied with 'women's work', with anti-war and relief organizations. In the hierarchy of the Comintern and the communist parties these sites of 'female' activism were seen as cultural, and clearly considered of less significance than those typically invested by men, seen as properly political. This ambivalence regarding women's place in political activity was reflected in visual representations that tended to avoid connotations of militant activism. In the visual imagery of the 1930s PCF, striking women were rarely depicted in action. They were rather pictured out of context, away from the workplace and from any suggestion of conflict, such as a picket line.⁸⁹ Within the communist movement, the division of labour between men and women coincided with the traditional association of the one sex with the public, and the other with the private sphere.

There were exceptions, but these were most often associated, as we have seen, with periods of social instability and disruption, such as the early years of the revolution and of the Comintern itself. The exemplary instance for the second half of the 1930s is provided by the Spanish Civil War. Here, as elsewhere, one can see a labour of symbolic transformation. When women militia were still tolerated in the Republican forces, communist newspapers portrayed them as young, good-looking and generally cheerful, robbing them of their status as real soldiers. But even 'demasculinized' in this way, service in the militia never accorded with accepted ideas of feminine behaviour. The communist newspaper *Femmes en Suisse romande* felt obliged to 'explain' it, which immediately singled it out as something exceptional. 'Why', the women writers asked, in an article of January 1937, had 'so many pretty Spanish women', 'as feminine as could be, in both appearance and attitudes', felt obliged to take up arms? Why did they 'wear the peaked cap and carry the rifle of the militia-men'? A formulation that in passing defines the weapon as a masculine attribute. We then learn that they behave this way because they have no choice. An extraordinary situation calls for extraordinary behaviour: they have 'risen up in all the admirable beauty of their deathless hatred of Fascism and taken up the rifle'.⁹⁰

Women themselves tended to consider their political activity to be secondary to that of the men, in the first place to that of their own husbands. Even when they were cadres, and identified themselves as such, like Jeannette Vermeersch, the second wife of Maurice Thorez, they could reduce or give up their political activity for the sake of their role as mothers,⁹¹ or to support the husband in his work. Relieving a husband of domestic burdens or helping him in his own work itself came to be seen as party work. Lilly Korpus, a member of the KPD district leadership in Berlin in the 1920s, a journalist and later editor-in-chief of the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*, gave up her own career in exile in the Soviet Union between 1936 and 1945, assisting her husband, the communist writer Johannes Becher, by translating for the newspaper he edited. In any event, it fell to the wives of political leaders constantly engaged in business and often on the move to keep the home fires burning. As Marjorie Pollitt says in her autobiography, 'Harry was more away than at home for many years, speaking at meetings all over the country'.⁹² Her husband however encouraged her 'not to be just "Harry Pollitt's wife" but a political activist in my own right'. Which she was, at the local level. Another aspect of her political activity, what she calls 'our work together', involved supporting her husband in his role as leader of the British CP: 'He got me to read every article he wrote and, where I could, to improve the structure of sentences, correct his spelling or look up appropriate quotes from Marx or Lenin'.⁹³ Peggy Dennis, another party leader's wife who had herself spent years on missions for the Comintern, explains how, once back in the United States, she came to accept the loss of her 'individual public identity'. Unable to reconcile the roles of activist and wife, she decided to adopt Gene's work as her own: 'Gene and his work and his needs became sublimated into being my special political contribution'.⁹⁴

The Comintern thus offered women a rare opportunity for political engagement and access to a public realm as yet off limits to women. There, women were not passive participants but actors in the full sense. Yet the fields of political activity open to women were closely tied to the private and the domestic. Despite repeated declarations in favour of the equality of men and women,⁹⁵ the communist system was pervaded by a symbolic violence that minimized the social value of women's waged work and of women's political activism. In matters of gender, Communism in its Bolshevik and Stalinist versions did not escape what Roland Barthes called the 'reality effect', which establishes as a natural phenomenon precisely that which it constructs. In the process of the elaboration of difference, feminine images and social roles were more

ephemeral and contradictory than the more stable and consistent representations of masculine identity. The martial model of the early 1920s was applicable to both sexes, even if different in its effects in the two cases. Similarly, the post-1935 call to shoulder family responsibilities was addressed to both men and women. And communist discourse, in the Soviet Union as well as in Western Europe, ceaselessly insisted that marriage was a relation between 'equal' comrades. It was just that the priorities this implied were different. If men were called to order, this was primarily in order to promote discipline at work, employee turnover being one of the great problems in the USSR. Yet stabilization of both home and workplace was a goal shared by the countries of the West – though in the Soviet Union, unlike elsewhere, women were not asked to give up working, except in the case of the elites. They were expected rather to combine motherhood and waged work, a pattern adopted in part by communist parties elsewhere. In this respect, the family-centric cultural model promoted by the communists in the second half of the 1930s did not represent a simple return to conservative values, expressing rather what Barbara Evans Clements has dubbed a 'modernized patriarchy'.⁹⁶ It also represented the embryo of the modern conception of the woman's role that gradually imposed itself in post-war industrial societies. Yet this new representation of women's identity maintained the old hierarchies among different roles: the mother came before the worker, the wife prioritized her husband's political work above her own, and the woman communist acted first of all to defend children and those who could not help themselves.⁹⁷ Despite the equality officially proclaimed, women cadres in the Comintern were often faced with difficult choices between political and familial responsibilities.

3

In Stalin's Moscow

'Terrific and terrifying' – these were the words of Richard Bernaschek, Austrian left social democrat and Linz regional commander of the *Schutzbund* (his party's paramilitary organization), reporting in 1934 on his visit to the Soviet Union.¹ The American engineer Zara Witkin used very similar terms, recalling in his memoir a 'Russia, land of horror and hope',² while the Austrian writer and arts journalist Hugo Huppert more expansively evoked 'a vastly creative, massively disappointing yet inspiring revolutionary process'.³ Western communists' accounts of their experience of the Soviet Union are full of such contrasts and ambivalences. All had had great expectations of that 'longed-for' land, eagerly and impatiently awaiting the day of departure, feeling 'almost mad with joy' at the sight of the border railway station of Negoreloe and waving 'as if possessed' at the Red Army soldiers, before suffering disappointment on arrival in Moscow:⁴ this is a pattern to be found everywhere in memoirs and autobiographies. The long and arduous trek to the Soviet Union was a journey to the land of hope, the passage of the border a profoundly happy arrival 'home' – these are the figures that organise the recollections of these travellers to the Soviet Union. Like clichés in general, these *topoi* represent not realistic descriptions but widely current and ready-to-hand cognitive and perceptual schemata. In some cases, such language can come across as propagandistic exaggeration in its compulsive enthusiasm, as for example in a pamphlet published by the Austrian communist youth organization in 1937, in which a Young Communist recalled his sleepless night and commented: 'Never have I felt so joyful and excited as on my journey to the Soviet Union'.⁵

The subject of this chapter, then, is the experience of these foreign communists once they arrived in Moscow, their conditions of life and

their legal situation in the Soviet Union, looking not only at official entry and immigration policies and questions of everyday life but also at the institutional and professional frameworks within which cadres from 'sister parties' and other foreigners immigrating into the Soviet Union operated.⁶

3.1 The confrontation with Soviet everyday life

While left-wing visitors' and immigrants' expectations of the Soviet Union were almost uniformly positive, actual confrontation with Soviet reality provoked a range of different reactions. Many initially maintained their enthusiasm after arrival. The German actor Alexander Granach – who played in *Kämpfer*, director Gustav von Wangenheim's film on the Reichstag Fire Trial, shot in Moscow in 1935 – noted, fascinated, in a letter of 3 May that year that 'first impressions, the bustling activity, the women's faces, the many splendid-looking children, the sense of work and speed, are fantastic'.⁷ Two years later, his tone was disillusioned: 'I've been sitting here now four months without work, and soon it will be a whole month since I applied for an exit visa, getting fobbed off day after day'.⁸ Here we hear not so much the convinced communist and internationalist as the artist whose relationship with the Soviet Union depends on his being given work to do.

Yet even when personal disappointment was great, whether of account of problems of everyday life or of the intra-party repression provoked by Kirov's murder, many maintained their essential hope in the Soviet Union as a social and political project. The German actress and writer Hedda Zinner, who went to the Soviet Union in 1935, together with her husband Fritz Erpenbeck, described later how she long sought 'to save myself from seeing the truth': 'We greeted every Soviet success with enthusiasm, the hard-won lessons of the past led us to endorse revolutionary severities, we failed to understand the lawless degeneration in the time of the personality cult, seeking the incomprehensible law behind it. As good friends, comrades whose innocence I had vouched for were imprisoned, a world collapsed for me, yet I still had my world view. And when I was once again able to survey the world about me, I saw that history was on the whole proceeding in accordance with this view; the defects of capitalism were no less, the achievements of socialism were greater, the land in which we had experienced so much beauty and so much difficulty had become a world power – a power for peace. Yes, history sometimes demands an inhuman patience of us'.⁹

The quote above displays an attitude widespread among those foreigners who did not become 'renegades' after leaving the Soviet Union: their own negative feelings and experiences were rationalized as the products of cultural and to some extent social differences, and criticism had to be withheld for the sake of politics. Such people's relationships to the Soviet Union were complex and many-sided, but these different aspects were hierarchically ordered in the sense that the political always took precedence over the personal, and one's personal life was in the last analysis only justified through one's political activities and stances.¹⁰ So it was that Hugo Huppert, for example, could comment in his diary on the many railway accidents in the Soviet Union: 'Grim irony: the land of industrial giants has not yet mastered technology; it has embarked upon socialism with malfunctioning machinery and drunken engine drivers'.¹¹ And it was this same Austrian writer and journalist, living in Moscow since 1928 and working there as arts editor of the *Deutsche Zentral-Zeitung* from 1934,¹² who rebuked Georg Lukács at a party meeting, insisting that the USSR was no alien land: 'We are not in exile here', he said, 'Here we are in our own homeland'.¹³ All those foreigners to whom the Soviet Union had offered political refuge had hardly any choice but to see that country as their last chance, and clung to their hopes with all the energy of despair. For many, a return to their land of origin was out of the question, for political or other reasons.

Women, for example, might have lost their citizenship by marrying a foreigner – as was then the rule in many countries, among them Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The Zurich-born Viktoria (Dora) Krützner-Kern, who had married a German, found herself in such a situation in 1937 when her application for Soviet citizenship was turned down and she had to leave. Only by divorcing her husband would she be able to return to Switzerland, for he himself had been expelled from the country in 1931 and could not expect to be granted another residence permit. It was therefore entirely understandable that in her letter requesting the intercession of the Moscow representative of the Swiss CP she should emphasize her attachment to the USSR and her integration into Soviet society. The relatively privileged position she had until recently enjoyed as a 'literary employee' of the *Deutsche Zentral-Zeitung* and the wife of a well-paid foundry manager provided the material basis for such a claim. Her use of words, too, suggests that she had in the meantime learnt to speak and to think in 'Soviet'. She knew in what kind of terms one had to speak of the Soviet Union, which factors would make her appear a good communist and

which not. 'Why do I not want to leave?', she asks, rhetorically, in her letter. 'In the 5 years I have been here I have become a Soviet person, I am actively involved in social life and for years now have not felt a foreigner. I love and have always loved the Soviet Union ... The Soviet Union has become for me, as for so many foreign workers, my true homeland ... My banishment has brought with it the end of my life's most cherished hopes'.¹⁴

In the second half of the 1930s, unqualified support and defence of the Soviet Union became the routine duty of all Communists. Likewise, party members in the USSR had to be involved in various organizations, in 'social life,' so as to participate in socialist construction and demonstrate their solidarity with the system. In return, they could expect to be counted a member of the great Party family and to be publicly recognized by the Soviet authorities as a useful member of society. It was the breakdown in this mutual exchange that Dora Krützner-Kern sought to explain to herself in 1937: 'Not knowing the grounds for my exclusion, I am of course entirely in the dark. I am not aware of any instance whatever of anti-Soviet behaviour on my part, and as a long-time member of the *Komsomol* it naturally grieves me greatly ... to know that I do not enjoy the confidence of the Soviet power'.¹⁵

Her skills in 'Soviet' argumentation availed her not at all, however, for with the start of the Great Terror 'Stalin broke all the rules of the game', in American historian John Arch Getty's striking formulation.¹⁶ The 'enemy' was no longer characterized by determinate political or social attributes, and the notion of 'enemy of the people' that came into circulation in the Great Terror could mean anything and everything. Her husband Fritz Krützner-Kern was imprisoned in August 1937 and extradited to Germany in March the following year, while she and her son were deported to Switzerland in November 1937. The Soviet/Stalinist perceptual and interpretative frameworks that had been learnt and to a great extent internalized thus became largely useless. More generally, this new Soviet anti-foreigner policy meant for many Communists the end of a simultaneously political and personal project that had begun, full of hope, two decades earlier.

3.2 The age of 'proletarian internationalism'

If visitors, whether communists or sympathizers, were numerous, those who settled in the Soviet Union were fewer. They generally arrived either as foreign employees of the Comintern or its ancillary organizations, as political refugees, or, for a time, as technicians or skilled

workers. The right of asylum in the case of 'political or religious persecution' was recognized by an early decree, and the principle was enshrined in the 1918 Constitution (Article 21), although it was expected that the refugees would stay only as long as they were in danger or needed to recuperate before returning to the political struggle in their home countries. The chief ground on which asylum was granted was persecution for revolutionary activities.¹⁷ The Constitution of 1936 likewise granted the right of asylum to those who were persecuted for defending the interests of the working people, and also extended the relevant grounds of persecution to include 'scientific activities' and 'struggle for national liberation' (Article 129). In terms of political rights, the Soviet Union treated employed foreigners in the same way as Soviet citizens – that is, subject to the same class requirement that they be workers or peasants.¹⁸ The crucial dividing line in early Soviet legal thinking was drawn not between citizens and foreigners, but between social classes and political camps. As Benjamin Nathans has argued, the Bolshevik Constitution of 1918 was based on a neo-corporative conception of citizenship, and it promoted a rights regime of radically internationalist cast. It granted 'all [the] political rights of Russian citizens to foreigners residing within the territory of the Russian Republic ... and belonging to the working-class or the non-labour-exploiting peasantry'.¹⁹ Stalin's Constitution of 1936 marked a retreat from such a class-based conception of rights by granting the right to vote and to be elected to 'all citizens of the USSR aged 18 or older'. Following this paradigmatic change, the 1938 legislation marked the end of the internationalist trend and the emergence of a concept of nationality in Soviet citizenship law. Before this, the law had taken all persons resident in the USSR to be citizens. Now it defined three categories: Soviet citizens, citizens of foreign states and stateless persons.²⁰

Soviet internationalism was then a *proletarian* internationalism. At first, there were few who took advantage of it, and one reason for this must be that the threat had to be extremely grave for asylum to be granted. According to a report by International Red Aid, there were 477 such persons in 1931, 570 in 1931, and 688 in 1933.²¹ The figures then began to grow at an increasing rate, and by the mid-1930s there were several thousand political emigrants or 'politemigrants' in the USSR. These were predominantly Central and Eastern Europeans: Poles, Bulgars, Letts and Rumanians. But by far the largest single national contingent of emigrants was represented by members of the German CP and their families.²² Between May 1934 and December 1935, finally, came several waves of members of the Austrian *Schutzbund*, who were

generously received, the Soviet Union hoping to gain an international propaganda advantage from doing so. These were estimated to number 730 men, to which have to be added the women and children.²³ This brought the total number of German-speaking refugees in the Soviet Union in 1936 to some 4,600, according to an estimate by the German party delegation.²⁴

Far fewer in terms of numbers than the political or employment-related migrants were the 'party workers'. Included in this category were senior officials of the different communist parties seconded – or sometimes 'promoted out of the way' – to the Comintern or its ancillary organizations (the Young Communist International, the Profintern or Red International of Labour Unions, the Krestintern or Peasant International, Sportintern, International Red Aid (MOPR), Workers International Relief and so on). For them, the Comintern regulated the entry formalities. Also included were the representatives of Communist Parties or other organizations to the Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI),²⁵ and the 'technical' employees, such as translators, shorthand typists and secretaries employed by international organizations headquartered in Moscow. Also counted as 'party workers' were those party members sent to Moscow to study for one to three years at the International Lenin School (ILS) or the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West (KUNMZ).²⁶ The total number of such students is not known, numbers varying a great deal, but it must have amounted to several thousand, perhaps even 10,000, over the years.²⁷ And finally, some foreign communists were employed by such institutions as the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow, for example, the British nationals Jane Tabrisky (later, as Jane Degras, the editor of a monumental academic documentary history of the Comintern²⁸), Olive Budden and Nancy Williams. Violet Lansbury, the daughter of Labour Party leader George Lansbury, who had studied at the Communist University in Sverdlovsk, worked for the Foreign Workers' Cooperative Publishing House (1931–1938).²⁹

The First Five Year Plan of 1928 saw the Soviet authorities open the borders the following year to the engineers, supervisors and skilled workers needed to support the effort of industrialization, a policy that probably reached its peak in mid-1932, when more than 42,000 foreign 'specialists' were employed in the Soviet Union.³⁰ Around half of these were of German or Austrian origin.³¹ Almost as numerous were the American technical specialists and managers whose firms were involved in major construction projects or the expansion of the tractor and

automobile industry, who were contracted to deliver the manufacturing plant and machinery ordered from them as operational factories.³² This immigration came to an end after 1933, and most employment contracts, normally limited to one or two years, were not renewed. Many of the probably several thousands who nonetheless remained ended up imprisoned or executed in the late 1930s.³³

A last category is represented by communist creative artists, active in film, theatre, literature or music. They arrived either as political emigrants or as invited to contribute to a specific cultural project. A member of the party since 1921, Hugo Huppert had gained a doctorate in political science under Hans Kelsen in Vienna before studying sociology at the Sorbonne. He arrived in Moscow as early as 1928, working at the Marx-Engels Institute on the first MEGA edition of the complete works of Marx and Engels before switching to arts journalism. Even before the formal turn to the Popular Front policy, the Comintern and the Soviet authorities had begun to woo intellectuals in the West, hoping to exploit for their own ends – the defence of the Soviet Union – the anti-war sentiment prompted by the rise of Fascism. Once again, it was the indefatigable Münzenberg who succeeded in rallying a number of famous Western figures, such as Albert Einstein, Heinrich Mann, John Dos Passos, Upton Sinclair and Bertrand Russell, behind the Amsterdam-Pleyel Movement.³⁴ After Hitler's accession to power, the Soviet Union offered German writers especially new opportunities for employment and publication. Among these, to name only a few, were Johannes R. Becher, Willi Bredel, Alfred Kurella, Julius Hay, Erich Weinert and Hedda Zinner.³⁵ They had a national section of their own within the International Union of Revolutionary Writers, and after the latter's dissolution in 1935 a section of the Soviet Writers' Union that had its own spacious residence.³⁶ Many found a position at one of the three German-language periodicals published in Moscow and financed by the Soviet Union: *Das Wort* (1936–1939), *Internationale Literatur/Deutsche Blätter* (1931–1945) and the *Deutsche Zentral-Zeitung* (1925–1939).³⁷ For those active in theatre and film – a milieu partially overlapping with that of the writers – there were employment opportunities not only in media and publishing but also in academic research, education and the arts more generally. Musicians and composers, too, ended up in Moscow, among the best known being Hans and Charlotte Eisler and the singer and actor Ernst Busch. As much attracted by the ambitious construction projects of the Stalin era as driven out of Germany by growing political persecution, a good number of renowned communist

architects settled in Moscow in the 1930s, among them the Swiss Hannes Meyer, former director of the Bauhaus, the Frankfurt city planner Ernst May, and the Austrian Grete Schütte-Lihotzky.³⁸

This relatively populous milieu of German-speaking creative artists and professionals was very close-knit, such closeness bringing with it inevitable conflict. Most had known each other from before emigration. Arriving in the Soviet Union as a political emigrant in the summer of 1935, the German journalist Susanne Leonhard encountered many of her old friends and acquaintances in Moscow. As well as her close friend Sophie Liebknecht, the widow of the murdered Karl Liebknecht, she kept company with the film director Gustav Wangenheim and his wife the actress and journalist Inge Franke, the theatre director Erwin Piscator and the actor Alexander Granach. Among her acquaintances were also the American journalists and translators Louis and Markoosha Fischer, and Valentina Adler, daughter of the Austrian founder of Individual Psychology, who worked at the Foreign Workers' Press. Other members of her circle were such notable figures as the writer Erich Weinert, the singer Ernst Busch, and the Polish journalist Mietek Menkes. This last had been a colleague of hers when she had been head of the press department at the Soviet mission in Vienna. In 1935, he was the head of the TASS news agency in Moscow, though, as Leonhard put in her memoirs, he had 'the misfortune to be married to a niece of Trotsky's'.³⁹

3.3 A cosmopolitan but closed and privileged world

While few foreigners if any can have worked for the Comintern with an eye to gain, it offered material advantages to many that were beyond the reach of the Russian population in general. In the Lux and Soiuзнаia hotels there was the possibility of accommodation in central Moscow, a privilege not to be sneezed at in that sprawling city.⁴⁰ Of the political emigrants, only a lucky few found accommodation with International Red Aid. Neither sent by a communist party nor invited by the Comintern, Susanne Leonhard spent months in 1935 looking for a room for herself and her son, which at 270 roubles represented more than a quarter of her income.⁴¹ The 16-year-old Wolfgang Ruge, who had gone to Moscow with his brother in 1933, managed to find a job as a draughtsman in the teaching materials service of the KUNMZ, though he had neither school-leaving certificate nor training in any occupation, but he found himself wandering from one short-term sub-let to another.⁴² Although even the higher functionaries had at best a large room, or perhaps two small ones for themselves and their

families, they were nonetheless better off than the people of Moscow, whose average living space per capita in the early 1930s was 5.5 square metres, which fell to four square metres by 1940, the construction of public housing in the capital coming to an almost complete standstill in the 1930s.⁴³ Together with the rapid urbanization of the Soviet Union in the 1930s, whose cities saw an influx of 30 million country-dwellers, this meant that life for those in the cities was cramped or worse.⁴⁴ The customary form of housing was the communal apartment or *kommunalka*, in which each family had one room to live, eat and sleep, while bathroom, kitchen and corridor were shared. The Lux Hotel, too, operated on this principle, but in Moscow's terms the facilities were very advanced. The housekeeper who looked after the family of Elena Bonner – whose step-father Gevork Alikhanov⁴⁵ was in 1937 head of the Comintern's cadre department and whose mother Ruth Bonner worked at the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute⁴⁶ – could hardly get over her enthusiasm on arriving at the Lux in 1931: central heating, a gas stove and showers with running hot water.⁴⁷

All the same, the kind of accommodation available to employees of the Comintern and other international organizations was anything but luxurious in Western terms. Young singles often received no more than 'a half room'. One such was Erna Kolbe, employed as a secretary at the Comintern from 1933–1935, and another was Lise London, who lived at the Lux from April 1934 to September 1936, at first in a new annexe in the inner courtyard with a large shared dormitory.⁴⁸ However, the Russian Elena Bonner, too, described the effect of her realization, as a young girl, that the whole family would now be living in one single room. She found this 'worrying'.⁴⁹ Depending on one's status in the Comintern there was also a different allocation of accommodation on holiday. KUNMZ student O. P. Kolentynova, for example, shared her room in the spa town of Staraia Russa with seven other women.⁵⁰ For most, it was in addition something of a culture shock to be confronted with the bedbugs and rats of the hotels. Anyone who could would keep a cat.⁵¹

In general, it was Russian notions of cleanliness that most horrified West and Central Europeans, whatever the class differences in expectations of cleanliness might be.⁵² The *kul'turnost'* campaign initiated by the regime in 1935, which sought to inculcate not only rules of cleanliness but also 'good manners' and eventually the rudiments of an understanding of art, was welcomed by many foreigners as an urgently necessary effort to catch up with modern standards of hygiene and civilization.⁵³ When Jules Humbert-Droz once again returned to Moscow in

1938, he noted with great pleasure the new cleanliness that prevailed in public transport. Now all the Russians had to learn, he wrote to his wife in Switzerland, was quite how much scent you needed to put on.⁵⁴ The positive re-evaluation of behaviours formerly frowned upon as bourgeois was particularly striking in its effect on notions of femininity. Even manicures and rouge were now a matter of 'hygiene, not luxury', as one party newspaper-seller reported of his trip to the Soviet Union.⁵⁵

Although the majority of foreigners welcomed Soviet efforts to achieve a more 'cultured' way of life – especially as it resulted in such conveniences as the construction of the Moscow Metro, improved food supplies and a broader cultural offering – many commentaries are marked by a certain benevolent superiority, the Russians being regarded as somewhat retarded backwoodsmen who with great zeal but only limited success were attempting to ape urban Western manners. In her diary of the Deutsche Theater's 'Kolonne Links' tour of the Donbass in Spring 1934, the actress Inge von Wangenheim repeatedly expressed her annoyance at the indisciplined, indeed uncivilized audiences whose only notion of theatre was broad comedy.⁵⁶

Most foreigners found the food little to their taste. To eat in the canteen of the Hotel Lux was a strictly regulated privilege, periodically reviewed 'with a view to termination',⁵⁷ though the Russian *kasha* (buckwheat porridge) and the very black rye bread were hard not only on the palate but sometimes on the digestion as well. As a result, from the late 1920s onward, leading party functionaries and foreign specialists were provided with various grades of special rations through a system of special foreigners' shops called *insnab* (*Inostrannoe snabzhenie*). With the reintroduction of rationing and closed distribution at the workplace in 1929, there was established a system of socially differentiated access to consumer goods, as Sheila Fitzpatrick has shown. To eat at the works canteen but also to have access to certain shops and special offers at work of goods in short supply one needed employment. In addition, factories, businesses and administrations generally had housing made available only to their own workers. The workplace system operated by a system of categories, the availability of goods being determined in accordance with ascribed social status, industrial workers standing at the top of the Soviet hierarchy. At the time of the first Five Year Plan, foreign specialists, especially engineers, counted among the privileged groups.

Despite the frugal circumstances and the idealistic motives that had brought people together at the Hotel Lux, the life of Comintern employees was dominated by traditional hierarchical structures and rules.

In the Comintern there were officially three categories of employees: the lowliest were the technical staff and employees of the Young Communist International (YCI, KIM in Russian); in the middle were the cadres, editors, journalists and assistants to political office-holders; while at the top were Soviet party leaders and the representatives of foreign parties.⁵⁸ At the Lux, the higher officials had bigger and brighter rooms and the right to more and better food, clothing and toilet articles. The distribution of these material status-distinctions was precisely laid down and rigidly observed. There was no possibility of individual choice, neither to upgrade nor to downgrade. Those who from egalitarian inclinations preferred to waive their privileges had soon to accept that it just wasn't on, and not just because it 'was impossible ... to survive with the normal rations of the Russians'.⁵⁹ In the 1930s, with the Comintern introducing ever more differentiations of rank into its personnel structure, higher functionaries (*nachal'niki*) were obliged to uphold their own status.⁶⁰

Even Comintern children were aware of their parents' rank and related accordingly to the children of lower-ranking officials, as Elena Bonner recalls. She also describes her parents' special ration (*paek*): 'Papa's [parcel] was delivered to the house, twice a month or more, but I don't know whether we paid for it. It had butter, cheese, candies and canned goods. There were also special parcels for the holidays, with caviar, smoked and cured fish, chocolate, and also cheese and butter. You had to pick up Mama's parcels ... I often went for ours, and you had to pay. It contained butter and other items, but it was much less fancy than Papa's'.⁶¹

The degree to which this rule-bound internal order represented a principle of domination according to which each was to keep to his or her place could be seen whenever someone fell into disfavour. Already by the late 1920s political deviation was punished by the withdrawal of privileges, as Jules Humbert-Droz's family discovered when he diverged from the Comintern line.⁶² But it was only with the Terror that this resource-based control over individuals' living conditions was systematically developed to its logical conclusion.

The foreigners' shops were abolished in July 1935, together with other privileges.⁶³ This was followed on 1 February 1936 by the closure of the *torgsin* hard currency shops established in July 1930.⁶⁴ These had sold goods in short supply for foreign currency, or in exchange for gold, silver or objects of value. Nominal prices were rather lower than at the *kolkhoz* markets or normal retail outlets.⁶⁵ In late 1932, with the Soviet Union suffering massive food-supply problems (bringing famine

to the Ukraine and other regions of the country), the ECCI canteen withdrew from the *insnab* system,⁶⁶ the Comintern officials hoping that this would allow them to create an alternative little 'Soviet economy' of their own. With great optimism, they planned facilities for rearing a hundred pigs, a poultry farm for 500 birds, for the most part geese, a small cattle shed and a garden,⁶⁷ but this ambitious project immediately foundered on the rocks of Soviet bureaucracy. In August 1933 the ECCI standing committee responsible for the matter had to note that construction of the cattle shed was running late. This put the project into question, 'because winter is coming and without a shed the animals will freeze'.⁶⁸

The privilege of Comintern employees (as opposed to the foreigners employed in the Soviet economy proper) lay not so much in pay as in access to benefits in kind, various services among them. Comintern salaries were until 1934 subject to the party maximum, ranging from 200–400 roubles a month, in this more or less corresponding to the pay of Soviet doctors.⁶⁹ In the first half of the 1930s, pay in the Comintern was thus still relatively egalitarian, though a member of the Presidium might in many cases earn almost twice as much as a secretary. In 1932, for example, salaries within the organization (excluding 'machine operators', garage staff and cleaners) varied between 200 and 300 roubles a month.⁷⁰ Some ten years later, wage differentials had expanded considerably: while the nine ECCI secretaries – the Bulgarian Georgi Dimitrov, the Russian Dmitry Manuilsky, the two Germans Wilhelm Pieck and Wilhelm Florin, the Frenchman André Marty, the Spaniards José Diaz and Dolores Ibárruri, the Czech Klement Gottwald, and the Italian 'Ercoli' (Palmiro Togliatti) – received 2,300 roubles, a political analyst (*Politreferent*) had to make do with 1,400 and an 'ordinary' secretary with only 600.⁷¹

Comintern salaries, in any event, allowed most foreigners to employ a maid (only women were engaged as servants, it would appear) or a nanny, a privilege that most could never have afforded in their home countries. New, too, would have been the possibility of a *dacha*, a cottage for weekends and holidays. Long summer holidays in the countryside around Kuntsevo, where the party *nomenklatura* had their *dachas*,⁷² are without a doubt among Comintern officials' happiest memories of their days in Moscow. Even in the 1930s, the idyllic life of the *dacha* seems to have seen conflict, resentment and mutual suspicion melted away by the balmy air of the birchwoods.⁷³ However, only a few, privileged persons, 'the top officials and middle cadre' according to Ruth von Mayenburg, had the right to a *dacha* on guarded Comintern land. The

others had to find country cottages for themselves or put themselves on the list for a room at a holiday resort, a rest home or a slot at a communal *dacha*.⁷⁴

In addition to material advantages, Comintern employees also had access to certain services. They could receive treatment, for example, at the Kremlin Hospital. Living in Moscow in the early 1930s, as Hermann Köhler's partner – and even before finding Party employment herself – Lotte Hümbelin (then still Lotte Bindel) experienced the difference between this elite institution for senior party and state functionaries and the ordinary clinics attended by the general population: 'Here [at the Kremlin Hospital] were the best doctors and the best facilities the country had to offer. The doctors were friendly, the treatment lavish. When six months later I got a job and became no more than an ordinary employee, the difference struck me greatly'.⁷⁵

In addition, Comintern employees often had free passes for public transport and access to official cars. Residents of the Hotel Lux could make use of the in-house laundry and hairdresser's, send the children to the hotel's own kindergarten, attend the regular film-screenings, or obtain tickets for plays, concerts or readings. That these services represented a considerable proportion of everyday expenditure is suggested by an expenses claim submitted in July 1931 by two German-speaking communists who had been accommodated outside Moscow, very likely for security reasons. Just food, laundry, newspapers, fares, barbering, cinema, theatre and books came to 175.40 roubles.⁷⁶

The cosmopolitan milieu of the Cominternians was linked by language, culture and experience to half the world, but hardly to the Russian population. The 'foreigners' island' that was the Hotel Lux was like all official government buildings closed off by an access-control system, whereby nobody could enter without a pass (called a *propusk*) or an advance appointment: no unauthorized person had access to the world of the Lux. Those that belonged to it lived a distinctive life of their own within Soviet society, with its own infrastructure, and it would seem that even Moscow's diverse cultural life attracted little interest.⁷⁷ Only the children broke the iron rules now and again, smuggling their school friends in beneath the window of the NKVD security guard.

It was not security-mindedness alone, however, that accounts for this insularity, but also the inability of most of the foreigners to speak their hosts' language. Many Comintern employees spoke hardly a word of Russian, even after being there for years. As Hugo Huppert lamented to Pasternak, 'to learn the Russian language and Soviet literature, learn, learn, learn ... That unfortunately is what my dear old colleagues have

not been able to bring themselves to do! Some will not, the others cannot'.⁷⁸ It was the children, above all, who quickly found themselves at home in a foreign language, though many (like the future GDR politicians Werner Eberlein, Peter Florin, Markus and Konrad Wolf, or figures such as Wolfgang Leonhard, Marianne Lange-Weinert, Gregor Kurella and Henry-Ralph Lewenstein)⁷⁹ attended the educationally progressive German-language Karl Liebknecht School, until its closure in early 1938.⁸⁰ The women, too, seem to have made a better job of the language. Men, on the other hand, had not enough time for it, or generally delegated contact with the native population and the local administration to their partners. As the German communist Gustav Sobottka recalled of his wife and son: 'She learnt [Russian] on the first aid courses held at the Ernst Thälmann Club, attended courses on party history to perfect her knowledge and so better take her place among the Soviet citizenry. Our son did the same thing. He worked at the NATI. He learnt Russian in a year, went to *rabfak* after work, and later attended evening classes at a Moscow institute'.⁸¹ These words he wrote to Dimitrov, Manuilsky and Pieck in 1939, after his son had been imprisoned and his wife had suffered a breakdown.

4

Soviet Party Practices

Admission to the Comintern apparatus, transfer to the Soviet party, party purges and 'verifications of party documents (*proverka*)' were key moments in the encounter with Stalinist practices of cadre control. Foreign communists first came across the insistent Soviet demand for autobiographical narrative immediately upon first arrival, a demand renewed upon every change of role or institution. An exchange of party cards (*obmen partbiletov*) such as took place at the party schools in 1936 also called for numerous acts of self-recounting. It was only after the archives were opened that the true scale of this outpouring of biographical, self-critical and self-evaluative speech under Stalinism became apparent, reaching down to the lowest ranks of the party (and the lowest spheres of society).¹

These Soviet party practices produced countless written documents, now available to historians in the form of cadre files. They give us a glimpse of the extent of the 'Civilization of the (Self)Report'. Party members had to fill in questionnaires (*ankety*) and write CVs in the form of 'autobiographies' (*avtobiografii*). They had to offer self-criticism in party and school meetings and evaluate their own work in 'self-reports' (*samootchety*). Such declarations would be recorded by a stenographer, or, at the international cadre schools, by the students in turn. Many of these narratives were oral rather than written. An oral autobiography, or more precisely a public autobiographical declaration, had to be given before the relevant collective on first joining the party, or, as tended to be the case for foreign communists, before the Transfer Commission upon transfer of membership to the A-UCP(b), an exercise repeated for each purge and verification campaign as well as at party meetings for criticism and self-criticism. On the other side of the fence, the apparatus produced 'characterizations' (*kharakteristiki*) or evaluations of cadre,

and all sorts of certifications or declarations (*spravki*) to be sent to other institutions. It also collected denunciations.

While the notions of 'party autobiography' and 'self-report' were hardly known to outsiders before the Russian archives were opened, this was not so of 'criticism and self-criticism', a practice publicized through the grotesque and fantastical self-accusations proffered at the great show trials of the 1930s and 1950s.² For proponents of the totalitarianism thesis, it was emblematic of the system's aspiration to total re-education and manipulation.³ Research since the opening of the archives has demonstrated, however, that the notion of 'self-criticism' has to be historicized. At first a slogan launched by Stalin in 1927–1928, it promoted not individual self-criticism, but open, self-critical discussion of social ills within the party (or 'in the working class', in the rhetoric of the party leadership). It could be said that it represented an attempt to encourage criticism of bureaucracy. In the 1930s, however, it took on in addition the sense of 'criticism of oneself', and it was in the context of purges and verification campaigns that the slogan came to find expression in a specific practice of collective, public (within the party, that is) self-criticism.⁴

Even 'purge', which designated an institutional practice from the very beginning, didn't always have the same meaning as it did later. *Chistka* originally meant a cleansing of the party of 'careerists' and 'opportunists' through the 'verification of party documents' (*proverka*) and the re-registration of members. It was an obligation that also fell on other sections of the Comintern, for the 13th of the '21 Conditions' laid down at the 2nd Congress in 1920 provided that 'The communist parties of those countries in which the communists can carry out their work legally must from time to time undertake purges (re-registration) of the membership of their party organizations in order to cleanse the party systematically of the petty-bourgeois elements within it'.⁵ After 1929, however, 'self-cleansing campaigns' proliferated in the Soviet party, gradually changing not only in their objects but also, and above all, in their consequences. For members of sister parties who transferred to the Soviet party in the 1930s, this meant that a complicated and protracted admission process was followed by ever-repeated tests of loyalty and *partiinosť* or party-mindedness. A first campaign carried out under the aegis of the Control Commission in April 1929 led to the expulsion of just over a tenth of full and candidate members for breaches of party discipline (oppositional activities, ideological unreliability, 'passivity'), 'unsocialist' behaviour (alcoholism, uncouthness, sexual promiscuity and/or misconduct) or tardiness in the implementation of directives.

In the Comintern, sanctions were milder: of 232 subjected to verification only seven were expelled while 32 were disciplined. The next 'cleansing campaign' or purge followed in early 1933. Lasting a year-and-a-half, it was intended to 'unmask' not only 'class alien and hostile elements' but also 'careerists, self-seekers and bureaucratized elements'. Some 17 per cent of members and candidates were excluded.⁶ Now, for the first time, the purge within the Comintern extended to members of non-Soviet parties as well, though only a few of the 457 members examined suffered sanction. The purge was hardly over, however, when in August 1934 the Central Committee ordered an exchange of the party cards that had only just been verified. The process accelerated after the murder of Sergei Kirov, gradually developing into a form of repression before turning into frank terror in 1937–1938.⁷

I begin by presenting the context and development of these practices of biographical surveillance and control that rely on forms of self-thematization and self-evaluation. This chapter focuses on the questionnaire and the party autobiography, before looking at the process of transfer to the Soviet party and the detail and volume of the written documentation generated by the bureaucratic interest in the person that characterized the Stalinist system.

4.1 Speaking about the self

The oldest form of biography-writing encountered by the foreign party member in the Soviet Union was the questionnaire (*anketa*).⁸ Already at the founding congress of the Communist International in 1919, the delegates had completed a rudimentary biographical questionnaire, the form soon afterwards beginning its gradual expansion to include not only name and social origin but more and more information on respondents' activities, opinions and political positions. In the 1920s, foreign communists arriving in the Soviet Union were asked to write a (party) autobiography, that is, a detailed narrative CV, just as were all Soviet citizens in paid employment and all members of the Communist Party.⁹ It was explicitly required that all information provided be true, a point made not just by the demand for referees who could confirm the declarations, but by the warning printed at the end of the introductory notes: 'Anyone providing false information will be excluded from the party'. Practice in the Comintern was systematized only in the 1930s. In 1932, the ECCI decided to demand autobiographies of all new staff, after investigation had shown that precise information was held only on two-thirds of those employed.¹⁰ A new autobiography had now to

be written at every change of technical, administrative or political post, and also on the occasion of purges and verifications.¹¹ The national sections were to adopt this practice as well. By 1938 the CPGB had collected some 500 'short "institutional" or "cadre" autobiographies'.¹² In France, party autobiographies came into use in late 1931, as part of the tightening of control that accompanied the struggle against the 'Barbécélor group'. Until 1937 the practice had concerned only national and regional leaders, apart from foreign members. Later, with increasing membership and growing demands for 'vigilance' local leaders were also subjected to the practice. From then on, several thousand autobiographies were produced every year.¹³

The move from relative laxity to rigorous cadre control saw the creation of the Comintern's Cadre Department, which was provided with the powers and resources necessary for the task of biographical scrutiny. The growth in its importance can be seen in staff numbers alone: from eight in 1932 it quickly grew to 48 in 1935, after the reorganization of the Comintern, reaching 64 in 1938, at the height of the Terror, before falling again to 48 in 1941¹⁴. Its intensive record-keeping activity made it an archive of the party life, and, indeed, the private life of everyone who worked at the Comintern. It was the 'black box' that recorded every fault or error.

The early 1930s saw the Comintern apparatus not only create new instruments of control but also apply those it already possessed with greater rigour.¹⁵ The number of questions on the questionnaire for ECCI staff thus rose from 21 in 1927 to 24 in 1931, then to 33 in 1935 and even to 39 in 1943. Notable among the new enquiries were questions about the member's position on changes of political line and attitudes towards opposition movements, and precise information was requested on any contact with individual oppositionists. But the Comintern cadre also now had to provide extensive information on further matters. So, in accordance with a May 1932 decision by the Comintern Cadre Department's institutional predecessor, the written autobiography (which in outline generally followed the questions of the questionnaire) had to provide information on: 1. social origin and family background, especially spouse, siblings and other relatives; 2. intellectual development (reading and educational attainments); 3. all memberships of political organizations, with dates of joining, offices held and persons frequented; 4. involvement and activity in social/labour movements, for example in trade unions and other 'mass organizations', in the organization of strikes or other public actions; 5. any arrests or convictions, together with the precise circumstances; and 6. occupational

history, and referees within the party who could attest to the truth of the answers given.¹⁶

At first glance, the party autobiography appears to be a singular text, a genuinely individual composition, but it was in fact produced in accordance with a predetermined and detailed organizational scheme, and indeed there existed a guide to how to write it. Its standardized form indicates that the autobiography did not serve as a record of individual experience, but rather reflected what was considered to be the correct political development of a party activist. This is not gainsaid by the fact that the autobiographies found in the Comintern's Moscow archives vary widely in form – in length, indeed, if nothing else. There might be detailed life-narrative in one case, and brief, shorthand references to biographical data in another. Karl Richter, for example, a student at the International Lenin School, wrote three dozen pages in 1937, while others were content with only two or three pages. In terms of content, too, party members enjoyed a certain freedom. Having escaped Germany for Prague and then Moscow, the writer Willi Bredel began his autobiography (which likely dates from the second half of 1934) with a literary flourish, a staging of a self-reflexive autobiography: 'September, October, November 1933, in the most terrible months of imprisonment in the concentration camp, in darkness and solitary confinement, amid whippings and nightly murders I resigned myself to reckoning my life too in no more than days. In this frightful time, during which I saw my best friends, my dearest comrades die around me, I reflected upon my life until then, the decade and a half that I had lived as a conscious human being. And these recollections gave me the strength and determination to face the dark future more calmly and steadily, and helped me to overcome all fear'.¹⁷ The Swiss communist Willy Trostel, on the other hand, writing in 1930, was an exponent of the more telegraphic style: 'Born 14 November 1894. Proletarian parents. Zürich-Aussersihl'.¹⁸

To that extent, the 'pact of truth' (Philippe Lejeune) on which the composition of the autobiography and the completion of the questionnaire depended proved to involve rather a 'negotiated truth' between party member and party as institution.¹⁹ Tina Modotti thus made no mention of her career as an actress when she filled in a questionnaire in 1932, though she did not forget that she had worked for seven years at a milliner's shop.²⁰ For Bredel, who shortly before had attended the 1934 Soviet Writers' Congress, where he had been elected as secretary of the German Section of the Soviet Writers Union, the writing of his autobiography – to which he gave, moreover, the Goethean title

'Aus meinem Leben' [From my life] – offered the opportunity to essay his new role as a proletarian writer. His four page account constructs his biography as a model communist life, characterized by the correct proletarian origin and devoted to the party and the cause of labour: 'My entire life has belonged to the struggle of the working class', he wrote. Wherever he had worked, as a lathe operator in the Hamburg shipyards or as a volunteer journalist on Bremen's *Arbeiterzeitung*, he had always championed the party. Even at sea, when he had undertaken 'seven Mediterranean voyages as a lathe-operator and lubricator', he had organized 'a party cell on board'. His account of the exemplary life of a 'party soldier' lacks neither the experience of repression nor an emphasis on party discipline. Even his flight from Germany in 1934 took place 'in agreement with the underground leadership of our party'. It's no surprise, then, to find a similar position adopted in the autobiography of Maurice Thorez, composed in Moscow and dated 25 August 1932. During a spell in jail, he notes, his concern had been to encourage imprisoned workers to put together a newspaper. This was one feature among others that the Cadre Section included in its summary of the French leader's biography.²¹

The autobiographies preserved in the Comintern archive show that party members interpreted the party's injunction to biographical transparency with varying degrees of stringency. Many did not reveal anything the Cadre Department did not already know, while others recounted their thoughts and feelings at length. Narrative strategies could be employed to construct for oneself a certain type of biography, displaying the desired relationship to the party, as exemplified by Bredel. In his case, the endeavour was to manage the transition from the story of a 'proletarian party soldier' to the 'exemplary life of a party literary hero' – a symbolic transformation that seems to have been successfully effected, as witnessed by a second autobiography composed, again in Moscow, in July 1944.²² This reads as the spotless life of someone always in the party's service, whether fighting National Socialism in Germany, joining the International Brigade after attending a writers' congress in Madrid, or finally returning to Moscow in 1939. Each of these engagements was accompanied by a literary elaboration of the experience to meet 'the immediate daily requirements' of the Party.

Given that autobiographies had to be written several times, one can follow the process of learning how to make a 'successful biography', how to stage a career in the party apparatus. The Swiss comrade 'Paul Fischer', for example – whose real name was Emil Hofmaier – began

his second autobiography in February 1935, having been working at the Profintern since 1931, by mentioning his current occupation, and so his social status. He also featured his 'cultural capital', that is, his language skills.²³ He also gave considerable emphasis to the fact that while still in Switzerland he had participated in a discussion group on economics and had 'completed' it with success. By underlining his skills he legitimated the post he then occupied as head of the Press Department at the Profintern. The third autobiography, in 1939, of this worker by birth and by earliest employment unambiguously reflects a new-found confidence in his professional and political abilities. This text is not only much longer than the others, it is also more developed and better structured. In it, the author insists on his theoretical knowledge of 'Marxism-Leninism', of economics, and of the history of the party. He certainly appears much more confident of his value to the party apparatus, and in particular of his conformity with the dominant normative framework. He underlines this by discussing the work he has done on himself – a work in his view rewarded with success.

Conversely, precisely because autobiographies were written on several occasions, a weakness in one's biography might be easily revealed. This would then have to be 'explained', and it would have been suspicious to refuse. In the early 1930s one's social origin was very thoroughly scrutinized (a category which became less prominent later). Also, contacts with milieux outside ('foreign to') the party could have a pernicious influence on a communist. These points were made clear to the students of the French section of the International Lenin School in 1933: 'Certain biographies have made it clear to us', the head of the section told them, 'that at the root of these weaknesses are social origin and the external influences the militant is subjected to in the milieux in which he is active'.²⁴

If the autobiography can be considered as a rite of legitimation or a 'rite of institution' (Pierre Bourdieu) that promoted the adjustment of the habitus to the new environment, as Claude Pennerier and Bernard Pudal contend,²⁵ such practices as public 'self-criticism' and 'self-report' represented a more direct challenge to the comrade's self. These two forms differed in their contexts and (in part) in substance. As we have seen, 'criticism and self-criticism' developed from a means of identifying collective failure to a critique and evaluation of the individual.

On the other hand, the 'self-report' or 'balance-sheet', apparently introduced around 1931²⁶ and documented in the Comintern schools after 1933, was concerned with the achievement of 'production' goals.²⁷

In the international cadre schools, production meant the practical outcome of one's academic work and other activities, and also results in terms of personal development. Within the school, groups would meet to discuss and evaluate the results of the group as whole, and from 1935 onward those of individuals as well. In doing this, they considered not only knowledge acquired, but also behaviour and character. (Self-)education functioned through self-evaluation.²⁸

A self-critical stance was expected at 'criticism and self-criticism' and 'self-report' sessions alike. There were in the last analysis a means to determine how an individual measured up against the party's normative requirements. To limit any shortfall, and in the ideal case to produce conformity, the procedure was frequently repeated in various different guises. In one session after another, the individual's claims were judged, the effort made and the actual results achieved being evaluated by party comrades, fellow-students or work colleagues. The self-observation required of the party member and the rectification of the entire personality carried out by the collective were described by party managers as 'methods' for 'the Bolshevization of cadre', or, as the French communist leader André Marty declared at the ILS in 1933,²⁹ a 'method of education'. It was considered to represent the highest form of party democracy, for everyone had a view and the right to speak. The Italian Communist Teresa Noce, an employee of the Profintern in Moscow in the early 1930s, and wife of Luigi Longo, emphasized in looking back at the *chistka* at the 'Elektrozavod' factory, that everyone from the manager and the union secretary to the manual workers had had to say their piece. For her, this was an admirable example of 'proletarian democracy in action'.³⁰

This was hard for foreigners to pick up, just the same. The minute attention to every biographical detail, to every incorrect formulation, often struck them as infantilizing and pettifogging. These and similar difficulties found expression in a leader's closing words at a party meeting at the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West: 'Class vigilance is not yet well understood. On the one hand, many comrades come with entirely trivial matters. On the other, they should have warned me much earlier'.³¹ Above all, they were reluctant to be critical of others. Over and over again, party officers or lecturers had to explain to students that this was the wrong attitude to take. In February 1935, for example, a lecturer at the KUNMZ closed a discussion of two cases of breach of discipline (in regard to class vigilance and collective work) by remarking that almost all the comrades uninvolved in these breaches had remained silent. They should have taken a position, he said,

'for party meetings are there for that, so that we all educate each other and liquidate errors together'.³² Yet even when the preparedness to criticize others was there, many remained unclear as to where and when criticism should be offered.

Meetings usually took place at the level of the party cell, though sometimes the whole party group would be called together. Attendance was mandatory.³³ The procedure was that one by one the party members to be 'verified' would give a critical account of themselves to the collective.³⁴ This included their biographies and political positions, as well as their attitudes to concrete cases of expulsions of oppositionists from the party. The instructions of the ILS purge commission regarding the *chistka* announced for 1933 prescribed both what should be talked about and what should not be talked about. 'They must mention and explain their social origin, their current social position, and how they came to join the party. They must briefly recount their activities in the party, and mention their conflicts with the bourgeoisie. They must without fail identify their errors, the activities they have engaged in in the USSR, and any doubts should they have them'.³⁵

Those present would then come in with questions, to clarify ambiguities and to bring to light what had been withheld. If the answers were not acceptable, sanctions might go so far as expulsion from the party. In the time of the Terror, this last generally led to arrest. Unlike the written autobiography, which followed a predetermined pattern in a merely internal dialogue with the party, this kind of self-presentation allowed direct measurement against party norms. As theoretically no aspect of the personal biography was spared, this form of public speech about oneself tended towards the total. The refusal to go into certain questions was taken as a sign that the individual had something to hide.

Discussion did not limit itself to biography or relationships, for 'signs' of possible political deviation could be found in everyday behaviour – in dress, in physical appearance or in the jokes one told, for example. Only a few succeeded in maintaining the claim to an entirely party-compliant biography through the repeated rounds of self-thematization in questionnaires, autobiographies, self-criticism and self-report. For each of these forms called for not only the appropriate skills of self-presentation, and if necessary of self-defence, but also ever deeper exploration of what one had already said. While it was possible to answer the question on occupation in the questionnaire with 'worker' simply, a designation notably capacious, extending from the professional engineer employed in the metal industry on the one hand and the student with a temporary job in a factory on the other, the autobiography required further detail.

In self-criticism and self-report these details were gone into more closely again, and might have to be even further qualified under questioning by the group. In addition, even more personal questions might be asked. The initial self-presentation had to be confronted with the external interpretations of the party apparatus and the party group, the process resulting in the gradual emergence of collectively negotiated representation of the self.

In the 1930s, however, the Soviet authorities increasingly sought to bring these foreigners under their control, as they were doing with the Soviet population,³⁶ but so long as they stood under the authority of a 'sister party' there were limits to what could be done. Such ties gave them access to international networks that their Soviet comrades lacked. There was therefore increasing pressure on foreign cadres to transfer their membership to the A-UCP(b). Once optional, this now became a precondition for political integration and even a condition of residence in the Soviet Union.

4.2 The Soviet party responds

The usual procedure for members of Communist parties all over the world had been to join the party of the country of residence.³⁷ Transfer to the Soviet party, however, was not mandatory – except for students at the international schools, who joined the A-UCP(b) for the time of their study. A Comintern functionary in Moscow for more than ten years, Jules Humbert-Droz remained a member of the Swiss CP. Only his wife Jenny transferred.³⁸ The process itself at that time was routine, normally presenting no problems. Until the early 1930s, then, only a proportion of the foreign Communists – Comintern officials and employees of the international schools – ever became members of the Soviet party, some very few being members of none. Indeed, even at the international cadre schools, not all employees were party members. As was revealed by the results of the 1933 purge at the ILS, of the translators and interpreters, a third – that is, six of them – were not organized in the party, 'even though they, like the others, often have sight of very secret documents', and many were, as a result, 'political illiterates who made many errors in their translation'. The same was true of the language teachers.³⁹ The purge commission concluded that in future the ILS should 'where possible employ only qualified teachers drawn from the Party'.⁴⁰

In the 1930s, however, membership of the Soviet party was no longer optional. Only those members of foreign parties who remained

less than a year in the Soviet Union were exempted from mandatory transfer to the A-UCP(b). At the same time, transfer from foreign parties to the A-UCP(b) became caught up in the tightening of cadre control that was an element in the Party's ever more intensive scrutiny of its membership. In 1933, the Soviet party even decreed a halt on new members that lasted until 1936, producing long waiting lists for membership.

In the process, the party consolidated its monopoly over the political: 'real political life only happened in the Party'.⁴¹ If foreign communists wanted to participate in the political life of the Soviet Union, then, they would have to seek admission to the Soviet party. When Wolfgang Leonhard applied to join the *Komsomol* in 1939, having moved to the Soviet Union with his mother at the age of 13, he had to prepare for a year.⁴² He studied its programme and constitution, read the most important writings of Lenin and Stalin, and studied the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, known as the *Short Course*. In his written application he then justified his request 'politically'. The admission process began with giving an account of his life at a meeting of the *Komsomol* committee, which was followed by questions about himself: What societal work have you done? How are your studies going? Have you thoroughly studied the *History of the A-UCP(b)*? Do you know the most important duties and principles of a member of the *Komsomol*? And so on. Following this successful interview, the application went to the district committee, whose secretary solemnly presented Leonhard with his card.⁴³ In the party cell there was generally another 'open meeting' with questions about one's character and political knowledge. Acceptance was followed by some months as a 'candidate', eventually followed by formal admission to membership and the presentation of party documents. These were among the Communist's most treasured possessions, and the good party member was the one who kept them safe and in good order. Negligence, soiling, removal of pages or indeed loss of the card were signs of an 'unserious' attitude towards the party and as such frequent themes of self-criticism.

In 1932 the Soviet party established a special commission to supervise such transfers, directly responsible to the Central Committee and headed by M. F. Shkiriakov, a long-standing member of the party who sat on the Comintern's International Control Commission and who would become a member of the Soviet party's control commission in 1934.⁴⁴ With this, the entire process was centralized at the level of the Central Committee, while local party organizations were notified that

from then on only this special commission had jurisdiction over transfers. Foreign communist parties' representations in Moscow were told that they could no longer issue any party documents whatever.⁴⁵

The rules for the handling of 'transfer cases', that is, for the admission of foreign communists into the Soviet party were fixed by the CC of the A-UCP(b) at a meeting in June 1932. It was decided that the process of transfer should last no less than three months, that local party organizations should involve those concerned in party work during this period, that consideration by the ECCI take no more than two weeks, that the cadre files of transferees should remain with the commission, and that the transfer commission should question them in person. Finally, it was laid down that the commission should meet three times a month.⁴⁶ In transfer decisions made later that year it was again emphasized that 'in accordance with the constitution of the Comintern', no-one who had come to the Soviet Union without the permission of their home party could transfer to the A-UCP(b).⁴⁷

Compulsory transfer coincided with a general tightening up of policy on the admission of foreigners and the introduction of systematic control of foreign party cadre and Comintern officials. In comparison with 1936–1938, however, transfer policy in 1932–1933 seems to have been relatively liberal. In cases of doubt, even when the party representation in Moscow was unable to provide a reference, inquiry would be made of the party cell. Participation in an oppositional group or previous membership of a non-communist party were not yet grounds for refusal.⁴⁸ According to Manuilsky, the practice until 1933 was that the Comintern apparatus automatically accepted the recommendation of the national section and immediately applied for a transfer to the A-UCP(b), whereupon the Soviet party's transfer commission admitted the comrade without further ado.⁴⁹ This notion of routine acceptance does not, however, ring entirely true. A report on transfers in the six-month period between January and June 1931 gives the following figures: 648 were transferred to the A-UCP(b), 81 admitted only as candidates, and 106 refused.⁵⁰

In general, a transfer required the approval of the ECCI Secretariat. In addition, the applicant had to be vouched for by his or her employer and by three members of the A-UCP(b). Also necessary were the approval of the home party, accompanied by an evaluation (*kharakteristika*), and a *spravka* stating the circumstances of the comrade's arrival in the Soviet Union, whether the home party's CC permission had been given for this, and by whom they had been allocated to their place of work. The application was to be accompanied by the member's party documents.

Any questions or complaints the Cadre Department had about the applicant were also to be forwarded to the Transfer Commission.⁵¹

Like other control procedures, transfer called for an extensive investigation that would normally take months. What had in the 1920s been an unproblematic switch between two equal member-parties of the International increasingly became a massively bureaucratic exercise. In the second half of the 1930s, admittedly, much more was at issue than admission or non-admission to the Soviet party. For the picture of the party cadre that emerged from this process was essentially drawn by the party apparatus, in an evaluation unlike all those we have considered that relied not on self-narration but on the construction of a narrative by others, and this would have fatal consequences when mechanisms of scrutiny became the machinery of liquidation.

An example of this almost boundless documentary information-gathering and the path to perdition it could open up is afforded by the transfer dossier of Paul Rüegg. This Swiss-born metalworker, who had joined the Socialist Youth in 1912 before later becoming a member of the party, had attended the Comintern's founding congress in 1919. Between 1919 and 1921 he worked in Germany, Italy, Austria and Switzerland as a courier for the Western European Secretariat (predecessor of the WEB), part of the Comintern's secret apparatus, and soon thereafter for the Comintern's newly created International Liaison Section, the OMS. There he may perhaps have done more than ferry documents. Arrested in Vienna in late 1919, he was suspected by the police of intending to aid the escape of Béla Kun, imprisoned in the Austrian capital, but for want of proof they could only extradite him to Switzerland. After attending the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West in 1924, he remained in the Soviet Union, working until his arrest at various locomotive factories in Kolomna and Ulan Ude.⁵² His name became well-known in Western Europe in 1931–1932, when it was used as a borrowed identity for one of the OMS operatives arrested and tried in China that Willi Münzenberg organized a public campaign to save.⁵³ Rüegg's Transfer Commission dossier shows how many institutions and party organs were involved in commenting on the application.⁵⁴ It also shows how even after transfer (Rüegg being made a candidate member in 1926 and a full member in 1927) such a file could continue to grow. Apart from manuscript autobiographies written in 1927 and 1932, it contains only external observations on his person. Among these are several *spravki*, among them a positive reference of 13 March 1937 from Konrad Mayer, Swiss party representative in Moscow between 1935 and 1938, and a whole series from various

employees of the Comintern's Cadre Department, including 'Mertens' (that is Grete Wilde, from 1935–1938 an analyst (*referent*) in the cadre department), 'Kraevskii' (Anton Stein, head of the Cadre Department until 1936) and also 'Tsirul' (acting head of the Cadre Department for a short period in 1937). Another memorandum came from Elena Stasova, member of the International Control Commission and president of the International Red Aid. There are also references from the factory committees at Rüeegg's places of work, and from the NKVD.

Increased control brought with it not only the expansion of the control bodies of A-UCP(b) and Comintern, but also, as the Rüeegg dossier shows, their closer articulation with police institutions. The sources testify to the institutionalized cooperation between the NKVD and the cadre departments of the party and the Comintern in the context of verifications and purges. The cadre department thus writes to Dimitrov on 23 August 1936 that it has sent material on 3,000 people to the NKVD.⁵⁵ Given the lack of complete access to relevant archives, the precise procedural details of this co-operation remain unknown, but there is enough evidence already of the exchange of correspondence and documentary materials between Comintern bodies concerned with cadre matters and the NKVD: the International Control Commission and the Comintern Cadre Department, first of all, but also other organizations dealing with emigrants, such as International Red Aid and the Soviet Writers' Union. Elena Stasova, for example – head of Red Aid and probably one of the most influential members of the ICC during the purges – forwarded correspondence regarding a case of 'Trotskyism' in the district committee for foreign languages in Odessa to Yezhov the very same day.⁵⁶ The flow of information is also difficult to reconstruct because it often followed a meandering path between the three separate but interlinked organizations involved: the A-UCP(b) (that is the party organization within the Comintern), the Comintern apparatus proper, and the NKVD.

As well as throwing a light on these channels of communication, the Rüeegg dossier also reveals the volume of documentation generated on party cadres. There were often several organizations that held the most complete personal details on an individual in the form of copies or excerpts and other information passed on by organs of cadre control. Rüeegg's voluminous dossier thus contains various *kharakteristiki*, extracts from *proverka* regarding the 1935 verification of party documents, and an excerpt from minutes of 20 May 1937, probably from the ECCI verification commission, asking the cadre department to check the material in the ECCI archives on Rüeegg's expulsion from the

Swiss CP (Rüegg having been expelled in 1924 because he allowed his union to pay him unemployment benefits while he was working for the Comintern). The report of the party organizer at the Modellzsch Makhnachev notes that in the purge of 1929 Rüegg had been strongly reprimanded for disagreement with the 'general line' of the party. There is another indication in Rüegg's file that something might be amiss in his biography, a report that notes his contacts with two other Swiss nationals, Berta Zimmermann and Fritz Platten. Zimmermann was arrested two months before Rüegg, and executed in December 1937, while her ex-husband Platten was the subject of an ECCI investigation begun in late 1936 or early 1937 that had led to his expulsion from the Party in late summer 1937 and then to his arrest. As recently as March 1936, however, the Transfer Commission had confirmed Platten's party membership.⁵⁷ Finally, the dossier also contains a six-page Russian summary of all this material, drawn up by 'Mertens' on 25 June 1937, noting alongside a whole raft of grounds of suspicion the names of several of Rüegg's personal friends already under arrest.⁵⁸ Rüegg himself was arrested on 9 August 1937, and shot soon afterwards. Ironically, on 9 September 1937 the Communist papers abroad, the Swiss amongst them, announced that Paul Rüegg and his wife had been released by the Shanghai police.⁵⁹

4.3 The NKVD decides

The party purge of 1933 saw the admission of new members suspended.⁶⁰ This covered all levels of party organization, including district committees, and it also affected foreigners. Individual communist parties or organs of the Comintern could no longer send recommendations directly to district party organizations, as this would have allowed the possibility of candidate membership being granted. Instead, they had to send the prospective party organization a *spravka* indicating that the candidate's documents had been submitted to the Transfer Commission. Comrades with such a *spravka* had then to be subjected to the purge process.⁶¹ A letter of 5 August 1933 from the Transfer Commission to Kaganovich, Secretary of the Central Committee of the A-UCP(b), states that the Commission had by then accumulated a backlog of more than a thousand cases.⁶² By early 1937 no fewer than 5,000 members of foreign parties were waiting for the result of their application for transfer, even though the ban on new admissions had been lifted in mid-1936.⁶³ Delays in transfer often meant that foreign communists had difficulties in finding jobs and registering with the authorities.

Circumstances had changed, however, when transfers resumed in the second half of the 1930s. The Transfer Commission was now formally obliged to consult the NKVD. A provision of this kind was first proposed in a draft of May 1935 which noted that the Transfer Commission should not come to a final decision without forwarding all the documents in the case to the ECCI and the NKVD and receiving their approval.⁶⁴ The closer articulation between the political and the police arms of the Soviet power also manifested itself at the level of personnel. By 1937, the Commission included not only the NKVD officer – and ECCI Secretary since 1935 – ‘Moskvin’ (that is Mikhail (Meer) A. Trilisser) but the Cadre Commission officials Anvelt and ‘Belov’ (that is, Georgii P. Damianov).⁶⁵

The generalization of the logic of terror and its implementation by police institutions are clearly evidenced in the ‘transfer work’ of the German section of the Comintern. In February 1936 a further special commission was created to review references provided in connection with transfer to the A-UCP(b). This ‘small commission’ consisted of all three German Comintern officers. Although it only began regular work in May, it had by then already put together a list of some 3,000 emigrants. In the course of this process of transferring all foreign party cadre to the A-UCP(b), every one of them had to be ‘verified’ from scratch.⁶⁶ Around 2,500 emigrants had been investigated by September 1936, the verification extending even to abroad, including as it did 3,000 dossiers of ‘comrades no longer in the Soviet Union’.⁶⁷ Those who had already transferred to the Soviet party were also verified once again, and the references that individual comrades had provided for their transfer to the A-UCP(b) were also re-examined and, as had been decided earlier, if these references proved to have helped ‘spies’ and other ‘class enemies’ enter the party, the individuals or the parties who had provided them were summoned by the International Control Commission of the Comintern.⁶⁸ The intention of all this was to weed out ‘enemies of the party’ and ‘party wreckers’, ‘suspicious elements’ and ‘bad elements’. Lists of those excluded or to be excluded from the Party were sent to the NKVD, who then marked off on them the names of those they arrested.⁶⁹

In addition, when the ban on admissions was lifted, the Comintern itself established a series of commissions and sub-commissions to verify the references given earlier in accordance with less stringent procedures. By this point, some 8,000 members of other CPs had been transferred to the A-UCP(b).⁷⁰ The outcome of the exercise was, however, to a great extent predetermined, for the Central Committee of the A-UCP(b) had

already concluded in late December 1935 that the representatives of foreign parties had evidenced gross, indeed 'criminal' negligence, in providing references for transfer purposes.⁷¹ And that 'insufficient class vigilance' was to be found even at the very top of the Comintern and International Red Aid was an ever-repeated reproach.⁷²

Surveillance (cadre control and the purge as investigation) and punishment (purge as sanction) were from the beginning closely intertwined. The process varied over time in intensity, in substantive content, and above all in its consequences. From the end of the 1920s, however, these became ever more severe, ending in the mid-1930s, even for Western party-members, in expulsion and criminal sanctions, including death. The purge changed accordingly from a means to political-pedagogic ends to an instrument of discipline and repression.⁷³

That such a development was possible was thanks to the multifunctionality of cadre control. It was firstly used by the party secretariat and the Organization Department to screen cadre for cadre-selection purposes. Secondly, it embodied the Bolshevik conception of a periodical 'self-cleansing' of 'unworthy elements'. Thirdly, while it operated on the party membership as a means of discipline, it was also a technique for the internalization of the ruling norms. Fourthly, the practices it involved had an explicitly pedagogical function, serving the Communist goal of the 'improvement' of 'Old Man' that was necessary to the realization of a communist society. The instrumentalization of cadre control by the Stalinist régime was able to exploit all of these aspects, even if none of them were necessarily predestined to such use.

5

Becoming a 'Real Bolshevik'

To be nominated and then accepted to attend a course at an international cadre school in the Soviet Union represented a key stage in rising through the ranks of a Communist party. Though graduating students returning home did not generally find themselves appointed to the top leadership of their organization, which had its own, different, mode of selection, they would – barring accidents – join the intermediate stratum located between the numerous 'lower' cadres of local and regional officialdom and the national leadership of the party. To create the 'inflexible militant of the proletarian cause' proposed as a model by this cadre education,¹ the schools deployed a system of pedagogy whose goals and methods will be analyzed here. Despite the Communist International's claim to universality, the encounter with the Soviet party and its practices proved somewhat disorienting. It differed notably in the methods of control exercised by and over the membership, among them the regular 'purges' (*chistki*) (either systematic or following upon the investigation of a particular 'case' or 'affair' (*delo*), from the mid-1930s onward), 'verifications' (*proverki*), and exchanges of party cards. But it was distinctive, too, in its culture and in the pedagogy that inculcated it.² To become the 'true Bolshevik' the communist cadre of the 1930s aspired to be, proved to be a matter of self-cultivation, of self-perfection, a process of transformation that required one to learn a number of introspective and discursive techniques.

5.1 The international cadre education system

The international cadre schools were established during the period of 'Bolshevization' in the mid-1920s, but it was only with the Stalinization of the Comintern from 1928 onward that they really expanded. It was

with a view to unifying the Communist parties around a single centre that the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) in November 1924 presented a proposal for the organization of international cadre education in Moscow, the paper being drafted by Bela Kun. The first students arrived in May 1926. As well as the International Lenin School (ILS), another institution, initially established for the training of cadres from the non-Russian minorities of the Soviet Union, also opened its doors to foreign communists: this was the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West (generally referred to by the Russian abbreviation KUNMZ).³ While the course at the ILS started with 70 students from 23 different countries, numbers varied over the years. There was a large increase between 1928 and 1932.⁴ There were thus 660 students for the year 1931–1932 alone (as against some 200 in 1928) and 592 in 1936.⁵ A recent estimate suggests that some 3,500 students passed through the ILS between May 1926 and mid-1938, when the school closed.⁶ Most came from Germany, with 320, followed by France, Poland, Italy, the United States and China with 200–225, Great Britain with 150, and finally Spain and Finland with 135 each. Other countries such as Canada, Belgium and Sweden were responsible for between 40 and 75 students each, Switzerland, Australia, Colombia and Iceland for between ten and 15.⁷ At the KUNMZ, foreign communists represented the majority of the students by the late 1920s, the result of the gradual introduction of a whole series of new foreign language sections on the request of the Comintern.⁸ In May 1933, there were 466 foreign students as against 332 from the Soviet Union; in 1936, 536 students in total, more than half of whom were foreign. It was above all the Austrian and German sections that expanded in 1933–1934, on account of the refugees from these two countries who settled in the USSR. An estimated total of 5,000 students for all international schools taken together (including that of the Communist Youth International) seems then to be at the low end of the range.⁹

The success of the undertaking depended first of all on the selection of students, who had, of course, to be motivated, but that was not all. They were handpicked. The first selection was carried out by the party of origin, which nominated them on the basis not only of criteria of political conduct (loyalty to the Party and to the line) but also of social origin (proletarian), family and occupational background (no connections with members of the police or the intelligence services) and even health.¹⁰ Once in the Soviet Union, they were subject to further, much more searching examinations, organized by the Central Control

Commission of the Soviet party and notably, from June 1932, by the Comintern's Cadre Commission.¹¹ This 'verification' of the candidate was undertaken in strict observation of the 'rules of conspiracy',¹² which required in effect that the candidate now reveal nothing of him or herself except to the party instances responsible for the collation of biographical data. The symbolic violence effected by this dispossession of one's biography, handed over to the party, which stored it away and used it if it saw fit, was underlined by the obligation imposed on the candidate to abandon his or her own name for a pseudonym that would serve as their only official identity in the USSR. This first encounter with the practices of the Soviet Communist Party would be crowned by the writing of one's autobiography, the centrepiece of the personal file.

As the young communists from abroad admitted to the cadre schools spoke little Russian, they were grouped together by language. There were thus French, German, Italian, English and other 'sections'. At the KUNMZ in 1930–1931, there were 17 such sections. The following year, the Italian, Norwegian and Swedish sections were transferred to the ILS. At its height in 1936, the ILS hosted 20 language sections, 12 of these corresponding to single nationalities. Section D, responsible for all English-speaking students together, was divided in two in 1933, with students from England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand in one and students from the USA and Canada in the other. In 1936, the same was done with the German-language Section A, now divided between students from Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands on the one hand and those from Austria on the other. Each international education institution had a complex hierarchical organization in which educators and their committees shared jurisdiction with party and trade union representatives and their committees. At the different levels of each section one thus found not only administrators but also student representatives. There was, in addition, a party committee composed of representatives of the school leadership, the administration, the teaching staff and the students, responsible for political work, as well as a party (*partorg*) and a trade union representative (*proforg*), nominated by their peers.¹³ Their responsibility was to ensure order and discipline. It was their job, for example, to prevent the circulation of 'Trotskyite newspapers', as occurred in the French section of the ILS in 1936.¹⁴ From 1933 onward, all activities of both school and party were subject to the supervision of the school's cadre department.¹⁵

Defined by a course committee, the course content – termed the 'academic' work – was based on the knowledge supposed to be useful to future Party cadres: students were to acquire a smattering of political

economy and Marxist-Leninist ideology, but above all they had to learn about Party organization, and the history of the Soviet Party, of the Comintern and of their own party, and also about the realities of the Soviet Union.¹⁶ Such intellectual formation was but one aspect of provision: sport, reading and theatre also had places on the programme. The timetable was heavy (up to ten hours teaching a day at the beginning, eight in 1931 and seven from 1933), and there were many complaints about overload, all the more as the course also required much homework, 'self-directed learning' being one of the pedagogical methods adopted. In addition, students had to participate actively in the union and the party and engage in 'societal work', that is to take on collective tasks such as the publishing of a wall newspaper or the decoration of a 'red corner'. One was also expected to take part in 'Oso work', as the exercises of the paramilitary civil defence organization (*Osoaviakhim*) were called. Spells of practical experience in the countryside or in a Soviet factory completed the course.

5.2 The goals of education

The system of dual supervision, pedagogical and political, by the school's academic leadership on the one hand and by the party leadership on the other, reflects the scope of the educational goals. The knowledge needed by these future middle cadres went beyond a familiarity with Marxism-Leninism. Beyond immediate academic performance, the student who wished to graduate successfully had to acquire a specific intellectual disposition, appropriating the methods and the tools that would ensure a 'correct' understanding of the party line and ensuring that the party's interests and interpretations always prevailed over the individual member's. In this respect, everything or nearly everything had to be relearned in the Soviet Union, students having to draw a line under the cultural and educational capital acquired in their own country and party. 'No doubt we have all become more or less capable militants in the practical struggles back there [in Western Europe]', explained a session-leader at a KUNMZ 'party day' in 1935, 'but overall our education has been one-sided. It's only here, under the leadership of the Party, that we have the opportunity to become better, real, universal militants'.¹⁷

The requirements for becoming such a militant were apparently simple, for it was enough to understand 'that the collective always knows best', as was explained by Fritz Heckert, the German Communist Party's representative to the ECCI from 1932–1934.¹⁸ The adoption of

a hierarchy of interpretation so privileging the party meant acquiring what Erving Goffman called 'a sense of one's place'¹⁹ – not only being able to locate one's position (notably in relation to the Party), but also adjusting to it. It was one thing to declare loyalty to the Party, as many foreign communists did in the party autobiographies they wrote on first arriving in Moscow: 'I have never ceased in my militancy', wrote 'Danièle' Casanova;²⁰ 'without interruption (*lückenlos*), my life has been given over to the struggle of the working class', declared the German writer Willi Bredel.²¹ But the 'real Bolshevik' proved it in everyday behaviour. In no circumstances would a Communist put his or her own interest above that of the Party. Having refused to contribute to the 'socialist loan' on the grounds that they needed the money for their 'personal needs (theatre, cinema, tram, clothing)', students Supo (probably Souppault, who could have been the French communist Sylvan Péronnet) and the Belgian 'Auguste Depierre' (in real life Rénatus Dillen) of the French section found themselves accused of 'political error' in the course of the 1933 purge at the ILS.²² They had put 'their own [*lichnye*] wants before their social duty'. On a trip to Leningrad, Depierre had also 'first wanted to amuse himself and only later realized that he was there for the construction of socialism [*sotsstroï*]'.²³ In displaying such an 'individualistic' attitude, which was no better than 'egocentric', a party member showed an unwillingness to accept party discipline. It put his own 'personal' interests above those of the party, to which this was unacceptable. It was equally unacceptable to weigh one's own comfort against one's duties to the party. In a self-criticism meeting of French section, student 'Bonnard' (a pseudonym) declared that he had been earning a good wage before he moved to the Soviet Union and that for him attendance at the Lenin school was a sacrifice. 'No more eating well, drinking my bottle of wine, my beer, no more a proper room of my own, the situation here is completely different'.²⁴ Such an attitude was uncommunist.

What at first sight seems no more than a matter of accepting party discipline proved in reality to be a long process of learning a cultural model with its own distinctive habitus. In this context, the acquisition of party-certified political and cultural capital had to be approached with the greatest of 'seriousness', testified to by the frequency with which the term appears in the 'characterizations', as written evaluations of the students were called. Yet the intellectual, moral and practical direction of this intense work on the self was the responsibility of the Party, and the future cadres had not the competence to bring their own powers of interpretation to bear. 'Self-satisfaction, arrogance, a sense of

superiority' were regularly rebuked as character defects. Comrade Fuchs was thus subject to the severest party sanction on account of his refusal to admit his error in a criticism and self-criticism session. 'I'd rather shoot myself', he'd said! 'Non-communist behaviour', was the retort of the collective. One participant told him 'Your process of improvement has come to a stop. We don't need stubborn mules. It's against yourself you have to struggle'.²⁵ In 1942, during the War, Wolfgang Leonhard ('Linden') faced the same reproach. He was accused of 'personal arrogance' for his sarcastic remark that he'd be interested to know what a certain speaker had to say about Alexander Nevsky. 'What is the meaning of that? What it means is that he already knows everything and that he has no need to learn anything'.²⁶

The acquisition of 'practical' knowledge, the offering of a 'correct' or 'proper' analysis of 'Soviet reality' – these typical and highly significant terms mark the educational attainments noted in academic assessments. Concretely, students had above all to be capable of transposing to particular situations – 'in practice' – the interpretative schemata inculcated by the institution. As witnessed by the characterizations, the good student, the 'accomplished Bolshevik', is the one who knows how to 'apply' the knowledge acquired, who 'knows how to tackle questions concretely'. The bad student, on the other hand, 'tends to look at problems in an abstract manner', or has 'too theoretical an approach'. Such was the case of Cox, a student in the English section (Section E) of the ILS, criticized for 'an abstract approach to concrete problems'.²⁷ The bad student, like the bad teacher, had a 'superficial' approach to problems, as was acknowledged by a certain Popandopulo at a February 1936 meeting of the KUNMZ party committee (*partkom*). Group leader for the students specializing in 'propaganda', he had bungled the distinction between the Stakhanovites (the 'heroes of labour' who exceeded the norm, promoted by a late-1935 party campaign) and the *udarniki* (the 'shock-workers' of the Civil War years, revived in 1929 to inspire productivity in the context of the First Five Year Plan), 'for he tends to explain everything too fast and to be impatient with the students'.²⁸

The method adopted to achieve the pedagogical goal consisted above all in learning by repeated practice the correct manner of interpreting Marxist-Leninist theory. The traditional discussion of texts played a central role, enabling one to 'clarify the issues'. To 'clarify', though, was in the end nothing other than to adopt the point of view of one's teachers and thus of the Party. It was to it, or its leaders, that the development of theory was delegated. As the student Degraf confessed at the KUNMZ in 1936: 'At first I lacked clarity on the agrarian question, but I caught

up later. I was wrong to have stuck to my position'.²⁹ What one ought to do in such a situation was 'to clarify the question with the teacher'.³⁰ According to Ivan Titkin, secretary of the party committee at the ILS, it was enough to heed 'what Stalin has said on the subject'.³¹ Texts by Soviet leaders (Stalin of course among them) were taken as teaching material, each filleted for its content by the student called upon to present it, and then the teacher (called a lecturer) offered corrections, approving one interpretation or criticizing another, before the students themselves took up the task. The discussion would last until all the students had made their own the official 'Bolshevikly correct' interpretation. Because of this, teachers had to be especially careful that 'each comrade takes turn to speak'.³²

Such 'discussions' should not be confused with debate or the contest of different possible interpretations. 'A truly revolutionary theory is incompatible with sterile definition-mongering', André Marty explained to students of the French section of the ILS in 1935, citing Georgi Dimitrov. He boiled down to a punchy phrase this principle of the Stalinist cultural model, for which all theory flowed directly from practice, the mediator of this single truth being the Party: 'Leninism is, more than anything, life'.³³ This was a new experience for foreign communists, and their encounter with Soviet techniques for the inculcation of that truth was often bruising. As one student remarked, 'This method of approaching problems, as practised in the Soviet Union, is new to me. If you had to admit a mistake in Germany, in practical work, in the cell or elsewhere, the comrades were not so concerned whether the choice of words was wrong. What was important was your attitude to work with the Party. If a comrade worked well, you didn't bother about wrong expressions or attitudes'.³⁴ Another student, Comrade Fromm, had to understand that it was 'an incorrect political position, when she says 'it's going too far when you find "Long live Stalin!" or "Long live the CP" in a newspaper article, or when she claims that there is too tight an editorial control in the Leningrad press'.³⁵

This insistence on things being put the right way included the written word. 'Text revision brigades' vetted teaching materials, wall newspapers and anything else that might disseminate 'errors' among the students. Alarm was raised, for example, by a passage in a party history that spoke of 'the difference between Lenin and Engels concerning the struggle against the *narodniks*'.³⁶ Doubtless this hyper-correctness, this 'anxious reference to the legitimate norm of ... correctness' might be understood as symptomatic of an uneasy relationship to codified knowledge.³⁷ The new knowledge was indeed not yet completely assimilated, and the learners were therefore unable to do without constant

self-observation in order to prove to others, as to themselves, that they were among those who had mastered it. In addition, however, the nature of the knowledge itself demanded such an attitude. For there was only one right and wrong, and only one interpretation was possible. In any event, this knowledge could be acquired only by great effort. Hermetic, rigid – dogmatic, indeed – it called for a psychic economy organized around self-inspection.

This psychology was not limited to the cognitive, but included a self-discipline and a self-mastery equal to every circumstance. The ideal militant to be embodied by the Stalinist cadre, as revealed in the students' characterizations, was someone above all rational and self-controlled. Those who passed the test were 'steady', 'loyal', 'serious', 'trustworthy', 'conscientious', 'convinced', 'calm', 'active', 'energetic', 'disciplined'. They had 'a developed sense of duty' and integrated without difficulty into the group.³⁸ The student 'Antoine', on the other hand, admitted to getting worked up too easily: 'I showed a lack of composure unfitting in a communist'. Others criticized for being 'shaky', 'touchy' or 'inconsistent in performance' were 'unable to take criticism' or 'subject to mood swings'.

The self-mastery of the 'true Bolshevik' found expression at three levels: the personal, the cultural, and the political, all mutually dependent. Plain living and everyday discipline were thus obligatory. This meant morning exercise, sports, and a rational use of time. The student Forster admitted during the purge of 1933 that he didn't enjoy *fizkul'tura* (physical culture), because he lacked discipline and self-control.³⁹ He was not the only one who tried to skip the organized early morning exercise. Partorg Braun explained the significance of this 'boycott':

What is the meaning of this boycott of *physkultur*? *Physkultur* means physical and mental health, means discipline. We are struggling to achieve *physkultur* and our comrades do not understand its significance. Where do we find the roots of this? In the remains of petty-bourgeois thinking and character. This individualistic behaviour is an expression of their petty-bourgeois residues. Residues of social democracy. It is your task to combat such abuses to the utmost. One has to be 100 per cent capable, which means completely jettisoning social-democratic ways of thought. As experienced communists we understand that there are questions of principle in the minutest details. Such details can have dangerous consequences. One has to discipline oneself.⁴⁰

Attention to the body and its health was part of one's duty, not just to keep fit and maintain one's capacity for work, but also because personal

hygiene reflected moral hygiene. Carelessness in matters of dress could reflect a lack of discipline, punctuality, responsibility. This was the accusation aimed at one unfortunate Lenin school student during the 1933 purge, when he was told, 'Your clothing symbolizes your whole personality'.⁴¹

This work on the physical self was accompanied by the thorough programme of cultural and social education that became *de rigueur* in the 1930s. The 'cultivated' communist had good manners, treated women with respect, went to the theatre and visited museums.⁴² The Lenin School had a department of *kul'trabota*, 'cultural work', responsible for the organization of weekly film screenings, museum visits and political discussions.⁴³ Choirs, too, were established, corresponding to the school's linguistic or national sections. These activities formed an integral part of the programme of study and students had to show evidence of progress in the subject. If most conformed – in the rhetoric of their self-reports, at least – there were many who had difficulty in accepting all the prescribed criteria of 'cultivation'. So it was that at a session for 'discussion of production results', the student Steinbeck had to answer the criticism that he did not read enough literary fiction. He was even threatened with the withdrawal of his accreditation as an *udarnik*, a shock-worker. He protested: 'It's true that I don't read great literature, but I'm someone who loves the outdoors, and I make a lot of expeditions. What's more, I'm a non-smoker. But some of the people in my room smoke, and I've been denounced as a smoker in the wall newspaper'.⁴⁴

However much the communist cadres of the future might have been motivated to perfect their education, this purely 'rational' cultural practice, laboured and pedagogical as it was, did not suit everyone. For students who were workers by origin, who had none of the relevant cultural capital to start with, evenings at the theatre could sometimes be tedious, if not incomprehensible, as the performances were given in Russian, a language they hardly knew. Others, on the other hand, objected to having to go to the theatre as a group, inevitably attracting the reproach of 'petty-bourgeois individualism', as did the student Wiesel, who, during a report-back and assessment, expressed the thought that 'it's much nicer to go by yourself'.⁴⁵ It was not at all uncommon for an evaluation to find that over the last term one student only had shown exemplary discipline in this respect, while some had failed to go to the theatre at all.

What was demanded of the student was the acquisition of a certain body of knowledge, and also the adoption of a certain stance in relation to it. In addition to this double goal, the international schools were

meant to produce in the future cadre an inner disposition that saw the correct attitude toward the party not as a matter of knowledge alone but as something expressed in everything one did, in one's schemes of orientation and interpretation – in other words, in a recomposition of the habitus. How was this internalization of the mental structures of the Stalinist social world effected? What were the 'techniques of deculturation and reculturation'⁴⁶ employed? How was the singular subordinated to political rationality?

5.3 Learning habits

The *modus operandi* for the production of the Stalinist cadre made use of self-inspection, turning subjectivity to its own ends. One had to talk about oneself, reveal oneself, correct one's errors. The operation of this pedagogy, however, was based on the principle of truth, and this called for complete transparency, and the greatest zeal. The principle could be implemented most effectively, as might be expected, in the boarding-school-like international cadre schools, where it was ensured that no student 'withdrew', isolating him or herself from the rest. The French Lenin School student Richard, who 'preferred to remain by himself' rather than working in a small group of two or three, had to admit this as a fault when doing self-criticism in 1933.⁴⁷ In certain cases the collective was called to 'come to the aid' of students who too much cut themselves off, like student Reif of the Lenin School, who lacked the ability 'to properly integrate into the social life of the collective'.⁴⁸ Even errors that might seem at first sight unimportant had to be identified, declared and dissected, as they could be symptomatic of others more serious. There could be no such thing as a realm exempt from the demands of the collective, and no possibility of 'cutting oneself off'. Students had, then, to be constantly speaking of themselves, explaining the choices they had made, the reasons, the doubts; offering a public assessment of the progress of their studies, of the difficulties they were having, and of the mistakes they had made. 'The party demands of everyone that they should account for themselves every day, every hour', insisted F. Heckert,⁴⁹ who had already explained to the Lenin School students the reasons for this, during the purge of 1933: 'A comrade who doesn't speak of his mistakes is firstly being dishonest to the party. Secondly, the party cannot trust such a comrade and cannot assign tasks to him, even if he is a good militant. Thirdly, such a comrade leads non-members to doubt the honesty of the party as a whole. And fourthly, this comrade will prompt others to hide their own past from the party,

giving it a bad reputation and making it impossible for it to play its role as the avant-garde of the masses in struggle'.⁵⁰ The student Bloch, an Austrian, affords an example of what was involved in such a rejection of the confessional attitude: he did 'not defend his opinions sufficiently openly', so that it was 'difficult to help him overcome his wrong ideas'. He was not included among those who passed the end-of-year assessment and were put forward for a party post.⁵¹

It was to 'correct errors' and 'overcome one's wrong ideas' that one had to put oneself on display by talking about oneself before others. Through their criticism these others could help the 'self-critic' reorder his or her deepest self in a manner more consistent with the Soviet party norms. But this operation on the self was not just the erasure of earlier cultural conditioning now inappropriate; it also required the acquisition of schemata or 'models for the production of practices', a new attitude characterized by the readiness and the ability to improve both capacity and performance.

To be able to improve, one had to measure oneself against others. A key instrument of Soviet governmentality, 'socialist emulation' was introduced into the factories in 1929 in an attempt to mobilize workers to increase the level of productivity, and then into the cadre schools in the early 1930s.⁵² The students laid down in advance the goals in relation to which they would be assessed by their teachers and fellow students.⁵³ The group agreed on the goal to be achieved within a certain period of time, such as achieving a certain standard in the study of Stalin's *Concerning Questions of Leninism*, or a certain level of participation in morning exercise, and in doing so issued a challenge to other groups. In other cases, it would be two individuals who competed against each other. Everything became a matter of competition: course content, the number of party meetings, the wall newspaper, the cleanliness of rooms, participation in social, cultural or military activities ... From 1935, more political goals indexing conformity to the party line started to be introduced, such as assiduity in 'the struggle for Bolshevik vigilance' or the achievement of a properly self-critical attitude.⁵⁴

For young communists from abroad, these Soviet practices were at first entirely foreign. 'When we arrived here, we had no idea of what "socialist emulation" meant in practice', noted the students of the French section of the Lenin School in 1933.⁵⁵ 'Socialist emulation' was part of a discourse that boasted of having nothing to do with capitalist competition, the goal in this case being to raise everyone to the highest level. Means to this were the so-called 'tugboat' principle and the sponsorship of weaker teams by stronger.⁵⁶ Competing groups systematically

reviewed progress, in principle once a month.⁵⁷ Results were normally first discussed among course members. Those who achieved the targets gained the coveted title of 'shock worker' and sometimes material advantages, such as a stay at a holiday resort on the Black Sea. Every student had to cast a (self-)critical eye on his or her own efforts. This self-assessment was then considered and if necessary corrected by fellow-students and teachers. If some over-estimated themselves, others under-estimated. The student Gerber, for example, admitted that he was regularly late for class and that he would not achieve his targets. His comrades then discussed whether he could keep his shock-worker card. Student Hartmann was in favour, student Kurz against, the latter suggesting that Gerber be issued with a warning. It was Hartmann's position that finally won the day, five votes to three.⁵⁸

More generally, all results were discussed and evaluated at self-report (*samootchet*) meetings, where individuals reported on their progress, but also on their failures, errors even; the group, for its part, was answerable for each one of its members. In fact, like 'socialist emulation', self-report rested on the principle of mutual answerability. Given the goals of the system of training 'proper Bolshevik cadres', however, it wasn't just educational achievement that was assessed, but the personality as a whole. The personal 'balance-sheet' thus covered not just 'production work' but 'societal work', 'party work' and general behaviour. Whether formally demanded or informally reproduced, there existed a more or less fixed pattern to which the self-report generally conformed, even if some students insisted on a more spontaneous form of self-presentation. In what appears to be a fairly representative instance, the three students who successively presented their balance-sheets at a party meeting dealt with the following points: the group's 'production', that is, their academic achievement in the subjects they had undertaken to study, knowledge of Russian, relationships with lecturers and other school officials, assiduity in physical culture and 'societal work', and involvement in the production of the newspaper, party and cultural activities. On each point, they weighed up strengths and weaknesses.⁵⁹ Should they not do so, others would remind them that the purpose of the exercise was an in-depth self-examination that left no aspect of the self in the dark. After the student had spoken, there followed an examination by the group, termed the 'general discussion', during which he or she would have to defend the self-assessment against critique. In general, challenges were many, for a critical attitude was the mark of a 'true Bolshevik'. The student Laube, for a example, a member of the German-language section of the KUNMZ, had to respond to the

following questions: 'Why do you do no societal work?', 'What kind of library do you go to?', 'Why don't you go on group outings to the theatre?', 'Why do you keep yourself apart?', 'What are the weaknesses in your work, what are your mistakes, and what would you say about your attitude toward the group?'⁶⁰

His attitude, precisely, was considered unsatisfactory because Laube didn't join in enough, he kept himself apart. Furthermore, he hadn't really grasped the tasks of the 'true Bolshevik', because he thought that he could only do 'societal work' if his studies didn't suffer, an idea judged to be 'utterly wrong' by another student.⁶¹ According to those at the meeting, this attitude of detachment was all the more unsatisfactory for corresponding, as they saw it, to his general behaviour. For if he were not prepared to recognize his errors, as the critics claimed, he lacked the necessary humility in relation to the group and the party, and if he would not recognize his errors then he could not correct them. 'But we're your comrades' said another student, 'and all we want to do is help you overcome your faults'.

Confronted by such criticisms, the student (or teacher) in question had to respond. There were only two options open, self-criticism or self-justification, the latter within certain narrow limits only. In the first case, one straightforwardly recognized one's errors and promised to 'liquidate' them.⁶² In the second, one could defend oneself by evoking mitigating circumstances, such as family difficulties. This was the option chosen by comrade Kern. Justifying her absences from class, she stressed that she had a young child and a seriously ill husband.⁶³ Another student managed to divert attention from his weaknesses by raising the question of the accuracy of the record.⁶⁴ The margin of negotiation was very narrow, but it did exist. The others' reaction depended on a number of factors, the first being the student's standing within the group. The crucial thing, apart from personal likes and dislikes, was to show a willingness to improve. Otherwise, one was quite simply rejecting the purpose of the whole exercise: working on the self so as to become a Bolshevik cadre.

This indeed was the whole goal of the self-report, what underpinned its operation: to lead the person reporting on him- or herself to modify, step by step, certain attitudes, certain ways of thinking, certain values. The means to this was a kind of truth-game in which self-analysis alternated with systematic interrogation by the group, a procedure that presupposed complete openness on the part of the person concerned. Should the necessary disposition – intellectual and emotional – be absent, then the role of the group was to bring it into being through its rounds of insistent questioning, a role it had every interest in carrying

out, as it would be held responsible for the successes and failures of its members. To this end, every self-report concluded with a resolution of the group attesting to the results of one's work on oneself. If there were no fault to find, or very little, the student (or teacher) would qualify as a 'shock worker'. Failing this, the group would prescribe tasks to be carried out with a view to the adjustment of understandings or attitudes. Student Laube thus had to show zeal in 'societal work', not only at the University but in party and union. It was also demanded that he should recognize his faults, in order to overcome them. Finally, he had to undertake to achieve a mark of 'very good' in every area, 'as he is capable of it'.⁶⁵ The procedure of report, evaluation and prescription concluded in general with a declaration on the part of the students concerned that they accepted the demands made, and would do their best to meet them.

The ultimate moment of truth, the confrontation with 'reality' would be the 'practical' (*praktika*) with which the course normally concluded. It was this that served as a measure of the pedagogical work done, as it called for 'seeing Soviet reality' as it was described in official slogans,⁶⁶ that is, taking an 'objective' rather than a subjective view.

According to a 1936 balance-sheet of the work of the Lenin School, the manifest objective of the placement in a factory or collective farm was 'to allow students to become familiar with the material advances in the lives of workers and collective farmers' achieved 'thanks to the Bolshevik Party' and 'the growth of productivity thanks to Stakhanovism'.⁶⁷ The future cadres were prepared long in advance for this encounter with the everyday life of the Soviet population. Directed reading, excursions and visiting speakers introduced them to the perceptual and interpretative schemata promoted by the party. Group discussions helped them 'clarify' their views. 'The achievements of the collectivization movement are enormous' – this is how Comrade Kolbe introduced a discussion on the function of agricultural artels as exemplary models of the organization of peasant production.⁶⁸ According to the teachers, much correction was necessary, as for example in discussion of the Stakhanovite movement. At first, it was not uncommon for students to see it as a return to traditional forms of worker exploitation, with high rates of production and the reintroduction of wage differentials. The student Leblanc, for example – a 'weak element', apparently – declared that it was 'nothing new': 'In capitalist factories, they put strong workers on the line to increase productivity. The only difference, it seems to me, is that there workers are working for capitalism, but here they are working for themselves'.⁶⁹ Another student made a similar claim on returning from his placement. He changed his mind

later, after a group discussion: 'I understand now that what I said about the political leader [*politshef*] with whom I did my practical placement was wrong from start to finish. But everyone in the collective thought the same thing. They thought of him as the 'boss' who arrived in his car, gave orders and so on ... Obviously, this was wrong, I know now that the car was absolutely necessary for doing the job properly'.⁷⁰

To avoid such 'errors of judgment' those responsible had to plan placements in the minutest detail.⁷¹ But experience on the ground could often prove disappointing, as is testified by the wall newspapers in which such encounters were reported in detail.⁷² On more than one occasion, accommodation arrangements were haphazard, the food appalling. Students would sometimes be robbed: of shoes, a pen, a bag ... One group had to walk three hours a day to get to work and back, because no transport was provided. But what seems to have particularly disappointed those sent on placement was local party or union officials' lack of interest in them. Some simply 'forgot' to offer any welcome. As 'Jack Tanner' of the ILS remembered, writing later under his true name Harry Wicks, it was when they arrived hundreds and hundreds of miles from Moscow that the students began to realize the immensity of the cultural differences.⁷³

Not all placements were like this – some students seem to have enjoyed their *praktika*⁷⁴ – but each one called for a reading in which individual experience and feeling were subjected to the rationality of class analysis. There were several ways in which this might be done. One was the placement report, similar in nature to the self-report, in which experience was rendered 'objective' through the application of a 'correct' political interpretation. If confusion existed, it was the teacher's job to clarify it by means of a lesson or a group discussion. Finally, the outcome of this process was again reworked in the form of one or more articles the student had to write for the newspaper of the section concerned or even for the communist press abroad.⁷⁵ As documented in at least one case, the students also recorded their *praktika* experiences in an album made for the 61st anniversary of the German party leader Wilhelm Pieck.⁷⁶ This allowed the correction of any remaining errors of judgment arising from the encounter with reality.

5.4 Autonomy, discipline, repression

Behind a validated and certificated party cadre, then, lay a long process of 'work on the self', it being incumbent on the student to gradually adopt the cultural logic proffered by the party. The appropriation of

the relevant schemata of perception and thought was made possible – though not guaranteed – by the strong tie to the apparatus characteristic of the communist militant, and even more so of the aspiring cadre. The hunger for knowledge common among those whose modest background had deprived them of the opportunity to acquire a cultural capital of their own and the active participation required of the student were other factors inclining them in this direction. The prohibition against self-isolation and the injunction to openness to group norms and 'vigilance against any deviation'⁷⁷ all favoured the integration of individual subjectivity.

The demand made of students at the international cadre schools in the 1930s, that they become 'independent' militants, here gains all its meaning. This was indeed one of the most commonly evoked requirements: 'knows how to approach problems in independent fashion', 'works independently' or on the contrary 'lacks independence', 'is not sufficiently determined and self-reliant'.⁷⁸ However, to become 'capable of working independently' in the context of this Bolshevik education was to have internalized the interpretative schemata of the Stalinist world and to have acquired the ability to judge what was proper to it and what foreign. In these conditions, autonomy meant no more and no less than the disposition to abide by party discipline.

If need be, the communist institution was able to bring mechanisms of intimidation to bear. Those who refused to bend to the norm and admit their errors risked sanctions such as a warning, a reprimand, non-graduation, even expulsion from the party. It was all the easier for the bureaucracy to wield this kind of threat, given that it had in its records all the officially recorded information received from employers, headmasters, party secretaries and so on: certificates (*spravki*), evaluations (*kharakteristiki*), personal files and personal data cards (*lichnye dela* and *lichnye kartochki*) and other information gathered in the course of its many practices of objectivation.⁷⁹ More insidiously, self-criticism was considered a pedagogical technique for promoting the 'ideological consolidation' of the party the leadership had called for. Given this, every refractory student was subjected to the pressure of the group with which he or she lived day and night, a group that was held responsible, what's more, for each of its members. Another factor favouring the adaptation of the individual was that selection to train as a cadre in the Soviet Union was an honour for which one had to show oneself worthy. This all the more as teachers and officials constantly reminded the students that their time in the USSR was paid for by the efforts of the Soviet workers who financed the maintenance grant they received, and

that students were indeed aware of enjoying privileged conditions (diet, central Moscow accommodation, internal passports, special Central Committee passes giving access to the Lenin Institute, the Marx-Engels-Institute and the Comintern building).⁸⁰ In the context of the Stalinist institution and its techniques, work on the self to bring it into line was as much a social norm as a condition of academic success, but in many cases such an outcome equally accorded with the student's ambitions as a communist and his or her need to identify with the party.

ILS balance-sheets noted with satisfaction that the early graduates had enabled the creation of new parties, providing the indispensable leadership group, and that ex-students had spearheaded 'the liquidation of opportunist leaderships', as for example in France, Spain, Poland, Sweden and the United States. A number played leading roles in the Spanish Civil War, while others again had become cadre-school teachers. Nonetheless, failures were not uncommon,⁸¹ and the ILS leadership also noted that despite these successes there had been students who had left the party, been expelled, or simply given up political activity.⁸² Furthermore, the courses had not always met the practical demands of concrete political struggle, the German students, for example, being ill-prepared for work in illegality.⁸³ Nonetheless, of the 16 members of the KPD central committee elected in 1939, five were ex-students of the ILS, while another had taught there.

To conclude, one might suggest the following hypothesis: in certain respects, Stalinism shared with other modern types of power a reliance on citizens' internalization of cultural schemata rather than the use of coercion or repression. In fact, it relied on what one might call 'total pedagogy': a practical training that conveys the essentials of what is specific to the pedagogical goal pursued by means of education rather than instruction, that is the formation of character and not just the transmission of knowledge (the institution in this precisely applying one of the principles of pastoral power, concerning itself with each member of the community as an individual), and in this, on self-education rather than the passive reception of the thinking of another.⁸⁴

There are, secondly, the methods of work based on rationality and instrumental logic. In substance, Foucault said no differently when he noted that Stalinism, a 'pathological form' of power, 'used, to a large extent, the ideas and devices of our political rationality'.⁸⁵ These were the technologies of transformation that enabled the acquisition of the skills and the social aptitudes required through the fixing of realistic goals, their operationalization, the measurement of outcomes and their evaluation in the group. For this it was necessary not only

to master the language of self-evaluation but also to adopt a new psychological and intellectual orientation.

The chief constraint on the success of in-depth transformation is probably not to be found in the techniques themselves but in the political conditions of their deployment. From late summer 1936, the purge and its associated thematization of the self – presented as a 'Bolshevik method of work'⁸⁶ – became an instrument of repression. Destruction replaced education (a process not automatic but politically determined). The same methods now mediated another logic, producing different effects. There were no longer criteria for the detection of 'unreliable elements', now transformed into 'enemies'. Party officials continued, nonetheless, to insist that discussions take place 'in all comradeship and in an objective manner'.⁸⁷ Under such pedagogical cover, but deprived of all proper political criteria, the purge turned to Terror. There emerged with this a new anthropology in which human beings were no longer inherently perfectible. It was now no longer a matter of 'liquidating' one's own errors, but of 'liquidating' those who erred.⁸⁸

6

The Party and the Private

In the Soviet Party, the private was not considered a separate, autonomous sphere.¹ Family relationships and friendship networks, sexual relationships and sexual behaviour were all to be open to the scrutiny of the party, they were to be accounted for and discussed. The line between the 'private' and the 'public' was blurred.² For the Soviet party, nothing was private, for supposedly private matters were in fact the signs of individual political dispositions and of loyalty or otherwise to the organization. To ensure party members' loyalty, it was considered essential that they should have a clear sense of the connections between 'private' and 'public', and to have regard for these in practice, that is, in their everyday life. Its members were thus expected to share everyday problems and conflicts between couples or with colleagues or neighbours with the party collective, which would then offer its judgment. Questions concerning a spouse's political attitudes, milieu of origin, opinions and associations normally figured in questionnaires and self-criticism discussions, and among the required contents of the autobiography. During the purges, frequent change of sexual partners could lead to party sanctions or even expulsion and an evening party with friends could be seen as an oppositional meeting. This experience was new to non-Soviet communists, in that during the inter-War period questions of sex, partnership and gender relations were discussed in their home parties only in general and not in personal terms. An intervention by the party cell or party hierarchy could be expected only in the case of gross misbehaviour. If the students of the cadre schools got special training on the way in which the private formed part of 'the public sphere of the party', the other foreign communists had to learn this as party members: 'While it [the private life, like private discussions] appear[s] to be of a personal nature, one must get out of the habit of seeing it

as something personal'.³ The drawing of the line between private and public was part of the pattern of communicative negotiation, Western party members more or less willingly undergoing a learning process, appropriating the prevailing Soviet rules of cognition and behaviour in their interactions with party officials.

6.1 '*Partiinost*': the party always comes first

In one respect the party members among the 'politemigrants' did share in Soviet values: the party's priority over personal interests and preferences was for its members indisputable. The party embodied the course of history and the social whole, every tie of solidarity, all trust and faith in humanity. The first rule of party life was 'identification with the party' ('*partiinost*'). A private life in the sense of the cultivation of familial and couple relationships was possible, but only to the extent that it did not challenge the superordinate value of the party, of the collective. Socialist Realist works embody this normative framework, within which the private, love included, is subordinated to social duty, that is, duty to the party. The best-known example is no doubt Ostrovsky's novel *How the Steel Was Tempered*, whose revolutionary hero lives in accordance with the maxim that 'The private is nothing compared to the public'.⁴ The 1931 Soviet film *Odna* (Alone) follows the same pattern. After initial hesitation, the young teacher shows herself willing to abandon her beloved to go to the Siberian village where the party wants to send her.⁵

That this was not just a literary template, that these norms were also effective in lived reality, can be seen in the documentary sources we have for the Comintern and its milieu. Party members were at least in principle spurred by wish to combat their 'petty-bourgeois tendencies'. Whatever their individual differences, they were collectively concerned to cultivate a habitus that would make them one with the party, with the 'social'. This led to the view that for party members every detail received its meaning from their membership of the party, that is to say, their participation in the social-historical totality. 'History will not forgive us, if we do our work badly', the head of the Comintern's Garage Department wrote to Manuilsky, when he had to ensure the availability of uniforms for the anniversary of the October Revolution.⁶

This orientation to the universal embodied by the party underlay the preparedness to accept a supra-individual organization of one's own life, categorizing personal behaviour as acceptable or unacceptable to the party, advantageous or disadvantageous to the international class struggle. In his strongly autobiographical novel *Moskva-hranice*

(Moscow-Border), covering his time in the Soviet Union, from 1932–1935, the Czech writer Jirí Weil puts these words into the mouth of party secretary Tronin: ‘There are all sorts of people in the party. There are slackers and careerists, even thieves. But the party is flawless, it’s honest and incorruptible. It gets rid of these people, it purges itself of them’.⁷

While the party demanded extensive self-sacrifice of its members, for those who worked at the Comintern it was also their employer, and not infrequently the means to social advancement or the realization of certain personal goals. The party’s interest in cadres’ private life must then have been experienced in contradictory fashion: for while on the one hand it might be seen as the sympathetic concern of a powerfully protective and supportive institution, in the 1930s it increasingly became an inquisitorial intrusion into individual life. How strong might be the identification with the party as a great family and with party leaders as powerful father figures to whom one could look for assistance, is shown by the example of Sophie Kirschbaum from Switzerland, who turned with the greatest confidence to ‘Comrade Dimitrov with the request that he investigate my case and grant me permission to remain’. In doing so, she informed the Comintern’s general secretary of her personal circumstances: ‘If I were aware of any kind of fault on my part, I would never allow myself to write to you. I am 24 years old, and I have been unable until now to have any personal life to speak of, the heavy demands of work not allowing it’. As she went on to say, she associated with the possibility of settling in the Soviet Union – the ‘affirmative action empire’ as Martin called it⁸ – the prospect of at last embarking on the medical training she had set her heart on: ‘And now, the place where I could have lived happily with my husband and child, the place above all where I would finally have been able to devote myself to my studies – I want to study medicine – this all would be barred to me’.⁹ This expectation of being able to pursue professional training was not at all a naïve projection. There are many examples of women who emigrated to the Soviet Union in the first half of the 1930s who found new professional horizons open up before them. The Austrian Gerda Hauser (b. Weckelsdorf/Teplice nad Metují, Bohemia, 1909) travelled to Moscow with her children in 1935, and was there able to study aircraft construction; Emma Tromm (b. Cologne, 1896), who went to Moscow in 1932, made a career as a writer in the Soviet Union; while Wanda Bronska (b. Zurich, 1911), arriving in 1931, got the job that she wanted as a reporter on the *Deutsche Zentral-Zeitung*.¹⁰

Party-mindedness was however hard-won for most. The attitude essentially demanded of communists subordinated personal interests and preferences to party duties. Anyone who failed in this would be accused of 'petty-bourgeois individualistic tendencies'. The truly 'Bolshevik' attitude of mind privileged not one's own interests but those of the party. No personal complaints against comrades were therefore allowed in criticism and self-criticism meetings, and anyone who did make any would find themselves in the dock. Martynov of the Leningrad District Committee (*lenobkom*) of International Red Aid (IRA) discovered this in the course of the purge campaign that followed the murder of Kirov, when IRA, like other party organizations, was called to exercise greater vigilance. His own response, in which he criticized a number of the organization's leaders, was turned against him. One participant in the meeting reacted to his remarks with the criticism that Martynov had talked only of himself (*lichnye schety*) and his problems with the leadership. He therefore called out to his comrade: 'Martynov, if you want to show that you are right, you have first to get rid of your ego'. He accused him of wanting to swell up his own authority by casting aspersions on the leadership. Another commented, 'Martynov's attacks are very personal (*lichnyj*), reminiscent of the Zinovievite style of attack', before a third finally launched a full-blown assault: Martynov hadn't come to the district committee for a month, preferring to go swimming: 'You're happy to fling shit (*griaz'*) at other people, but you say nothing about your own faults'. Martynov ended up with a warning.¹¹

With their own experiences at home to fall back on, foreign party members especially could sometimes put up a determined resistance to Soviet notions of party discipline. When three female Comintern employees, the comrades Just, (Betty?) Schönfeld and Grünberg, were called to explain their repeated lateness and absences from meetings to a party meeting at the Lux, they reacted with indignation. Grünberg told comrade Abeles, *partorg* of the German party section at the CI, that she would get nothing from her, either 'now or in the future', for the comrade had 'no right to conduct such an inquisition'. And to Josef Eisenberger, chair of the meeting, she added that all he did was to 'bandy bombast'. Not satisfied with that, she turned the accusation against comrade Abeles herself, who started the meetings very late. If meetings didn't begin punctually, she said, 'comrades were under no duty to wait for the meeting, because they might well end up waiting seven hours'. This determined approach succeeded in blunting the accusation, and Eisenberger was obliged to reduce the charge from 'anti-Party attitude' to 'behaviour contrary to the Party's interests'. And the

final resolution, passed unanimously with two abstentions out of 16, limited itself to taxing the three women with 'systematic absenteeism'. For the defeated officers, nevertheless, such behaviour could only be explained by the fact that 'the comrades [had] not properly adjusted to Party life here'. 'They too much apply the standards of the KPD', said Abeles. In his concluding remarks, Eisenberger, too, attributed the three women's attitude at the meeting – 'more of an accusation against the party cell' – and their 'failure of self-criticism' to the difference in party cultures. Contrary to Abeles, however, he charged that Grünberg 'would never have allowed herself in the German party the liberties she [has] taken here'.¹² In some cases, foreign communists strove to evade the countless expectations attached to the idea of the collective. Recalling a holiday on the Black Sea with her husband Heinz and a German friend of his, Margarete Buber-Neumann writes that the 'three of us foreign communists' had a completely different idea of what it ought to be. Feeling that the many compulsory activities (morning exercises, medical inspections, group excursions, evening dances) were infantilizing, they withdrew from them to spend the day at the beach. In doing this, however, they 'were forgetting just one little thing: that [they] were part of a collective'.¹³ In 1932, this cost them no more than being identified as 'undisciplined'.

There were sometimes 'moments when the longing for another country, your own, breaks through, when the whole skilfully and laboriously assembled construction collapses', wrote Jiri Weil.¹⁴ Insight into the difficulties of self-formation and self-disciplining in the context of the process of Soviet construction is afforded by the diary of Ilse Berend-Groa, an actress and director who worked at the Foreign Workers' Theatre in Moscow.¹⁵ On her journey to Magnitogorsk she notes her attempt 'to objectify' her love for X, to bring it 'into the course of real life' and thus to become – despite their burning love – 'a communist person'.¹⁶ No small matter, implying as it did her separation from her beloved in Moscow! On top of this were the less than rudimentary conditions prevailing in this industrial city just being built from the ground up. With much cajoling of herself, Berend-Groa did however gradually allow herself to be impressed by the gigantic scale of the steel production complex, and after some time declared herself prepared to take her place in the 'proletariat's struggle for production': 'And now I know too to what flag I now cling: I will remain here for as long as is needed by the work that I am given. I am obedient, like Abraham when in a strange land he was commanded to sacrifice that which he most loved ... I sang, however, sang on the way home as I have not sung for a long time, for a

red flag waved before me! In its silken folds shone forth sometimes your face, sometimes those of other comrades'.¹⁷

What was called 'private life' was thus not without significance. 'I finally realized that under socialism there are no longer any "unpolitical details"', the actress Inge von Wangenheim would later recollect, having left the Soviet Union only after the war.¹⁸ Among the 'details' that could be significant were one's 'personal opinions' as well as one's sexual behaviour, family arrangements and friendship networks.

6.2 The private as sign of the political

The 'Bolshevik vigilance' that followed Kirov's murder brought with it greater party scrutiny of individuals' private, personal affairs as well as of their behaviour within the party, likewise justified as politically necessary. This is illustrated by a resolution passed at a general meeting of the party at the KUNMZ on 8 April 1935, in connection with 'the CC's confidential letter on the lessons of the events associated with comrade Kirov's murder'. It notes that it will be 'necessary to increase party vigilance most decisively and to create conditions of work such that every member of our collective feels truly responsible for the work in his section and in timely fashion identifies and reveals the slightest deviation ... The *partorg* should engage the members of party groups in systematic discussions of public life, personal life and party work'.¹⁹ In the mid-1930s the notion 'the class enemy works by secret methods'²⁰ rapidly became all-pervasive, and once ubiquitous treachery was accepted as the main explanation for problems, there could be no refusal of the in-depth screening of people in general and of oneself in particular. The logic of suspicion led inevitably to an attempt to identify the signs that would allow the exposure of the secret enemy.

In the purge of 1933, conformity in both politics and behaviour were the key requirements for continuing party membership, and from 1935–1936 on they became requirements for survival. 'My first wife was a sympathiser. She drowned in the Volga. I left her because she was seeing another man. For six months I paid her 100 roubles', explained Stotz at a self-criticism meeting at the KUNMZ in 1936, in his keenness to answer the question, 'What is your wife's political attitude?'²¹ A 'subjective' standpoint soon came to count as a sign of a 'counter-revolutionary attitude'. In his statement to the ECCI of 15 July 1929, Jules Humbert-Droz could still evoke the 'personal opinion' he still held and expressed, even if he subordinated it to that of the party. A few years later it was practically unthinkable for an official of the

International even to mention the existence of an individual opinion on political matters.²² Commenting in 1934 on a letter he had written in an ‘unforgivable fit of temper’, Heinz Neumann said: ‘I saw it not as a political document but as purely a “private letter”, although it is of course clear to me today that for party people there is no such thing at all as a “private letter” or “private behaviour”’.²³

Indeed, in the second half of the 1930s even views on the new family legislation and the new criminal code no longer fell under the category of ‘private opinion’. The critical stance towards the prohibition of abortion that was evidently shared by many if not most foreign communists proved in many cases to foreshadow a greater or lesser distancing from the Soviet Union. In the eyes of the party – and of the NKVD – this became the sign of an ‘anti-Soviet attitude’. Their openly expressed opinion was turned against them, for in Soviet eyes it was an indicator that they were not judging realities in a correctly ‘Bolshevik’ manner, and that they were not yet properly loyal members of the party. The Austrian Lenin School student ‘Karl Richter’ had apparently made a sarcastic comment in the course of a debate on the anti-abortion legislation, about the death of a woman who had sought an abortion, asking whether the dead woman too had spoken out in favour of the official position. For the ILS party meeting that ‘exposed’ him in 1937, it was ‘a link in a chain of anti-Soviet actions’. In its closing resolution the meeting noted it had come to the conclusion that he had ‘from the beginning manifested an anti-Soviet line, directed against the party and the CI’.²⁴ He was excluded from the school as an ‘anti-Soviet and anti-party element’ and from the party as ‘an enemy of the people and the party’ and shortly thereafter arrested.²⁵

An ‘uncommunist attitude’ might also be manifested in a members’ sexual behaviour. As the freelance journalist and writer Ella Winter had written in her book *Red Virtue: Human Relationships in the New Russia*, following her visit in 1930–1931, a party member could be ‘purged’ not only for political but also for personal misconduct (frivolity, excessive promiscuity, libertinism, or rape by force or deception). Not for transgressing the moral law, but because such behaviour betrayed the social goals of the Revolution.²⁶ Sexual promiscuity was generally seen as ‘petty-bourgeois individualism’. The official communist position rejected both Romantic love and an emphasis on sexuality as ‘bourgeois’, says Winter.²⁷ In matters of rape, degrading treatment or physical or emotional violence, Russians and foreigners seem to have been at one. In the half a dozen cases found in the Comintern archive, the meeting always upheld the accusation, that is, the woman’s claim. In

1933, one of the administrators of the Lux was expelled from the party for attempted rape (though there were other grounds as well, such as 'bureaucratic behaviour' toward the workers and the refusal to do 'party and societal work').²⁸ 'Bobkov', a foreigner who compelled his wife to hand over her earnings and also forced her to have an abortion before then abandoning her, was stripped of his candidate membership. 'His party membership book is for him no more than a shield', said the woman *Komsomol* member who led the case against him at the meeting.²⁹

Such behaviours as sexual harassment or sexual assault (usually of women), or the abuse of a position of authority for sexual purposes could be brought up as charges at purge meetings. The 'purge commission' that investigated the *Mezhrabpom-Film* studios in 1933 uncovered several cases of such 'uncommunist behaviour'.³⁰ The Russian Iakov Spiridonovich Zaitsev, a member of the A-UCP(b) since 1925 and head of the script department at *Mezhrabpom-Film*, was excluded from the party as a 'morally degenerate element'. He had apparently organized 'unrestrainedly debauched drinking bouts and orgies', at which he 'basely exploited' 'actresses subordinate to him', 'compensating' them for this by giving them roles and contracts or promotions.³¹ Similar accusations led to the expulsion from the party of Viktor Aleksandrovich Shanto, formerly a circus director in Moscow and since 1930 an employee and afterwards manager of *Mezhrabpom-Film's* studios. His offence was 'failure in his work to eliminate the working methods of the old circus artists, which found expression in improper touching, embracing and so on of young women while instructing the same in various bodily movements'.³² His defence was weak: the only thing he could come up with was to say that the charge was not proven.³³ He was unable to deny, however, that he had failed in his 'duty, as a leader and a communist, to control [him]self' in that he had physically attacked a film director and thrown a chair at him. Whether the commission granted his request to review its decision to exclude him from the party remains unknown, but it seems unlikely. For in addition to his improper relationships with his female students, Shanto had been found guilty of a number of other lapses, such as 'lack of class instinct in the selection of staff', 'unacceptable behaviour towards the film director Barnett'³⁴ and 'irresponsibility in respect of building works ... and resulting negligence, bordering on wrecking'.³⁵

An 'uncommunist' attitude to women might also be indicated by an improper readiness to change girlfriends too often – a behaviour not necessarily so quickly condemned by the foreigners. In the Finnish

section of the ILS there was a very young student who had numerous love affairs, but the section leadership only intervened when two girls got pregnant in a row.³⁶ And when the case of Comrade Holz's womanizing was raised in the Austrian section in 1937, the other students opposed this. Volkov, the deputy head of the School's cadre department had accused Holz of breach of conspiracy for allegedly bringing a young woman he had met on an excursion into the Lenin School and then attempting to conceal it. The charge, however, was of 'improper relationship with a woman': 'He had already got to know one young woman. That was permitted. Some time later, he met another one. He broke off with her too, though he had permission in that case as well. Now he met a third. What does that look like?', asked the Russian Volkov. But when he went on to ask, 'Was it right to ask that question?' and answered himself 'Yes!', a resounding 'No!' rang out from his audience!³⁷

Despite the Party's theoretical – even if merely tacit rather than explicit – indifference to gender, in practice sexual promiscuity was more severely judged in women than in men. Lise London (then Ricol) recalls that she was rebuked when, as a young married woman, she found herself a new man (Arthur London).³⁸ She was then working, in 1934–1936, as a secretary in the French section of the Comintern's Translation Department.³⁹ As far as one can tell from the sources, however, men faced such reprimands only when unfaithfulness was linked with misogynistic sexual behaviour, and as a rule only when it coincided with other 'errors' or 'misdemeanours'. If one looks at what was actually at issue in these party meetings where individuals' private lives were brought up for public discussion, reviewed and in some cases condemned by the party collective, it would appear that a range of charges was always brought, sexual transgressions forming an element in the political evaluation of the person as a whole. They functioned as the visible sign of a 'morally depraved person' or as the confirmation of such a finding. A person who behaved in such a way would be corrupt, acting as a 'wrecker', concealing their origins, or being undisciplined in their work.

In that sense, judgment was passed not so much on the act itself as on its political implications. The motion would always state that the person concerned had 'damaged the good name of the Party by their unworthy behaviour', behaving in a way unacceptable in a party member. The process was intended above all to sanction conduct damaging to the party, not, as one might imagine from today's perspective, misogynistic and exploitative behaviour that treated women as sex-objects

in keeping with the prevailing symbolic order and the real differences of power between the sexes that also existed in the Soviet Union. This normative framework nonetheless opened up a space within the dialectic of power for women to defend themselves and not infrequently to retaliate. It gave them the chance so to formulate their experiences that men's behaviour had to be dealt with publicly, even if this had to be done in terms of the party's requirements.

An element that also has to be considered in any interpretation of the public discussion of party members' sex lives is the general social context of the 1930s Soviet Union, which in sexual matters saw a retreat from the liberalism that had characterized the previous decade, certainly its first half. The criminalization of homosexuality in March 1934 and of abortion in 1936, as well the tighter restrictions on divorce, were the legal reflection of the official promotion of the traditional family. They were framed in a semantic that denounced the supposedly prevailing promiscuity as 'petty-bourgeois Bohemianism' and the source of many social problems. The sexual hygiene encouraged by the regime thus also functioned as a measure of social hygiene. So when in the 1930s party cells condemned sexual transgressions, they did so also on this basis. The 1930s saw the development in the Soviet Union of a very prudish and puritanical attitude to sexuality, amounting almost to a sexophobia, that struck many of the 1920s generation of foreign communists as shocking or ridiculous.⁴⁰ This 'Soviet prudery' was not, however, entirely shared by the party elite or the intelligentsia, as Margarete Buber-Neumann recalls. When she and her husband visited the renowned mathematician, geophysicist and Arctic explorer Otto Lulevich Schmidt and his no less famous wife, the physician and psychoanalyst Vera Fedorovna Schmidt, he showed them his smuggled copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, carefully hidden behind other books.⁴¹

Foreign communists of proletarian background (like the Austrian *Schutzbündler*) seem to have adjusted better to the new 'traditional' assumptions about family and life-style than did party functionaries and intellectuals from so-called Bohemian milieux in Europe, some of who remained loyal to the 'progressive' notions of sexual freedom abandoned by the Soviet communist party in the late 1920s. The German communist immigrant Nelly Held, for example, describes in her memoirs her collection of Comintern men, happily remembering the multiple sexual encounters she enjoyed despite being married. She refused to be ashamed of such 'libertinism', which would have been regarded by the Party as 'petit-bourgeois individualism' at best. Years later she would remark, in discussing her encounter with an Austrian

communist during a Black Sea holiday: 'We made love, naturally. Of course, it could be said that it was immoral of me, as a married woman. But that was how I saw things. Kollontai would not have thought differently'.⁴² Many of those working for the Comintern had open marriages and changes of lovers seem to have been frequent, as Ruth von Mayenburg, who lived at the Hotel Lux in Moscow during the 1930s, and others writing about this period remember.⁴³ But during the Great Terror such life-styles, termed 'Bohemian', became one more ground for accusation and arrest.

6.3 True party-mindedness starts in private life

Sexuality and private life generally were regarded by the Bolsheviks as a vulnerability in the socialist personality. 'A disorderly sexual life weakens any party member as a fighter', declared Aron Aleksandrovich Sol'ts, chairman of the Party's Central Control Commission in 1922, responsible for the morality and conduct of the Party's members.⁴⁴ Under the Stalinism of the mid-1930s it suggested a whole series of shortcomings, from 'moral depravity' to the suspicion of 'wrecking' [*vreditel'stvo*]. With 'Bolshevik vigilance', this 'contamination' model came to be increasingly applied to private relationships. According to this logic, 'private' meetings with friends and acquaintances were not 'private' but political, and thus a party matter.

In 1935, with the Soviet Party's decision to dissolve Workers International Relief (headed by the influential but suspect 'Red media entrepreneur' Willi Münzenberg), the two patterns of accusation came together. Installed by the Central Committee as head of *Mezhrabpom-Film*, Samsonov described his critics as 'Bohemians' connected with the earlier head of the script department, the 'Trotskyite' Zaitsev.⁴⁵ He aimed his fire especially at the Italian Francesco Misiano, representative of the WIR CC at *Mezhrabpom-Film* in the USSR. His attendance at an evening party organized by his deputy Fritz Globig in November 1934 was used against him, Globig having since been found guilty of organizing 'anti-Party meetings' and sacked from his job.⁴⁶ Misiano's 'serious political failings' were 'strongly condemned' by the Politcommission of the ECCI and he received a 'severe reprimand'. In a written statement and in person at a closed party meeting he accepted 'entirely the sharp and justified criticism of the comrades'. For he had 'absolutely not considered the political implications of my fortuitous encounter with enemies of the Party at my deputy's home in November last year'.⁴⁷ He subsequently fell ill, but he was not in any event to be allowed to return

to his position, according to the NKVD,⁴⁸ and it is likely that only his death in 1936 saved him from imprisonment.

With Misiano at that social evening had been several founding members of the Communist Youth International, who there allegedly re-established the 'conciliators' group.⁴⁹ Among those present, alongside Alfred Kurella and 'Kurt Heinrich' (born Heinrich Süßkind) and his wife, was also 'Fritz Winter', who had to explain himself at length to the party group meeting. An oral statement on 14 January 1935 was followed three days later by one in writing, which was however judged to be unsatisfactory. On 9 February he therefore made another statement, this time more detailed, in which he said: 'As a party member of many years standing, familiar with fractionists' methods from several anti-fraction struggles, I should have recognized from the outset the character and political consequences of such a gathering and signalled the danger immediately, especially after the exposure of the counter-revolutionary Zinoviev group. Instead of that, in viewing the gathering as a mere social event, I evinced a lazy liberalism and a want of vigilance, allowing myself to be used by the fractionists as cover for their discussions, and then upon the exposure of the fractionists I did not sufficiently [so deleted in the transcript] assist the Party, thereby aiding and abetting the fractionists'.⁵⁰

Possession of a properly 'Bolshevik' character was in the end something that had to be demonstrated. The party member had of his or her own accord to consult with the party over important personal questions. Only a private life consonant with party expectations could really prove comrades' loyalty to the organization, their 'class consciousness' and their 'Bolshevik attitude', and the necessary concomitant to this was a readiness to speak publicly, before the party, about one's private, indeed intimate relationships, in all the detail that the party might require. Likewise implied was the willingness if necessary to leave one's partner, or break off relations with friends or family. 'It is indescribably hard for me to discover that for years I have been giving aid and comfort to an enemy of the Party', declared the wife of 'Kurt Heinrich' in her letter to the *partkom* of the ECCI. 'When I discovered last night that the accusations against [my husband] were well-founded, I broke off all relations with him'.⁵¹ Not to break with a friend, spouse, lover or relative exposed in the purges as an 'enemy of the Party' was seen as 'petty-bourgeois sentimentality'. And more than that, it was 'unbolshevik behaviour', which in purge or Terror could often transmute into 'anti-Party behaviour'. As André Marty instructed the students of the Lenin School, 'Whoever puts considerations of personal friendship above our

collective friendship, the fundamental friendship that unites us all, is no Bolshevik. No Bolshevik either is anyone who covers up political failings for the sake of personal friendship, substituting friendship for politics'.⁵² A refusal to go along with this was itself taken as a sign that a person was unworthy of the party's trust.

It was suspicious in itself if the partner of a person accused of anti-Party behaviour claimed not to have noticed anything. In the 1933 purge at the ILS, it was alleged against Emilia Mariottini, who had lived in the USSR since 1927, working first as a teacher of Italian at the KUNMZ, then as an interpreter and shorthand typist at the ILS, that a fraction meeting had taken place in her room in 1926, apparently organized by her 'fractionist' husband. She responded, almost defiantly, that she had had no part in this meeting of his and knew nothing at all about it. Her only fault was not to have immediately informed the Party of it.⁵³ This claim did not spare her sanctions. Like two other School employees, she was expelled from the Party for 'serious political misconduct' (that is 'association with counter-revolutionaries, betrayal of the Party, and self-isolation from Party life') and dismissed by the School, together with other 'politically suspect persons not investigated by the Party [that is the Cadre Department]' (*polit. neblagonadezhnie i partiino-nevyderzhanie litsa*).⁵⁴

In November 1937 Minna Iakovlevna Raiskaia had to explain her relationship with her now imprisoned husband to a 'closed' meeting of the party collective at the ILS. She immediately admitted having made errors in two respects: firstly, that she had been aware of his aristocratic origins, but had not ever informed the Party of them; secondly, that during the ten years of their life together, she had never detected that he was 'an enemy'. The collective did not accept this claim of ignorance. 'One cannot believe Raiskaia when she claims that she had not seen one sign that her husband was an enemy. The two were very close to each other for ten years, even if for some years they have lived at different addresses', said one woman comrade. In addition, the accused was guilty of a breach of conspiracy, in having taken her husband with her on her placement. Raiskaia was expelled from the Party.⁵⁵

In the purges of the mid-1930s onward, charges very often involved 'association' with enemies of the Party, above all with partners, friends or family. The 'correct' attitude for comrades to adopt was not only to distance themselves as much as possible from the miscreant, but to positively look forward to his or her conviction. This evidently required the complete renunciation of the affective in favour of the political. The duty of a partner was to deal with the situation just like any other member of the Party. This meant, in the first place, trusting the Party, indeed trusting the Party implicitly. This was the attitude adopted by

the German comrade Alice (Lea) Abramowitz on the imprisonment in late 1934 of her husband, the Hungarian journalist and China specialist Lajos Magyar,⁵⁶ a member of the German CP since 1919 and a former secretary of its Central Committee.⁵⁷ When at a closed session of the *partkom* of the ECCI on 1 January 1935 she was called upon to explain her relationship with the man now exposed as an 'enemy of the Party', and why she had not been aware of his political activities, she declared: 'I also told him [Magyar]: if I were faced with the question of whom I should believe, him or the Party, I would have no option but to believe the Party'. She also voted his expulsion, 'as she believed the Party when it found him to be an enemy of the Party'.⁵⁸

The tactic – if that is what it was – did not however pay off, for Abramowitz was herself arrested not long afterwards, to suffer 15 years of prison camp and exile. Yet in many cases such declarations did reflect inner convictions. In her memoirs, Iulia Piatnitskaia recalls her reaction when her imprisoned husband (Osip Piatnitsky) was supposedly exposed as a provocateur. 'And if it's true, how I despise him, how I hate his base and cowardly soul, which I cannot understand! Oh, how clever he was at hiding it all!'⁵⁹

Particularly receptive to a perspective in which the Party came first and the family second were children and adolescents. The German communist Martha Globig attests to this in her recollections:

The most upsetting thing was that our son, who was 16 at the time, said to his father, "So, father, tell us now everything you know". It was so upsetting for me because I could see that the lad couldn't believe that ... the state organs of Soviet power could have made any kind of mistake. On the one hand, I was proud that we had brought up a boy who believed so implicitly in everything to do with the Soviet Union; on the other hand, I was convinced that Globig's arrest was definitely a mistake.⁶⁰

Shortly afterwards, she too was arrested. The boy was on the verge of tears, but he turned away from her and looked out through the window 'into the dark of night'.⁶¹

Intra-family denunciation was more-or-less held up as a model of desirable behaviour. The officially promoted cult of Pavlik Morozov (a 13-year-old child said to have been killed by his family for denouncing his father to the authorities) and films like *The Party Card*, in which a woman exposes her husband as an enemy, encouraged it among the Soviet citizenry and gave it the stamp of Soviet legitimacy.⁶² Yet Sheila Fitzpatrick's conclusion that such behaviour was in fact much

less common than the propaganda might suggest also finds support in our sources on the foreign community.⁶³ Evidence for what Fitzpatrick terms 'loyalty denunciations' in which black marks from the past (such as adhesion to 'Trotskyism', membership of a 'fractional group' or 'anti-working-class origins') were revealed by closely related informants, such as parents, children or siblings, or still co-habiting spouses or partners, were practically unknown among the foreign communists.⁶⁴

The situation changed once people had kept their distance following an arrest. The margin of freedom that did remain narrowed significantly, however, by the second half of the 1930s. When in 1933 a French student at the Lenin School received a letter with 'counter-revolutionary' content that he should have passed on to the Party leadership, he failed to do so, not wishing to inform against his friend. This was judged to betray a 'spirit of chauvinism', but was otherwise without further consequences.⁶⁵ He would not have got away so lightly two or three years later.

In 1935, with the beginning of arrests within the Comintern, and even more in 1936 when the wave began to gain momentum, close contact with an arrested person could be dangerous, and interpreted as the sign of a shared political stance. In the case of the German communist David Krugljanski, accused in the first Moscow trial, the report from the German CP illustrated this logic when it declares that 'a real student of Stalin, like Thälmann, would never have introduced such a person into the party leadership'.⁶⁶ In anticipation of such developments, it was not uncommon for party members to hurry forward with information on the arrested person, like the Austrian 'comrade' who wrote to the Cadre Commission 'out of proletarian vigilance', as he said, to report on his 'reservations and observations on the couple named Urban'.⁶⁷ Such an approach was taken by Heinz Neumann, once editor-in-chief of the German CP's *Rote Fahne*, who in 1935 found himself back in the Soviet Union, together with his wife. There he attracted the attention of the authorities, for not only had he turned against the ultra-left party line in 1932, but he had also been friends with the Georgian communist Bessarion Lominadze, who had committed suicide after being found guilty of forming a 'left-right bloc'. On 4 September 1936 Neumann sent the Comintern's International Control Commission a statement 'On my relationship to intra-party questions in the A-UCP(b)', in which he took his distance from his erstwhile friend, in his oppositional incarnation at least: 'Of the Lominadze group I must note that I was friends with B. Lominadze at both the personal and political levels while he was actively struggling against deviationists and oppositionists in the

Comintern and the A-UCP(b) ... When in 1929 Lominadze embarked on his first deviations, together with Schatzkin and Sten ... I immediately turned against him, communicating this to the leading comrades of the A-UCP(b), in the presence of comrade Thälmann'.⁶⁸ Some even rehearsed every negative thing they knew about everyone of their acquaintance.⁶⁹ As responsibility for 'errors' became more and more individualized, one's conformity could only be demonstrated by highlighting the 'errors' of others, by denouncing them.

If the personal revealed the political, in the Party's eyes it could also serve to conceal the political significance of actions and attitudes. The logic is illustrated by the case of Klavdiia Kirsanova, rector of the ILS, who in late 1937 had to account to a closed meeting of the party at the School for her ties to certain 'enemies of the people'.⁷⁰ Her case is a perfect example of the interpretative scheme that prevailed in Stalinist society, whereby political objectives were suspected to lie behind personal relationships, and such relationships were thus suspected of being used to mask political designs. It was argued that Kirsanova had been pursuing a particular policy on the Chinese question, and this meant that her relationships with Chugunov and Serebriansky were not just private (*lichnye*) but also political.⁷¹ It was insinuated by some comrades that her 'anti-Party' relationship with the Chinese communist Chugunov might well have led to her having a relationship with him.⁷² She had defended him in his first political error, and had corresponded with him when he had been sent to the Far East. When he returned to Moscow, she had invited him to her home, where he had remained a long time.

The accusation against Kirsanova, brought by Manuilsky in his role as the Central Committee's representative in the Comintern, also involved a gender-specific allegation, *viz.* that she had had an extra-marital affair. The meaning of this, as she herself pointed out, was that if she betrayed her husband, she could equally betray the Party.⁷³ Against this, the rector insisted emphatically that she had betrayed neither her husband nor the party. Just the same, her 'close, friendly and private relations with the people's enemies, Chugunov, Serebriansky and Segal' were cited in the resolution that led, in the first place, to her expulsion from the Party. In particular, by associating and co-operating with Chugunov, 'revealed as a Japanese spy' in the course of a lengthy trial, she had enabled this enemy of the Party to conduct his 'struggle against the Party line' at the ILS. The other counts of the accusation simply followed from this, where they were not mere elaborations upon it. Kirsanova had thus in general pursued a poor cadre policy at the ILS, having appointed yet

other 'enemies of the people' or allowed them to pursue their activities there; she had introduced 'methods of work inappropriate to the Party', which showed amongst other things that she was still defending Chugunov, even after his unmasking as an 'enemy of the people'; and finally she had not corrected the earlier errors which had led to her suspension as head of the school in 1931.⁷⁴ At the end of the meeting, all present spoke in favour of Kirsanova's exclusion from the Party. A decision of the ECCI Secretariat on 16 November 1937 saw her sacked from her post at the Lenin School. She did however survive imprisonment, and was readmitted to the Party in 1941.⁷⁵

It was women who were more likely to find themselves in trouble over their private lives. At the time of the Great Terror, especially, when accusations took on a more anti-bureaucratic aspect, it was mostly men who held high Party posts or other elite positions who were more at risk of arrest. Furthermore, men in general seem to have been considered more dangerous. The enemy was in any event almost exclusively figured as masculine. Thus, more men were arrested and – as the files document – in more cases women had to dissociate themselves from their husbands than vice versa. Yet there were cases, too, in which men had to give up their women. Kravchenko, a student at the ILS, for example, was expelled from the school and the Party because he had 'never broken off, nor owned up to' his relationship with his wife, although she was 'a known provocateur in Beijing'.⁷⁶ One Rabinovich, employed at the Institute of World Economy and Politics, got away with a severe reprimand and a final warning when called upon to explain his relationship with 'an enemy of the people'. It was considered a mitigating circumstance that they lived apart.⁷⁷

All the same, the opinions of women seem to have been identified with those of their partners, as witnessed by patterns of party accusation and arrest.⁷⁸ This gendered assumption of complicity was however shocking to many women Communists of the 1920s generation, who had joined the Party fervently believing in equal rights and women's autonomy. Alice Abramowitz clearly expressed her disagreement with women's subsumption under the political beliefs and affinities of their male partners when cross-examined by the *partkom* of the ECCI on the character of her husband Magyar and the company he kept: 'Did you ever meet with former members of the Zinovievite opposition, Safarov, Guralsky, and so on, either here in Moscow or abroad? With Magyar, perhaps, or without him?'; 'Were there discussions, were people interested in where Trotsky was, in what conditions he was living, and so on? Did Magyar ever show an interest in such questions?'; 'Had all the

comrades from the German party that you met been conciliators?'.⁷⁹ After responding at length to these questions and others, Abramowitz suddenly exclaimed: 'When I came here, I was meant to work at the OMS. Everything had been agreed. Then suddenly this avalanche comes down on my head. This raised the question of whether I should be barred from the work, because of my relationship with Magyar. My personal opinion is this: the life I had with him was very relative in nature. I don't know who visited him. I don't know what discussions he had. As a party comrade, I can speak my mind about things as well. I don't know to what extent I'm to blame or not'.⁸⁰ The party knew: it found her guilty. For the political was constituted by the private, and against that no notion of women's individuality stood a chance.

7

From Comrades to Spies

For foreign communists, Soviet political developments in the 1930s were sometimes inexplicable. Especially alienating for many was the grotesque rhetoric of the enemy within that was put into circulation by the regime. Jiri Weil gives expression to this sense of the outlandish in his semi-autobiographical *Moskva-hranice* (Moscow-Border), when he has his literary alter ego say

Here too the struggle is fought, relentlessly and pitilessly, every day, every minute, every second. This struggle is however governed by laws, and these are known only to those subject to them. Jan Fischer came from a foreign land, ready to subject himself, but he knew them only from books. If production fell in the Donbass, Fischer would say "Laziness, bad organization, technical backwardness". The country though said "the enemy", and mobilized all its forces for the struggle. It had a right to do that, and Fischer bowed to it, for he had taken it as his country, after all, but he did not find it an easy road.¹

Most deeply suspect in this climate was the Comintern, and the foreign cadre earlier welcomed were transformed into strangers, and increasingly viewed as 'enemies' from the mid-1930s onward. The sharp turn to patriotism and xenophobia in the mid-1930s can be seen as a reflection of the slogan 'socialism in one country', yet its origins are not so much political-ideological, being rather the doing of a party leadership that, faced with socio-economic difficulties and external threats, found itself caught in an ever sharp turn of tighter social control and increasing repression. Stalin's late-1920s 'revolution from above' (Robert Tucker) had furthermore effected an ideological displacement.² The call for total mobilization that was required by the First Five Year Plan was directed to the people, not

to a class. Despite the retention of a class-struggle rhetoric, the workers lost their centrality, as Victoria Bonnell has shown through the development of Soviet iconography. The key category of the 1930s was not 'class' but 'citizenship'.³ What tied the resident foreigners to the Soviet Union thus evaporated: they were no longer comrades and allies in struggle but burdensome refugees and, increasingly, foreign spies.

Though the tendency first emerged in the early 1930s, developments only really came to a head with the murder of Kirov.⁴ Shortly after that, a Central Committee circular was issued that urged party organizations to greater vigilance against the enemy:

We must put an end to the opportunist complacency engendered by the enormous assumption that as we grow stronger the enemy will become tamer and more inoffensive. This assumption is an utter fallacy. It is a recrudescence of the Right deviation, which assured all and sundry that our enemies would gradually come grovelling to Socialism and in the end become real Socialists. The Bolsheviks have no business to rest on their laurels; they have no business to sleep at their posts. What we need is not complacency, but vigilance, real Bolshevik revolutionary vigilance. It should be remembered that the more hopeless the position of the enemies, the more eagerly will they clutch at "extreme measure" as the only recourse of the doomed in their struggle against the Soviet power.⁵

A single narrative cannot do justice to the complexity of the Stalinist repression of those years. The reasons were many, and are still a matter of controversy among historians. Amongst those proposed are the cumulative intensification of regulatory control in the face of chaotic social conditions in the early 1930s; the politicization of 'social deviance' and the criminalization of political 'opposition' by a ruling party whose support was crumbling away; the diffusion of the principle of suspicion through Soviet institutions and society by an isolated elite fearing for its power; and the paranoia about enemies, spies and conspiracies in one's own ranks inspired by the prospect of war.⁶ The Comintern, too, came to feel the effects of the spiral of surveillance and repression. The criminalization and prosecution as 'wreckers' and 'plotters' of real or supposed oppositionists in the Comintern and among the emigrants more generally began before Yezhov's appointment. In January 1935 the organization witnessed a whole series of 'party trials' in connection with the Magyar case, part of a purge of the party elite.⁷ Charges spoke of association with 'conciliators', of support for 'Zinoviev and Kamenev', those so accused being described

as 'enemies of the party'.⁸ The intensifying violence of repression was fuelled (though not caused) by the intensive collection and reporting of data by party officers, state functionaries and the political police. In the early 1930s, with increasing reliance on statistical methods of surveillance through the compilation of card catalogue registries, the key to the whole being the passport and residence registration system, the data amassed grew exponentially. The Comintern, too, had from the beginning kept files on people, for administrative purposes. The centralization of policing under the newly formed NKVD in 1934 gave this habit a more police-like, repressive aspect and produced a gigantic police apparatus with almost unlimited, extra-judicial powers of repression,⁹ whose arm reached as far as the Executive Committee of the Communist International.¹⁰ Police activity aimed at stabilizing the social order through purges and deportations peaked in the early 1930s and then with the 'mass operations' of 1937–1938, involving arrest and execution by quota (notably as provided by NKVD Order No. 00447 on the repression of the 'kulaks').¹¹ Here a distinction must be drawn, however, between Soviet society on the one hand and members of the Party and the Comintern on the other. Although the Comintern was touched by the effects of this attempt at large-scale social engineering, the repression struck its own ranks somewhat later, in 1935–1936, and the accusations generally had a more directly political, though rarely substantiated, content. This chapter will trace the effects of the growing xenophobia and repression on the 'internationalists'.

7.1 The end of 'proletarian internationalism'

Foreign cadres at the Comintern and its associated organizations, and even 'normal' political emigrants working in Soviet concerns, were the victims of a development that directly touched their status in the Soviet Union. Their very biographies made them available as 'foreign bodies' and scapegoats; origins, family associations, membership of sister parties, and long periods spent in the West, these all associated them with the 'foreign', the outside, and they were increasingly seen as potential spies and traitors.

The early 1930s saw the Soviet authorities turn away from a class-based internationalism in their domestic politics to emphasize the national (and from 1933, Russian) character of the Soviet Union.¹² This, however, affected policy regarding the admission of political emigrants from Western and Central Europe, whose situation changed considerably in the second half of the 1930s, both symbolically and legally. The new Constitution of 1936 formally did away with the two classes of citizenship. Article 135 granted the right to vote and to be

elected to all citizens of the USSR aged 18 or older, regardless of racial or national membership, faith, educational level, residence, social origin, property status, and past activities. In theory at least, rights were now attributed to 'citizens' regardless of specific social identities.¹³ And Communists from abroad were now first of all foreigners, not international comrades and fellow members or allies of the class.

Developments were, however, for a long time contradictory, oscillating between nationalism and internationalism until around 1937.¹⁴ In cultural matters, the Soviet Union at first began by strengthening its relationships with the West, in the late 1920s. As well as promoting tourism and establishing various propaganda organizations, it sought to win the loyalty of Western intellectuals who might act as ambassadors for the country. What is more, in around 1931–1932 it took a 'cultural turn', as Katerina Clark has argued, in the hope of establishing Moscow as an international capital of culture, a beacon to intellectuals the world over.¹⁵ This policy was likely not consistently backed by all agencies of the state, having been very much introduced 'from above', in part thanks to Stalin. In practice, its implementation fell to the leading creative artists described by Clark as 'cosmopolitan patriots'. With the new emphasis on culture came a 'great appropriation', primarily of Western European but also of American culture, but also retrospectively of the Great Russian and European culture of the past, which was 'reworked, reinvented for the specifics of Marxism-Leninism and the Stalinist epoch'.¹⁶ The boosting of culture 'as a value for its own sake and as emblem of national glory' served to aestheticize the Stalinist state.¹⁷ The nationalist and internationalist standpoints remained in competition for some years.

This also found expression in Soviet immigration and asylum policies. Although immigration did in fact reach its apogee in the first half of the 1930s, 1932 saw a partial retreat from a relatively open admission policy. This greater rigour paralleled the imposition of cadre control on the Comintern that same year, with the Cadre Section of the ECCI expanded into a department in itself and the Comintern ever more closely integrated with the apparatus of the Soviet state.¹⁸ In April, the Politcommission of the ECCI issued directives 'On the process for the settlement in the USSR of members of sister parties and their transfer to the A-UCP(b)'. Migration without Party permission was now considered 'desertion of the front of class-struggle',¹⁹ and communists who arrived without such approval were 'deserters'. This policy, actually first introduced in connection with party members in the 1920s, was at first rather laxly applied. So a German-speaking woman student at the KUNMZ, who had travelled to the Soviet Union without party authorization,

was simply granted this retrospectively. This would, however, be held against her later, during the purge of 1933, by Oskar Grossman, the Austrian CP representative to the ECCI, as symptomatic of a lack of discipline and social-democratic residues.²⁰ In early 1933, with a wave of political emigrants from Germany in prospect, the admissions policy became significantly tighter, under pressure from the leaderships of the Comintern and the German CP.²¹ By 1936, exceptions were no longer tolerated, and existing unapproved emigrants could no longer expect material or moral support from the Party or its welfare organizations.²²

Faced with the prospect of mass emigration to the USSR, in February 1933 representatives of the Comintern, the OGPU and the MOPR (responsible since 1924 for handling all asylum applications) meeting in Moscow proposed guidelines for the granting of residence permits and citizenship. With a few amendments, these were shortly thereafter accepted by the Politcomission of the ECCI and in April that year they were endorsed by the Organization Department of the CC of the A-UCP(b). The home party leadership's authorization to emigrate to the USSR was an essential precondition for recognition by the MOPR and the Soviet authorities. In accordance with this, emigrants were divided into three groups: a first group, recognized as political emigrants by the Authentication Commission of the MOPR, would be granted a residence permit without further formality, though after December 1934 they would be obliged to take Soviet citizenship; a second group, not recognized as political emigrants by the Authentication Commission, would be granted residence permits only with the agreement of the home party's representative in Moscow or of the Cadre Department of the ECCI; a third group, finally, composed of those who had carried out work of a conspiratorial or military nature, were to take Soviet citizenship, without this being made public, however.²³ Not all applications for the status of political emigrant were granted. In the mid-1930s, only around half seem to have been accepted, while around a quarter were deferred and another quarter rejected.²⁴

Following its entry into the League of Nations, the Soviet Union held itself aloof from the work of its High Commission for Refugees Coming from Germany. During the 1930s, the Soviet Union increasingly emphasized the division between interior and exterior, both materially and symbolically: border defences were strengthened, the new Constitution of 1936 accentuated the distinction between Soviet and other citizenship, and in 1938 it was made more difficult for a foreign spouse to obtain Soviet nationality.²⁵ In addition, in the second half of the decade most collaborations with foreign firms were ended, many

Western correspondents were forced to leave the country, and transport connections with other countries were reduced. In 1937, defence minister Voroshilov announced to the assembled Central Committee: 'The whole world is against us'.²⁶

A concrete expression of the general distrust of foreigners was an increase in surveillance. While it had, since the 1920s, been customary to hand over one's passport and to adopt a pseudonym, both of which not only expressed but reinforced emigrants' dependence on the Soviet authorities, the introduction of the internal passport in 1932 saw a tighter control over movement within the Soviet Union imposed on foreign comrades as well. To this was added in mid-1936 a more rigorous censorship of letters sent out of the country. From then on, foreign parties' representatives to the ECCI could correspond with their home party only with the permission of the relevant ECCI secretary. Early in 1936 a 'special system of registration' was to be established in order to 'record and verify' the whole 'political emigration'. The foreign communists who were members of the Soviet party were to be checked by party bodies, those who were not by the MOPR.²⁷ Artists, too, were more closely watched. The German-Russian film studio where many foreign artists worked was particularly prone to Stalin's suspicion of spies. In 1935 a special commissioner was appointed at *Mezhrabpom-Film*, to be responsible for all matters regarding the work of the foreign comrades. It was argued that: 'Many foreign comrades work in MEZHHRABPOM-FILM's various businesses. Many of these do not speak Russian, and are not acquainted with what are for them the new relationships obtaining in our country. In their work, they adjust only with difficulty'. The directors, departmental heads and so on had therefore to help them as best they could. In doing which, 'special attention should be paid to the work on the film *Fighters* of the camera crews of the foreign directors – Comrades [Joris] Ivens and [Gustav von] Wangenheim'.²⁸

Even in the genuinely transnational, cosmopolitan organizations of the Comintern, Russian was increasingly promoted as the 'language of socialism'.²⁹ Exhortations to learn 'the language of Lenin' there had always been; now the mastery of Russian was 'a political matter', as a Russian instructor put it to Austrian Schutzbündler: 'Those who learn the Russian language show that they wish to learn the reality of proletarian revolution'.³⁰ Non-Russian Comintern officials now strove to demonstrate their 'loyalty to the line' and devotion to the 'Workers' Fatherland' through the ostentatious if not always competent use of Russian.³¹ Another expression of this were the many Russianisms with which they peppered their prose, signs of correct 'politlanguage'.

The Soviet leadership's deep distrust of the 'internationals' can be seen early on in a speech by Manuilsky, then a member of the CC of the A-UCP(b) and de facto leader of the Comintern. In October 1931, addressing the assembled Comintern apparatus on 'Measures to combat provocations in sister communist parties', he referred to the emigrants, 'especially those from illegal communist parties', as a 'hotbed of provocation'.³² The next month, the Mass Department of the CC of the A-UCP(b) launched an investigation into the MOPR's biggest hostel for political emigrants. As this was apparently not carried out properly, six months later the MOPR Executive Committee and the German delegation, that is the KPD's leadership in Moscow, were requested 'to undertake a thorough investigation of the criminal element among the politemigrants from Germany'.³³ The goal was repatriation: as the directive went on to say, 'some of the worst of them' were then 'to be handed over to the relevant Soviet authorities for expulsion from the USSR'.³⁴

The repression that followed the murder of Kirov on 1 December 1934 had seen the arrest not only of Zinoviev, once leader of the organization, but also of Georgi Ivanovich Safarov (1891–1942), then deputy head of the Eastern Secretariat, who had been an oppositionist before 1928. The threads of the 'counter-revolutionary plot', as the murder charge called it, led directly to the Comintern, which thus fell under the suspicion of insufficient vigilance.³⁵ In 1935 the Party ordered a new, year-long 'verification' of the membership, to be carried out by local party organizations. Alongside the purge, a broad 'anti-bureaucratic' campaign was launched, its goal being to expose those responsible for mismanagement. There then followed in quick succession a series of meetings of the party groups at the ECCI and its associated institutions in which the 'lessons' were drawn from the murder of Kirov.³⁶ This meant that former oppositionists acknowledged their errors, but at the same time accused others who had apparently not repudiated their oppositional stance. After the party committee of the Comintern's Publishing House for Foreign Workers had expelled several comrades, a joint meeting of the ECCI party and *Komsomol* organizations considered the 'case' (*delo*) of Ludwig or Lajos Magyar, a Hungarian Communist, deputy head of the Eastern Department of the ECCI, who not only had shown openly oppositionist sympathies between 1925–1927, but also had maintained a close relationship with Zinoviev and Safarov, amongst others. He was expelled from the party at the end of December 1934 and arrested a day later. It is noteworthy, however, that he was not shot at the time, but only in November 1937.³⁷

Complaints about political emigrants intensified in the mid-1930s. In December 1935, a draft resolution for the ECCI claimed that 'Enemies of the USSR and the Comintern are using political emigration as a channel to place their agents not just in the Soviet Union but also in the A-UCP(b)'.³⁸ This had been revealed by the verification of party documents, as had the 'criminally negligent behaviour of sister communist parties' representatives to the ECCI in issuing recommendations for transfer to the A-UCP'. In early January 1936 Manuilsky wrote to Yezhov to ask him for a meeting to discuss the measures necessary to stop 'the penetration of the territory of the USSR by spies and saboteurs, disguised as political émigrés and members of the fraternal parties'.³⁹ The CC of the A-UCP(b) subsequently ordered another 'exchange of party documents' – an exercise that would last from March to December. In this connection, a special commission was established in February to oversee the verification of emigrés. In early March the ECCI Secretariat decided 'to discontinue the existing practice of keeping on the USSR territory individuals suspected of provocation and espionage'.⁴⁰ Measures proposed included more rigorous selection of Lenin School students, and the repatriation or deportation of certain categories of foreigner. Also announced was the 'liquidation' of the institutions of the emigration.

The summer saw a shift of target, criticism no longer being aimed at 'passive' or 'hostile elements', but at ex-oppositionists and the 'terroristic activity of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite counterrevolutionary bloc', thus establishing a direct connection with the accused of the First Moscow Show Trial and heralding the start of the Great Terror. Appointed head of the NKVD by Stalin himself in September 1936, Yezhov publicly declared that over the previous year around a fifth of the party membership had been expelled, and some of these sent to prison. According to him, these were nearly all the worst kind of enemies, spies, 'Whites' and crooks. Could they assume, he asked, that those who had been expelled but not arrested would now abandon their subversive, counter-revolutionary activity?

Over the next two years, the allegations became ever wilder. On 25 August 1936, the First Moscow Show Trial having just begun, the ECCI Presidium decided, together with the International Control Commission, that henceforth all communists who 'betrayed the Party' should be 'expelled from the Party, without exception'.⁴¹ The two bodies noted that 'enemy agents' had penetrated the party. And that 'even leading members of the party' had not 'shown sufficient class vigilance'. They had 'been conciliatory in the face of breach of conspiracy, betrayal

and provocation' – an accusation that would appear as a leitmotiv in ECCI resolutions over the coming months. The control commissions of the individual parties had now to 'mercilessly drive out of the Party all traitors, alien and hostile elements, double-dealers, demoralized elements, crooks, incorrigible fractionists, as well as all those members who consistently breach the rules of conspiracy'.⁴²

The tautological nature of Soviet leaders' interpretation of reality became particularly flagrant in 1937, during the time of the Great Terror. For Manuilsky, *éminence grise* and Stalin's right-hand man in the Comintern, the transfer of party membership helped the enemy 'legalize his wrecking and the camouflaging of his agents, Trotskyites, spies and saboteurs behind the party book'.⁴³ He therefore proposed to further tighten up the procedure. Two preconditions for transfer should be permanent settlement in the Soviet Union and a minimum three years' residence. Another should be the assumption of Soviet citizenship, as also recommended by the NKVD. For the latter had already in 1933 proposed to Aliev, head of the Transfer Commission, that membership of the A-UCP(b) should not be granted to those who were not Soviet citizens.⁴⁴ However, if only Soviet citizens could become members of the A-UCP(b), this could only signify the end of the vaunted 'proletarian internationalism' of the 'Workers' Fatherland', on which so much propaganda depended.

The concrete consequences of this turn to nationalistic categories were spelled out by Manuilsky himself: members of the Polish CP on Soviet territory were generally to be excluded from transfer 'on account of the infiltration of the Polish CP by agents of the class-enemy'.⁴⁵ By then, the systematic repression against Polish cadre was already in full swing. In late 1937 the 'nest of spies' that was the Polish Party had been dissolved and a *damnatio memoriae* pronounced upon it. At one stroke, all mention of the Communist Party of Poland disappeared from the Communist Press, as if it had never been.⁴⁶

If an individual party were collectively guilty of 'espionage', then all its political emigrants in the Soviet Union were suspect. These now undesirable 'comrades' had to be sent back to their countries of origin, being infested with Trotskyism, according to the CC of the A-UCP(b). The dirty work would however fall to the 'representatives to the ECCI of the communist parties of the capitalist countries', who in Spring 1937 were instructed by the Soviet party leadership to 'carry out a campaign of enlightenment against Trotskyism among émigré Communists resident in the USSR, in order, as a result of such a campaign, to organize within a year a mass return of émigré communists to political work in

the capitalist countries, allowing to remain in the USSR only those comrades who are sick or incapable of work, and those who by virtue of the nature of the accusations made against them in the bourgeois courts are unable to return to work in any capitalist country'.⁴⁷

In early April 1937 Manuilsky informed the NKVD and the top leadership of the Soviet party that the verification and exchange of party documents had shown that 'agents, Trotskyists, spies and saboteurs' had succeeded in sneaking their way into the Party.⁴⁸ In March 1938 the ECCI Secretariat resolved to carry out a 'campaign of enlightenment' about the Third Moscow Show Trial, mounted against Bukharin, Rykov, Krestinsky and others, the so-called 'Right-Trotskyite bloc'. This would show 'that there is a world conspiracy of reaction and fascism directed immediately against the Land of Socialism, but also against the peace and liberty of all peoples', a conspiracy 'inspirated [*sic*] by the espionage centres of Hitler's Germany and Japan' and 'carried out with the participation of the remnants of all anti-Soviet groupings: the Trotskyites, Rights, Zinovievites, Bourgeois-Nationalists, Mensheviks and SRs, as agents of the fascist war incendiaries'.⁴⁹

7.2 The closure of foreign organizations

Soviet institutes and enterprises began as a result to dismiss their foreign employees. In late summer 1937 the Institute for World Economy and Politics cut some 20 posts, almost all of them occupied by persons of foreign origin. The same happened at the Marx-Engels Institute.

Foreigners found themselves practically without any way of making a living. Already in summer 1936 the German Hermann Remmele could send to Manuilsky a list of some 30 party functionaries and cadre-school graduates who were out of work.⁵⁰ One of the few places that still offered employment, until June 1938, was the Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the Soviet Union (VEGAAR), which in 1937 still employed 335 people, of whom some 25–40 were German speakers.⁵¹ Until his arrest, Heinz Neumann was one of them. Another possibility might be Ino-Radio (known in the West as Radio Moscow), which had been transmitting in German since 1929 and would continue to do so throughout the war. This fell directly under the authority of the A-UCP(b), and its foreign staff were mostly made up of former Comintern employees or party functionaries, as well as members of what remained of the colony of communist writers and actors in exile. A precarious alternative after the disappearance of nearly all other possibilities was, until 1939, the newspaper *Deutsche Zentral-Zeitung*,⁵² which by February

1938 had already seen half of its workforce arrested. 1938 also saw the closure of Moscow's Ernst Thälmann Foreign Workers' Club (earlier the German Club), after the arrest of its director Albert Zwicker in February. This had offered foreigners a meeting-place and a rich programme of courses, talks and events. Foreigners' clubs were closed, too, elsewhere in the Soviet Union, sometimes for very fanciful reasons.

The last of the artists and architects left by 1936–1937 at the latest, as the many avant-garde projects they had been involved in fell victim to the Soviet bureaucracy and to the constraints on creative expression imposed by a retrogressive Socialist Realism on the one hand and NKVD-sponsored terror on the other. The only ones left were those who could find no other refuge and had managed to avoid deportation.⁵³

The Communist University of the National Minorities of the West, where a great number of foreign communists were teaching, closed its doors on 1 May 1936, and within a year its director Maria Frumkina, a fluent German-speaker, had been 'exposed as an enemy of the people'. The ILS followed in 1937–1938. In 1938 the Karl Liebknecht School, too, was closed, which at its high point in the mid-1930s had employed 35 teachers (among them Austrians, Swiss and Hungarians as well as Russians and Russian Germans) to educate 750 pupils (the offspring of émigré Germans, and a few children of Russians who had lived some time in Germany). Already in 1936 the NKVD had 'discovered' an allegedly 'counter-revolutionary, fascist-Trotskyite group' amongst the teachers, followed in 1938 by a 'Hitler Youth Conspiracy'.⁵⁴ This brought the end of another international institution on Soviet soil. The International Agrarian Institute had already suffered a partial closure in February 1936. A number of the lecturers whose later fate is known found work for a time at the Foreign Literature Publishing House. One was Theodor Beutling, who after studying at the ILS in 1926–1928 and occupying a party post in Germany emigrated to Moscow in 1933, where he was head of the German section at the KUNMZ in 1934–1936. He was arrested by the NKVD on 27 January 1938 and died in a camp in 1942.⁵⁵ Others, like Paul Wandel and Helene Berg, lecturers at the ILS since 1935, were able to teach at its successor institution, the cadre school operated in Kushnarenkovo in 1941–1943.⁵⁶

While Workers International Relief was dissolved in 1935, together with what remained of the Krestintern⁵⁷ (except for the International Agrarian Institute, which survived until 1940), the Profintern lost about half its staff in Spring 1936. The Comintern, too, was ordered to slim down its staff at its reorganization in 1935.⁵⁸ The whole apparatus (Cadre Department, Department for Propaganda and Mass

Organization, Department for International Liaison of the ECCI Secretariat, Bureau of the ECCI Secretariat, the publishing and editorial staffs of the journal *Kommunistische Internationale*) were centralized and organizationally streamlined. The national secretariats, the Politsecretariat and the Politcommission were all abolished, all duties and responsibilities being merged at the level of the ECCI Secretariat itself, newly reorganized as ten (personal) secretariats. The Cadre Department came now under the direct supervision of one of the ECCI secretaries; it was Manuilsky.⁵⁹

The successive waves of 'liquidation' of Comintern cadres robbed the organization of very many of its staff, not sparing even the highest ranks.⁶⁰ Having been dismissed from their posts in 1935, three ex-members of the ECCI were arrested one after the other in 1937: the Latvian Wilhelm Knorin, ex-head of the secretariat for Central Europe, on 22 June; Béla Kun, once leader of the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic, until 1935 a member of the ECCI Presidium and after that director of a Moscow publishing house, on June 28;⁶¹ and the Old Bolshevik Osip Piatnitsky, earlier head of the Department for International Liaison (OMS), and responsible for funding communist parties abroad, on 7 July. By 1937, the international apparatus was more or less paralyzed.⁶² According to an assessment by German party representative Paul Jäkel in April 1938, more than 70 per cent of KPD members in the USSR had been arrested,⁶³ and according to the Russian historian Fridrikh Firsov the membership of the Russian party cell at Comintern headquarters had fallen by 57 per cent since January 1936.⁶⁴ On the lists of Moscow executions compiled by Wladislaw Hedeler appear the names of 83 functionaries living in one of the 315 rooms at the Hotel Lux.⁶⁵

There was, however, no automatic relationship between expulsion from the party and arrest, nor between arrest and conviction. Imre Nagy, who lived in Moscow between 1930 and 1945, and who worked at the Krestintern's International Agrarian Institute until 1936, was expelled from the party on 8 January 1936 in the course of the verification of Hungarian émigrés, losing his post at the Institute in consequence on 1 February. He appealed against the decision, however, and now applied for Soviet citizenship, which he had hitherto refused to do. He was granted it that same year, and by the summer had found employment again. He was briefly arrested in March 1938, but was released after a few days. And the same sort of thing happened to György Lukács.⁶⁶ For the whole foreign community, however, this was a time of the most extreme anxiety.

The repression did not halt with the end of the Great Terror. Nor was it limited to party functionaries and Comintern employees, but extended to the skilled workers and technicians from abroad who worked for Soviet enterprises, as Sergei Zhuravlev's research has shown. Between 1938 and 1940, the NKVD noted the formation of several informal 'women's groups' in Moscow. One of them consisted of the wives of arrested German workers from the *Elektrozavod*-factory. Although such groups were notorious for their discontent and so-called 'anti-Soviet agitation', the NKVD waited until the war to 'clear out' this 'wasps' nest' and send the German wives to forced labour or Siberian exile. An arrested organizer 'confessed' to having 'gathered together the wives of persons who had been repressed for counter-revolutionary activity and systematically carried out counter-revolutionary agitation among them'.⁶⁷

The consequences of dismissal were not limited to loss of income for the employee and the effects on the area of work concerned. While in the second half of the 1930s dismissal from the Comintern apparatus and expulsion from the party marked the beginning of a life behind bars at best, it had much earlier come to threaten the loss of bed and board. Richard Urban and his wife and two children saw themselves moved from a room of 22 square metres to one of 12 square metres when he lost his job as the Austrian CP's functionary responsible for the *Schutzbündler* in the USSR.⁶⁸ The families of those arrested were shifted out of the Lux proper to the dark and uncomfortable Annexe in the inner courtyard. During the purges, evictions from the 'doss-house of the world revolution' (Ruth von Mayenburg)⁶⁹ were so many that party leaderships in exile and the Comintern itself had to attend to the social problems arising in consequence. A meeting of the KPD politburo clearly illustrated the real power relationships in Stalin's Moscow: 'On the eviction of unreliable elements from Comintern accommodation, it was decided that no objections be raised in individual cases, but that we should urge in certain cases that assistance be given in finding employment and accommodation, contacting for this purpose the committee established by the Comintern – Belov, Sergeev, Samsonov'.⁷⁰

7.3 Loss of bearings and personal ties

The dynamic of mutual denunciation and increasingly absurd allegations could hardly be opposed. In the files for the time when the Terror began to embrace the Comintern, one rarely finds direct criticism of the 'enemies everywhere' logic behind 'Bolshevik vigilance' like the

following one. Making a self-report, a student at the KUNMZ declared that he thought it was wrong, on hearing a formulation considered to be politically erroneous, to immediately report it to the section. He believed that one first had to clarify whether this was a misunderstanding, a poor choice of words, or a political error. And he went on to say, bravely, that in general he thought it was 'wrong to see every comrade as a snitch above all'.⁷¹

Arrests could have severe psychological effects on those left behind, but individual reactions varied. Paradoxically, many sought to find fault with themselves. They had not trusted the party enough, and now it was clear how wrong they had been. Only when it was too late, not long before his own arrest, did one Austrian Lenin-School student acknowledge that it had been wrong of him to conceal past errors from the party. 'The party is right to require of a Communist that he should reveal all the circumstances of his past, without reservation. This gives it the opportunity to judge a person correctly, and to help them abandon their errors and to develop'. Because he had failed to do this, the party had not had 'the opportunity to judge me properly. The party put great trust in me ... and I have not lived up to it'.⁷²

Faced with arrest, deportation, and growing administrative obstacles of every kind,⁷³ many sought permission to fight in the Spanish Civil War. Not all were successful. Some of these political refugees decided to go home, despite the dangers that awaited.⁷⁴ Others escaped into mental breakdown, and some, like Martha Ruben-Wolf, took their own lives. 'In the office of the German delegation to the ECCI, scenes of distress on the part of the wives of those arrested are a regular occurrence', wrote Paul Jäkel in a highly confidential report to the KPD leadership.⁷⁵ By the end of the Great Terror, an apocalyptic mood prevailed among the surviving Comintern employees and political émigrés.⁷⁶

Friends taken away by the secret police had to be condemned and disowned. Their relatives were cut off and lived entirely isolated lives, awaiting their own arrest. Their acquaintances were plagued by the nagging and well-founded anxiety that they too might be led to perdition by the contacts they might 'confess' to. For practically all émigrés, especially those living together at the Lux, had some kind of 'relationship' with someone or other that might make them the next to go when one of them was arrested. All of them knew people behind bars, and like a deadly-dangerous infectious disease, contact with these pariahs could have lethal consequences. No conversation was harmless, and every word had to be chosen with care.⁷⁷ The atmosphere in Moscow in 1937–1938 was such that 'One was ashamed still not to have been

arrested', recalled the German Marxist historian Wolfgang Ruge, a young man at the time; 'One could easily be taken for an informer'.⁷⁸

The ever crazier self-incriminations the NKVD extracted from their prisoners brought about a fundamental destabilization of identity. Cadres' well-established criteria of judgment and schemes of ideological orientation crumbled and scattered like sand in the wind. An exemplary expression of this profound demoralization and isolation is the following letter of April 1939, sent by the German comrade Franz Schwarzmüller to the leaderships of the A-UCP(b), the Comintern and the KPD, following the arrest of his wife Anni Etterer:

For us German emigrants, who are part of the German party, part of the Third International, that intra-party life, that political life and political activity have absolutely come to an end ... What are the consequences of such a situation? For many good comrades and true friends of the USSR such a life means disintegration – mental death – stagnation of political development, political indifference ... In such an émigré community, living in such conditions – as the Germans presently are in the USSR – demoralization and opportunism, and with them the class enemy, more easily make headway than in an emigration closely connected, politically engaged and energized.⁷⁹

Despite the disillusion and disappointment, the notion of the enemy remains the same: the idea of a class enemy easily penetrating a body no longer resistant because no longer (politically) energized still dominates the thinking of the long disenchanted. The only ones immune were the 'healthy' Russian people as a whole. And to belong to this, the only way was to engage in a *fuite en avant*: to become a new, 'healthy' Soviet person, one had to show that one had freed oneself of damaging Western influences, from 'petty-bourgeois, capitalist' inclinations.

Faith in Russia became a fundamental element of survival strategy, like unconditional acceptance of Stalinist policy and the adoption of a party-concordant habitus. At one purge meeting of the German party the author and film director Gustav von Wangenheim admitted what he had used to think of the *chistka*: 'At first I wrongly took it to be a Russian peculiarity. I have now come to realize that it is Bolshevistic'.⁸⁰ The Russian Comintern leadership's numerous admonitions to Western functionaries to adjust to the environment they were living in were intended to accelerate this kind of assimilation. Already in September 1933, Piatnitsky had complained at a meeting of the

party purge commission at the ECCI, that 'the foreigners often go back home without knowing where it is they have been living for years. They have never got to know the world around them, never entered into Russian life'.⁸¹

During the Terror, failure to integrate into the 'Soviet milieu' or 'the Russian party context' was a sign that comrades wanted to 'cut off' or to 'isolate' themselves.⁸² Foreigners who by 1937 had not acquired Soviet citizenship were among the first to be arrested. This is what happened to the British communist Rose Cohen. The wife of the Russian David Petrovsky (Lipez), an administrative employee at the Comintern for many years and finally head of the foreign department at the *Moscow Daily News*, she could hardly be said not to have integrated, but she was reproached by officials of the Comintern Cadre Department for not having taken Soviet citizenship. She was thus refused an extension to her residence permit in October 1936, and having also been refused the return of her British passport, she was arrested that same day by the NKVD. Accused of being a British agent and of belonging to an anti-Soviet organization within the ECCI, she was then condemned to death.⁸³

Paradoxically, however, foreigners clung all the more tightly to the weak threads that still bound them to their country – and notably to their citizenship – the greater grew the official pressure to assimilate.⁸⁴ In the paranoid atmosphere of the time, the party apparatus interpreted such behaviour as the expression of a more general refusal to integrate into Soviet society and to adapt to the usages of the Russian party. State and party officials repeatedly declared: 'We do not know the political émigrés'.⁸⁵ Following the arrest of a colleague, Soviet party members at the Institute of World Economy and Politics were urged to be especially vigilant with regard to the members of foreign communist parties.⁸⁶ Yet as the Austrian communist Lilli Beer-Jergitsch recalled, only at the height of the Terror, when official xenophobia had reached such a pitch that every foreigner was thought of as a potential spy, and any contact with them compromising, did the calls for greater integration fall silent.⁸⁷

By then, xenophobia had long gripped the general population.⁸⁸ Soviet newspapers published such statements as: 'It is no way an exaggeration to say that every Japanese living abroad is a spy, just as every German citizen living abroad is an agent of the Gestapo'.⁸⁹ A German woman émigré was informed by the Party Secretary at her place of employment that 'as a member of the A-UCP(b) [she] ought to know that all the Germans in the Soviet Union were spies'.⁹⁰

Foreign communists were very much aware of this attitude on the part of the Soviet population. Many were upset by it, distrusting the Russians as the Russians distrusted them. In 1938 a Hungarian émigré told his compatriot Jenő (Eugen) Varga, director of the Institute of World Economy and Politics: 'You probably know as well as I do that the best part of the Hungarian emigration was arrested in March. The reason is unknown, but it is typical that I should have heard Russians say, "All foreigners will be arrested"'.⁹¹ The mistrust, the suspicion, and not least the police repression affected the 'internationalists' profoundly. They had arrived as comrades, to help build socialism in the Workers' Fatherland, and now encountered not solidarity but hostility.

Conversely, faced with the rising xenophobia, the adults avoided dealings with the local population. 'In the 1930s my sense of connection with the Russians diminished', said the East German communist Erna K. [Kolbe]. 'I had the impression that it wasn't wanted so much, in any case ... We Comintern employees kept to ourselves anyway, closed off from the outside'.⁹² The inhabitants of the Comintern's gated community at the Lux were now confined to it. The climate of mistrust that characterized Soviet society also pervaded the international community at the Lux itself. While the 1920s had seen nations and cultures mix together at convivial social events, the following decade saw the atomization of this cosmopolitan society. People slunk through the corridors, retreated to their rooms as quickly as they could. The different nationalities now kept themselves to themselves. Returning to Moscow in 1935, Margarete and Heinz Neumann found an atmosphere of despondence. They felt isolated, and hardly anyone visited them at the Lux.⁹³ One factor in this sense of isolation was the Comintern's move in 1937 from the centre of Moscow, not far from the Kremlin, to new quarters in the outer suburbs, but the most important was the *chistka*. Visiting Moscow on political business in October 1937, Humbert-Droz noted in a letter to his wife Jenny: 'Hardly any old acquaintances to be seen at the Comintern, so I haven't yet been able to pass on your regards to anyone. The new buildings are also extremely unfavourable to chance encounters. They're so big you get lost in them ... What's more, it was necessary to give the apparatus a good clean out, and it's now like new, which was indeed urgently needed'.⁹⁴ Having arrived as a secret courier in the winter of 1939–1940, the Frenchwoman Andrée Dutilleul ('Mounette') later recalled that all the doors were closed in the 'prefabricated, anonymous and gloomy building'.⁹⁵

An atmosphere of acute mutual suspicion weighed on everyday life at the Lux and hamstrung the Comintern. Neither the files nor later

personal recollections evidence much in the way of protest against the legal discrimination and police repression suffered by foreigners. One of the few instances must be Eugen Varga's expression of outrage at the 'mood of pogrom against foreign comrades', addressing a party meeting of his Institute following the dismissal of several foreigners: 'The mere fact of not being born in the Soviet Union can be no reason for dismissal from the Institute ... One has to consider each foreign comrade's contacts. The possibility of spy contacts is considerable, but when there is no evidence, I cannot support it'.⁹⁶ This was perhaps an internationalist's last attempt at least to make a public stand for his principles.

In Stalin's eyes, however, the Comintern was an organization full of agents disguised as party members.⁹⁷ To those as yet untouched, emphatic self-distantiation from those accused seemed the only hope of averting mortal danger, and meeting after meeting was spent in endless denunciation. As Humbert-Droz wrote to Jenny from Moscow in February 1937, following the Second Moscow Trial, that of the 'anti-Soviet Trotskyite centre', including Piatakov, Radek and Sokolnikov: 'The trial is finished, but meetings continue to consider its utilization in liquidating Trotskyism in the various countries. Meetings one after another, commissions, small commissions, drafting sub-committees, and you know what these meetings are like. If everyone doesn't get their speech in, the meeting must be too short'.⁹⁸ Talk did not however dispel anxiety. 'The so-called party meetings of the ... ECCI apparatus, the Comintern building, the corridors of Hotel Lux, were pervaded by a panic fear, a hysterical anxiety in the face of an impalpable and thus more or less inescapable danger', writes Herbert Wehner, describing the suffocating fear that overcame people in 1937.⁹⁹ It was an atmosphere that poisoned interpersonal relations. Visitors' intentions were suspect: were they trying to find something out? Ruth von Mayenburg laconically records the destruction in the second half of the 1930s of the strong communal ties that had earlier characterized this hive of revolutionary activity, the living symbol of worldwide solidarity in struggle: 'Most vanished quickly into their rooms, popping briefly into the kitchen only to cook. Someone might knock, 'I forgot to buy bread', and even then people wouldn't be terribly happy to open the door. Most did though tend to stay in touch with their compatriots, but beyond that contacts were rather formal'.¹⁰⁰ In 1943, in the latter days of the Lux, officials of different nationalities sat separately from each other to eat, and anyone who broke this pattern, reports Wolfgang Leonhard, would be 'looked at with astonishment'.¹⁰¹

8

Epilogue

Late in the evening of 8 May 1943, Dimitrov and Manuilsky were summoned to the Kremlin, where Molotov informed them of Stalin's decision to dissolve the Comintern, 'a hindrance in today's conditions'.¹ The decision was made public on 15 May. In the meantime, on the 13th, the ECCI Presidium had met in closed session to discuss it. All those present ended up supporting the dissolution of the organization. It had become an 'archaism', said the Bulgarian Vasil Kolarov, as prospects of revolution had long vanished.² The German Wilhelm Pieck admittedly had doubts: Were the Communist parties mature enough to be left to themselves? Only the Czech Jan Sverma expressed regret: 'Yesterday as I was reading the draft decision, my heart ached. I grew up in the Comintern, and my whole life has been linked to it. But these are emotions'.³ He too voted for the resolution. He had learnt, one could say, to subordinate his feelings to political rationality.

In reality, the activities for which the Comintern was still responsible did not come to an end, but were transferred to the International Department of the Central Committee of the Soviet party, while the Comintern's staff – of whom there were 421 in 1941 – were moved to Research Institutes Nos 99, 100 and 205, which fell under the same department. This didn't mean cutting links with communist parties abroad, or freeing them from the discipline of the general line. Unity had to be maintained. It was just that now, in accordance with Stalin's vision of leadership within the communist movement, control was to be effected through a network of bilateral relationships between the Soviet party apparatus and party leaderships elsewhere, and the former Comintern departments were turned over to this function.⁴ The International Liaison Service, responsible for clandestine activities (which had replaced the Comintern's International Section, the OMS,

in the mid-1930s) was absorbed by the Soviet secret service.⁵ A last reorganization of 'operational leadership' less than a year before the dissolution had already made it the First Department of the ECCI, reporting to General Secretary Georgi Dimitrov.⁶ This was the department that maintained contact with clandestine party organizations in the warring countries, via its radio network. The maintenance of international links also answered to the demand of West European communist parties, no less than ten of which had their headquarters and foreign affairs departments in Moscow, run by leaders in exile. These were the German, Spanish, French, Austrian, Czechoslovak, Italian, Finnish, Hungarian and Romanian parties.⁷ Coded messages transmitted between Moscow and some 30 radio stations abroad, not only throughout Europe but also in China and the United States, conveyed political and military intelligence as well as directives on the political line or on national tactics. The communist leaderships considered these communications to be essential to the correct conduct of the anti-fascist struggle, and there was no question of doing away with such an instrument of coordination and propaganda.

It was the case, though, that with its incorporation into the Soviet party communist international activity had lost its last semblance of autonomy. It was on Moscow's orders that in 1947 the communist parties abandoned the watchword of national unity that had guided their strategy since the end of the war. The launch of the Marshall Plan the same year led the Soviet leadership to tighten its control over the European parties with the creation of the Cominform (the Communist Information Bureau) in September. According to Molotov, these parties had not sufficiently coordinated their policies with Moscow.⁸ The new organization, however, covered only nine European communist parties, the Soviet included. But it wasn't just smaller than the Comintern: the Cominform also embodied a different principle of leadership. In the first place, political questions were settled by Stalin and those few close to him. There was no longer any question at all of collective decision-making by elected bodies, as had been the case in the early days of the Comintern, the Cominform's *modus operandi* explicitly embodying the top-down style of leadership that had emerged in the Soviet Union in the late 1920s, as Stalin consolidated his grip on the state and then on the Soviet economy. This was a style based on the relationship between a manager and his assistants: a boss calls his staff together, and no other kind of meeting was allowed.⁹

This vertical organization of power – a system of command – was gradually imposed on the Comintern.¹⁰ The 1930s saw 'horizontal'

encounters between representatives of the different communist parties become fewer and fewer. The organization's seventh and last world congress in summer 1935 took place only in appearance, being completely stage-managed. If delegates (the majority at least) were relieved to learn of a political turn that gave effect to the anti-fascist line so long awaited and already anticipated in the practice of the French CP, its main business was the enthronement of Dimitrov as general secretary of the Comintern, a new role that clearly echoed the situation obtaining in the Soviet party. And it was to Stalin and his circle that Dimitrov turned whenever he had to make a decision.¹¹ Furthermore, the reorganization of the leading bodies of the Comintern centralized all functions and all communications in nine personal secretariats under Dimitrov's supervision. The last plenum had been held in late 1933. Until then, each party had had the right to send a delegation reflecting the size of its membership to that body, responsible for the leadership of the International between world congresses. Afterwards, decisions on appointments or on political matters would be taken in closed, ad hoc meetings, to which the officers of national parties were invited for 'consultations'. Leaders of the Swiss CP, for example, were summoned to meet with ECCI officers more or less every six months between 1935 and the beginning of the war.¹² Unlike the earlier meetings of the democratically elected bodies, these were not announced to the membership, and those who attended were not the chosen representatives of their parties. Confronting the Moscow leadership alone, or in a group of no more than two or three, those summoned were called to report on their party, and were generally on the defensive. They were there to take orders, rather than to meet the Comintern leadership on an equal footing.

Cominform meetings repeated this pattern. Contrary to what they seem to have believed, the representatives of the European communist parties had not been called to the founding conference in Poland to exchange views with their Soviet counterparts. They were there to adopt the new 'two camps' policy outlined in Zhdanov's report on the international situation, opposing the 'imperialist and anti-democratic camp' represented by the United States and its allies and supporting the 'anti-imperialist and democratic camp' gathered around the Soviet Union and the people's democracies.¹³ The only two West European parties in the Cominform, the French and the Italian, were denounced for a politics based on legalist and parliamentary illusions.¹⁴ This way of proceeding, mounting a surprise attack on a party before an audience of its sister parties, could only put its representatives at a disadvantage. Another aspect of this top-down organization can be seen in

Stalin's techniques for controlling and if need be correcting the wording of political resolutions, down to the subtlest semantic nuance. As is evidenced by the sources now available, the Soviet delegation was in permanent contact with Moscow, via coded radio messages, allowing it to propose last-minute amendments, though in certain cases it would seem that resolutions were simply rewritten after the fact.

The East European parties, for their part, were subject to a very distinctive subordination that flowed from the division of spheres of influence between the great powers that emerged from the war. In the meantime, the image of the Soviet Union had changed as well. The attraction it had earlier had in the West for circles far wider than those of the communists themselves, especially during the 'pink decade' of 1927–1937, had been damaged by the Moscow Trials, mass terror in the Soviet Union, and the repression of anarchists and Trotskyists during the Spanish Civil War. The numbers of foreigners visiting the Soviet Union collapsed after 1935–1936: big international gatherings such as plenums and world congresses became fewer, then stopped altogether; the international cadre schools closed, one after another. Those who remained in the Soviet Union during the years of terror and war were more or less caught in a trap, and it was only after the end of hostilities that most of the foreigners could return to their own countries. Those still outside might refuse to go when called, like Willi Münzenberg in 1937, or comply only fearfully, like Jules Humbert-Droz in 1938. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union came to appear as a great power acting as a counterweight to the capitalist system rather than as the embodiment of romantic hopes of proletarian emancipation. Not even communists dreamt of settling there and forming colonies of revolutionary émigrés. When the British communist Dennis Ogden was sent to Moscow as a translator in 1955, he came to realize that he was practically the only English person to have gone there since the war.¹⁵

The successes enjoyed by the Communist parties of Western Europe after the war in the end proved short-lived. If some gained a mass membership and the Italian and French parties briefly participated in the government of their countries, the Cold War and the submission to Soviet foreign policy demanded by Moscow provoked electoral setbacks and a retreat to dogma. Many communist parties saw leadership wars and conflicts over strategy. The rejection of insurrection and civil war as an option in Western Europe saw leaderships that had engaged in the resistance sidelined in favour of returnees from Moscow. Yet the parties continued to be riven by a tension between submission to Soviet interests and a revolutionary line that ran counter to them.¹⁶ Between

1947 and 1955, the West European parties suffered a dozen crises, all connected with the replacement of leaderships or the elimination of disloyalty, either in connection with the ideological freeze of the Cold War or the new turn that came with the death of Stalin. These involved the Swiss party (1947, 1952), the Finnish (1948), the Spanish (1949), the Norwegian (1949), the Cypriot (1949–1952), the Swedish (1951, 1953), the French (1952, 1954), the Belgian (1954) and the Italian (1954–1955).¹⁷ The cleavages became visible with the expulsion of the Yugoslav party in 1948, when ‘Titoism’ became the generic term for any ‘deviation’. The purges were, however, far worse in the East, with a wave of large-scale show trials of communist leaders in Hungary, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia between 1949 and 1953. These were followed by the multiple shocks of 1956: Khrushchev’s ‘secret speech’, ‘destalinization’, the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution. If the apparatus as a whole survived, parties had more and more difficulty absorbing these successive challenges, which undermined their members’ sense of being in the right, and thus their identification with the Party. Little by little, the communist world that had been built over the decades now found itself ‘unmade’.¹⁸

There is no space here to consider the history of Communism as a whole during the short twentieth century – the story of the relationships between one party holding state power and other parties that did not. The story too of a political ideology that rested on the symbolic capital of the workers but which proved to be an illusory ‘solution’ to their lack of political representation.¹⁹ These few facts that have been evoked are intended to highlight the asymmetrical relationship between the European communist parties and the Soviet party led by the ‘master of the Kremlin’, the outcome of a development that had begun in the 1920s, together with the growing fragmentation of a communist movement and the erosion of its members’ commitment in both intellectual and affective terms. Internally, however, the communist parties retained after the war the most important elements of the Stalinist practices they had adopted in the years before it, notably the practice of biographical surveillance and control.²⁰ Likewise, the end of the International did not see the end of internationalism. The idea of international solidarity and of commitment to causes ‘elsewhere’ than at home still formed part of the lived values of the communist world. A party would still shelter and support foreign comrades under threat in their own countries on account of their political activities, an example being the Italian members who took refuge in Czechoslovakia in order to avoid trial and probable imprisonment for their roles in alleged

crimes committed during or after the Resistance period.²¹ On the whole, however, international personal contacts changed in character after the war. If World Festivals of Youth and Students for Peace and Friendship attracted a good many participants, they were nonetheless ephemeral events. They were deterritorialized encounters, as it were, outside the normal times and places of workaday life and everyday activism, and they had no decision-making function. There was nothing comparable to the intense, long-term relationships of comradeship, collaboration, neighbourliness, intimacy and enmity that existed between the people of the Comintern and the Hotel Lux.

Despite undeniable continuities, this was a new period, one that calls for another and different history. We may conclude then simply with the observation that the dissolution of the Comintern marked the definitive end of one of the most powerful instruments of political struggle available to socialists in the first half of the twentieth century, an organization on which there came to converge the hopes of millions of people. It meant also the end of a certain form of internationalism and cosmopolitanism, as it lost its material embodiment. It brought about the disintegration of the transnational cultural milieu formed by the professional revolutionaries who had converged on Moscow in the 1920s and 1930s. This was the culmination of a process of disentanglement from the Western cultural and political influence represented by these foreigners in the USSR, a process initiated by Stalin in the second half of the 1930s. Those who survived this distinctive, early-twentieth-century political experiment would remain indelibly marked by it. If some denounced the crimes of Stalinism, they were few indeed. Most kept silent, for personal or political reasons. Thus German communists who returned from long years in Soviet camps without having lost their faith in Communism or their hopes of revolutionary change fell hostage to the Cold War division of their country. Living in the GDR, they did not speak of their experience of Stalin's purges. In West Germany, any declaration on the subject only played into the hands of anti-Communism. This was the dilemma faced by Susanne Leonhard, who as an anti-Stalinist socialist refused to collaborate with the CIA despite 12 years of life in a camp and deportation. Others retained both political convictions and faith in the Party despite everything, and remained active members: Hugo Huppert, for example, who after two years spent in NKVD prisons worked for the Anti-Fascist Committee in Soviet prisoner-of-war camps from 1942–1944, before returning to Austria, only to be recalled to the USSR in 1949, where he would remain until 1956. The political socialization of this generation of Comintern activists was

based on the hope of a better future, a hope whose guarantor was the Party. The German educationalist Franziska Rubens, who lived in the Soviet Union from 1933–1948, recalled of the Terror that ‘The psychological pressure was immense – only faith in the Party, the certain hope that truth would win out, kept us going’.²² History disappointed the hopes, beliefs and expectations of this political generation, but for the historian the distinctive transnational cultural and political space that they created and the specific kind of militancy that they practised offer a glimpse of the complexity and multiplicity of the motivations of historical actors. And without a proper regard for the subjective and emotional dimension, any account of their decisions and trajectories risks missing entirely the social and personal determinants of politics.

Notes

Introduction

1. Several recent studies have considered the role played by Communism in the history of the 20th century, as political orientation and organization: Archie Brown, *The Rise and Fall of Communism* (New York: Ecco; London: Bodley Head, 2009); Silvio Pons, *The Global Revolution. A History of International Communism, 1917–1991*, trans. Allan Cameron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); David Priestland, *The Red Flag: Communism and the Making of the Modern World* (New York: The Grove Press, 2009); Robert Service, *Comrades: A History of World Communism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Macmillan, 2007); Steve A. Smith, ed., *Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). Though arguing from various political points of view their focus remains on traditional political history, not on Communism as a collective experience and the Comintern as the site of a particular type of militant practice.
2. Reinhart Koselleck, “‘Space of Experience’ and ‘Horizon of Expectation’: Two Historical Categories”, in Koselleck, ed., *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 349–375, here p. 354.
3. Koselleck, ‘Space’, p. 355.
4. Koselleck, ‘Space’, p. 355 (translation modified).
5. Raphael Samuel, ‘Faith, Hope and Struggle: The Lost World of British Communism, Part One’, *New Left Review* no. 154 (November–December 1985), p. 11.
6. According to Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), the hopes of self-determination for the colonies that had been prompted by Wilson’s rhetoric were extinguished by Spring 1919 at the latest. The principle would be restricted to Europe, and the people of the colonies would have to wait. Nguyen Ai Quoc (later famous as Ho Chi Minh) was one of those who had placed their hopes in the League of Nations and who then turned to Communism.
7. For the spatial scales of the Comintern’s political activity, see Chapter 1.
8. Gleb Albert, ‘From “World Soviet” to “Fatherland of All Proletarians”. Anticipated World Society and Global Thinking in Early Soviet Russia’, *InterDisciplines. Journal of History and Sociology* 3:1 (2012), pp. 85–119, available at <http://www.inter-disciplines.de/bghs/index.php/indi/article/view/53> (last retrieved 13 January 2014).
9. Annie Kriegel, *Aux origines du communisme français 1914–1920. Contribution à l’Histoire du mouvement ouvrier français*, vol. 2 (Paris, La Haye: Mouton & Co, 1964), p. 873.
10. Mikhail Narinsky and Jürgen Rojahn, eds, *Centre and Periphery: The History of the Comintern in the Light of New Documents* (Amsterdam: IISG, 1996).

11. The transnational is often understood as comprised of *non-inter-state relations*. In this respect the Comintern only imperfectly accords with the definition offered by Patricia Clavin, which focuses on collective actors. Clavin understands by the transnational dimension the coordination of civil-society actors, by the international that of state actors, and by the supranational that of autonomous political authorities beyond the national-state context. Patricia Clavin, 'Defining Transnationalism', *Contemporary European History* 14:4 (2005), pp. 421–439, here p. 425.
12. Jürgen Osterhammel, 'Transnationale Gesellschaftsgeschichte: Erweiterung oder Alternative?', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 27:3 (2001), pp. 464–479, here p. 473; a revised version of this article was published in English as 'Transnational History of Society: Continuity or New Departure?', in Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, eds, *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), pp. 39–50.
13. Akira Iriye, 'Transnational History', *Contemporary European History* 13:2 (2004), pp. 211–222, here p. 213.
14. Robert Frank, 'Emotions mondiales, internationales et transnationales, 1822–1932', *Monde(s)* 1:1 (March 2012), pp. 47–70, here p. 66.
15. Bert Hoppe, *In Stalins Gefolgschaft: Moskau und die KPD 1928–1933* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2007), pp. 227–289.
16. Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Stalin und sein Team. Jenseits der Gewalt', *Osteuropa* 62:4 (April 2012), pp. 61–69.
17. Katerina Clark and Karl Schlögel, 'Mutual Perceptions and Projections: Stalin's Russia in Nazi Germany – Nazi Germany in the Soviet Union', in Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick, eds, *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 396–441, here pp. 400–401.
18. Among the great many studies of this question of transfers see for example Antony Sutton, *Western Technology and Soviet Economic Development*, 3 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University Press/Hoover Institution Press, 1968–1973), in particular Volumes 1 and 2.
19. Michael David-Fox, 'Multiple Modernities vs. Neo-Traditionalism: On Recent Debates in Russian and Soviet History', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 64:4 (2006), pp. 535–555.
20. Yves Cohen, 'Circulatory Localities: The Example of Stalinism in the 1930s', *Kritika* 11:1 (Winter 2010), pp. 11–45.
21. See Richard Crosse, Norman LaPorte, Kevin Morgan and Matthew Worley, eds, 'Communism and the Leader Cult', special issue of *Twentieth Century Communism: A Journal of International History* 1 (2009).
22. Lise London, *Le Printemps des camarades* (Paris: Seuil, 1996), p. 142.
23. Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, 'Exile, Gender, and Communist Self-Fashioning: Dolores Ibárruri (La Pasionaria) in the Soviet Union', *Slavic Review* 71:3 (Fall 2012), pp. 566–589, here p. 571.
24. 'Dans tous les pays, des millions de travailleurs ont fait hier des obsèques mondiales à Lénine', *L'Humanité* 28 January 1924, no. 7336, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4012093> (last retrieved 18 April 2014).
25. See Lisa McGirr, 'The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti. A Global History', *The Journal of American History* 93:4 (March 2007), pp. 1085–1115.

26. See Claudio Natoli, 'Pour une histoire comparée des organisations communistes de solidarité: le Secours ouvrier international et le Secours rouge international', in José Gotovitch and Anne Morelli, eds, *Les Solidarités internationales. Histoire et perspectives* (Brussels: Editions Labor, 2003), pp. 17–42.
27. See Frederick Genevée, 'L'Association juridique internationale (1929–1940)', in Gotovitch and Morelli, *Solidarités*, pp. 101–112. For the importance International Red Aid accorded to legal defence and struggle in the field of law see also Nikolaus Brauns, *Schafft Rote Hilfe! Geschichte und Aktivitäten der proletarischen Hilfsorganisation für politische Gefangene in Deutschland (1919–1938)* (Bonn: Pahl-Rugenstein, 2003), pp. 167–218; Carola Tischler, "'Die Gerichtssäle müssen zu Tribunalen gegen die Klassenrichter gemacht werden". Die Rechtsberatungspraxis der Roten Hilfe Deutschlands', in Sabine Hering and Kurt Schilde, eds, *Die Rote Hilfe. Die Geschichte der internationalen kommunistischen 'Wohlfahrtsorganisation' und ihrer sozialen Aktivitäten in Deutschland (1921–1941)* (Opladen: Leske and Budrich, 2003), pp. 105–130.
28. Babette Gross, *Willi Münzenberg: Eine politische Biographie* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1967), pp. 131–132.
29. Paul Nizan, *The Conspiracy*, trans. Quintin Hoare (London: Verso, 2011), p. 156.
30. Bernhard H. Bayerlein, 'Das neue Babylon. Strukturen und Netzwerke der Kommunistischen Internationale und ihre Klassifizierung', *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung* (2004), pp. 181–270, here p. 182. According to Comintern data, the organization had 328,716 members in 1930 (at the lowest point in its history), down from 887,745 in 1921; 913,000 in 1935; and 1,200,000 in 1939: Annie Kriegel, *Les Internationales ouvrières (1864–1943)* (Paris: PUF, 1964), p. 112. These figures do not include the membership of the Soviet party.
31. Pierre-Yves Saunier, 'Les régimes circulatoires du domaine social 1800–1940: projets et ingénierie de la convergence et de la différence', *Genèses* 71 (June 2008), pp. 4–25, here pp. 16–17.
32. Kris Manjappa, *M. N. Roy: Marxism and Colonial Cosmopolitanism* (Delhi: Routledge, 2010).
33. Franz Borkenau, *World Communism: A History of the Communist International* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962), p. 419.
34. For a genealogy of this term, see Brigitte Studer, 'Totalitarisme et stalinisme', in Michel Dreyfus et al., eds, *Le siècle des communismes* (Paris: Seuil, 2008), pp. 33–63.
35. Hermann Weber, *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus. Die Stalinisierung der KPD in der Weimarer Republik*, 2 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1969), p. 8.
36. Weber, *Wandlung*, p. 8. The usefulness and the limits of this concept are discussed in Norman Laporte, Kevin Morgan and Matthew Worley, eds, *Bolshevism, Stalinism and the Comintern: Perspectives on Stalinization* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
37. Henry Pelling, *The British Communist Party: A Historical Profile* [1958] (London 1975), p. 191, cited in Kevin Morgan, Gideon Cohen and Andrew Flinn, eds, *Agents of the Revolution. New Biographical Approaches to the History of International Communism in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), p. 38.

38. Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces' [1984], trans. J. Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16:1, pp. 22–27.
39. *An American Engineer in Stalin's Russia: The Memoirs of Zara Witkin, 1932–1934*, ed. with an introduction by Michael Gelb (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 30.
40. The expression is from Bronislaw Baczko, *Les imaginaires sociaux: Mémoires et espoirs collectifs* (Paris: Payot, 1984), p. 18.
41. Cited in Michael Scammel, *Koestler: The Literary and Political Odyssey of a Twentieth-Century Skeptic* (New York: Random House, 2009), p. 163.
42. Marcello Flores and Francesca Gori, eds, *Il mito dell'URSS: La cultura occidentale e l'Unione Sovietica* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 1990).
43. Jean-François Fayet, *VOKS. Le laboratoire helvétique. Histoire de la diplomatie culturelle soviétique de l'entre-deux-guerres* (Geneva: georg éditeur, 2014), p. 16. Fayet provides a very thorough narration of the efforts deployed by the Soviet cultural diplomacy in Switzerland in the 1920s and 1930s.
44. Sophie Coeuré and Rachel Mazuy, eds, *Cousu de fil rouge: Voyages des intellectuels français en Union soviétique: 150 documents inédits des Archives russes* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2012). See also Michael David-Fox, 'From Illusory "Society" to Intellectual "Public": VOKS, International Travel, and Party-Intelligentsia Relations in the Interwar Period', *Contemporary European History* 11:1 (2002), pp. 7–32.
45. The phrase is that of the Swiss journalist Elisabeth Thommen in her *Blitzfahrt durch Sowjet-Russland* (Zurich: Oprecht & Helbling, 1933), p. 3.
46. Sylvia R. Margulies, *The Pilgrimage to Russia: The Soviet Union and the Treatment of Foreigners, 1924–1937* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968).
47. Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931–1941* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2011).
48. Clark, *Moscow*, p. 8.
49. Ludmila Stern, *Western Intellectuals and the Soviet Union, 1920–40: From Red Square to the Left Bank* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 155.
50. *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov, 1933–1949*, ed. Ivo Banac, trans. Jane T. Hedges, Timothy D. Sergay and Irina Faion (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 52.
51. For data on the Austrians see Chapter 3. David Wingate Pike estimates a total of 6,000 Spaniards, inclusive of 3–4,000 children: Pike, *In the Service of Stalin: The Spanish Communists in Exile, 1939–1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 17. I focus here on Communists from Western Europe, looking mostly at the German-speakers (those from Germany, Austria and Switzerland), though without neglecting, in particular, members of the French, British, Italian and American parties.
52. Nicolas Werth, 'De la soviétologie en général et des archives russes en particulier', *Le débat* 77 (November–December 1993), pp. 127–144. On this comprehensive production of ego-documents in various contexts and forms see also my introduction to Brigitte Studer, Berthold Unfried and Irène Herrmann, eds, *Parler de soi sous Staline. La construction identitaire dans le communisme des années trente* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2002), pp. 1–30.

53. Unless otherwise stated all translations of files are by the author and translator of this volume. The unpublished documentation I draw on is mainly to be found in the Russian State Archive for Socio-Political History, Moscow (*Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv social'no-politicheskoi istorii*, RGASPI), with some from other archives. Besides the shorthand records of party committee and school group meetings and diverse forms of autobiographical accounts, the other main sources are political resolutions of Comintern bodies and the published and unpublished memoirs of Communists. Precise references will be given in the text. For more details on the archives see the bibliography of the present work.
54. See the introduction to Claude Pernetier and Bernard Pudal, eds, *Autobiographies, autocritiques, aveux dans le monde communiste* (Paris: Belin, 2002), pp. 15–39.
55. To mention only the most influential: Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2006); Irina Paperno, *Stories of the Soviet Experience: Memoirs, Diaries, Dreams* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009). Igal Halfin, *Terror in My Soul: Communist Autobiographies on Trial* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003) uses party autobiographies, adopting a radically discursive approach. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear off the Masks! Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005) works with the categories of identity and identification, rather than self and subjectivity, while Wendy Goldman, *Inventing the Enemy: Denunciation and Terror in Stalin's Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), which relies on shorthand reports of factory meetings during the Terror, rejects the idea that these collective arenas tell the historian anything about individuals' thoughts or feelings, showing only how (ordinary) people acted.
56. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, 2nd edition. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
57. As, for example, in Stefan Plaggenborg, *Experiment Moderne: Der sowjetische Weg* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2006).
58. Michel Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', in James D. Faubion, ed., *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, Vol. III, *Power*, trans. Robert Hurley et al. (New York: New Press, 2001), pp. 326–348.
59. Alois Hahn, 'Identität und Selbstthematisierung', in Hahn and Volker Kapp, eds, *Selbstthematisierung und Selbstzeugnis: Bekenntnis und Geständnis* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987), p. 12. The construction of a communist identity and a communist 'self' has grown into a rich field of research. For a recent discussion of different approaches see Claude Pernetier and Bernard Pudal, eds, *Le sujet communiste: Identités militantes et laboratoires du 'moi'* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2014).
60. Foucault, 'Technologies of the Self', in Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton, eds, *Technologies of the Self. A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), pp. 16–49.
61. Michel Foucault, *Résumé des cours 1970–1982* (Paris: Julliard, 1989), p. 133.
62. Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', p. 331. For a more extensive discussion see Brigitte Studer and Heiko Haumann, 'Introduction', in Studer and Haumann, eds, *Stalinist Subjects: Individual and System in the Soviet Union and the Comintern, 1929–1953* (Zurich: Chronos, 2006), pp. 39–64, here pp. 42–45.
63. Alfred Kurella, *Der Mensch als Schöpfer seiner selbst: Beiträge zum sozialistischen Humanismus* [1936] (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1958), p. 16.

64. I make use here of the useful typology established in Choi Chatterjee and Karen Petrone, 'Models of Selfhood and Subjectivity: The Soviet Case in Historical Perspective', *Slavic Review* 67:4 (Winter 2008), pp. 967–986, here pp. 977–978.
65. Bernard Lepetit, 'Histoire des pratiques, pratique de l'histoire', in Lepetit, ed., *Les formes de l'expérience: Une autre histoire sociale* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1995), pp. 9–22, here p. 20.
66. Lepetit, 'Histoire', p. 20.
67. Lepetit, 'Histoire', p. 20.
68. Lepetit, 'Histoire', p. 20.
69. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011 [1980]), p. 33. See also my considerations in Brigitte Studer, 'Penser le sujet stalinien', in Pennetier and Pudal, *Sujet communiste*, pp. 35–57.
70. The influential notion of 'speaking Bolshevik' comes from Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). For a critique of Kotkin's conception of the Soviet subject as static and moral see Igal Halfin and Jochen Hellbeck, 'Rethinking the Stalinist Subject: Stephen Kotkin's "Magnetic Mountain" and the State of Soviet Historical Studies', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 44:3 (1996), pp. 456–463.
71. Claude Pennetier and Bernard Pudal, 'For intérieur et remise de soi dans l'autobiographie communiste d'institution (1931–1939). L'étude du cas Paul Esnault', in *Le for intérieur* (Paris: PUF, 1995), pp. 324–340.
72. Lepetit, 'Histoire', p. 20.
73. Yves Cohen, 'La co-construction de la personne et de la bureaucratie: aspects de la subjectivité de Staline et des cadres soviétiques (années 30)', in Studer and Haumann, *Stalinist Subjects*, pp. 175–196.

1 The Bolshevik Model

1. Mikhail Narinsky and Jürgen Rojahn, eds, *Centre and Periphery: The History of the Comintern in the Light of New Documents* (Amsterdam: IISG, 1996); David Mayer, 'Weltrevolution, Stalinismus und Peripherie. Die Kommunistische Internationale und Lateinamerika', in Karin Fischer and Susan Zimmermann, eds, *Internationalismen. Transformation weltweiter Ungleichheit im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Promedia/Südwind, 2008), pp. 171–192, here p. 182.
2. On this, see the introduction to the present work.
3. On the organizational structure of the Comintern see Grant M. Adibekov, Elena N. Shakhnazarova and K. K. Shirinia, *Organizatsionnaia struktura Komintern 1919–1943* (Moscow: Rosspen, 1997) and Bernhard H. Bayerlein, 'Das neue Babylon. Strukturen und Netzwerke der Kommunistischen Internationale und ihre Klassifizierung', *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung* (2004), pp. 181–270. On its biographical composition see the papers in Michael Buckmiller and Klaus Meschkat, eds, *Biographisches Handbuch zur Geschichte der Kommunistischen Internationale. Ein deutsch-russisches Forschungsprojekt* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2007). On Comintern activists from the French, Belgian, Swiss and Luxembourg sections: José Gotovitch et al., eds, *Komintern:*

- L'histoire et les hommes. Dictionnaire biographique de l'Internationale Communiste en France, en Belgique, au Luxembourg, en Suisse et à Moscou* (Paris: Editions de l'Atelier, 2001), included in revised form as a CD-Rom accompanying the history of the Comintern by Serge Wolikow, *L'Internationale Communiste (1919–1943). Le Komintern ou le rêve déchu du parti mondial de la révolution* (Ivry-sur-Seine: Les Editions de l'Atelier, 2010).
4. Bayerlein, 'Babylon', p. 182.
 5. Bayerlein, 'Babylon', p. 236.
 6. According to a joint Russian and German research project based on records for 28,626 such persons held in the archives of the RGASPI: Buckmiller and Meschkat, *Handbuch*, p. 9.
 7. Olaf Kirchner, 'Die 'sowjetische Sektion' in der Komintern. Versuch einer empirischen Profilbestimmung', in Buckmiller and Meschkat, *Handbuch*, pp. 247–286, here p. 250.
 8. Report from Tsirul and Moisei Chernomordik to Osip Pianitsky und Dmitri Manuilsky, 2 March 1933, RGASPI 495/18/981.
 9. Kirchner, 'Sektion', p. 205. This does however pose the question of whether after the Great Terror the staff statistics were as meticulously maintained.
 10. Bayerlein, 'Babylon', p. 241.
 11. Vatlin Alexander, 'Kaderpolitik und Säuberungen in der Komintern', in Hermann Weber and Ulrich Mähler, eds, *Terror. Stalinistische Parteisäuberungen 1936–1953* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1998), p. 69.
 12. Report by Tsirul, head of the Cadre Section of the Organisation Department (a subdivision preceding the Cadre Department in 1932), to the Small Commission of the ECCI, n.d. (late 1931 or early 1932), RGASPI 495/6/48; see also Vatlin, *Kaderpolitik*, pp. 54–55.
 13. Protocol no. 108 of the Permanent Commission of the Secretariat of the ECCI, 13 January 1932, RGASPI 495/7/20.
 14. Report by Tsirul to the Small Commission of the ECCI, n.d. (late 1931 or early 1932), RGASPI 495/6/48.
 15. The Finnish party with 16 members, the Austrian, Swedish and Swiss with seven each, the Polish, American and Czechoslovak with six each, the Lithuanian and the Bulgarian with five each, the Italian with four, the Yugoslavian, Hungarian and Romanian with three each, the French with two, and the Dutch, Persian, Estonian, Greek and Icelandic parties with one each.
 16. Peter Huber, 'Das Führungskorps der Komintern. Ein soziobiographischer Querschnitt', in Buckmiller and Meschkat, *Handbuch*, pp. 195–246.
 17. Report by Tsirul to the Small Commission of the ECCI, n.d. (late 1931 or early 1932), RGASPI 495/6/48.
 18. Report by Tsirul. On the basis of data on 504 KPD functionaries out of around 550 in total, in 1927, Hermann Weber classifies 18 per cent as 'intellectuals in the broadest sense' and seven per cent as 'academics': *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus. Die Stalinisierung der KPD in der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1969), Vol. II, pp. 26–36.
 19. The analysis lacks data on gender.
 20. Huber, 'Führungskorps', pp. 210–211.
 21. *Die Kommunistische Internationale* (Berlin) no. 1 (August 1919), pp. 21–23, cited in Wladislaw Hedeler and Alexander Vatlin, eds, *Die Weltpartei aus Moskau*.

- Der Gründungskongress der Kommunistischen Internationale 1919. Protokoll und Dokumente* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008), pp. 230–232, here p. 232.
22. The relationship between the Comintern and individual Communist parties is examined in José Gotovitch, *Du communisme et des communistes en Belgique. Approches critiques* (Brussels: Editions Aden, 2012); Bert Hoppe, *In Stalins Gefolgschaft* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007); Kevin Morgan, Gideon Cohen and Andrew Flinn, *Communists and British Society 1920–1991* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 2007); Brigitte Studer, *Un parti sous influence. Le Parti communiste suisse, une section du Komintern, 1931 à 1939* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1994); Andrew Thorpe, *The British Communist Party and Moscow, 1920–1943* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000). Almost two decades after the opening of the archives, overall studies of the history of the Comintern are still few and far between: Kevin McDermott and Jeremy Agnew, *The Comintern. A History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin* (London: Macmillan, 1996); Pierre Broué, *Histoire de l'Internationale Communiste 1919–1943* (Paris: Fayard, 1997); Aleksandr O. Chubar'ian, ed., *Istoriia Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala, 1919–1943. Dokumental'nye ocherki* (Moscow: Nauka, 2002); Fridrikh I. Firsov, *Sekretnye kody istorii Kominterna. 1919–1943*, (Moskva: AIRO-XXI, 2007); Aleksandr Iu. Vatlin, *Komintern. Pervye desiat' let* (Moskva: Rossiia Molodaia, 1993); Alexander Vatlin, *Die Komintern. Gründung, Programmik, Akteure*, (Berlin: Dietz, 2009); Alexander Vatlin and S. A. Smith, 'The Comintern', in Steve A. Smith, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 187–194; Wolikow, *L'Internationale*. See also Michel Dreyfus et al., eds, *Le Siècle des communismes* (Paris: Seuil, 2008); Matthew Worley, ed., *In Search of Revolution: International Communist Parties in the Third Period* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004).
 23. See *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov, 1933–1949*, ed. Ivo Banac (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).
 24. Bayerlein, 'Babylon', pp. 192 and 265.
 25. On the 'Russian delegation' see Alexander Vatlin, 'Die russische Delegation in der Komintern: Machtzentrum des internationalen Kommunismus zwischen Sinowjew und Stalin', *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung* 1 (1993), pp. 82–99.
 26. This point is made by Yves Cohen, 'Circulatory Localities: The Example of Stalinism in the 1930s', *Kritika* 11:1 (Winter 2010), p. 15. See Oleg Khlevniuk, *Master of the House: Stalin and his Inner Circle*, trans. Nora Seligman Favorov (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).
 27. For further detail see Brigitte Studer, 'More Autonomy for the National Sections? The Reorganization of the ECCI after the 7th World Congress', in Narinsky and Rojahn, *Centre*, pp. 102–113.
 28. Only in the second half of the 1930s was there a significant increase in the representation of colonial territories in the leadership of the Comintern, though the organization had been concerned with the 'colonial question' from its very beginnings.
 29. The first Communist parties, mostly of a radical-left orientation, were founded just before Lenin's establishment of the Communist International.
 30. Minute no. 13 of the Purge Commission of the German Section of KUNMZ, 3 November 1933, RGASPI 529/2/370. Chapter 5 will show that the Soviet party leadership's interventions in educational practice sometimes encountered reluctance, passivity and occasionally even resistance.

31. See Bernhard H. Bayerlein et al., eds, *Deutscher Oktober 1923: ein Revolutionsplan und sein Scheitern* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2003).
32. For the Swiss CP, see Studer, *Un Parti*, pp. 43–64; the 1931 ‘Barbé-Célor affair’ in the French CP is covered in detail, somewhat anecdotally but on the basis of internal party documents, in Philippe Robrieux, *Histoire intérieure du parti Communiste français 1920–1945* (Paris: Fayard, 1980), pp. 311–406, and on the basis of Comintern sources in Annie Kriegel and Stéphane Courtois, *Eugen Fried. Le grand secret du PCF* (Paris: Seuil, 1997). For the German CP, see Weber, *Wandlung*.
33. The first interpretation prevails for the most part in British scholarship, perhaps because the CPGB did not in the late 1920s and early 1930s experience as brutal a change of leadership as did many other parties. See McDermott and Agnew, *Comintern*, and more explicitly Norman Laporte, Kevin Morgan and Matthew Worley in the ‘Introduction’ to their *Bolshevism, Stalinism and the Comintern: Perspectives on Stalinization* (Basingstoke: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2008). I myself take Stalinization to represent a step-change in the dismantling of internal democracy rather than the simple continuation of an existing steady process.
34. Norman Laporte and Kevin Morgan, “‘Kings among their subjects?’ Ernst Thälmann, Harry Pollit and the Leadership Cult as Stalinization’, in Laporte, Morgan and Worley, *Bolshevism*, pp. 124–145. That there could be variants and differing manifestations of the model is emphasized in *Communism and the Leader Cult*, special issue of *Twentieth Century Communism: A Journal of International History* 1:1 (May 2009), especially in Kevin Morgan’s introduction, ‘Stalinism and the Barber’s chair’, pp. 9–19, and in Claude Pennetier and Bernard Pudal, ‘Stalinism: Workers’ Cult and Cult of Leaders’, pp. 20–29. Klaus Heller and Jan Plamper also point out the plurality of the phenomenon: *Personality Cults in Stalinism – Personenkulte im Stalinismus* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2004). See too Jan Plamper, *The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).
35. Hermann Weber and Bernhard H. Bayerlein, eds, *Der Thälmann-Skandal. Geheime Korrespondenzen mit Stalin* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2003), p. 12.
36. After the 7th World Congress of 1935 there was not one member of the ECCI Secretariat who was the leader of a legal Communist party outside the Soviet Union.
37. On the influence of Soviet foreign policy on the Comintern and the pressure within the Comintern for a change of line after Hitler’s rise to power see Jonathan Haslam, ‘Comintern and Soviet foreign policy, 1919–1941’, in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, Vol. III, *The Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 636–661, here pp. 648–652.
38. This ‘nationalisation’ however led to the Comintern’s sections gaining increased autonomy only on secondary matters.
39. SAPMO RY 1/I 2/707/182: ILS, Schulungsmaterialien 1934–1937.
40. Katerina Clark refers to the formation among the German-speaking literary diaspora of the Popular Front period of a complex cultural identity situated between the German-speaking world, France, Europe and the Soviet Union: ‘Germanophone Intellectuals in Stalin’s Russia: Diaspora and Cultural Identity in the 1930s’, *Kritika* 2:3 (Summer 2001), pp. 529–552.
41. Michael David-Fox, ‘Multiple Modernities vs. Neo-Traditionalism: On Recent Debates in Russian and Soviet History’, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 64:4 (2006), pp. 535–555.

42. Bernard Pudal, *Prendre parti. Pour une sociologie historique du PCF* (Paris: Presses de la FNSP, 1989). Claude Pennetier and Bernard Pudal also report that an emulation of Thorez, the 'Fils du peuple', is to be identified in a quarter of the 120 PCF autobiographies they studied: 'Ecrire son autobiographie (Les autobiographies communistes d'institution, 1931–1939)', *Genèses* 23 (1996), pp. 53–75.
43. Pudal, *Prendre parti*, p. 232. See also Pennetier and Pudal, 'Stalinism', pp. 20–29.
44. The highest-ranking party leaders of the 1930s, such as Thorez, generally attended no such school, being legitimized in terms of their supposed genuine proletarian origins.
45. Max Weber, *Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 233–234.
46. Alain Dewerpe, *Espion. Une anthropologie historique du secret d'Etat contemporain* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995).
47. This was a perpetual theme of criticism, as in the Report by Tsurul to the Small Commission of the ECCI, n.d. (late 1931 or early 1932), RGASPI 495/6/48.
48. 1921 saw the establishment of a 'commission on questions concerning the reorganization of the ECCI apparatus', which existed until 1929, though it apparently only began work in 1923. See RGASPI 495/46. The restructuring of the apparatus was also a recurring topic on the agendas of the ECCI Secretariat (495/18) and its Bureau (495/20).
49. Resolution of the Politcommission, 27 January 1932, RGASPI 495/18/945.
50. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 23.
51. Waleri Fomitschow, 'Organisation und Entwicklung der Aktenführung im Apparat der Komintern. Zusammensetzung und Inhalt der Bestände von Personalakten (am Beispiel des Bestandes für Deutschland)', in Buckmiller and Meschkat, *Handbuch*, pp. 55–73.
52. Letter from OGPU to MOPR Central Committee, 16 December 1930, GARF 8265/4/27.
53. This is the gist of Manuïlsky's speech, 'On the Garrulity and Other Provocations of Foreign Communists', of 6 October 1931, cited in Vatlin, *Kaderpolitik*, p. 52; see also Bert Hoppe, 'Iron Revolutionaries and Salon Socialists: Bolsheviks and German Communists in the 1920s and 1930s', *Kritika* 10:3 (2009), pp. 499–526, here p. 503, and Chapter 7 of the present work.
54. Purge Commission of the ILS, Minute no. 1, 2 October 1933, RGASPI 531/2/23.
55. RGASPI 531/1/227.
56. The norm of vigilance is further discussed in Chapter 6 below.
57. For a more extensive treatment see Brigitte Studer, 'Verschleierungstaktik als Herrschaftspraxis. Über den Prozess historischer Erkenntnis am Beispiel des Kominternarchivs', *Jahrbuch für historische Kommunismusforschung* (1995), pp. 306–321.
58. The transfer of decision-making power in the All-Union Communist Party/bolshevik (A-UCP/b) to a system of secret, parallel bodies is examined in detail in Niels Erik Rosenfeldt, *The 'Special' World: Stalin's Power Apparatus*

- and the Soviet System's Secret Structures of Communication (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2009), 2 vols, from which emerges a picture of an absolutely all-powerful Stalin.
59. Studer, 'More Autonomy?' and 'Die Kominternstruktur nach dem 7. Weltkongress. Das Protokoll des Sekretariats des EKKI über die Reorganisierung des Apparates des EKKI, 2. Oktober 1935', *Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* 31 (1995) 1, pp. 25–53.
 60. Bernhard H. Bayerlein, Mikhaïl Narinski, Brigitte Studer and Serge Wolikow, eds, *Moscou – Paris – Berlin. Télégrammes chiffrés du Komintern (1939–1941)* (Paris: Tallandier, 2003). Telegrams were also used to urge the British party leader Harry Pollitt and others not to deviate from the party line.
 61. Between June 1937 and November 1938, the International Liaison Department was led by Moskvin, ex-head of the International Department of the OGPU. He was followed in 1939–1941 by Konstantin Sukharev, and then Grigori Sorkin. The budget for such communications was around 70,000 dollars, exclusive of the financial input of national Communist parties: Bayerlein, Narinski, Studer and Wolikow, *Moscou*, pp. 24–27.
 62. Witness the struggle in early 1941 between Jacques Duclos and Maurice Tréand for control of the radio transmitter/receiver in France: Bayerlein, Narinski, Studer and Wolikow, *Moscou*, pp. 389–390.
 63. As, for example, in 'On the Work of the ICC', confidential, German transcript, 9 July 1936, RGASPI 495/20/759. The ICC's *fond* 505 in the Comintern Archive is today no longer open to researchers.
 64. See Brigitte Studer and Berthold Unfried, *Der stalinistische Parteikader. Identitätsstiftende Praktiken und Diskurse in der Sowjetunion der dreißiger Jahre* (Köln: Böhlau, 2001).
 65. This was noted too in Hoppe, 'Iron Revolutionaries', pp. 506–507.
 66. The novel by the Russian philosopher, journalist and literary critic Nikolai Chernyshevsky was published in 1863. It became a blueprint for a radical dedication to the cause and is famous for highly impressing Lenin and other leading Bolsheviks.
 67. Alois Hahn, 'Ehrlichkeit und Selbstbeherrschung', in Hans-Werner Franz, ed., *22. Deutscher Soziologentag 1984* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1985), pp. 221–222.
 68. Carlo Ginzburg, 'Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm' in Carlo Ginzburg, *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*, trans. John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 96–125.
 69. Pennetier and Pudal, 'Ecrire son autobiographie', pp. 53–75.
 70. The disciplinary function of the exercise of state power has also been discussed by Stefan Plaggenborg in his work on the Soviet path to modernity, *Experiment Moderne. Der sowjetische Weg* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2006).
 71. Peter Holquist, 'What's so Revolutionary about the Russian Revolution? State Practices and the New-Style Politics, 1914–21', in David L. Hoffmann and Yanni Kotsonis eds, *Russian Modernity. Politics, Knowledge, Practices* (Houndmills/Basingstoke: Macmillan/St. Martin's Press, 2000), pp. 87–111 and Holquist, *Making War. Forging Revolution. Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914–1921* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).
 72. On the effectiveness of the Cadre Department see also Chapter 4 of the present work.

73. Bayerlein, 'Babylon', pp. 212–213.
74. Decision in principle on a Cadre Department for the International Lenin School, 20 December 1933, RGASPI 495/4/273.
75. Fridrich Firsow, 'Die Komintern und die "Grosse Säuberung"', in Buckmiller and Meschkat, *Handbuch*, pp. 361–377, herep. 365.
76. For a broad range of essays on the workings of the Terror in the 1930s, see Barry McLoughlin and Kevin McDermott, eds, *Stalin's Terror: High Politics and Mass Repression in the Soviet Union* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). For an overview shortly after the opening of the Comintern archive see Peter Huber, 'The Cadre Department, the OMS and the 'Dimitrov' and 'Manuilsky' Secretariats during the Phase of the Terror', in Narinsky and Rojahn, *Centre*, pp. 122–152.
77. During the Great Terror the Cadre Department had the same right to decide on cadre questions as the Secretariat of the ECCI: Leonid Babicenko, 'Die Moskvin-Kommission. Neue Einzelheiten zur politisch-organisatorischen Struktur der Komintern in der Repressionsphase', *The International Newsletter of Historical Studies on Comintern, Communism and Stalinism* 5/6 (1994/95), pp. 35–39.
78. Decisions concerning the Cadre Department (draft), 8 February 1936 (in German), RGASPI 495/20/811, adopted by the ECCI on 11 February 1936.
79. Decisions concerning the Cadre Department.
80. The early 1930s saw the emergence of a cadre commission in the PCF, under the aegis of the *Commission Centrale de Contrôle* under Maurice Tréand.
81. On the Work of the ICC, confidential, German transcript of Russian original, 9 July 1936, RGASPI 495/20/759.
82. Decision of the Presidium the ECCI and the Bureau of the ICC of the CI, German transcript of Russian original, 9 April 1937, RGASPI 495/20/756.
83. Proposal of the *Orgotdel* concerning the tasks of the cadre section of the *Orgotdel* of ECCI, 22 February 1932 (in German), RGASPI 495/4/413.
84. Draft proposal for the improvement of cadre education in the German section of the ILS, (after 1933) (in German), RGASPI 531/1/75.
85. Bayerlein, 'Babylon', p. 213. Some relate not to Comintern cadres, nor even members of Communist parties, but to figures outside the Party.
86. RGASPI 495/274/58.
87. The authors distinguish a variety of attitudes, ranging from the abandonment of self to the retention of a proper sense of one's own worth ('Ecrire son autobiographie').

2 The New Woman

1. Lion Feuchtwanger, *Moscow 1937: My Visit Described for My Friends*, trans. Irene Josephy (London: Left Book Club/Victor Gollancz 1937), p. 27–28. This book was commissioned to counter the disastrous effect produced by the publication of André Gide's *Return from the USSR*.
2. This function of collective representations as effecting the incorporation by individuals of the divisions of the social world is discussed in Roger Chartier, *Au bord de la falaise. L'histoire entre certitudes et inquiétude* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1998), p. 12.
3. Studies on the Comintern's women's and gender policy remain rare. See notably Elizabeth Waters, 'In the Shadow of the Comintern: The Communist Women's Movement, 1920–1943', in Sonia Kruks et al., eds, *Promissory Notes*:

- Women in the Transition to Socialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989), pp. 29–56; Aurelia Camparini, *Questione femminile e Terza Internazionale* (Bari: De Donato, 1978); Bernhard H. Bayerlein, 'Zwischen Internationale und Gulag. Präliminarien zur Geschichte der internationalen kommunistischen Frauenbewegung (1919–1945)', *International Newsletter of Communist Studies Online* XII:19 (2006), pp. 27–47 http://newsletter.icsap.de/home/data/pdf/INCS_19_ONLINE.pdf (last retrieved 16 January 2013).
4. Claude Pannetier and Bernard Pudal, 'Introduction', in Pannetier and Pudal, eds, *Le sujet communiste. Identités militantes et laboratoires du 'moi'* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2014), p. 15.
 5. Dora Russell, *The Tamarisk Tree: My Quest for Liberty and Love* (London: Virago, 1977), p. 94. The biography of Alexandra Kollontai has been well researched: On her life during the utopian phase of Soviet communism see Barbara Evans Clements, *Bolshevik Feminist: The Life of Aleksandra Kollontai* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979) and Beatrice Farnsworth, *Aleksandra Kollontai: Socialism, Feminism, and the Bolshevik Revolution* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1980); for her later years, Beatrice Farnsworth, 'Conversing with Stalin, Surviving the Terror: The Diaries of Aleksandra Kollontai and the Internal Life of Politics', *Slavic Review* 69:4 (Winter 2010), pp. 944–970. See also Cathy Porter, *Alexandra Kollontai: A Biography* (Pontypool: Merlin Press, 2013).
 6. For a more detailed presentation of developments in the legal and social status of women in the Soviet Union, see Wendy Goldman, *Women, the State, and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917–1936* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
 7. The point is made by Joy Chatterjee, 'Ideology, Gender and Propaganda in the Soviet Union', *Left History* 6:2 (Fall 1999), pp. 11–28, here p. 23.
 8. The proportion remained fairly constant over the years, averaging 4.16 per cent: Peter Huber, 'Das Führungskorps der Komintern. Ein soziobiographischer Querschnitt', in Michael Buckmiller and Klaus Meschkat, eds, *Biographisches Handbuch zur Geschichte der Kommunistischen Internationale. Ein deutsch-russisches Forschungsprojekt* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2007), pp. 195–246, here p. 203. The gender ratio was slightly better amongst heads of sections at the ILS, one fifth of whom were women: Julia Köstenberger, 'Die Internationale Lenin-Schule (1926–1938)', in Buckmiller and Meschkat, *Handbuch*, pp. 287–309, here p. 294.
 9. Joan Wallach Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category for Historical Analysis', in Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. 28–50, here p. 42 and pp. 44–45.
 10. Madeleine Pelletier, *Mon voyage aventureux en Russie Communiste* [1922] (Paris: Indigo & Côté-femmes éditions, 1996), pp. 94–95.
 11. Barbara Evans Clements, *Bolshevik Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 137.
 12. I published this extensive ECCI Secretariat document on the reorganization of the ECCI apparatus, dated 2 October 1935 (RGASPI 495/18/1020), together with an introduction and biographical notes, in *Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* 31:1 (March 1995), pp. 25–53.
 13. Arrested in September 1937, Martha Moritz was condemned to death and shot on 8 April 1938.
 14. Bertha Zimmermann was arrested and executed in 1937. For her biography see José Gotovitch and Mikhaïl Narinski, eds, *Dictionnaire biographique de*

- l'Internationale communiste* (Paris: Les Editions de l'Atelier, 2001), included in revised form as a CD-Rom accompanying Serge Wolikow, *L'Internationale Communiste (1919–1943). Le Komintern ou le rêve déchu du parti mondial de la révolution* (Ivry-sur-Seine: Les Editions de l'Atelier, 2010).
15. See Gotovitch and Narinski, *Dictionnaire*, and her own memoir at <http://trcamps.free.fr/Mounette%201939.html> (last retrieved 16 January 2013).
 16. On this, together with examples of positive reactions from working women see Carmen Scheide, *Kinder, Küche, Kommunismus. Das Wechselverhältnis zwischen sowjetischem Frauenalltag und Frauenpolitik von 1921 bis 1930 am Beispiel Moskauer Arbeiterinnen* (Zürich: Pano Verlag, 2001), pp. 317–324.
 17. Atina Grossmann, 'German Communism and New Women: Dilemmas and Contradictions', in Helmut Gruber and Pamela Graves, eds, *Women and Socialism. Socialism and Women* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1998), pp. 135–168.
 18. Christine Bard and Jean-Louis Robert, 'The French Communist Party and Women, 1920–1939: From "Feminism" to "Familialism"', in Gruber and Graves, *Women*, pp. 321–347, here p. 323. The Communist International itself published a figure of scarcely two per cent: Hertha Sturm, 'Werbt Arbeiterinnen für die Kommunistische Partei!', *Inprekorr* 165 (19 December 1924), pp. 2272–2273.
 19. Grossmann, 'German Communism', p. 140.
 20. Annelie Schalm, 'Ruth Fischer – eine Frau im Umbruch des internationalen Kommunismus 1920–1927', in Buckmiller and Meschkat, *Handbuch*, pp. 129–147, here pp. 143–144. The tendency to push for militant action on the streets was favoured by the growing unemployment of the late 1920s. See Eve Rosenhaft, *Beating the Fascists? The German Communists and Political Violence 1929–1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
 21. See Chapter 1.
 22. On this imagery see Victoria E. Bonnell, 'The Iconography of the Worker in Soviet Political Art', in Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds, *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class and Identity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 341–375. On the construction of gender in the European communist parties see Eric D. Weitz, 'The Heroic Man and the Ever-Changing Woman: Gender and Politics in European Communism, 1917–1950', in Laura L. Frader and Sonya O. Rose, eds, *Gender and Class in Modern Europe* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp. 311–352.
 23. For the use in the German Communist Party of the slogan 'The party fights as one man' (also understandable as 'like a man'), see Silvia Kontos, *Die Partei kämpft wie ein Mann. Frauenpolitik der KPD in der Weimarer Republik* (Basel: Stroemfeld; Frankfurt am Main: Roter Stern, 1979). The author documents this masculinization of the party imagination. See too Karen Hagemann, 'Men's Demonstrations and Women's Protest: Gender in Collective Action in the Urban Working-Class Milieu During the Weimar Republic', *Gender & History* 5:1 (Spring 1993), pp. 101–119.
 24. On Communist women's resistance to their exclusion from paramilitary activities in Weimar Germany see Sara Ann Sewell, 'Bolshevizing Communist Women: The Red Women and Girls' League in Weimar Germany', *Central European History* 45:2 (2012), pp. 268–305.
 25. Elizabeth A. Wood, 'Class and Gender at Loggerheads in the Early Soviet State: Who Should Organize the Female Proletariat and How?', in Frader and Rose, *Gender*, pp. 294–310, here p. 309. Zinoviev's announcement was

- also published in German: 'Die Bolschewisierung und die Arbeit unter den Frauen', *Die Kommunistische Fraueninternationale* 4:2 (1925), p. 1205.
26. See Beatrice Brodsky Farnsworth, 'Bolshevik Alternatives and the Soviet Family: The 1926 Marriage Law Debate', in Dorothy Atkinson, Alexander Dallin and Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, eds, *Women in Russia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1977) pp. 139–165, and Barbara Evans Clements, 'The Birth of the New Soviet Woman', in Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenez and Richard Stites, eds, *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), pp. 220–237.
 27. *Basler Vorwärts*, 13 February 1932.
 28. A term very much used in Switzerland all through the interwar years, even by communists.
 29. 'Après le 8 mars. Au Travail!', *Le Drapeau Rouge*, 19 March 1932. Gosse makes a similar observation about the American CP: Van Gosse, "'To Organize in Every Neighborhood, in Every Home": The Gender Politics of American Communists between the Wars', *Radical History Review* 50 (1991), pp. 109–141, here p. 119.
 30. 'Methods and Forms of Work Among Women: Theses' in *Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Third International*, ed. Alan Adler, trans. Alix Holt and Barbara Holland (London: Ink Links, 1980), p. 214.
 31. See Elizabeth A. Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997); Wendy Z. Goldman, 'Industrial Politics, Peasant Rebellion and the Death of the Proletarian Women's Movement in the USSR', *Slavic Review* 55:1 (Spring 1996), pp. 46–77.
 32. Joan Wallach Scott, 'On Language, Gender, and Working-Class History', in Scott, *Gender*, pp. 53–67.
 33. Kevin Morgan, Gideon Cohen and Andrew Flinn, *Communists and British Society 1920–1991: People of a Special Mould* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 2007), p. 162.
 34. Sturm, 'Werbt Arbeiterinnen', pp. 2272–2273.
 35. Circular letter to the communist parties, 3 June 1931, Swiss Federal Archives, Bern, J. II. 94/4.
 36. Cited in Edward Hallett Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977), Vol. I, p. 237.
 37. Wood, 'Class'.
 38. The French CP opposed the move: Hertha Sturm, 'Ergebnisse der Internationalen Beratung über die Arbeit unter den Frauen', *Inprekorr* 108 (24 August 1926), pp. 1811–1812. It is interesting to note that the organization bureau of the ECCI saw fit to modify *a posteriori* the content of a resolution passed at this meeting.
 39. Quoted in Wood, *Baba*, p. 213.
 40. As Bernhard Bayerlein concludes from his prosopographical study, half the women in leading positions in the international communist movement joined the communist opposition, mainly in the anti-Stalinist left: Bayerlein, 'Zwischen Internationale und Gulag', here p. 45.
 41. Clements, *Bolshevik Women*, pp. 197–198.
 42. Brigitte Studer, *Un parti sous influence. Le Parti communiste suisse, une section du Komintern, 1931 à 1939* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1994), pp. 293–338 and pp. 421–423.

43. Bard and Robert, 'The French Communist Party', p. 323; Renée Rousseau, *Les femmes rouges. Chronique des années Vermeersch* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1983), p. 203.
44. Harvey Klehr, *Communist Cadre: The Social Background of the American Communist Elite* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), p. 75.
45. Andrew Thorpe, 'The Membership of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 1920–1945', *The Historical Journal* 43:3 (Sep. 2000), pp. 777–800.
46. Thorpe, 'Membership'; Morgan, Cohen and Flinn, *Communists*, pp. 169–170.
47. Claude Maignien and Charles Sowerwine, *Madeleine Pelletier, une féministe dans l'arène politique* (Paris: Editions ouvrières, 1992); Christine Bard, *Les filles de Marianne. Histoires des féminismes 1914–1940* (Paris: Fayard, 1995); Sue Bruley, *Leninism, Stalinism, and the Women's Movement in Britain, 1920–1939* (New York; London: Garland Publishing, 1986), pp. 76–81.
48. Jeannette Thorez-Vermeersch, 'Souvenirs de militants', *L'Humanité*, 10 April 1956, quoted in Bernard Pudal, *Prendre parti. Pour une sociologie historique du PCF* (Paris: Presses de la FNSP, 1989), p. 170.
49. On the 'cultural revolution' see Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931* (Bloomington, IN; London: Indiana University Press, 1978), more especially 'Cultural Revolution as Class War', pp. 8–40, and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1992). On cultural models in the 1930s, see Katerina Clark, 'Engineers of Human Souls in an Age of Industrialization: Changing Cultural Models, 1929–41', in W. G. Rosenberg and Lewis H. Siegelbaum, eds, *Social Dimensions of Soviet Industrialization* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 248–264.
50. Robert Maier, "'Die Frauen stellen die Hälfte der Bevölkerung unseres Landes". Stalins Besinnung auf das weibliche Geschlecht', in Stefan Plaggenborg, ed., *Stalinismus. Neue Forschungen und Konzepte* (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 1998), pp. 243–265.
51. Thomas G. Schrand, 'The Five-Year Plan for Women's Labour: Constructing Socialism and the 'Double Burden', 1930–1932', *Europe-Asia Studies* 51:8 (December 1999), pp. 1455–1478.
52. Roberta Manning, 'Women in the Soviet Countryside on the Eve of World War II, 1935–1940', in Beatrice Farnsworth and Lynne Viola, eds, *Russian Peasant Women* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 211–214.
53. Andrée Lévesque and Brigitte Studer, 'The Soviet Woman Model in Canada and Switzerland, 1929–1939', unpublished paper given at the Second European Social Science History Conference, Amsterdam, March 1998. On the contradictory attitudes to female Stakhanovism in the Soviet countryside see Mary Buckley, 'The Stalinist Subject and Gender Dimensions', in Brigitte Studer and Heiko Haumann, eds, *Stalinist Subjects: Individual and System in the Soviet Union and the Comintern 1929–1953* (Zurich: Chronos, 2006), pp. 345–358.
54. Susan E. Reid, 'All Stalin's Women: Gender and Power in Soviet Art of the 1930s', *Slavic Review* 57:1 (1998), pp. 133–173.
55. On the image of the *baba*, the 'backward' Russian woman, in the Bolshevik politics of the formation phase of the regime, see Wood, *Baba*.
56. On this connection see Fitzpatrick, *Cultural Revolution*, pp. 232–235, and Vadim Volkov, 'The concept of *kul'turnost'*: Notes on the Stalinist civilizing

- process', in Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., *Stalinism: New Directions* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 210–230. The interpretation of 1930s Stalinism as entailing a conservative retreat goes back to Nicholas S. Timasheff, *The Great Retreat: The Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1946). This has been disputed in recent years: see David L. Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917–1941* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003) and the debate in *Stalinism and the Great Retreat*, special issue of *Kritika* 5:4 (Fall 2004).
57. Robert W. Thurston, 'The Soviet Family during the Great Terror, 1935–1941', *Soviet Studies* 43:3 (1991), pp. 553–574. On the new role assigned to the family in literary representations see Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1981), especially pp. 114–135.
 58. Manning, 'Women', pp. 211–212.
 59. *USSR in Construction*, 1935, No. 6.
 60. Paul Ginsborg, 'The Politics of the Family in Twentieth-Century Europe', *Contemporary European History* 9:3 (November 2000), pp. 411–444.
 61. On this debate see Rudolf Schlesinger, *The Family in the USSR* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949), pp. 251–269, and Robert W. Thurston, 'The Soviet Family', p. 557.
 62. Lise London, *Le Printemps des camarades* (Paris: Seuil, 1996), p. 142.
 63. Barry McLoughlin, Hans Schafranek and Walter Szevera, *Aufbruch, Hoffnung, Endstation. Oesterreicherinnen und Oesterreicher in der Sowjetunion 1925–1945* (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1997), pp. 273–275.
 64. Ervin Sinkó, *Roman eines Romans. Moskauer Tagebuch* (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1969), p. 108.
 65. Anja Schindler, "'Mit der Internationale durch das Brandenburger Tor". Martha Ruben-Wolf (1887–1939)', in Ulla Plener, *Leben mit Hoffnung in Pein. Frauenschicksale unter Stalin* (Frankfurt an der Oder: Frankfurter Oder Editionen, 1997), p. 47. The fate of Martha Ruben-Wolf and her husband Lothar, also a well-known German communist physician, is somehow emblematic of that of a whole stratum of progressive emigrants to Soviet Russia who had hoped to see their ideals realized in the society being built there. Lothar was arrested in November 1937 or January 1938 and shot on 4 October 1938. Finding herself in desperate straits, Martha committed suicide in August 1939.
 66. Rosa Puhm, *Eine Trennung in Gorki* (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1990), pp. 74–75.
 67. London, *Printemps*, p. 142. Eisenberger was arrested on 24 April 1937 for 'counter-revolutionary activities' and condemned to several years of imprisonment. He died on 4 or 8 February 1938 in a camp in Magadan. For his biography see: Hermann Weber and Andreas Herbst, eds, *Deutsche Kommunisten. Biographisches Handbuch 1918 bis 1945* (Berlin: Dietz, 2004), pp. 179–180.
 68. Diary entry of 21 May 1938, cited in Ulla Plener, 'Eine brach mit der zähen Hoffnung. Wanda Bronska (1911–1972)', in Plener, *Leben*, pp. 54–121, here p. 95.
 69. Report on the Situation and Party-work in the ILS to the secretary of the Krasno-Presnensky district committee of A-UCP(b), 19 December 1936, RGASPI, 531/2/42.

70. Sinkó, *Roman*, p. 108.
71. See Studer, *Un parti*, pp. 378–379. For the PCF see François Delpla, 'Les communistes français et la sexualité (1932–1938)', *Le Mouvement Social* 91 (April–June 1975), pp. 121–152, here pp. 141–142.
72. Bard and Robert, 'The French Communist Party', pp. 340–341.
73. 'Ein Sowjetbürger kommt zur Welt', *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*, 27 May 1936, pp. 344–345.
74. 'Und ich bin keiner alten Jungfer begegnet ... (Die Seite der Frau)', *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*, 16 January 1936, p. 45; 'We Soviet Wives', *American Mercury* 32:128 (August 1934), p. 416.
75. 'Der Muttertag!', *Vorwärts*, 9 May 1936.
76. Annie Kriegel, 'Bureaucratie, culte de la personnalité et charisma. Le cas français: Maurice Thorez, secrétaire général du P.C.F. (1900–1964)', in Kriegel, *Communismes au miroir français. Temps, cultures et sociétés en France devant le communisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), pp. 131–160. On the construction of the French communist leader's 'model biography' see Pudal, *Prendre parti*, pp. 215–227, and on mother- and family-centric language and images in the PCF see Weitz, 'Heroic Man', pp. 311–352.
77. In 1939 a widely circulated Soviet publication quoted Stalin's remark, apparently made in 1923, that 'worker and peasant women are mothers, they are bringing up our children – the future of our country': Thurston, 'The Soviet Family', p. 562. (The author does not however remark on the gendered nature of this reference to child-rearing, even though this is here specifically associated with women.)
78. For the PCF see Delpla, 'Les communistes français'.
79. 'Une jeune mère de 28 ans, sauvagement décapitée: Liselotte Hermann', *Femmes en Suisse romande* 14, August–September 1938, p. 8.
80. 'Einiges zur Frauenfrage von einst und jetzt', *Frauenwelt* 7, July 1937, p. 11.
81. Robert Levy, *Ana Pauker: The Rise and Fall of a Jewish Communist* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p. 48; Annie Kriegel and Stéphane Courtois, *Eugen Fried. Le grand secret du PCF* (Paris: Seuil, 1997), pp. 216–218.
82. Kristine Byron, 'Writing the Female Revolutionary Self: Dolores Ibárruri and the Spanish Civil War', *Autobiography and Memoir*, special issue of *Journal of Modern Literature* 28:1 (Autumn 2004), pp. 138–165, here p. 149.
83. Letter from Elena Stasova to André Marty (in French), 13 August 1937, GARF 8265/4/61.
84. Peggy Dennis, *The Autobiography of an American Communist: A Personal View of a Political Life, 1925–1975* (Westport, CT; Berkeley, CA: Lawrence Hill & Co, 1977), p. 87.
85. Letter from Elena Stasova to Pieck,? [illegible] September 1937, and letter from Pieck to Stasova, 4 September 1937, GARF 8265/4/61.
86. Letter from D. S. Manuilsky to N. I. Yezhov regarding measures against 'spies and saboteurs disguised as political émigrés', 3 January 1936, RGASPI 495/18/1047a, published in William J. Chase, *Enemies Within the Gates? The Comintern and Stalinist Repression* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 105–107.
87. Bruley distinguishes between two groups of women members of the CPGB: the 'cadres', usually single or the childless wives of male party members, who expected to be involved in mainstream party activities, and the 'supporters',

- who were home-centred and put their domestic responsibilities before political involvement: Bruley, *Leninism* pp. 122–124, 295.
88. Florence Keyworth in an interview of 26 August 1994, cited in Morgan, Cohen and Flinn, *Communists*, p. 163.
 89. Weitz, 'Heroic Man'. See in particular the illustration drawn from the French Communist newspaper *Regards* of 30 May 1935, picturing dressmakers on strike as the elegant occupants of urban space (p. 332). And Susan Reid has noted a similar tendency in figurative art, women workers in heavy industry being almost always represented in an idealized environment from which dust and noise are absent: Reid, 'All Stalin's Women', pp. 138–141.
 90. 'Pourquoi des femmes espagnoles ont-elles coiffé le képi et pris le fusil au côté des miliciens?', *Femmes en Suisse romande* 3, January 1937, p. 4.
 91. Annette Wiewiorka, *Maurice et Jeannette. Biographie du couple Thorez* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), p. 277.
 92. Marjorie Pollitt, *A Rebel Life: Marjorie Pollitt Recalls her Life and Times* (Ultimo, NSW: Red Pen Publications, 1989), p. 103.
 93. Pollitt, *Rebel Life*.
 94. Dennis, *Autobiography*, p. 89. For an analysis of the contrasts between women of the old and the new left see Ellen Kay Trimberger, 'Women in the Old and New Left: The Evolution of a Politics of Personal Life', *Feminist Studies* 5:3 (Fall 1979), pp. 431–450.
 95. The Soviet Constitution of 1936 reiterates the principle, notably in Article 137.
 96. Clements, *Bolshevik Women*, p. 275.
 97. On the PCF and its particularly traditional representations of women after 1945, see Rousseau, *Les femmes rouges*.

3 In Stalin's Moscow

1. Quoted in Inez Kykal and Karl R. Stadler, *Richard Bernaschek. Odyssee eines Rebellen* (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1976), p. 191.
2. *An American Engineer in Stalin's Russia: The Memoirs of Zara Witkin, 1932–1934*, ed. with an introduction by Michael Gelb (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 35.
3. Hugo Huppert, *Einmal Moskau und zurück. Stationen meines Lebens. Autobiographie* (Vienna: Globus Verlag, 1987), p. 186. Huppert worked from 1934 as arts editor of the *Deutsche Zentral-Zeitung*, and from 1936 also as deputy editor of *Internationale Literatur – Deutsche Blätter*.
4. Lotte Hümbelin, *Mein eigener Kopf. Ein Frauenleben in Wien, Moskau, Prag, Paris und Zürich* (Zürich: edition 8, 1999), pp. 109, 155–156, 159; almost identical language can be found in Lise London, *Le Printemps des camarades* (Paris: Seuil, 1996), p. 128.
5. Mimeographed pamphlet by KJV-Österreich, Moscow, February 1937, RGASPI 531/1/263.
6. Many foreign communists, though not all, became members of the A-UCP(b) in the 1930s. On the transfer process, see Chapter 4.
7. Letter to Lotte Lieven, Moscow, 3 May 1935, SAAK, Alexander Granach papers. On this film see also Chapter 7.
8. Letter from Kiev, 9 November 1937, SAAK, Alexander Granach papers.

9. Hedda Zinner, *Selbstbefragung. Erinnerungen, Aufzeichnungen und Reflexionen über das Jahrzehnt von 1935 bis 1945* (Berlin: Buchverlag Der Morgen, 1989), p. 6.
10. On this see Chapter 6.
11. Hugo Huppert, diary, 23 September 1933, SAAK, Archiv Hugo Huppert, diaries.
12. The *Deutsche Zentral-Zeitung* was published in Moscow from 1926, at first for the German-speaking population of the Soviet Union, later being expanded to serve emigrants and intellectuals. It went daily in 1932. It was controlled at first by the German section of the CC of the A-UCP(b), then the German section of the Comintern. In the mid-1930s the print-run was 40,000.
13. Reinhard Müller, *Die Säuberung. Moskau 1936: Stenogramm einer geschlossenen Parteiversammlung* (Reinbek b. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1991), p. 197.
14. Letter from Dora Krützner-Kern to Kony Mayer, Moscow, 6 May 1937, copy cadre file in SSA, Ar. 198.7.1.
15. Letter from Dora Krützner-Kern.
16. John A. Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, eds, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932–1939* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 14.
17. *Encyclopedia of Soviet Law*, edited by F. J. Ferdinand Joseph Maria Feldbrugge, Gerard Pieter Van den Berg, William Bradford Simon (Leiden: BRILL, 1985), p. 68. For Soviet asylum for German Communists see Carola Tischler, *Flucht in die Verfolgung. Deutsche Emigranten im sowjetischen Exil 1933–1945* (Münster: Lit.-Verlag, 1996) and ‘German Emigrants in Soviet Exile: A Drama in Five Acts’, in Karl Schlögel, ed., *Russian-German Special Relations in the Twentieth Century: A Closed Chapter?* (Oxford: Berg, 2006), pp. 77–97; Klaus Jarmatz, Simone Bark and Peter Diezel, *Exil in der UdSSR. Kunst und Literatur im antifaschistischen Exil 1933–1945* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1979), Bd. 1 (like other studies from the GDR, this ignores problematic aspects of Soviet policy).
18. Citizenship Law of 13 June 1930, Art. 6, replacing Art. 2 of the Law of 20 October 1924.
19. Quoted in Benjamin Nathans, ‘Soviet Rights-Talk in the Post-Stalin Era’, in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, ed., *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 166–190, here p. 170.
20. Christopher Osakwe, ‘Recent Soviet Citizenship Legislation’, *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 28:4 (Autumn 1980), pp. 625–643.
21. Data from International Red Aid Report on the Admission and Distribution of Politemigrants to the USSR, 8 May 1934, GARF 8265/3/33.
22. Tischler, *Flucht*, p. 5.
23. Barry McLoughlin, ‘Die Schutzbundemigration in der UdSSR: Neue Funde und Erkenntnisse aus Moskauer Archiven’, *Jahrbuch des Dokumentationsarchivs des österreichischen Widerstandes* (1994), pp. 97–105, here p. 102; on Austrian emigration to the USSR generally see Barry McLoughlin, Hans Schafranek and Walter Szevera, *Aufbruch-Hoffnung-Endstation. Österreicherinnen und Österreicher in der Sowjetunion 1925–1945* (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1997). For the fate of women in Soviet exile see Simone Barck, ed., *Jahrhundertchicksale. Frauen im sowjetischen Exil* (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2003).
24. Tischler, *Flucht*, p. 93. By contrast, the estimated number of exiled German communists in the remaining European countries at this time amounted to only 2,000 people (Tischler, ‘German Emigrants’, p. 80).

25. The numbers of ECCI employees varied with time but averaged around 500. See Chapter 1.
26. Falling under the authority of the ECCI, these institutions were intended to provide the Comintern and its member parties with the necessary middle ranking political staff.
27. The ILS alone accounted for some 3,500 students between May 1926 and mid-1938 (see Chapter 5). There also existed a further category of foreign resident in the Soviet Union, admitted neither as political refugees nor as party workers. These were the foreign employees of the Soviet Union military and intelligence apparatuses.
28. Jane Degras, ed., *The Communist International, 1919–1943: Documents*, in 3 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1956, 1960, 1965).
29. Barry McLoughlin, 'Visitors and Victims: British Communists in Russia between the Wars', in Alan McIlroy, Kevin Morgan and Alan Campbell, eds, *Party People – Communist Lives: Explorations in Biography* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2001), pp. 210–232, here pp. 214–215.
30. Andrea Graziosi, 'Foreign Workers in Soviet Russia, 1920–1940: Their Experience and Their Legacy', *International Labor and Working-Class History* 33 (1988), pp. 38–59, here pp. 39–40. On the foreigners' colonies see also Sergei V. Zhuravlev and V. Tiazel'nikova, 'Inostrannaia koloniia v Sovetskoi Rossii v 1920–1930e gody', *Otechestvennaia istoriia* 1 (1994), pp. 179–190. More especially on the German specialists recruited from the mid-twenties to work for Elektrozavod see Sergei Zhuravlev, 'Malen'kie liudi' i 'bol'shaia istoriia': *Inostrantsy Moskovskogo Elektrozavoda v sovetskom obshchestve 1920–kh–1930-kh gg.* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2000).
31. Barry McLoughlin and Hans Schafranek, 'Die österreichische Emigration in die UdSSR bis 1938', in Traude Horvath and Gerda Neyer, eds, *Auswanderungen aus Österreich. Von der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zur Gegenwart* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1996), pp. 163–185, here p. 172.
32. Thomas P. Hughes, *American Genesis: A History of the American Genius for Invention* (New York and London: Penguin Books, 1989), pp. 264–284. On Magnitogorsk, see the memoir of John Scott, who worked there for five years: *Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia's City of Steel* (Bloomington-Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), an expanded and more critical version of the original 1942 publication). On experiences with Soviet bureaucracy see also the Memoirs of Zara Witkin: *An American Engineer*.
33. Graziosi, 'Workers', pp. 47–49.
34. David James Fisher, *Romain Rolland and the Politics of Intellectual Engagement* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; Oxford: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 158–176. More generally, on the Soviet Union and Western intellectuals see Ludmila Stern, *Western Intellectuals and the Soviet Union, 1920–1940: From Red Square to the Left Bank* (London: Routledge, 2007).
35. A list of 'Anti-fascist German artists in the Soviet Union 1933–1945. Theatre, Film, Broadcasting' includes 65 names of authors, directors, composers, conductors, actors and set designers: SAAK Sammlung Exil, Rep. 101/SU, V a.1.
36. On these writers living conditions see especially David Pike, *German Writers in Soviet Exile, 1933–1945* (Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), and also Jarmatz, Bark and Diezel, *Exil*; Müller, *Die Säuberung*; Tischler, *Flucht*.

37. On Soviet cultural policy in relation to Western artists and intellectuals see Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931–1941* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 2011) and to Germans more especially, idem, 'Germanophone Intellectuals in Stalin's Russia: Diaspora and Cultural Identity in the 1930s', *Kritika* 2:3 (Summer 2001), pp. 529–552.
38. On May and the failure of his hopes for a 'new architecture' see Thomas Flierl, ed., *Standardstädte. Ernst May in der Sowjetunion 1930–1933. Texte und Dokumente* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2012). Jarmatz, Bark and Diezel, *Exil*, describes in great factual detail the activities of German artists, architects, and media workers in the USSR, though it skates over personal conflicts and largely ignores the growing repression.
39. Susanne Leonhard, *Gestohlenes Leben. Als Sozialistin in Stalins Gulag* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1988), p. 25.
40. On everyday life at the Hotel Lux see too the Memoirs of Ruth von Mayenburg, *Hotel Lux. Das Absteigequartier der Weltrevolution* (Munich: Piper, 1991 [1978]). The Comintern had at first to share the Hotel Lux with the State security, which had first claimed the luxury hotel in the great allocation of properties to government departments and related organizations after 1917: Timothy J. Colton, *Moscow: Governing the Socialist Metropolis* (Cambridge; London: Belknap Press, 1995), p. 99.
41. Leonhard, *Gestohlenes Leben*, p. 27.
42. Wolfgang Ruge, *Gelobtes Land. Meine Jahre in Stalins Sowjetunion* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2002).
43. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 46.
44. Moshe Lewin, 'Society, State, and Ideology during the First Five-Year-Plan', in Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931* (Bloomington, IN; London: Indiana University Press, 1978), pp. 41–77, here p. 53.
45. Alikhanian in the original Armenian.
46. The Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute was formed in 1931 by joining together the Lenin Institute and the Marx-Engels Institute.
47. Elena Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters*, trans. Antonina W. Bouis (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), p. 96. Nonetheless, in the early 1930s two-thirds of Moscow's inhabitants had access to running water, the city being better served in this respect than most others in the country: Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 50.
48. Meinhard Stark, 'Wenn Du willst Deine Ruhe haben, schweige'. *Deutsche Frauenbiographien des Stalinismus* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 1991), p. 100; London, *Printemps*, pp. 133–135.
49. Bonner, *Mothers*, p. 95.
50. Letter to KUNMZ party committee, 26 August 1936, RGASPI 529/2/46.
51. Jenny Humbert-Droz, *Une pensée, une conscience, un combat. La carrière politique de Jules Humbert-Droz retracée par sa femme* (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1976), pp. 72–73; Mayenburg, *Hotel Lux*, pp. 17–18.
52. Mayenburg, *Hotel Lux*, pp. 51–53.
53. On the genesis and political significance of the notion of *kul'turnost'* in all its different aspects, see Vadim Volkov, 'The Concept of *Kul'turnost'*: Notes

- on the Stalinist Civilizing Process', in Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., *Stalinism: New Directions* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 210–230.
54. Letter from Jules to Jenny Humbert-Droz, Moscow, 29 August 1938, published in Jules Humbert-Droz, *Dix ans de lutte antifasciste, 1931–1941* (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1972), pp. 344–345.
 55. 'Ein AIZ-Kolporteur in Moskau', *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*, 3 June 1936, pp. 359–361.
 56. SAAK, Wangenheim papers, Rep. 025 III.1.c. Such remarks, however, are absent from the actress's published memoirs: Inge von Wangenheim, *Auf weitem Feld. Erinnerungen einer jungen Frau* (Berlin: Henchelverlag, 1954), pp. 173–221.
 57. Minute no. 121 of the Permanent Commission of the ECCI Secretariat, 13 July 1932, RGASPI, 495/7/22; Minute no. 161 (New determination of those eligible to use the canteen), 13 February 1934, RGASPI, 495/7/29.
 58. London, *Printemps*, p. 144.
 59. Hümbelin, *Kopf*, p. 160.
 60. Peggy Dennis, *The Autobiography of an American Communist. A Personal View of a Political Life, 1925–1975* (Westport; Berkeley: Lawrence Hill & Co, 1977), p. 66.
 61. Bonner, *Mothers*, p. 126.
 62. Jules Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline. Dix ans au service de l'Internationale communiste, 1921–1931* (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1971), pp. 358–359.
 63. McLoughlin and Schafranek, *Emigration*, p. 208.
 64. *Torgsin* was an abbreviation for *Vsesoiuznoe obedinenie po torgovle s inostrantsami*, the 'All-Union Association for Trade with Foreigners'.
 65. Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 56.
 66. Vatlin, *Kaderpolitik*, p. 54.
 67. Minute no. 123 of the Permanent Commission of the ECCI Secretariat, 25 July 1932, RGASPI 495/7/23.
 68. Minute no. 151 of the Permanent Commission of the ECCI Secretariat, 26 August 1933, RGASPI 495/7/27.
 69. Marcelline Judith Hutton, *Russian and Soviet Women, 1897–1939: Dreams, Struggles and Nightmares* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1992, 2 vols.), p. 622; on the abolition of the party maximum see Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 102.
 70. Protocol no. 129 of the Permanent Commission of the ECCI Secretariat, 29 October 1932, RGASPI, 495/7/24.
 71. Establishment report on ECCI apparatus 1941 (Russian), RGASPI 495/18/1326.
 72. On the geography of elite *dachas* see Colton, *Moscow*, p. 346.
 73. See for example the enthusiastic description in Mayenburg, *Hotel Lux*, pp. 252–264.
 74. Mayenburg, *Hotel Lux*, pp. 241–242.
 75. Hümbelin, *Kopf*, p. 168.
 76. Letter to Piatnitsky Secretariat, 7 July 1931, RGASPI 495/19/213.
 77. This was in any event Lotte Hümbelin's understanding (Hümbelin, *Kopf*, p. 166).
 78. Letter to Boris Pasternak, 22 November 1940, SAAK, Archiv Hugo Huppert.
 79. See his memoirs, *Die Karl-Liebknecht-Schule in Moskau, 1932–1937. Erinnerungen eines Schülers*, (Lüneburg: Nordostdeutsches Kulturwerk, 1991). His father was an American engineer, Harald Johnston, who had been

working in Russia before the civil war, and with whom his mother had an affair while married. After some peregrinations in Holland and Germany, the family went back to the USSR in 1932. His stepfather, whose name Henry-Ralph kept, was a victim of the purges in 1938.

80. On the history of this school see Natalja Mussienko and Alexander Vatlin, *Schule der Träume: Die Karl-Liebknecht-Schule in Moskau (1924–1938)* (Stuttgart: Julius Klinkhardt Verlagsbuchhandlung, 2005).
81. Gustav Sobottka to Dimitrov, Manuilsky and Pieck, 22 December 1939, RGASPI, 495/10/317.

4 Soviet Party Practices

1. I confine myself here to those practices that foreign party members encountered in the Soviet party and at the international cadre school. In Soviet society, a number of other forms of speech about the self were current. On this see Brigitte Studer, Berthold Unfried and Irène Herrmann, eds, *Parler de soi sous Staline. La construction identitaire dans le communisme des années trente*, Série Colloquium 2 (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2002).
2. Interpretations vary. Early Western explanations and accounts by so-called 'renegades' ascribed the self-inculpations of prominent party functionaries either to a form of public theatre intended to convince the backward peasant masses, the psychopathology of the Soviet personality, or the breaking of the individual through torture.
3. One example, representative of many others, is F. Beck and W. Godin, *Russian Purge and the Extraction of Confession* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1951).
4. For a periodization of these developments and a first interpretation of such self-criticism by foreign party members as a 'technology of the self' see Brigitte Studer and Berthold Unfried, *Der stalinistische Parteikader. Identitätsstiftende Praktiken und Diskurse in der Sowjetunion der dreissiger Jahre* (Köln: Böhlau, 2001). Unfried elsewhere adopts another interpretation and compares self-criticism with Catholic confession, while Oleg Kharkhordin relates it to the Orthodox practice of public penance: Berthold Unfried, 'Ich bekenne'. *Katholische Beichte und sowjetische Selbstkritik* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2006); Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Soviet Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). J. Arch Getty sees it as a ritual: 'Samokritika rituals in the Stalinist Central Committee, 1933–1938', *Russian Review*, 58:1 (January 1999), pp. 49–70. Adopting a purely discursive approach, Igal Halfin situates the 'confessions' elicited in the purges in a 'millenarian' context: *Intimate Enemies: Demonizing the Bolshevik Opposition, 1918–1928* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007) and *Stalinist Confessions: Messianism and Terror at the Leningrad Communist University* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2009). Such religious interpretations are however rejected by Erren in favour of an understanding of 1930s self-criticism as a technology of power promoting a 'vigilant' mutual control within party society: Lorenz Erren, *Selbstkritik und Schuldbekennnis. Kommunikation und Herrschaft unter Stalin (1917–1953)*

- (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2008). Griesse, on the other hand, sees the imposed Stalinist practice of criticism and self-criticism as designed to do away with forms of discussion and public exchange that had become widespread with the October Revolution: Malte Griesse, *Communiquer, juger et agir sous Staline. La personne prise entre ses liens avec les proches et son rapport au système politico-idéologique* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011).
5. 'Theses on the Conditions of Admission to the Communist International', in *Theses, Resolutions, and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Third International* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press: 1980), p. 95
 6. Of the extensive literature on the party purges in the A-UCP(b) one might cite John Arch Getty, *Origins of the Great Purges: The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered., 1933–1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), Robert W. Thurston, *Life and Terror in Stalin's Russia 1934–1941* (New Haven and London: Yale Press, 1996) and Barry McLoughlin and Kevin McDermott, eds, *Stalin's Terror: High Politics and Mass Repression in the Soviet Union* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). For the Comintern in particular see William J. Chase, *Enemies Within the Gates? The Comintern and the Stalinist Repression, 1934–1939*, with Russian documents translated by Vadim A. Staklo (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), Fridrich I. Firsow, 'Die Säuberungen im Apparat der Komintern', in Hermann Weber et al., eds, *Kommunisten verfolgen Kommunisten. Stalinistischer Terror und 'Säuberungen' in den kommunistischen Parteien Europas seit den dreißiger Jahren* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1993), pp. 37–51 and Alexander Vatlin, 'Kaderpolitik und Säuberungen in der Komintern', in Hermann Weber and Ulrich Mähler, eds, *Terror. Stalinistische Parteisäuberungen 1936–1953* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1998), pp. 33–119.
 7. See Chapter 7.
 8. On the filing of personal data and other documents at the Comintern see Waleri Fomitschow, 'Organisation und Entwicklung der Aktenführung im Apparat der Komintern. Zusammensetzung und Inhalt der Bestände von Personalakten (am Beispiel des Bestandes für Deutschland)', in Michael Buckmiller and Klaus Meschkat, eds, *Biographisches Handbuch zur Geschichte der Kommunistischen Internationale. Ein deutsch-russisches Forschungsprojekt* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2007), pp. 55–73.
 9. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear off the Masks! Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 104.
 10. Protocol no. 108 of the meeting of the Permanent Commission of the ECCI Secretariat, 13 January 1932, RGASPI 495/7/20. See also Chapter 1.
 11. Cadre section of the Organization Department, 27 March 1932, RGASPI 495/18/981.
 12. Kevin Morgan, Gideon Cohen and Andrew Flinn, *Communists and British Society 1920–1991* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 2007), p. 277.
 13. Claude Penneret and Bernard Pudal, 'Les mauvais sujets du stalinisme', in Studer, Unfried and Herrmann, *Parler de soi*, pp. 65–95, here pp. 68–69.
 14. On the development of the Cadre Department see Peter Huber, 'The Cadre Department, the OMS and the 'Dimitrov' and 'Manuil'skij' Secretariats during the Phase of Terror', in Mikhail Narinsky and Jürgen Rojahn, eds, *Centre and Periphery: The History of the Comintern in the Light of New Documents* (Amsterdam: IISG, 1996), pp. 122–152.

15. For an overview see Brigitte Studer, *Un Parti sous influence. Le Parti communiste suisse, une section du Komintern, 1931 à 1939* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1994), pp. 262–267.
16. Cadre section of the Organization Department, 27 May 1932, RGASPI 495/18/981. This was to be found in very similar form in the PCF as well: Pennetier Claude and Bernard Pudal, 'La "vérification" (l'encadrement biographique communiste dans l'entre-deux-guerres)', *Genèses* 23 (1996), pp. 145–163.
17. SAAK, Willi Bredel papers.
18. Willy Trostel cadre file, RGASPI 495/274/199.
19. Philippe Lejeune, *Le pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1975).
20. Patricia Albers, *Shadows, Fire, Snow. The Life of Tina Modotti* (New York: Clarkson Potter Publishers, 1999), p. 264.
21. Maurice Thorez cadre file, RGASPI 495/270/82.
22. SAAK, Willi Bredel papers.
23. Emil Hofmaier cadre file, RGASPI 495/274/208.
24. Party day held by Section I of the ILS, 4 December 1933, RGASPI 531/2/67.
25. Claude Pennetier and Bernard Pudal, 'Le questionnement biographique communiste en France (1931–1974)', in Pennetier and Pudal, *Autobiographies, autocritiques, aveux dans le monde communiste* (Paris: Belin, 2002), pp. 117–156, here p. 123. See too Pierre Bourdieu, 'Rites of Institution', in *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. G. Raymond and M. Adamson (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991), pp. 117–126.
26. Nicolas Werth, *Etre communiste en URSS sous Staline* (Paris: Gallimard 1981), pp. 76–77.
27. Draft proposal to improve cadre education in the German Section of the ILS, [1935] (in German), RGASPI 531/1/75; Minutes of the general meeting of the bureau of the party groups and *tsekhiashchiki* (party cells of enterprises), 28 April – 27 October 1936 (in Russian), Tsentral'nyi arkhiv obshchestvennykh dvizhenii (TsAOD) 212/1/37; cell meeting of the German group at the Institute for World Economy, 24 January 1936, TsAOD, 214/1/28. Evidence of self-report can also be found for party institutes.
28. See Chapter 5.
29. Speech by Marty to Section I of the ILS, 23 November 1933, RGASPI 531/2/67.
30. Teresa Noce, *Rivoluzionaria professionale* (Milan: La Pietra, 2003 [1974]), p. 162.
31. KUNMZ, Protocol of party meeting, Variant B, 3 February 1935, RGASPI 529/2/454.
32. KUNMZ, Protocol of party meeting, Variant B, 3 February 1935, RGASPI 529/2/454.
33. One of the earliest accounts of the first 'purge' meeting in February 1929 of the Comintern party 'cell', as the party organization of the Comintern was called, is from Ypsilon (that is Karl Volk), *Pattern for World Revolution* (Chicago; New York: Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, 1947), pp. 122–125.
34. An account of such a public, inquisitorial proceeding during a purge can be found in Elena Bonner's memoirs, where she describes her father's 'verification' at the Lux: Elena Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), pp. 147–151.
35. ILS purge commission, Protocol no. 1 of 2 October 1933, RGASPI 531/2/23.

36. On social control over the Soviet population, see David R. Shearer, *Policing Stalin's Socialism: Repression and Social Order in the Soviet Union, 1924–1953* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).
37. Tischler, 'German Emigrants', p. 83.
38. Jules Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline. Dix ans au service de l'Internationale communiste, 1921–1931* (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1971).
39. There is no indication for any of these whether they were Russians or foreigners.
40. Political conclusions of the purge commission of the party collective, ILS (Italian), n.d. (1933/1934), RGASPI 531/2/28.
41. The words of Vienna-born Charlotte Bindel, who worked at the Comintern's Moscow publishing house between 1931 and 1933: Lotte Hümbelin, *Mein eigener Kopf. Ein Frauenleben in Wien, Moskau, Prag, Paris und Zürich* (Zürich: edition8, 1999), p. 174. After her return to Austria she was used by the OMS as a courier, and then worked in illegality in Prague. After another visit to Moscow in 1935, she went back again to Prague, where she spent five months under arrest. In 1936 the Comintern sent her to Paris, where she was responsible for the first reception and examination of Austrian and Czechoslovak volunteers for the International Brigades. In 1938 she fled to Switzerland, but was expelled and went to London. After marrying the Swiss Fred Hümbelin, she was eventually able to settle in Switzerland. For her biography see *Dictionnaire biographique de l'Internationale communiste* (Paris: Les Editions de l'Atelier, 2010), on CD-Rom.
42. Wolfgang Leonhard, *Child of the Revolution*, trans. C. M. Woodhouse (London: Collins, 1957), p. 78. As the author says in his memoirs, it would have been impossible to join the youth organization one or two years earlier, as his mother had been arrested by the NKVD and nobody would have dared approve his application.
43. Leonhard, *Child*, pp. 78–81.
44. For its activities, see the minutes, memoranda and directives of the Commission for the Transfer to the A-UCP(b) of Former Members of Foreign Sister Parties, January 1932–June 1936, RGASPI 17/98/23.
45. Draft letter from ECCI to the individual parties resettlement in the Soviet Union and transfer to the A-UCP(b) of members of sister parties, 31 May 1932, RGASPI 17/98/23.
46. Minutes of the meeting of the Transfer Commission, 8 June 1932 (in Russian), RGASPI 17/98/23.
47. Rules for the transfer of members of sister parties, adopted by the Secretariat of the CC of the A-UCP(b) on 19 November 1932, RGASPI 17/98/23.
48. Minutes of the Transfer Commission, 1932–1933, RGASPI 17/98/14. In the mid-1930s, Question 17 of the 'Questionnaire for the Transfer to the A-UCP(b) of Members of Foreign Sister Parties' asked: 'Do you belong to any fractional group?' See, for example, the cadre file of Konrad Mayer, RGASPI 495/274/137.
49. Communication from Manuilsky to Nicolai Yezhov, Andrei A. Andreev and Matvei F. Shkiriakov with proposals for the tightening up of the transfer rules, 1 April 1937, RGASPI 523/1/66, cited in Vatlin, *Kaderpolitik*, pp. 110–111.
50. Transfer Commission report on the numbers of transferees to October 1934, RGASPI 17/98/23.

51. Huber, *Cadre Department*, p. 127.
52. The fate of Paul Rüeegg and his wife Gertrud Fischbach is described in Peter Huber, *Stalins Schatten in die Schweiz: Schweizer Kommunisten in Moskau: Verteidiger und Gefangene der Komintern* (Zurich: Chronos, 1994), pp. 231–246.
53. On this international campaign and the true identity of the OMS operatives see Studer, *Un parti*, pp. 530–541.
54. Rüeegg dossier, RGASPI 17/98/12200. There is also a cadre file for Rüeegg that contains further material: RGASPI 495/274/5906.
55. RGASPI 495/10a/391. See too the NKVD memorandum on support to party organs in the verification of party documents, 5 December 1935, published in John Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932–1939* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 198–199. Getty takes the most recent discoveries into account in correcting his earlier interpretation that the causes and motives of the purges were to be sought in the conflicts within party and state apparatuses and between personal and group interests rather than in any properly repressive impulse.
56. Letter files for applications, autobiographies, denunciations, GARF 8265/4/57. The VOKS was equally involved with the NKVD, according to Michael David-Fox, ‘From Illusory “Society” to Intellectual “Public”: VOKS, International Travel, and Party-Intelligentsia Relations in the Interwar Period’, *Contemporary European History* 11:1 (2002), pp. 7–32, here p. 28) and Ludmila Stern, *Western Intellectuals and the Soviet Union, 1920–1940: From Red Square to the Left Bank* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 155.
57. Protocol no. 8, Transfer Commission meeting of 25 March 1936, RGASPI 17/98/15.
58. Rüeegg dossier, RGASPI 17/98/12200.
59. *Rundschau*, 9 September 1937; *Freiheit*, 9 September 1937.
60. Decision of the Orgburo of the CC of the A-UCP(b), 19 January 1933, RGASPI 17/98/23.
61. Letter from Transfer Commission to Lazar Kaganovich, Secretary of the CC of the A-UCP(b) (in Russian), 5 August 1933, RGASPI 17/98/23.
62. Letter from Transfer Commission to Lazar Kaganovich.
63. Communication from Manuilsky to Yezhov, Andreev and Shkiriatov with proposals for tightening up the transfer rules, 1 April 1937, RGASPI 523/1/66, cited in Vatlin, *Kaderpolitik*, pp. 110–111.
64. Draft transfer rules (in Russian), May 1935, RGASPI 17/98/23. There had, however, already been cooperation between the two bodies. In a communication of 3 April 1933 Abram A. Slutsky, who would become Head of the International section of the NKVD from 1934 to 1938, thus informs the CC of the A-UCP(b) that foreign communists are to hand their party books to the NKVD should they be refused an exit visa by party organs, RGASPI 17/98/23.
65. Minutes of the Transfer Commission, 1936–1937, RGASPI 17/98/17.
66. Other nationalities followed. For the Swiss, for example, there is a verification list dated 27 December 1936 (RGASPI 495/274/137), and another of 19 February 1937 (RGASPI 495/12/72).
67. Status and results of the transfer work of the German Section (September 1936), RGASPI 495/292/83; Reinhard Müller, *Die Akte Wehner. Moskau 1937 bis 1941* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1993), p. 128.

68. Decision of the Presidium of the ECCI (draft), 19 February 1936, RGASPI 495/20/756.
69. See for example the lists in RGASPI 546/1/378, 379 and 420. A short time later, the link between expulsion and arrest was broken, and arrests were made to quota.
70. Grant M. Adibekov, Eleonora N. Shakhnazarova and Kirill K. Shirinia, *Organizatsionnaia struktura Komintern 1919–1943* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1997), p. 206.
71. Secretariat report on the transfer to the A-UCP(b) of members of sister parties, 29–30 December 1935, RGASPI 495/18/1039, cited in Vatlin, *Kaderpolitik*, pp. 65 and 98.
72. Decision of the ECCI Presidium and of the Bureau of the ICC of the CI, German transcript, original in Russian, 9 April 1937, RGASPI 495/20/756; communication from Dimitrov to Stalin, 21 January 1936, published in Alexander Dallin and F. I. Firsov, eds, *Dimitrov and Stalin 1934–1943: Letters from the Soviet Archives* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 24–25.
73. Reinhard Müller was the first to publish the extensive protocol of a purge meeting of Western cultural workers in Moscow: *Die Säuberung. Moskau 1936. Stenogramm einer geschlossenen Parteiversammlung* (Reinbek bei Hamburg:rororo aktuell, 1991). He does, however, too one-sidedly portray the participants as victims of the party machine, without considering their own involvement in the merry-go-round of mutual accusation.

5 Becoming a ‘Real Bolshevik’

1. Proposal for the improvement of cadre education in the German section of the International Lenin School (ILS), no date [1935], RGASPI 531/1/75.
2. See Chapter 4.
3. On these schools see in particular Leonid G. Babitschenko (one of the very first to access the relevant archives), ‘Die Kaderschulung der Komintern’, *Jahrbuch für historische Kommunismusforschung* (1993), pp. 37–59; with an emphasis on German communists, Julia Köstenberger, ‘Die Geschichte der Kommunistischen Universität der nationalen Minderheiten des Westens (KUNMZ) in Moskau 1921–1936’, *Jahrbuch für historische Kommunismusforschung* (2000/2001), pp. 248–330, and Köstenberger, ‘Die Internationale Lenin-Schule (1926–1938)’, in Michael Buckmiller and Klaus Meschkat, eds, *Biographisches Handbuch zur Geschichte der Kommunistischen Internationale. Ein deutsch-russisches Forschungsprojekt* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2007), pp. 287–309; for Swiss communists, Brigitte Studer, *Un parti sous influence. Le Parti communiste suisse, une section du Komintern 1931–1939* (Lausanne: L’Âge d’Homme, 1994), pp. 234–249; for British communists, Gideon Cohen and Kevin Morgan, ‘Stalin’s Sausage Machine: British Students at the International Lenin School, 1926–37’, *Twentieth Century British History* 13:4 (2002), pp. 327–355; and for Irish Communists, Barry McLoughlin, ‘Proletarian Academics or Party Functionaries? Irish Communists at the International Lenin School, Moscow, 1927–1937’, *Saothar (Yearbook of the Irish Labour History Society)* 22 (1997), pp. 63–79.
4. Köstenberger, ‘Die Internationale Lenin-Schule (1926–1938)’, p. 290.

5. The maximum number planned for that year was 650: letter from Dmitry Manuilsky to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the A-UCP(b), 2 January 1936 (in Russian), RGASPI 495/10a/385, and planning document of the ECCI Secretariat, 22 March 1936, RGASPI 495/10a/385.
6. Köstenberger, 'Lenin-Schule', p. 287. Another school took over during the war, but this closed on the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943. It is described in Wolfgang Leonhard, *Child of the Revolution* (London: Collins 1957), pp. 163–239.
7. Köstenberger, 'Lenin-Schule', p. 287.
8. In fact, certain courses at the KUNMZ went back to 1921, but the school only opened to foreign communists in 1926. There was another international school for students from Asia.
9. This figure is given in Babitschenko, 'Kaderschulung', p. 58.
10. Decision of the Political Committee of the ECCI with regard to the ILS report on the results of the admissions process for the academic year 1932–1933, 19 April 1933 (in German), RGASPI 495/20/865. Also Circular addressed to the Communist parties, March 1935 [?] (in German), RGASPI 495/80/447 and Conditions of Admission to the ILS in 1935–1936, RGASPI 495/4/188, which specifies: no contagious or disabling disease, no chronic disease such as neurasthenia 'in its clinical form', no tuberculosis, no acute anaemia.
11. It is true that communist parties were not always scrupulous in their application of the selection criteria, sometimes being only too happy to get rid of awkward customers among their militants.
12. There were also, of course, good practical reasons for these rules, students sometimes serving as couriers on their return home.
13. Report on the general situation of the ILS and on the work of the party, submitted to Simochkin, secretary of the Krasno-Presnenski district A-UCP(b), 19 December 1936 (in Russian), RGASPI 531/2/43.
14. Report on the general situation of the ILS.
15. Decisions regarding the ILS cadre department, 20 December 1933 (in German), RGASPI 495/4/273. The Comintern's cadre department also had a special committee responsible for the cadre education institutions.
16. 1934–1935 programme of study for the [short] courses for German groups at the ILS (in German), RGASPI 531/1/149. These courses were introduced in 1933 in response to the influx of German students after the Nazi takeover.
17. Annual party meeting, Group 1, old and new, KUNMZ, 15 May 1935 (in German), RGASPI 529/2/454.
18. Report of the bureau of the party cell, Section A (German section), with discussion, in the context of the 1933 purge at the ILS, RGASPI 531/2/26. Cadre file of Fritz Heckert, RGASPI 495/205/6322.
19. Cited in Pierre Bourdieu, 'Social Space and Symbolic Power', *Sociological Theory* 7 (1989), pp. 14–25, here p. 17.
20. Autobiography of 'Danièle' (Vincentella) Casanova, n.d. [late 1935, early 1936] (in French), RGASPI 495/270/1863.
21. Autobiography of Willi Bredel, [almost certainly 1934] (in German), SAPMO, Willi Bredel papers, 2035. See Chapter 4.
22. ILS Purge Commission report on the Supo (Souppault?), Depierre, Bondrak and Bonnard Affair [1933] (in Russian), RGASPI 531/2/65. The spelling of proper names is sometimes difficult to establish, given their often phonetic rendering in Russian; that of the sources is used here.

23. ILS Purge Commission report.
24. Minutes of a meeting of the French national group, ILS, 15 November 1929, RGASPI 531/1/174. Only with the School's move from the city centre to a Moscow suburb were students provided with twin-bedded rooms rather than the five- or six-bed dormitories: Arvo Tuominen, *The Bells of the Kremlin: An Experience in Communism* (Hanover, NH; London: University Press of New England, 1983), pp. 81–82.
25. Meeting of the party group of the German sector of the KUMNZ, February 1936 (in German), RGASPI 529/2/473.
26. Leonhard, *Child*, p. 201.
27. Meeting of Section E of the ILS, 27 August 1935, RGASPI 531/1/171.
28. Meeting of the party committee (*partkom*), KUNMZ, 15 February 1936, RGASPI 529/2/462. From 1931/32 on, students could choose a special subject from among 'Press', 'Propaganda' and 'Party-Building'.
29. Assessment report [or self-report] of comrade Degraf of the KUNMZ, n.d. [early 1936] (in German), RGASPI 529/2/473.
30. Assessment report [or self-report] of comrade Degraf.
31. Meeting of the cadre education section of the ILS, 13 December 1936 (in Russian), RGASPI 495/30/1118. In post since 1932, Titkin was sacked in 1937, together with a good number of others, as a consequence of the 'affair' centred on Klavdiia Kirsanova, director of the school: Letter from Bogomolov, head of the cadre department, to Schwarzmann, 10 December 1937 (in Russian), RGASPI 531/1/124).
32. Party Meeting, Variant B of Section A, KUNMZ, 27 May 1935 (in German), RGASPI 529/2/454.
33. Speech of 8 October 1935, RGASPI 531/1/152.
34. Party meeting, Group 2 of Class 1 of the German section, KUMNZ, 10 April 1936 (in German), RGASPI 529/2/473.
35. Annual party meeting, Variant B, KUMNZ, 3 February 1935, RGASPI 529/2/454.
36. General meeting of the German section, 23 January 1932 (continuation of meeting of 13 January) (in German), RGASPI 529/1/542.
37. Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, trans. Richard Nice, 2nd ed. (London: Sage, 1990), p 134, n. 16. The original authors were referring to language and academic correctness.
38. These descriptions are drawn from various *kharakteristiki* and other assessments drawn up in the course of normal study in the years 1929 to 1935, rather than in the context of mass arrests and the Great Terror. Reproaches later change in nature, concerning provocation, breach of conspiracy, lack of Bolshevik vigilance and fractional struggle. 'Foreign elements and enemies of the party', traitors, degenerate elements and others were excluded from the party: On the Work of the International Control Commission – German version – 9 July 1936, RGASPI 495/20/759.
39. Stenographic report of the purge at the ILS 1933, Protocol no. 1, 31 October 1933, RGASPI, 531/2/26.
40. Partial protocol of meeting of Variant B, 3 April 1935, RGASPI, 529/2/454. The German document speaks of *Physkultur* (a rendering of Russian *fiskultura*) rather than *Körperkultur*.
41. Closing session of the purge of Section A of the ILS, 17 November 1933 (in German), RGASPI 531/2/48. Again, a female student was suspected of having revealed her 'bourgeois mentality' by wearing jewellery to a purge session:

- Minutes of a meeting of the organization, propaganda and press-workers' seminar, KUMNZ, 25 September 1934 (in German), RGASPI 529/1/548.
42. One should also note the sexual aspect of the project, one of whose objectives was to discipline male sexual behaviour.
 43. In only two months in 1936, the students saw a film on Kirov, a report on events in Spain, and films such as *Parade on Red Square*, *The Party Card* and *The Generation of Victors: Report on the general situation of the International Lenin School* and on party work submitted to Simochkin, secretary of the A-UCP(b), Krasno-Presnenski district, 19 December 1936 (in Russian), RGASPI 531/2/43.
 44. Discussion meeting on the production of Course 2 of Group 1, KUNMZ, 11 January 1936 (in German), RGASPI 529/1/553.
 45. Meeting of Groups 1 and 2, competition balance-sheet, 11 April 1935 (in German), RGASPI 529/1/551.
 46. Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction*, p. 60.
 47. Discussion on the report of comrade Iablonsky, ILS, 14 October 1933, RGASPI 531/2/67.
 48. Minutes of section party meeting of Section JA (the Austrian section, established in 1936) of the ILS, 27 February 1937, RGASPI 495/187/3003.
 49. Meeting of the party group, Class 4, Groups 1 and 3, KUNMZ, 3 April 1936 (in German), RGASPI 529/2/473.
 50. Closing session of the purge of Section A, ILS, 17 November 1933 (in German), RGASPI 531/2/48.
 51. Students' characterizations of the year 1935, ILS (in German), RGASPI 531/1/152.
 52. On this practice in the factories, see Hans-Henning Schröder, *Industrialisierung und Parteibürokratie in der Sowjetunion. Ein sozialgeschichtlicher Versuch über die Anfangsphase des Stalinismus (1928–1934)* (Wiesbaden: Verlag O. Harrassowitz, 1988), pp. 107–120.
 53. Addenda to the minutes of the group meeting of 16 June 1933, provisional characterization in the context of the verification of socialist emulation and shock groups in the press section of Class 1 of KUMNZ (in German), RGASPI 529/1/544.
 54. Meeting of new Group 6, KUMNZ, 11 March 1935 (in German), RGASPI 529/2/453. On vigilance and the duty of self-criticism see also Studer, *Un parti*, pp. 87, pp. 262–279.
 55. Party day, Section I of the ILS, 4 December 1933, RGASPI 531/2/67.
 56. Stephen Kotkin, 'Coercion and Identity: Workers' Lives in Stalin's Showcase City', in Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds, *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class and Identity* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 282, 284.
 57. Meeting of Group 6, new, of the KUMNZ, 11 March 1935 (in German), RGASPI 529/2/453.
 58. Discussion of the production of Group 4 of Class 2, KUMNZ, 13 December 1935 (in German), RGASPI 529/2/454.
 59. Assessment report on comrades Sommer, Fuchs and Wilke at the party meeting of Variant B of the German section of the KUMNZ, 27 May 1935 (in German), RGASPI 529/2/454.
 60. Meeting of the party group of the German section of the KUMNZ, n.d. [1936] (in German), RGASPI 529/2/473.

61. Meeting of the party group of the German section.
62. Meeting of the party group of the German section.
63. Meeting of the party group of Class 3, groups 1 and 2, KUMNZ, 3 April 1936 (in German), RGASPI 529/2/473.
64. Personal balance-sheet report of comrade Buch at the party meeting of Group 2 of Class 1, 25 March 1936 (in German), RGASPI 529/2/473, and continuation of this report, 10 April 1936 (in German), RGASPI 529/2/473.
65. Meeting of the party group of the German section of the KUMNZ, n.d. [1936] (in German), RGASPI 529/2/473.
66. Balance sheet report on the practical placements of 21 groups from the ILS, 1936 (in Russian), RGASPI 531/1/144 and diary and reports on the summer placement by the responsible official Alex K. Fedchenko, ILS, 23 August–25 September 1936 (in Russian), RGASPI 531/1/153.
67. Placement balance-sheet, 1936 (in Russian), RGASPI 531/1/144.
68. Party meeting of Group 1 of Variant B, KUMNZ, 15 March 1935 (in German), RGASPI 529/2/454.
69. Questionnaire addressed to ILS teaching staff regarding their pupils (1936) (in Russian), RGASPI 531/1/94.
70. Meeting of Variant B [?], KUMNZ, (February or March 1935) (in German), RGASPI 529/2/454.
71. Resolution on practical placements for Section E (English section) of the ILS, 4 January 1935 (in Russian), RGASPI 531/1/172.
72. For example, A. K. Fedchenko's diary and reports on the summer placement, referred to in n. 61 above, and the report on practical placements in Section E of the ILS, 23 February 1934 (in English), RGASPI 531/1/172.
73. Harry Wicks, *Keeping My Head: The Memoirs of a British Bolshevik* (London: Socialist Platform 1992), pp. 107–119.
74. See, for example, the diary of Emma Dornberger of Germany, SAPMO, PA NL 206/2, 22.
75. General characterization of Section E of the ILS, 22 August 1934 (in English), RGASPI 531/1/172.
76. Letter from Wilhelm Pieck to thank the collective of Section A of the ILS for their anniversary present, 7 January 1937, RGASPI 531/1/154.
77. Political report of the purge commission of the party organization at the ILS, 19 November 1933, RGASPI 531/2/28.
78. See n. 38.
79. See Chapter 4.
80. Wicks, *Keeping my Head*, p. 84.
81. See the cases analyzed in Claude Penetier and Bernard Pudal, 'Les mauvais sujets du stalinisme', in Brigitte Studer, Berthold Unfried and Irène Herrmann, *Parler de soi sous Staline: La construction identitaire dans le communisme des années trente* (Paris: Ed. de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2002), pp. 65–95 and Penetier and Pudal, 'Écrire son autobiographie (les autobiographies communistes d'institution)', *Genèses* 23 (June 1996), pp. 53–75.
82. This balance-sheet drawn up for the tenth anniversary of the ILS and cited in Köstenberger, 'Lenin-Schule', p. 302, does not give figures. A study of 160 British ILS students concludes that they played an important leadership role for a period in the 1930s, but much less later: Cohen and Morgan, 'Stalin's Sausage Machine'.

83. Köstenberger, 'Lenin-Schule', p. 303.
84. This description of what I take to be the fundamental principles of any 'total pedagogy' understood as the formation of the personality as a whole is based on the example of scouting. In enumerating these principles, Robert Baden-Powell distinguishes the education of the scout from the drill of the military (*Scouting Towards reconstruction*, 1917, cited in Hans E. Gerr, *Pfadfindererziehung. Baden-Powells Entwurf einer Erziehung durch Scouting. Einflüsse und Entwicklungstendenzen* (Baunach: Deutscher Spurbuchverlag, 1983), p. 141.
85. Michel Foucault, 'Why Study Power: In Quest of the Subject', in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester, 1982), p. 209.
86. It was in these terms that the 1933 purge was officially justified in the cadre schools: Alexander Vatlin, 'Kaderpolitik und Säuberungen in der Komintern', in Hermann Weber and Ulrich Mählert, eds, *Terror. Stalinistische Parteisäuberungen 1936–1953* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1998), p. 59.
87. Continuation of the personal balance-sheet of comrade Buch, at party meeting, KUMNZ, 10 April 1936 (in German), RGASPI 529/2/473.
88. On this development see Brigitte Studer, 'Liquidate the Errors or Liquidate the Person? Stalinist Party Practices as Techniques of the Self', in Studer and Heiko Haumann, eds, *Stalinist Subjects: Individual and System in the Soviet Union and the Comintern 1929–1953* (Zurich: Chronos, 2006), pp. 197–216.

6 The Party and the Private

1. Nor was this the case in the 1930s Soviet Union more generally, as witness the workers of Magnitogorsk, who denied that life could be divided into separate spheres, because for them, 'all was "public"', meaning that all that counted was their work and the factory (Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 218).
2. The ascendancy of public over private in early Soviet ideology has been the subject of a number of important studies, among them Vladimir Shlapentokh, *Public and Private Life of the Soviet People: Changing Values in Post-Stalin Russia* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Marc Garcelon, 'The Shadow of the Leviathan: Public and Private in Communist and Post-Communist Society', in Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar, eds, *Public and Private in Thought and Practice. Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 303–332; and especially Oleg Kharkhordin, 'Reveal and Dissimulate: A Genealogy of Private Life in Soviet Russia', in the same volume, pp. 333–364, and the same author's *The Collective and the Individual in Soviet Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). Kharkhordin has argued that Bolshevik cultural practices had religious roots, but the empirical evidence for this remains scant. Svetlana Boym relates the Bolshevik distrust of the private to the 'Russian soul' (*Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 73). I limit myself here to a more context-bound consideration of the way foreign party members spoke of private matters at party meetings.

3. Recommendations by the chairman of a party meeting of the German Section at the KUNMZ, minutes of Variant B of Sections A, 9 April 1935, RGASPI 529/2/454.
4. Cited in Vera Dunham, *In Stalin's Time: Middle Class Values in Soviet Fiction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 59.
5. Cited in Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd, eds, *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881–1940* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 281–282.
6. Communication of September 1938, RGASPI 546/1/418.
7. Jiri Weil, *Moskva-Ihranice* (Prague: Druzstevní práce, 1937); cited here from the German translation, *Moskau – Die Grenze* (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau Verlag, 1997), p. 195.
8. Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001) uses the term in connection with the Soviet nationality politics, but it could also be applied to the Soviet Union's encouragement of the professional advancement of women.
9. A hope that remained unfulfilled, however. Letter from Sophie Kirschbaum to Dimitrov, 21 August 1937, RGASPI 495/274/58.
10. This and other examples are to be found in Ulla Plener, 'Das Erleben der Frauenemanzipation im sowjetischen Exil: Erwartung – Erlebnis – Bruch', in Simone Barck, eds, *Jahrhundertsschicksale. Frauen im sowjetischen Exil* (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2003), pp. 84–93. All three fell victim to the repression, but survived.
11. Minutes of a meeting of the presidium of the Leningrad district committee of IRA (in Russian), 15 January 1935 and 2 February 1935, GARF, P-8265/3/35. Grigori Zinoviev was the now discredited ex-head of the Comintern, his name now deployed as criticism and insult.
12. Minutes of the closed party meeting held at eight o'clock in the evening in the Red Corner at the Lux, 1 June ? (illegible), RGASPI 546/1/232.
13. Margarete Buber-Neumann, *Von Potsdam nach Moskau. Stationen eines Irrweges* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1957), pp. 306–307.
14. Weil, *Moskau*, p. 225.
15. *Magnitogorsk*, Ilse Berend-Groa papers, SAAK, Rep. 023. IV. 1. a-c. Berend-Groa (1885–1972), who had studied music at university, also taught at the Karl Liebknecht School.
16. Berend-Groa, *Magnitogorsk*, pp. 2–3 and 6.
17. Berend-Groa, *Magnitogorsk*, p. 142.
18. Inge von Wangenheim, *Auf weitem Feld. Erinnerungen einer jungen Frau* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1954), p. 220.
19. RGASPI 529/2/454.
20. Here in KUNMZ, minutes of Variant B of Sections A, 9 April 1935, RGASPI 529/2/454.
21. KUNMZ, minutes of the meeting of the German section (in Russian), 27 March 1936, RGASPI 529/2/473.
22. Despite his statement, Jules Humbert-Droz lost his place as member of the political secretariat of ECCI for 'right opportunism'. In October 1931 he received permission to return to Switzerland to lead the Swiss CP. Statement to the Executive Committee of the Communist International (in French), 15 July 1929, RGASPI 495/18/738.

23. Communication of 13 January 1934, SAPMO I6/3/467, FC 151/473.
24. ILS, Resolution of the party meeting of Section JA, 31 August 1937 and 2 September 1937, RGASPI 495/187/198.
25. Extract from the minutes of the ICC meeting of 28 November 1937, RGASPI 495/187/198.
26. Ella Winter, *Red Virtue: Human Relationships in the New Russia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1933), p. 115. On her life and political stance (very close to the CPUSA) see Ros Pesman, 'Red Virtue: Ella Winter and the Soviet Union,' in Sheila Fitzpatrick and Carolyn Rasmussen, eds, *Political Tourists: Travellers from Australia to the Soviet Union in the 1920s–1940s* (Melbourne University Press, 2008), pp. 102–121.
27. Winter, *Red Virtue*, pp. 123–125.
28. Open party meeting of the A-UCP(b) cell at the Lux, 27 October 1933, RGASPI 546/1/226.
29. Purge meeting of the *partkom* of the Comintern, 22 October 1933, RGASPI 546/1/228.
30. 'Mezhrabpom' is short for *Mezhdunarodnaia rabochaia pomoshch'* (Workers International Relief). A first purge of *Mezhrabpom-Film* took place in 1930.
31. Extract from the minutes of the purge commission at *Mezhrabpom-Film* (no. 15), September 1933, RGASPI 538/3/156.
32. Minute no. 15 of the open party meeting for the cleansing of the party cell of the 'Red Front' sound film studio, September 1933, RGASPI 538/3/156.
33. Submission of V. A. Shanto to the *raion* commission for the cleansing of the Dzerzhinsky raion of the party, n.d. (1933) (in Russian), RGASPI 538/3/156.
34. The renowned director Boris Barnet (1902–1965).
35. Submission of V. A. Shanto, and minute no. 15 of the open party meeting for the cleansing of the party cell of the 'Red Front' sound film studio, September 1933, RGASPI 538/3/156.
36. Arvo Tuominen, *The Bells of the Kremlin: An Experience in Communism* (Hannover and London: University Press of New England, 1983), pp. 81–83.
37. Meeting on the main results of the school year for section JA, ILS, the case of Austrian student Holz, 17 June 1937, RGASPI 531/1/227.
38. Lise London, *Le Printemps des camarades* (Paris: Seuil, 1996), p. 169.
39. Minutes of the ECCI Secretariat on the Reorganization of the ECCI *apparat*, 2 October 1935, RGASPI 495/18/1020.
40. The term 'sexophobia' comes from Mark Banting, Catriona Kelly and James Riordan, 'Sexuality', in Kelly and David Shepherd, eds, *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 311–351, here p. 319; on Western communists' incomprehension of Soviet prudery, see also London, *Printemps*, pp. 157–161.
41. Buber-Neumann, *Potsdam*, p. 437.
42. Nelly Held, *Ohne Scham*, ed. Marianne Krumrey (Berlin: Brandenburgisches Verlagshaus, 1990), p. 124.
43. Ruth von Mayenburg, *Hotel Lux. Das Absteigequartier der Weltrevolution* (Munich: Piper, 1991 [1978]).
44. A. A. Solts, *Communist Ethics* (1922), in William G. Rosenberg, ed., *Bolshevik Visions: First Phase of the Cultural Revolution in Soviet Russia*, Vol. 1 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990 [1984]), p. 37.
45. On this see the extensive dossiers RGASPI 538/3/172, 174 and 175.

46. Globig was arrested in November 1937 but survived the camps.
47. Letter to Cde Stetsky from the *kult'prop* of the CC of the A-UCP(b), 5 April 1935, RGASPI 538/3/172. For Misiano's biography see Branko Lazitch and Milorad Drachkovitch, *Biographical Dictionary of the Comintern* (Stanford: The Hoover Institution Press, 1996), pp. 319–320.
48. This was communicated by Yezhov to the liquidator of the Workers International Relief, the Swiss communist Karl Hofmaier (Letters from Hofmaier to Piatnitsky, 3 July 1935, and to Dimitrov, 13 September 1935, in RGASPI 495/91/211). On this liquidation of WIR see Brigitte Studer, 'Ein Prozess in Rom und seine Wiederholung in Moskau. Der Fall des Schweizer Komintern-Instruktors Karl Hofmaier', *Jahrbuch für historische Kommunismusforschung* (1994), pp. 254–274.
49. The 'conciliators' were an internal opposition in the German Communist Party who in the late 1920s turned against the ultra-left 'social-fascist' policy. It was officially disbanded and some of its members expelled in 1930, but it continued to exist in secret. See the documents in *Engagements à travers le monde. Résistances, conciliations, diffamations. Archives de Jules Humbert-Droz vol. IV* (Zurich: Chronos, 2001), and the introduction by Bernhard Bayerlein.
50. Statements of 'Fritz Winter' to the *partkom* of the ECCI, 17 January 1935 and 9 February 1935, RGASPI 546/1/282.
51. Letter to the *partkom* of the ECCI, 29 January 1935, RGASPI 546/1/282.
52. Speech by André Marty to Section I of the ILS (in French), 23 November 1933, RGASPI 531/2/67. See too a letter from Konrad (Koni) Mayer to the Cadre Department regarding the Swiss communist Sophie Kirschbaum, 21 August 1936, RGASPI 495/274/58.
53. Minute no. 7 of the purge at the ILS, 1933, RGASPI 531/2/25.
54. Report of the Purge Commission, *iacheika sotrudnikov*, ILS, 25 November 1933, RGASPI 531/2/28; list of teachers and employees of the teaching department of ILS removed from the university register between 1 January 1934 and 1 May 1935 (in Russian), RGASPI 531/1/78.
55. Minutes of the closed meeting of the party collective at the ILS (in Russian), *delo* Raiskaia, 19 November 1937, RGASPI 531/2/45.
56. On this party trial and Magyar's biography see too Chapter 7, and the documents in Chase, *Enemies*, pp. 51–95.
57. Born in Halle in 1905, Abramowitz joined the German CP in 1919. From 1922 she worked as a secretary at the ECCI's German or Central European Secretariat in Moscow, then from 1928 at the Western European Bureau (WEB) in Berlin. In 1934 she emigrated to France with her companion Magyar, with whom she had a boy, and then to the Soviet Union. She was arrested in January 1935 and condemned to three years in camp and in 1945 to another ten years. She survived and died in the GDR in 1971. For her biographical data see *In den Fängen des NKWD. Deutsche Opfer des stalinistischen Terrors in der UdSSR*, edited by the Institut für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung (Berlin: Dietz, 1991), p. 23.
58. Minutes of the closed meeting of the *partkom* of the ECCI, 1 January 1935, RGASPI 546/1/272.
59. Ioulia Piatnitskaia, *Chronique d'une déraison. Moscou 1937–1938* (Paris: Seuil, 1992), p. 125.

60. Recollections of Martha Globig, SAPMO, 'Erinnerungsarchiv' EA 278, fol. 58.
61. Recollections of Martha Globig.
62. On this see Irina Scherbakowa, 'Die Denunziation im Gedächtnis und in Archivdokumenten', in Günter Jerouschek, Inge Marßolek and Hedwig Röckelein, eds, *Denunziation. Historische, juristische und psychologische Aspekte* (Tübingen: Edition Diskord, 1997), pp. 168–182.
63. Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Signals from Below: Soviet Letters of Denunciation of the 1930s', *Journal of Modern History* 68/4 (December 1996), pp. 831–866, here p. 849.
64. The case was different with non-relatives or personal enemies. See also the denunciations for misuse of power in Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 143–147 and François-Xavier Nérard, *Cinq pour cent de vérité. La dénonciation dans l'URSS de Staline* (Paris: Tallandier, 2004).
65. Discussion on the report by Cde. Iablonsky, ILS, 14 October 1933 (in French), RGASPI 531/2/67.
66. Werner Hirsch, On the cadre and personnel policy of the German CP. Materials concerning the case of David-Emel-Stauer, 25 August 1936 (in German), RGASPI 495/10/391.
67. Letter of 10 January 1937 in the cadre file on Richard Urban, RGASPI 495/187/2989.
68. RGASPI 495/293/118.
69. See for instance the letter from Dinu Bodrja to the Cadre Department, 31 October 1937 (in Russian), RGASPI 531/1/127.
70. Kirsanova came under accusation as a result of Stalin's direct recommendation to Dimitrov on 11 November 1937: *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov 1933–1949*. Introduced and edited by Ivo Banac (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 69. On 16 November 1937 Dimitrov writes that a resolution on the dismissals of Kirsanova and Elena Stasova was passed, p. 72.
71. Minutes of the closed Party meeting, ILS, 19 November 1937, *delo* Kirsanova, RGASPI 531/2/45.
72. Chugunov (Zhou Dawen) had studied at the Communist University of the Workers of the East and then at the Sun Yatsen Communist University. As a translator he had access to documentation and influential party bodies otherwise barred to all but high party functionaries. He died a victim of the Terror. See Karin-Irene Eiermann, *Chinesische Komintern-Delegierte in Moskau in den 1920er/1930er Jahren. Kommunikations- und Herrschaftsstrukturen im Zentrum der internationalen kommunistischen Bewegung* (Berlin: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2009), pp. 173–175.
73. Kirsanova was married to Iemelian Iaroslavsky, one of the authors of *The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, the notorious 'Short Course', whom she had met in exile, before the Bolshevik Revolution. While Iaroslavsky had fallen into disfavour in the early 1930s, he still managed to hold on to a series of jobs. In 1937, the Terror came perilously close, as not only was his wife accused and expelled from the Party, but his son-in-law was arrested and shot. See Sandra Dahlke, *Individuum und Herrschaft im Stalinismus: Emel'jan Jaroslavskij (1878–1943)* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag,

- 2010), pp. 15 and 401–432, and on his interrogation by the party more particularly, pp. 410–411.
74. Minutes of the closed Party meeting, ILS, 19 November 1937, *delo* Kirsanova, RGASPI 531/2/45.
 75. Kirsanova and her husband Iaroslavsky lived in the same building in *ulitsa Granovskogo* as her accuser Manuilsky, and they must have seen each other regularly: Dahlke, *Individuum*, p. 411.
 76. Cadre education and development files (in Russian): ILS, balance sheet of the purge, n.d., RGASPI 495/18/1147A.
 77. Party meeting of the Institute of World Economy and Politics, November–December 1938, TsAOD, 214/1/25.
 78. There are many examples of this. It happened to the two Austrian Communists Gabriele Waik and Herta Kaiser, to mention only two (G. Waik cadre file, RGASPI 495/187/2018 and H. Kaiser cadre file, RGASPI 495/187/2363). For further examples see Véronique Garros, Natalia Korenevskaya and Thomas Lahusen, eds, *Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries of the 1930s* (New York: New Press, 1995), pp. 354–358, and J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, eds, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932–1939* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 4–5.
 79. Minutes of the closed meeting of the *partkom* of the ECCL, 1 January 1935, RGASPI 546/1/272.
 80. Minutes of the closed meeting of the *partkom* of the ECCL.

7 From Comrades to Spies

1. Jirí Weil, *Moskva-hranice* (Prague: Družstevní práce, 1937); cited here from the German translation, *Moskau – Die Grenze* (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau Verlag, 1997), pp. 224–225.
2. Robert Tucker, *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1928–1941* (New York and London: Norton, 1990).
3. Victoria E. Bonnell, ‘The Iconography of the Worker in Soviet Political Art’, in Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds, *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class and Identity* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 341–375, here p. 372. On the changing meaning of ‘class’ see also Sheila Fitzpatrick, ‘Ascribing Class: The Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia’, *Journal of Modern History* 65:4 (December 1993), pp. 745–770.
4. Gábor Tamás Rittersporn, ‘The Omnipresent Conspiracy: On Soviet Imagery of Politics and Social Relations in the 1930s’, in Nick Lampert and Rittersporn, eds, *Stalinism: Its Nature and Aftermath. Essays in Honour of Moshe Lewin* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 101–120 vividly describes the spread of conspiracy imagery in the 1930s. My focus here is restricted to the effects of party policies on the foreign communists. For references see n. 6, Chapter 4.
5. Cited in *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)* (Moscow: International Publishers, 1939), p. 327.
6. The dominant interpretation in recent years, of which Oleg Khlevniuk is one of the main representatives, imputes the Terror to the threat of foreign

- spies and enemies associated with the coming war. This reading has been substantiated by the discovery of the ominous NKVD Directive No. 00439 of 25 July 1937 regarding the so-called ‘German Operation’, which saw the imprisonment of more than 70,000 Germans and Soviet Germans. While older views concentrated on the elimination of Stalin’s political opponents, another interpretation reads the mass repression as a means to restore social order in accordance with a police logic. See in particular David R. Shearer, *Policing Stalin’s Socialism: Repression and Social Order in the Soviet Union, 1924–1953* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009) and Paul Hagenloh, *Stalin’s Police: Public Order and Mass Repression in the USSR, 1926–1941* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).
7. For this party trial and the case of Magyar see William J. Chase, *Enemies Within the Gates? The Comintern and the Stalinist Repression, 1934–1939* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 51–95, as well as the further discussion below and also Chapter 6.
 8. On this opposition group in the German CP see n. 49, Chapter 6.
 9. Shearer, *Policing*.
 10. See Chapter 4.
 11. Hagenloh, *Stalin’s Police*; Shearer, *Policing*.
 12. On the switch from a multinational approach that placed strict limits on Russian preponderance to the creation of ‘mono-nationally’ Russian *oblasti* (districts) in the USSR see Terry Martin, ‘The Russification of the RSFSR’, *Cahiers du monde russe* 39 (1998) pp. 1–2, 99–118.
 13. Benjamin Nathans, ‘Soviet Rights-Talk in the Post-Stalin Era’, in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, ed., *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 166–190, here p. 171.
 14. On the ambivalence of this dramatic year in which the Great Terror reached its peak see the social historical panoramic reconstruction of life in the Soviet capital in 1937: Karl Schlögel, *Moscow, 1937* (Boston: Polity, 2012).
 15. Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931–1941* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2011).
 16. Clark, *Moscow*, p. 8.
 17. Clark, *Moscow*, pp. 10 and 77.
 18. See Chapter 4.
 19. 9 April 1932, RGASPI 495/4/182, cited in Alexander Vatin, ‘Kaderpolitik und Säuberungen in der Komintern’, in Hermann Weber and Ulrich Mähler, eds, *Terror. Stalinistische Parteisäuberungen 1936–1953* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1998), pp. 33–119, here p. 50. These directives were probably forwarded to the Communist parties in June: see Draft of a letter from the ECCI to individual parties on settlement in the Soviet Union and transfer to the A-UCP(b) of members of the sister parties, 31 May 1932, RGASPI 17/98/23.
 20. Minute no. 13 of the meeting of the purge commission of the German section of the KUNMZ, 3 November 1933, RGASPI 529/2/370.
 21. Letter from Brand (that is Schubert or Schulte) to Heckert, 10 June 1933, RGASPI 495/292/64, cited in Carola Tischler, *Flucht in die Verfolgung. Deutsche Emigranten im sowjetischen Exil 1933–1945* (Münster: Lit.-Verlag, 1996), p. 19.

22. Resolution of the Secretariat (of the Executive Committee of the Communist International) on political emigration, 8 February 1936, RGASPI 495/20/811.
23. O politmigratsii, Postanovlenie politkomissii, 15 February 1933, RGASPI 495/4/231, cited in Tischler, *Flucht*, p. 9. The adoption of Soviet citizenship was also proposed to those who were not recognized as political emigrants, as for example in the case of Susanne Leonhard (meeting of the MOPR Authentication Commission, Minute no. 21, 13 July 1935, GARF P-8265/4/46).
24. On this see the minutes of the meeting of the MOPR Authentication Commission, GARF P-8265/4/46. On the grant of emigration and exit permits in the years 1936–1939 see also Brigitte Studer, *Un parti sous influence. Le Parti communiste suisse, une section du Komintern, 1931 à 1939* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1994), pp. 277–279.
25. It should be noted that it was impossible for Russians married to Western Communists to leave the country with their spouses. Having worked for the Comintern until 1935, Edgar Woog had to leave his wife in Moscow when he returned to Switzerland. In a letter of 1937, she told him that she had even had to promise not to make another request for a visa before 1940. They would never meet again. See Studer, *Un parti*, pp. 726–727.
26. Cited in Jeffrey Brooks, *'Thank You, Comrade Stalin!' Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 151.
27. Letter from Manuilsky to Yezhov, 3 January 1936, RGASPI 495/18/1047, published in Vatlin, *Kaderpolitik*, pp. 99–101 and Chase, *Enemies*, pp. 105–107.
28. Administrative Order no. 112 from Director Samsonov, Appointment of a Special Commissioner, 22 June 1935, RGASPI 538/3/175. Made in 1935–1936, *Fighters (Bor'tsy)*, by the German director Gustav von Wangenheim (1895–1975), dealt with the growing resistance to National Socialism in Germany. The Dutch director Joris Ivens (1898–1989), who also worked on it, lived in the Soviet Union between 1934 and 1936. In 1931–1932 he had completed a film about a young worker in Magnitogorsk, whose lead actor, the German Bruno Schmidtsdorf, would later be arrested.
29. One visible result of this is that the proportion of Russian-language documents in the Comintern archive increases ever faster throughout the 1930s.
30. Instructor Cde. Evrenov at the meeting of the Char'kov Schutzbund collective on 17 August 1935, GARF 5451/19/585, copy made available by Barry McLoughlin, Vienna.
31. There were however exceptions. Johannes Becher, editor in chief of *Internationale Literatur. Deutsche Blätter* from 1936 to 1945, categorically refused to learn Russian, so as to avoid it affecting his German (Clark, *Moscow*, p. 162).
32. Vatlin, *Kaderpolitik*, p. 52.
33. Mauno Heimo (responsible for the Comintern's administration and deputy head of the organization from 1932), Proposals for the Politcommission, 11 June 1932, RGASPI 495/4/413.
34. Mauno Heimo, Proposals for the Politcommission.
35. For what follows see Chase, *Enemies*, pp. 48–96. The acceleration of the spiral of repression can be seen in one of the few statistics available for the ICC.

- Of the 1,114 cases it sanctioned in the period 1924–1936 (first quarter), one third fell in the years 1934 and '35. By national origin, the German and Polish parties are most strongly represented, with 132 and 97 cases respectively, while the British party has only 12 (RGASPI 495/20/811/21 and 22).
36. Comintern personnel came up directly against Soviet party practices in the A-UCP(b)'s party committee (*partkom*) at the ECCI. It was this that held the 'purge meetings', too. See the papers of the A-UCP(b) party committee (*partkom*) at the ECCI in Fonds 546, RGASPI.
 37. Lajos or Ludwig Magyar (his real name being Lajos Milgorf) (1891–1937) had worked as a journalist for TASS and as head of the ROSTA bureau in Berlin and later in Shanghai. He returned to Moscow in 1927 and worked with Kuusinen in the Eastern Department of the Comintern. Between 1931 and 1933 he was sent on a mission to Germany and France, but was later recalled to the USSR. He was arrested in December 1934 and condemned as a 'Conciliator'. His arrest drew in a broader circle, and his wife too was arrested and condemned. See Chapter 6. His case is extensively documented in Chase, *Enemies*, pp. 51–95.
 38. Decision of the Secretariat on the transfer of members of sister parties to the A-UCP(b), 29 and 30 December 1935, RGASPI 495/18/1039, cited and reproduced in Vatlin, *Kaderpolitik*, pp. 62, 65 and 98.
 39. Letter from Manuilsky to Yezhov, 3 January 1936, RGASPI 495/18/1047, published in Vatlin, *Kaderpolitik*, pp. 99–101 and Chase, *Enemies*, pp. 105–107.
 40. Resolution of the ECCI Secretariat on the obligations of the Cadre Department with regard to émigrés (in Russian), 3 March 1936, published in Chase, *Enemies*, pp. 130–131. The German version is dated 7 March 1936, RGASPI 495/18/1073.
 41. Decision of the Presidium of the ECCI and the Bureau of the International Control Commission of the CI, 25 August 1936 (in Russian), RGASPI 495/20/760, published in Vatlin, *Kaderpolitik*, pp. 108–109.
 42. Decision of the Presidium of the ECCI and the Bureau of the International Control Commission of the CI, 25 August 1936.
 43. Letter from Manuilsky to Yezhov (head of the NKVD), Andreev (Secretary of the CC of the A-UCP(b)), and Shkiriakov (member of the party control commission of the CC of the A-UCP(b)) with proposals for the tightening up of transfer rules, 1 April 1937, RGASPI 523/1/66, published in Vatlin, *Kaderpolitik*, pp. 110–111.
 44. Letter from Slutsky (NKVD) to the CC of the A-UCP(b), 3 April 1933, RGASPI 17/98/23.
 45. Letter from Manuilsky to Yezhov, Andreev, and Shkiriakov, 1 April 1937, RGASPI 523/1/66, published in Vatlin, *Kaderpolitik*, 110–111.
 46. For a conspectus of the victims of the repression at the Comintern see Pierre Broué, *Histoire de l'Internationale communiste, 1919–1943* (Paris: Fayard, 1997), pp. 707–733; on the German victims, Hermann Weber, 'Weisse Flecken' in *der Geschichte. Die KPD-Opfer der Stalinschen Säuberungen und ihre Rehabilitierung* (Frankfurt am Main: ISP-Pocket, 1990); on the Poles see Svetlana Rosental, 'Repressionen gegen polnische und britische Kommunisten', in Michael Buckmiller and Klaus Meschkat, eds, *Biographisches Handbuch zur Geschichte*

- der Kommunistischen Internationale. Ein deutsch-russisches Forschungsprojekt* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2007), pp. 346–360.
47. ECCI document consequent upon the February-March plenum of the CC of the A-UCP(b), 14 May 1937, RGASPI 495/18/1191.
 48. Letter from Manuilsky to Yezhov, Andreev, and Shkiriatov, 1 April 1937, RGASPI 523/1/66, published in Vatlin, *Kaderpolitik*, 110–111.
 49. ECCI directive on the campaign of enlightenment in connection with the trial of the ‘Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites’, 22 March 1938 (original in English), RGASPI 495/20/751, published in Vatlin, *Kaderpolitik*, pp. 111–114 (in German) and Chase, *Enemies*, pp. 295–298.
 50. Letter from Remmele to Manuilsky, 26 July 1936, RGASPI 495/293/118, published in Vatlin, *Kaderpolitik*, pp. 101–105.
 51. The VEGAAR was established as a Comintern institution in 1931, with around 40 national sections. It was chiefly responsible for the *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe*, but it also published translations of novels, stories and poetry.
 52. This German-language newspaper was founded in Moscow in 1926. It appeared daily between 1933 and 1939, its print-run in the 1930s being around 40,000.
 53. The available studies of the German artistic emigration and its fate are now quite dated: see David Pike, *German writers in Soviet exile, 1933–1945* (University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Klaus Jarmatz, Simone Bark and Peter Diezel, *Exil in der UdSSR. Kunst und Literatur im antifaschistischen Exil 1933–1945*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Reclam, 1979).
 54. On the last years of this school and the repression see Natalja Mussienko and Alexander Vatlin, *Schule der Träume: die Karl-Liebknecht-Schule in Moskau (1924–1938)* (Stuttgart: Julius Klinkhardt Verlagsbuchhandlung, 2005), pp. 155–167. On the so-called ‘Hitler Youth Conspiracy’, see Hans Schafranek, ‘Kontingentierte “Volksfeinde” und “Agenturarbeit”’, *Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* 1 (2001), pp. 1–76.
 55. Julia Köstenberger, ‘Die Internationale Lenin-Schule (1926–1938)’, in Buckmiller and Meschkat, *Handbuch*, pp. 287–309, pp. 305–306.
 56. Köstenberger, ‘Lenin-Schule’, p. 307.
 57. Letter from Kolarov to the ECCI Secretariat, 29 October 1935, RGASPI 495/18/1028.
 58. On the streamlining of the Comintern apparatus see Minute (A) no. 5 of the meeting of the ECCI Secretariat, 2 October 1935, RGASPI 495/18/1020, published in Brigitte Studer, ‘Die Kominternstruktur nach dem 7. Weltkongress. Das Protokoll des Sekretariats des EKKI über die Reorganisierung des Apparates des EKKI, 2. Oktober 1935’, *Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* 31:1 (March 1995), pp. 25–53, at pp. 28–29.
 59. Decisions concerning the Cadre Department (draft), 8 February 1936 (in German), RGASPI 495/20/811, adopted by the ECCI on 11 February 1936; Studer, ‘Kominternstruktur’.
 60. Leonid Babicenko, ‘Die Moskvin-Kommission. Neue Einzelheiten zur politisch-organisatorischen Struktur der Komintern in der Repressionsphase’,

- The International Newsletter of Historical Studies on Comintern, Communism and Stalinism* II (1994/1995), No. 5/6, pp. 35–39.
61. The Presidium confirmed his dismissal from the ECCI on 3 July 1938: Minute no. 28, RGASPI 495/2/264.
 62. Fridrich I. Firsov, 'Die Säuberungen im Apparat der Komintern', in Hermann Weber et al., eds, *Kommunisten verfolgen Kommunisten. Stalinistischer Terror und 'Säuberungen' in den kommunistischen Parteien Europas seit den dreißiger Jahren* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1993), pp. 37–51, here p. 47.
 63. 'Dietrich' to the CC of the KPD and the German Delegation to the ECCI, 'Material zur Information', 29 April 1938, RGASPI 495/292/101; see also Tischler, *Flucht*, p. 101. This suggests a figure of around 2,800 of the KPD's estimated 4,000 émigré members in the USSR.
 64. Firsov, 'Säuberungen', pp. 49–50.
 65. Wladislaw Hedeler, 'Die Präsenz staatlicher Gewalt inmitten einer urbanen Umwelt. Das Beispiel Moskau', in Karl Schlögel et al., eds, *Mastering Russian Spaces: Raum und Raumbewältigung als Probleme der russischen Geschichte* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2011), pp. 199–252, here p. 214.
 66. János M. Rainer, *Imre Nagy. Vom Parteisoldaten zum Märtyrer des ungarischen Volksaufstandes. Eine politische Biographie 1896–1958* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2006), pp. 48–51.
 67. Sergei Zhuravlev, 'Malen'kie liudi i "bol'shaia istoriia". *Inostrantsy Moskovskogo Elektroavoda v sovetskom obshchestve 1920-kh-1930-kh gg'* (Moskva: Rosspen, 2000), p. 333.
 68. Jelka Urban to Moskvina, 14 April 1938, RGASPI 495/187/2989.
 69. That is how Ruth von Mayenburg called the Hotel Lux in the subtitle of her reminiscences: *Hotel Lux. Das Absteigequartier der Weltrevolution* (Munich: Piper, 1991 [1978]).
 70. Minutes of the meeting of the KPD politburo, 22 June 1937, SAPMO, Zentrales Parteiarchiv der KPD, Politbüro I/2/3/20.
 71. Shorthand record of the party meeting of Group 2 of Course 1 at the KUNMZ, 25 March 1936 and 10 April 1936 (German), RGASPI 529/2/473.
 72. Minutes of the party meeting of Section JA of ILS, 27 February 1937, RGASPI 495/187/3003.
 73. Receiving neither a passport nor a residence permit from the Soviet authorities, Elisabeth Weinert, for example, had to apply to the German embassy, and her Communist affiliation would have been evident had she ever had to return home. See the letter from Walter Dittbender (Head of the Office for German Émigrés) to Elena Stasova (President of the MOPR), 5 November 1937, GARF, P-8265/4/58. Others, like Klara Blum in 1935, had their status as political emigrants recognized (Minutes of the meeting of the Authentication Commission (*legitimatsionnaia*), 23 July 1935, GARF 8265/4/46).
 74. Some 150 of the Schutzbündler, for example, returned voluntarily to Austria between 1934 and 1938, followed by 60 more between 1939 and 1941. 160 joined the International Brigades, and 200–250 fell victim to the NKVD (Barry McLoughlin and Hans Schafranek, 'Die österreichische Emigration in die UdSSR bis 1938', in Traude Horvath and Gerda Neyer, eds, *Auswanderungen aus Österreich* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1996), pp. 163–185, here p. 177).
 75. 'Material zur Information', 29 April 1938, RGASPI 495/292/101.
 76. This observation is not of course limited to the Comintern milieu. On the anxieties of individuals in wider Soviet society see Orlando Figes, *The*

- Whisperers; Private life in Stalin's Russia* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin Books, 2007), in particular the chapter 'The Great Fear (1937–1938)', pp. 227–315.
77. See Chapter 6.
 78. Wolfgang Ruge, *Gelobtes Land. Meine Jahre in Stalins Sowjetunion* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2002), p. 85.
 79. Letter from Huber (that is Schwarz Müller) to Stalin, Molotov, Beria, Vishinsky, Dimitrov, Manuïlsky and Pieck, 23 April 1939, RGASPI 495/74/139.
 80. *Die Säuberung. Moskau 1936: Stenogramm einer geschlossenen Parteiversammlung*, ed. Reinhard Müller (Reinbek b. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1991), p. 422.
 81. 14 September 1933, RGASPI 546/1/214.
 82. See for example the 'Advice' to comrades summing up the Comintern Cadre Department purge of 1936 in connection with Cdes Brun and Eisenberger, n.d., RGASPI 546/1/335.
 83. Rosental, 'Repressionen', p. 359. See also Barry McLoughlin, 'Visitors and Victims: British Communists in Russia between the Wars', in Alan McIlroy, Kevin Morgan and Alan Campbell, eds, *Party People – Communist Lives: Explorations in Biography* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2001), pp. 222–223.
 84. Sergei B. Zhuravlev and V. Tiazel'nikova, 'Inostrannaia koloniia v Sovetskoi Rossii v 1920–1930e gody', *Otechestvennaia istoriia* (1994) 1, pp. 179–190, here pp. 188–189.
 85. This was raikom-secretary Fedorov at a meeting of the *lenobkom* of the MOPR, 2 February 1935, GARF P-8265/3/35.
 86. Minutes of the meeting of the party organization at the Institute of World Economy and Politics in the Kiev-raion of Moscow, January 1936, TsAOD 214/1/14.
 87. Lilli Beer-Jergitsch, '18 Jahre in der UdSSR', typescript (Vienna, 1978), p. 32, DÖW Exil 8834.
 88. Not just the party leadership but also that of the Comintern, as well as foreigners generally, were seen by the population as a privileged elite (see Sarah Davies, 'Us Against Them: Social Identity in Soviet Russia, 1934–1941', *The Russian Review* 56:1 (1997), pp. 70–89). The Soviet party leadership, and Stalin in particular, must have exploited these popular feelings in order to get rid of the now burdensome foreigners.
 89. Letter from the German Communist 'Franz Huber' (i.e. Schwarz Müller) to Stalin, Molotov, Beria, Vyshinsky, Dimitrov, Manuïlsky and Pieck, 23 April 1939, RGASPI 495/74/139.
 90. 'Dietrich' (Jäkel) to the CC of the KPD and the German Delegation to the ECCI, 29 April 1938, RGASPI 495/292/101.
 91. 26 March 1938, RGASPI 495/10a/391.
 92. Meinhard Stark, *Wenn Du willst Deine Ruhe haben, schweige'. Deutsche Frauenbiographien des Stalinismus* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 1991), p. 100.
 93. Margarete Buber-Neumann, *Von Potsdam nach Moskau. Stationen eines Irrweges* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1957), pp. 411–413. See too the account of a return to Moscow in late 1936 in Elisabeth K. Poretski, *Les nôtres. Essai* (Paris: Denoël, 1969), esp. pp. 178–179.
 94. Jules Humbert-Droz, *Dix ans de lutte antifasciste, 1931–1941* (Neuchâtel: Baconnière, 1972), pp. 234–235.
 95. Quoted in Annette Wiewiorka, *Maurice et Jeannette. Biographie du couple Thorez* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), p. 281.

96. Minutes of the meeting of the *partkom* of the Institute of World Economy (in Russian), 28 September 1937, TsAOD 214/1/18.
97. As we know today, a fourth show trial was apparently being planned, this time focussing on the Comintern. See Boris Starkov, 'The Trial that Was Not Held', *Europe-Asia Studies* 46:8 (1994), pp. 1297–1315; Reinhard Müller, 'Der Fall des 'Antikomintern-Blocks' – Ein vierter Moskauer Schauprozess?', *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung* (1996), pp. 187–214. Later the idea of foreign infiltration was attributed to those around Moskvina and Yezhov, after these had been 'exposed as enemies' (note of discussion between Stella Blagoeva, Elisabet M. Privorotskaia (both leading members of the Cadre Department) and Abakumov (then ad interim head of the NKVD,) 13 April 1939, RGASPI 546/1/418).
98. Letter to Jenny, 2 February 1937, published in Humbert-Droz, *Dix ans*, p. 193.
99. Herbert Wehner, *Zeugnis* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1982), p. 189.
100. Mayenburg, *Hotel Lux*, p. 67.
101. Wolfgang Leonhard, *Die Revolution entläßt ihre Kinder* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1990 [1955]), p. 277. This passage has been omitted from the English translation, *Child of the Revolution*.

8 Epilogue

1. Natalia Lebedeva and Mikhail Narinsky, 'Dissolution of the Comintern in 1943', in *Centre and Periphery: The History of the Comintern in the Light of New Documents*, ed. Mikhail Narinsky and Jürgen Rojahn (Amsterdam: IISG, 1996), pp. 153–162, here p. 153.
2. Lebedeva and Narinsky, 'Dissolution', p. 155.
3. Lebedeva and Narinsky, 'Dissolution', p. 155.
4. Silvio Pons, 'Stalin and the European Communists after World War Two (1943–1948)', *Past and Present*, Supplement 6 (2011), pp. 121–138, here p. 122.
5. On the Liaison Service and its operation during the early years of the war see the introduction to Bernhard H. Bayerlein, Mikhail Narinski, Brigitte Studer and Serge Wolikow (eds), *Moscou – Paris – Berlin. Télégrammes chiffrés du Komintern (1939–1941)* (Paris: Tallandier, 2003), pp. 24–27.
6. Minutes of the ECCI Secretariat, 11 July 1942, RGASPI, 495/18/1338.
7. Lebedeva and Narinsky, 'Dissolution', p. 158.
8. Cited in Pons, 'Stalin', p. 134.
9. Yves Cohen, 'Circulatory Localities. The example of Stalinism in the 1930s', *Kritika* 11:1 (2010), pp. 11–45, here p. 15.
10. Brigitte Studer, 'More Autonomy for the National Sections? The Reorganization of the ECCI after the 7th World Congress', in Narinsky and Rojahn, *Centre*, pp. 102–113.
11. See *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov, 1933–1949*, ed. Ivo Banac (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).
12. Brigitte Studer, *Un parti sous influence. Le Parti communiste suisse, une section du Komintern, 1931 à 1939* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1994), pp. 226–230.
13. The proceedings are available in a bilingual Russian-English edition, *The Cominform: Minutes of the Three Conferences 1947/1948/1949*, ed. Giuliano

- Procacci et al. (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1994); see pp. 225–233 for the theory of the ‘two camps’. A first study of the Cominform drawing on the Russian archives is Grant Adibekov, *Kominform i poslevoennaia Evropa, 1947–1956 gg* (Moskva: Rossiia Molodaia, 1994), also available in German translation: Bernhard H. Bayerlein and Jürgen Mothes (eds), *Das Kominform und Stalins Neuordnung Europas* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002). Adibekov reports that Stalin formulated the ‘two camps’ theory and considered a new way of ensuring the international coordination of the communist parties immediately after the war (*Kominform*, p. 54).
14. See in particular *Cominform*, pp. 253–263.
 15. Kevin Morgan, Gideon Cohen and Andrew Flinn, *Communists and British Society 1920–1991* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 2007), p. 224.
 16. Pons, ‘Stalin’, pp. 125–126.
 17. Marc Lazar, ‘Unité et crises des PC Ouest-Européens 1947–1960’, *Communismes* 29–30 (1991), pp. 29–43.
 18. The image comes from Bernard Pudal, *Un monde défait. Les communistes français de 1956 à nos jours* (Bellecombe-en-Bauges: Editions du Croquant, 2009).
 19. See Pudal, *Un monde*, pp. 187–210.
 20. For an example of the continuing use of the party biography for purposes of control and selection after the war see Ioana Cîrstocea, ‘“Soi-même comme un autre”. L’individu aux prises avec l’encadrement biographique communiste (Roumanie, 1960–1970)’, in Claude Pernetier and Bernard Pudal, eds, *Le sujet communiste. Identités militantes et laboratoires du ‘moi’* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2014), pp. 59–78. For its usage for commemorative ends see Mauro Boarelli, *La fabbrica del passato. Autobiografie di militanti comunisti (1945–1956)*, (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2007).
 21. Philip Cooke, ‘Red Spring: Italian Political Emigration to Czechoslovakia’, *The Journal of Modern History* 84:4 (2012), pp. 861–896.
 22. Cited in Christa Uhlig, ‘“Es gäbe hierzu viel zu berichten ...”. Pädagoginnen im sowjetischen Exil’, in Simone Barck et al. (eds), *Jahrhundertschicksale. Frauen im sowjetischen Exil* (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2003), pp. 94–113, here p. 106.

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Other archives consulted in Moscow were the Central Archive of Social Movements (TsAOD) and the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF); in Berlin, the Archive of the Parties and Mass Organisations of the GDR (SAPMO) and the Archive of the Academy of Art (SAAK), both at the German Federal Archives; in Vienna, the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW); and in Bern, the Swiss Federal Archives.

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