

**Sergei Stepanovich Chakhotin**  
**A Russian Taylorist in Berlin 1922-1926<sup>1</sup>**

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The Russian cell-biologist, Pavlovian, Taylorist and pioneer in the methodology of political agitation and propaganda, Sergei Stepanovich Chakhotin (1883 – 1973) is best known in the intellectual history of Russia as the author of “To Canossa!”, a manifesto of the *Smena vekh* group of émigré intellectuals who, in 1921, summoned their compatriots to reconciliation with the Soviet régime.<sup>2</sup>

The political outlook of *Smena vekh* group has been described as “National Bolshevism” and the need to reinstate Russia as a “great power” on the world stage was certainly a recurrent theme in the Paris-based weekly journal *Smena vekh* (29 October 1921 -25 March 1922).<sup>3</sup> However, as Hilde Hardeman has pointed out, when *Smena vekh* was replaced by the Berlin-based daily newspaper *Nakanune* (26 March 1922 – 15 June 1924) appeals to Russian nationalism, whilst they did not disappear, became less strident and the political orientation of the paper moved to the left.<sup>4</sup> This shift in policy broadly coincided with the removal from the editorial board of the

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Eugène and Pierre Tchakhotine for granting access to their father’s archive and for making available his autobiography, *Un Phare me guidait. Un savant et penseur Russe avant, pendant et après la Révolution : Quatre-vingts ans d’histoire vécue*.

<sup>2</sup> *Smena vekh: Sbornik statei* (Prague, *Nasha rech*’, 1921). The authors of the six essays, in addition to Chakhotin, were Yurii Venyaminovich Klyuchnikov, Nikolai Vasilievich Ustryalov, Sergei Sergeevich Lukyanov, Alexander Vladimirovich Bobrishchev-Pushkin and Yurii Nikolaevich Potekhin. On the history of *Smena vekh*, see Robert C. Williams, ‘Changing Landmarks in Russian Berlin, 1922-1924’, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (December, 1968) and *Culture in Exile. Russian Emigrés in Germany 1881-1941* (Ithica and London, 1972); Jane Burbank, *Intelligentsia and Revolution: Russian views of Bolshevism 1917-1922* (Oxford, 1989); Hilde Hardeman, *Coming to terms with the Soviet régime: The “Changing signposts” movement among Russian émigrés in the early 1920s* (Northern Illinois University Press, 1994); A.V.Kvakin, *Mezhdubelymi i krasnymi. Russkaya intelligentsiya 1920-1920 godov v poiskakh Tret’ego Puti* (Moscow, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> See Mikhail Agursky, *The Third Rome. National Bolshevism in the USSR* (Boulder and London, 1986); and the introduction to Kvakin, *op.cit.* (2006). The core group of the newspaper *Smena vekh* consisted of Klyuchnikov, Lukyanov, Bobrishchev-Pushkin and Potekhin. See Hardeman, *op.cit.*, p.133

<sup>4</sup> See Hardeman, *op.cit.* (1994), Ch. 6. The nature and extent of the subsidization of *Smena vekh* and *Nakanune* by the Soviet Commissariat for Foreign Affairs have been well documented in A.V.Kvakin, *op.cit.*

former Cadets, Klyuchnikov and Potekhin and a marginalizing of the most reactionary exponent of the nationalist viewpoint, Ustryalov, another former Cadet.<sup>5</sup> From 23 August 1922 the board comprised Grigorii Lvovich Kirdetsov, Boris Vyacheslavovich Duchesne (editors-in-chief) with Lukyanov, Chakhotin and Pavel Abramovich Sadyker as co-editors. Of these, Kirdetsov was leftward leaning, Duchesne had been elected as a Socialist Revolutionary delegate to the Constituent Assembly in 1918, Chakhotin was a socialist,<sup>6</sup> and Sadyker, the paper's business manager, seems to have had little influence over editorial policy. Lukyanov, who had only briefly belonged to the Cadet Party, was the only "liberal" carried over from the editorial board of the Paris journal. Bobrishchev-Pushkin, a former Octobrist, continued as a contributor but was no longer an editor.<sup>7</sup>

It would be a mistake to interpret the change in editorial policy as merely a bowing to the requirements of Soviet domestic and foreign policy, even if the Soviet diplomatic representative in Germany, Nikolai Nikolaevich Krestinsky, did play his part in the ousting of Klyuchnikov and Potekhin. Each of the members of *Smena vekh* had found his own way to "Canossa" and there were genuine political disagreements, as well as personality conflicts, within the group.<sup>8</sup> Whereas Russia's messianic destiny, the role of the *ancien régime* intelligentsia, and the need for a property-owning peasantry had been prominent themes in *Smena vekh*, the new editors of *Nakanune* brought to the fore the idea that the Bolsheviks' dictatorship was evolving into a "labour democracy" or "labour state". The intelligentsia that had been a caste apart, they argued, was being

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<sup>5</sup> Ustryalov between 1920 and 1934 was based in Kharbin and contributed to the movement from afar. When Lenin uttered his warning at the Eleventh Congress of the RKP(b) on 27 March 1922 that "*Smena Vekh* expresses the outlook of thousands and tens of thousands of bourgeois or of Soviet employees whose function it is to operate our New Economic Policy", he identified *Smenovekhovstvo* with the views of Ustryalov. To this extent Ustryalov was a liability. See Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (hereinafter PSS), Vol. 45 (Moscow, 1964), pp.67-116.

<sup>6</sup> Chakhotin is mistakenly described as a "Cadet" in Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution. Russia's continuum of crisis 1914-1921* (Cambridge and London, 2002), pp. 48, 105, 212, 223.

<sup>7</sup> From № 144 (1922) the editorial board of *Nakanune* consisted of B.V.Duchesne (Б.В.Дюшен), G.L.Kirdetsov (Г.Л.Кирдецов) (Editor in chief),"with the closest participation" of S.S.Lukyanov (С.С.Лукьянов), P.A.Sadyker (П.А.Садыкер) and S.S.Chakhotin (С.С.ЧАХОТИН). From issue № 450 (1923) Kirdetsov left the board. Biographical data with the exception of material on Chakhotin, have been taken from Hardeman *op.cit.* (1994) and A.V.Kvakin *op.cit.* (2006).

<sup>8</sup> Kirdetsov, In *Nakanune* of 22 July 1922 dissociated the "left-wing" of *Smenovekhovstvo* from the views of Ustryalov and implied that Klyuchnikov and Potekhin shared the latter's views. See Hardeman, *op.cit.* (1994), p.149.

succeeded by a “labour intelligentsia” (“*trudovaya intelligentsiya*”), an active social force that unlike its predecessor, was capable of bringing about social and economic recovery.<sup>9</sup>

The editorial board’s most accomplished theorist of the “labour state” was Sergei Stepanovich Chakhotin. Drawing upon the work of Western, and, in particular, German experts on “scientific management”, Chakhotin had by 1922 formulated his own “neo-Taylorist” programme for the reconstruction of Russia. It was not nationalism but his belief that the Bolsheviks shared his commitment to scientific management that persuaded Chakhotin to make the journey to “Canossa”.

### **A Taylorist in war and revolution**

A student in the Medical Faculty of Moscow University, Chakhotin had, in 1902, been arrested for participating in political protest, held for almost six months in the Butyrki Prison and expelled from the University. Following intercession by his father, a diplomat, he had been released on the understanding that he would leave Russia.<sup>10</sup> Following years of study of medicine and the natural sciences in the universities of Berlin, Munich and Heidelberg, Chakhotin obtained a doctorate in Zoology in the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics of the University of Heidelberg in 1907. Between 1907 and 1909 he worked in marine biological research laboratories in Messina<sup>11</sup>, Naples, Villefranche sur Mer, Trieste, Heligoland and Monaco and during the years 1909-1912 he worked on the design and construction of an apparatus for micro-beam surgery on the living cell, utilizing ultra-violet rays.<sup>12</sup> In 1912 Chakhotin’s achievements in this field earned him an invitation from Ivan Petrovich Pavlov to work as his assistant in the Laboratory of Physiology of the Imperial

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<sup>9</sup> See Hardeman, *op.cit.* (1994), pp.153-155, citing articles in *Nakanune* by Kirdetsov and Duschene.

<sup>10</sup> On this episode, see M.Yu. Sorokina, ““V Kanossu!” ili kak Sergei Chakhotin vernulsya na rodinu’, *Priroda* (2007), No.3.

<sup>11</sup> Chakhotin was seriously injured in the Messina earthquake. See his account, ‘Pod razvalinami Messiny’, published as *Sotto le Macerie di Messina* (Intilla Editore, Messina, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> “In 1911 I invented and constructed the first micromanipulator and in 1912, in Genoa, a method and apparatus for operating on the cell utilizing ultraviolet rays.” See M.Yu. Sorokina, *op.cit.* (2007), No.3. p.70.

Academy of Sciences in St.Petersburg. Chakhotin worked under Pavlov until 1918, from time to time travelling to Western Europe for research purposes.<sup>13</sup>

The ideas of Pavlov were to exercise a major influence on Chakhotin's social thought.<sup>14</sup> However, even before the First World War Chakhotin had also become a disciple of Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1915).<sup>15</sup> During the World War and the revolutions of 1917 he developed a theory of agitation and propaganda that drew upon the ideas of both Pavlov and Taylor. During 1915 and 1916 he organized a Committee for Military-Technical Assistance (*Komitet Voенno-Tekhnicheskoi Pomoshchi - KOVOTEP*), the purpose of which was to mobilize scientific knowledge for the war effort<sup>16</sup> and with the assistance of a fellow Taylorist, Pavel Matveevich Esmansky,<sup>17</sup> he organized the office of KOVOTEP in Petrograd and the provinces according to Taylorist principles.<sup>18</sup>

Following the February Revolution, Chakhotin obtained the agreement of War Minister Alexander Kerensky to the formation of a "Committee for Socio-Political

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<sup>13</sup> Chakhotin's achievements as a cell biologist have been acknowledged in Yu.I.Posudin, *Biofizik Sergei Chakhotin* (Kiev, 1995); and in Karl Otto Greulich, Alexey Khodjakov, Annette Vogt, Michael W. Berns, 'A Tribute to Sergej Tschachotin. Experimental Cytologist and Political Critic (1883-1973)' in Berns, Michael W. & Greulich, Karl Otto (eds.): *Methods in Cell Biology v.82 - Laser manipulation of cells and tissues* (Elsevier, 2007), pp.725-734.

<sup>14</sup> The title given by Chakhotin to his memoirs, *Un Phare me guidait ...*, is a tribute to Pavlov.

<sup>15</sup> On one occasion in Berlin Chakhotin had tried to persuade Einstein of the value of Taylorist methodology in scientific work. See 'Vstrechi Prof. S.S. Chakhotina s Al'bertom Einsteinom' (3 pp, no date), Chakhotin Archive.

<sup>16</sup> KOVOTEP was organised in conjunction with the Imperial Russian Technical Society (1866-1917). Chakhotin claimed that by the beginning of 1917 it had over ten thousand members in 40 territorial branches. It engaged in group research, organized lecture programmes, courses and exhibitions. The President of the Imperial Russian Technical Society, Vladimir Ivanovich Kovalevsky, was elected President of KOVOTEP.

<sup>17</sup> Pavel Matveevich Esmansky (1877-?). After the revolution he became Chairman of the Institute for the Scientific Management of Production in Taganrog. See Mark R. Beissinger, *Scientific management, socialist discipline and Soviet power* (Harvard, 1988), p.44, citing N.S.Il'enko and K.Shamsutdinov, *Nauchnaya organizatsiya truda dvadtsatykh godov* (Kazan', 1969).

<sup>18</sup> Serge Tchachotine, *Un Phare me guidait me guidait. Un savant et penseur Russe avant, pendant et après la Révolution : Quatre-vingts ans d'histoire vécue*, (Chakhotin Archive), p.53; and Prof. S.S.Chakhotin, *Organizatsiya. Printsipy, metody v proizvodstve, trgovle, administratsii i politike* (*Opyt*, Berlin, 1923), p.66;

Enlightenment”, in effect an “agit-prop” agency for the Provisional Government.<sup>19</sup> Disenchanted with the work of this Committee, he decided to “form a link between the stratum of intellectuals who supported the Provisional Government and the masses, whose power was increasing but who were not yet mature enough to take power into their own hands”.<sup>20</sup> He therefore formed a “Soviet of Deputies of the Labour-Intelligentsia” (*Soviet Deputatov Trudovoi Intelligentsii*).<sup>21</sup> The Soviet of Deputies of the Labour-Intelligentsia opposed the Bolshevik seizure of power and participated in a strike of civil servants that was called at the end of October (9 November, new style) by the Union of Unions of State Employees as part of an action organized by the “Committee to Save the Country and the Revolution”. When, in early January 1918, a detachment of sailors arrived at the offices of the Soviet with a warrant for Chakhotin’s arrest, he fled by train to the south of Russia.<sup>22</sup> Following an initial appointment as Director of Information in the Foreign Ministry of the Government of the Don under Ataman Petr Krasnov,<sup>23</sup> Chakhotin became head of the Information and Agitation Division (*Osvedomitel’no-Agitatsionnoe Otdelenie* or “OSVAG”) of the political administration (Special Council) of the Volunteer Army under, first, General M.V. Alekseev and then General A.I. Denikin. He organized OSVAG, based first in Ekaterinodar and then in Rostov, according to Taylorist principles. He considered his work with OSVAG to be pioneering and he included a

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<sup>19</sup> *Un Phare me guidait...*, pp.55-56. The right wing Socialist Revolutionary, Ekaterina Konstantinovna Breshko-Breshkovskaya was Honorary President and moderate leftists and Defencists such as Lev Deutsch, Nikolai Chaikovsky, V.F. Pekarsky and Peter Palchinsky were amongst its members. See Peter Holquist, *op.cit.*, pp.212-213.

<sup>20</sup> *Un Phare me guidait...*pp.57.

<sup>21</sup> See Serge Chakhotin, *The Rape of the Masses. The Psychology of Totalitarian Political Propaganda* (New York, 1940), p.164; Serge Tchakhotine, *Le viol des foules par la propagande politique* (1952), p.331. The Russian designation of this Soviet is given by Chakhotin in a brief autobiography that he wrote in 1956. See M.Yu. Sorokina, “‘V Kanossu!’ ili kak Sergei Chakhotin vernulsya na Rodinu’, *Priroda* (2007), No.3, p.70.

<sup>22</sup> *Un Phare me guidait...*p.58.

<sup>23</sup> Chakhotin owed his appointment to the “Chair of the Council of Heads of Departments”, Deputy Ataman Lieutenant-General Afrikan Petr Bogaevsky, whom he knew personally and to his command of foreign languages. See *Un Phare me guidait...*p.41 and Udo Gehrmann, ‘Germany and the Cossack Community in the Russian Revolution (April-November 1918)’, *Revolutionary Russia*, Vol.5, No.2, December 1992, pp.147-141.

detailed account of its structure and functions in his key work on organization published in Russian in Berlin in 1923.<sup>24</sup>

In the spring of 1919, with the White armies in the South of Russia in disarray, Chakhotin left Russia via Novorossisk and headed for Paris in search of scientific work. In Paris, he accepted an invitation from Prince Albert of Monaco (a distinguished zoologist) to work in his Oceanographic Institute.<sup>25</sup> It was while working in Monaco that he came to the conclusion that continuing opposition to the Bolsheviks was both futile and an impediment to Russia's economic and cultural revival. Instead, the émigré intelligentsia should contribute their knowledge of the new principles of organization developed in the West in order to "Americanize" Russian industrial production. In Paris in 1920 he delivered his paper 'To Canossa!' to the circle around Klyuchnikov, Lukyanov, Bobrishchev-Pushkin and Potekhin and his paper was included in the anthology *Smena vekh* published in Prague in 1921.<sup>26</sup> Between 29 October 1921 and 25 March 1922, with the support of the Soviet government, a weekly journal, also entitled *Smena vekh*, was published by the group in Paris.<sup>27</sup> Chakhotin contributed two articles to this journal, one on the psychology of reconciliation and a second on the need for the "rationalization" of Russian society. In these three publications he called for the formation of "collectives of the labouring intelligentsia" ("*kollektivny trudovoi intelligentsia*") and a form of socialism based upon the application of the Taylor system.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> See the chapters "Principles of rational organization as applied to administration" and 'Principles of rational organization in politics' in *Organizatsiya...*(1923), pp.107-110 and 142-154.

<sup>25</sup> The results of Chakhotin's work during this period, which included experimental work in the Collège de France, earned him the Prix Montyon of the French Academy of Sciences in 1921. See *Un Phare me guidait...* pp.62-65.

<sup>26</sup> Chakhotin claims that he had written his article before he made the acquaintance of Klyuchnikov's group and that he had originally intended to publish it as a brochure. See *Un Phare me guidait...*, pp.66-67. According to Hardeman, the anthology *Smena vekh* is dated "July 1921", but did not come out until mid-September of that year. A second edition was published in 1922. For a recent edition of 'To Canossa!' see *Politicheskaya istoriya Russkoi emigratsii 1920-1940. Dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow, 1999), pp.190-195.

<sup>27</sup> The editor of the weekly journal was Klyuchnikov, who received the financial support directly from Krasin. The Soviet government also supported a second edition of the *Smena vekh* anthology. See Krestinsky to members of the Central Committee, 9 September 1922 in A.V.Kvakin, *op.cit.*, pp.149.

<sup>28</sup> See Chakhotin, 'Psikhologiya primireniya', *Smena vekh* (Paris, 1922), No.15 and "Chumazy" ili "Kham"?', *Smena vekh* (Paris, 1922), No.17. See also Hardeman, *op.cit.* (1994), p.111.

## Chakhotin and *Nakanune*

Chakhotin's initial status in *Nakanune*, when it was founded in March 1922, was that of a correspondent. Following a period of employment (since the spring of 1921) in the Institute of General Pathology and Pharmacology of the University of Zagreb, he had by the winter of 1921 taken up a research position in Genoa in the laboratory of his friend Professor Benedicenti.<sup>29</sup> Being located in Genoa facilitated Chakhotin's appointment as a reporter for *Nakanune* on the international conference held in Genoa from 10 April – 19 May 1922. At the conference he worked alongside Klyuchnikov, one of the editors of *Nakanune*, who, at Lenin's insistence, had been appointed as an adviser to the Soviet delegation.<sup>30</sup>

In the summer of 1922 Chakhotin acquired an enhanced role in *Nakanune*. On 11 May 1922, acceding to a request from Krestinsky for further funds for the paper (an additional one million German marks were granted), the Politbureau proposed that “the publication of the paper be made through a shareholding company in such a way that no less than 50% of the shares should be in our hands...”<sup>31</sup> On 31 May 1922 Klyuchnikov, whose domineering behaviour in *Nakanune* was resented by his colleagues, was invited to Moscow together with his close associate Potekhin, ostensibly to report on the trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries.<sup>32</sup> As a left wing member of the Paris group, Chakhotin was more congenial to Krestinsky and to Kirdetsov and Duchesne.<sup>33</sup> In 1922 he moved from Genoa to Berlin<sup>34</sup> where, on 28

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<sup>29</sup> See *Un Phare me guidait...*, pp.66-67.

<sup>30</sup> See V.I.Lenin, ‘Draft Decision for the Politbureau of the TsK RKP(b), PSS, Vol. 44 (Moscow, 1964), p.380. As the despatches of the Soviet diplomatic representative in Berlin, Krestinsky, reveal, he had a low opinion of Klyuchnikov, both as an individual and as a journalist and this may have been another reason why Chakhotin attended the conference. See Krestinsky to members of the Central Committee of the RKP (b), 9 September 1922, A.V.Kvakin, *op.cit.*, p.154.

<sup>31</sup> Kvakin, *op.cit.*, p.133, citing RGASPI. f. 17, op.3, d.292.

<sup>32</sup> The withdrawal of Klyuchnikov and Potekhin from the editorial board was announced in *Nakanune* on 23 August 1922. See ‘Zaklyuchenie ot redaktsii gazety “Nakanune” ot 23 avgusta 1922’, *Nakanune* No.114 of 23 August and *V zhernovakh revolyutsii. Rossiiskaya intelligentsiya mezhdru belymi i krasnymi v porevoluytsionnye gody* (Moscow, 2008), pp.176-177.

<sup>33</sup> Grigorii Lvovich Kirdetsov (Григорий Львович Кирдецов (Дворжецкий, псевдоним Фиц-Патрик, 1880-1940?), and Boris Vyacheslavovich Duchesne (Борис Вячеславович Дюшен, 1886-1949). Both had been associated with the right-SR paper *Svobodnaya Rossiya* in Revel’ (Tallin) and

June 1922, in the absence of Klyuchnikov and Potekhin, he signed the registration document of the *Nakanune* holding company, as both a shareholder and as a member of the editorial board.<sup>35</sup> Later that year, in Berlin, he replaced a “Russian” passport he had acquired in Paris in 1921 with a Soviet passport and became a Soviet citizen.<sup>36</sup> This was indeed, as Chakhotin wrote, a “logical consequence”, of “*Smenovekhovstvo*”.<sup>37</sup> The acquisition of a Soviet passport enabled him to end his status in the eyes of the Soviet authorities as a “non-returnee”.<sup>38</sup>

### **A Taylorist view of world historical development**

As Samuel Liberstein has written, “The NOT movement of the 1920s in the Soviet Union can be regarded as part and parcel of the contemporary worldwide movement to rationalize production according to the methods pioneered by F.W.Taylor, Henri Fayol, H. Emerson, F.B.Gilbreth, Henry Ford and their numerous followers.”<sup>39</sup> In “To Canossa!” Chakhotin had argued that the “scientific organization of labour” was a precondition of the political and economic development of Soviet Russia. In a variety of publications of the period 1922 to 1928 he argued this case in detail, drawing

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worked in the propaganda department of Yudenich. See their biographies in the appendix to A.V.Kvakin, *op.cit.*

<sup>34</sup> *Un Phare me guidait...* p. 67

<sup>35</sup> On the founding of *Nakanune*, see Kvakin, *op.cit.*, pp.136-144, citing RGASPI, f. 5. Op. 2. d. 309. 1. 3 – 12.

<sup>36</sup> Chakhotin had been issued a passport by the “pre-Soviet” Russian General Consulate in Paris on 8 July 1921. Details of this passport are given in the copy (dated 26 May 1924) of the notarial agreement of 28 June 1922 contained in the Archive of the Foreign Ministry of the RF. Krestinsky had presented his credentials as Soviet Ambassador to President Friedrich Ebert in Berlin in August 1922. In a *curriculum vitae* that he prepared in December 1960 for the American, businessman, philanthropist and sponsor of the Pugwash Conference, Cyrus S. Eaton, Chakhotin gave 1922 as the year in which he became a “Soviet citizen”.

<sup>37</sup> Chakhotin’s expression in *Un Phare me guidait...* p.68.

<sup>38</sup> “By a Decree of the VTsIK & SNK (Supreme Central Executive Committee and Council of People’s Commissars) of 15 December 1921, individuals who had left Soviet Russia after 7 November 1917 “without the permission of the Soviet authorities”, together with those who remained had abroad for over five years without acquiring a foreign passport from a Consulate of the RSFSR, were deprived of their Soviet citizenship. They were given the legal status of ‘non-returnees’. See M.Yu.Sorokina, *op.cit.*, (2007), p.82.

<sup>39</sup> On the introduction of Taylorism into Soviet Russia, see Samuel Lieberstein, ‘Work and Sociology in the USSR: The NOT Movement’, *Technology and Culture*, Vol.16, No.1 (January, 1975, p.52; Charles S. Meier, ‘Between Taylorism and Technocracy’: European ideologies and the vision of industrial productivity in the 1920s’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, No.5 (1970), pp.27-61; and Beissinger, *op.cit.* (1988).

particularly upon the experience of Germany. These publications included contributions to *Nakanune* between 1922 and 1924; articles on scientific management sent from Berlin to a number of specialist Soviet journals between 1924 and 1928; a substantial work *Organization. Principles and Methods in Production, Trade, Administration and Politics*, published in Russian in Berlin in 1923 and in Moscow the following year;<sup>40</sup> a bibliography of European literature on scientific management published in Moscow in 1924;<sup>41</sup> and also in 1924, the editing of a translation into Russian of a book by Johann Riedel on the rationalization of work.<sup>42</sup>

Chakhotin identified three stages in the history of organization science. The first stage, in which work was organised as expediently as possible for the practical task of the production of goods, had taken place in America at the turn of the century. This had been the achievement of Taylor and the school of engineers and economists influenced by him, men like Frank G. Gilbreth and Henry Ford. However, in America, “the land of the machine par excellence, a country that has had a massive influx of unskilled, not very demanding workers, but has fewer skilled workers at its disposal” there had been “a path of development that looked upon people themselves as part of a mechanical installation and treated them accordingly”.<sup>43</sup>

When transplanted into the socially more advanced conditions of Europe towards the end of the World War, the Taylor system had at first encountered powerful resistance from the workers. However, in Europe, wartime suffering had created an awareness of the importance of the human factor. Europe and in particular Germany, the

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<sup>40</sup> Prof. S.S.Chakhotin, *Organizatsiya. Printsipy, metody v proizvodstve, torgovle, administratsii i politike* (Berlin, “Opyt”, 1923; Gosizdat, Moscow-Petrograd, 1924; 2nd edition Gosizdat, Leningrad, 1925). In his autobiography Chakhotin gives credit for sponsoring publication of the Soviet edition to Avraham Samoilovich Gallop, head of the foreign trade mission (INOTORG) in Berlin. See *Un Phare me guidait...*p.67.

<sup>41</sup> S. Chakhotin, *Evropeiskaya literatura po NOT* (Moscow, NKRKI, 1924). The dateline in the foreword is “Berlin, November 1923”.

<sup>42</sup> Johann Ridel’, *Ratsionalizatsiya truda*. Translated by the German by “Yu.N.S.” and edited by Prof S.S.Chakhotin (Leningrad and Moscow “Kniga”, 1924).

<sup>43</sup> See ‘Drei Etappen des Taylorismus (Amerika-Deutschland-Sowjet Russland)’, journal unidentified, no date but probably 1925. (Chakhotin Archive). Here, as in other works, Chakhotin is at pains to distinguish between the ideas of Taylor and “Taylorism” as it had been implemented in the USA: “That which is anti-social in so-called Taylorism does not come from him and his teachings, but from accretions which became fixed over time in its American development.”

scientifically best-endowed country, became the locus for the second development of the organizational idea: “the exploration of human cooperation in organizational operations”. ‘Psycho-technics’ had emerged as a branch of a new science, applied psychology.<sup>44</sup> Special research laboratories and institutes had been set up, masses of examination institutes, careers advice centres and schools for the specially gifted, offering “a clear run for the best and the brightest” had arisen. “The right worker in the right place” had become the watchword. Soon, however, it had become apparent even to the practitioners of psycho-technics that if workers lacked a sense of ownership of their work they would not perform to the best of their abilities. A sense of self-worth was essential to satisfaction in work. It was at this point that Soviet Russia became the locus for the third phase in the development of the organizational idea. “Here the worker is master of the state, master of himself, of his deeds, of his will and of his fate.” In Soviet Russia the “mechanical-organizational” and the “psycho-technical” components of scientific management would finally complement each other - Soviet Russia was “destined to be the third and final stage on the road to the organization of labour and to the real liberation of humanity.”<sup>45</sup>

### **“Rationalized capitalism in Germany”**

In articles contributed to Soviet journals, Chakhotin reported on developments in Germany that he considered to be of relevance to Soviet Russia under the New Economic Policy. In these writings on Germany one encounters a certain ambiguity. On the one hand, Chakhotin is aware that if Germany provided a particularly congenial environment for the spread of ideas of “rationalization” this was because it was not a centralized country, but a country of many centres. Groups interested in scientific methods had formed within commerce, advertising, office work, education and transport and so management practice and experience had developed spontaneously. By contrast with France and the United States, there had been, at the

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<sup>44</sup> By “psycho-technics”, Chakhotin is referring to what is now known as “aptitude testing”.

<sup>45</sup> ‘Petr Velikii i Velikaya Russkaya Revolyutsiya’, *Nakanune* (no date, but probably 1922) and ‘Drei Etappen des Taylorismus (Amerika-Deutschland-Sowjet Russland)’, both articles in the Chakhotin Archive.

outset, no organized “movement”. In fact, the Germany language did not even have a specific term for “scientific management”.<sup>46</sup>

At the same time, Chakhotin wrote positively of the centralization of government and of the importance of government intervention in the economy. In *Organization* (1923) he described the model of central planning that had emerged in Germany during the war: this had involved a high degree of centralization, a planning apparatus headed by leading industrialists, a single industrial plan, a division of labour throughout the country and a drive for the standardization of technology, machinery and parts. Though market principles had returned after the war, many traces of centralized state organization had been retained, notably under Walter Rathenau, Minister for Reconstruction from 1921.<sup>47</sup> In general, Chakhotin considered that Soviet Russia had much to learn from the “Rathenau model”, but he also drew attention to the “Moellendorf model”, in which the state played a more directive role.<sup>48</sup> Though this model had not been implemented in Germany, it had an analogue in the system of “War Communism” in Russia where it had had to be abandoned, owing to the country’s “industrial and cultural backwardness.”<sup>49</sup>

### **Norms and standards**

A key feature of the rationalization of the German economy, as Chakhotin saw it, was the process of “normalization” or the introduction of norms and standards in production. During the World War, under the Hindenburg programme, a unit had been created in Spandau to develop standards for war production. Then, in 1921 the Economics Ministry, in collaboration with the private sector, had set up the

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<sup>46</sup> Chakhotin’s comparison is with the Conférence de l’Organisation Française and with the Taylor Society. See ‘NOT v Germanii’, *Khozyaistvo i upravlenie* (1925), No.4, pp.107-110. The dateline of this article is “February 1925”.

<sup>47</sup> *Organizatsiya...*(1923), p.66.

<sup>48</sup> Wichard von Moellendorf (1881-1937), *Der Aufbau der Gemeinwirtschaft : Denkschrift des Reichswirtschaftsministeriums vom 7 Mai 1919* (Jena, Diederichs,1919). Moellendorf had been Rathenau’s assistant in organizing war production and, in 1918-1919, State Secretary in the Economics Ministry under Rudolf Wissell. “As a continuation of wartime regulatory agencies and expression of his commitment to a non-Marxist “conservative socialism”, Moellendorff envisioned dual pyramids of planning boards based on regions and type of industry.” See Charles S.Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: stabilization in France, Germany and Italy in the decade after World War One* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1975), pp.65-66 and Chapter 3.

<sup>49</sup> *Organizatsiya...*(1923) pp.66-69.

*Reichskuratorium für Wirtschaftlichkeit in Industrie und Handwerk* (RKW) to encourage research and development in the field of scientific management. Scientists, business people, government representatives and co-opted institutions now collaborated in the 200 branches of this organization. The most powerful body associated with the RKW was the *Normenausschuss der deutschen Industrie – NDI* (*Kommissiya po normalizatsii germanskoi promyshlennosti*) founded in 1917 on the initiative of the Union of German Engineers with the task of developing standards for weights, measures and other technical aspects of production. The *Ausschuss für wirtschaftliche Fertigung* (AWF) was developing standards in procedures for the use of machinery and equipment. The *Ausschuss für wirtschaftliche Verwaltung* (AWV) (*Kommissiya po tekhnike upravleniya*) worked on the rationalization of management; the *Reichsausshuus für Arbeitszeitermittlung* (*Reich kommissiya po izucheniyu vremeni v proizvodstve*) engaged in time and motion studies. In this field, Eduard Michel was an authority.<sup>50</sup> Walter Porstmann had made a major contribution to the creation of DIN-formats.<sup>51</sup>

### **Psycho-technics**

For Chakhotin, the introduction of “psycho-technics”, the application of psychology to industrial processes, was a significant step in the “humanization” of Taylorism. In *Organizatsiya* (1923) he noted the contributions of the German-American pioneer of psycho-technics, Dr. Hugo Münsterberg (1863-1916); of Walter Moede (1898-1958) who had founded the Institute for Industrial Psychotechnology (*Institut für industrielle Psychotechnik*); and of Curt Piorkowski (1888-1939) who, with Otto Lipmann (1880-1933), had founded the Institute for Vocational and Business Psychology (*Institut für Berufsfund Wirtschaftspsychologie*) in Berlin and was developing methodologies of aptitude testing and career counselling.<sup>52</sup> Psycho-

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<sup>50</sup> See Eduard Michel, *Wie macht Man Zeitstudien? Arbeits- und Zeitstudien zur genauen Festsetzung von richtigen Stücklöhnen in Maschinenfabriken* (Berlin, 1920).

<sup>51</sup> ‘NOT v Germanii’, *NOT i khozyaistvo* (1926), No.11; and ‘NOT v Germanii (Rabota po normalizatsii v narodnom khozyaistve)’, *NOT i khozyaistvo* (1927), No.2-3.

<sup>52</sup> On these theorists, see *Organizatsiya...*(1923), p.9; ‘V Kanossu!’, *Smena vekh* (Prague, 1921), pp.163-164; and ‘Okno v Zavtra’, *Nakanune* (no date but 1922), Chakhotin Archive. Chakhotin describes Piorkowski as being “well known in Russian NOT circles” His “Orga” Institute offered courses in “Office Systems” (*Byurotekhnika*) and “Sales Management” (*Organizationnaya tekhnika prodazhi*). See ‘Za granitse: Germanskii Soyuz Organizatorov’, *NOT i khozyaistvo* (1927), No.6-7.

technics was now also drawing upon the ideas of Freud and of the theorist of auto-suggestion, Émile Coué.<sup>53</sup> Evidence of the professionalization of this field was the formation of a *Union for the Practical Study of the Psyché* (Soyuz prakticheskogo psikhosoznaniya) in Stuttgart, whose members included doctors of medicine, middle and lower school teachers, college professors, engineers, writers and journalists.<sup>54</sup>

### **Traffic control – a case study in rationalization**

In his writings on social and industrial change in Germany, Chakhotin is a witness of the transition to “modernity” in Europe. His account of the introduction of a traffic control system in Berlin, where local authorities and police combined to deal with chronic traffic congestion and a high rate of accidents, is a case study in neo-Taylorism and a commentary on the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century in Europe. Drawing upon the ideas of the distinguished engineer and manager of the Berlin Street Railway, K.A.Tramm,<sup>55</sup> the Berlin authorities had placed restrictions on the categories of vehicle (notably horse-drawn carriages) that could use particular thoroughfares; introduced traffic lights and traffic police (some working in control towers nicknamed “Oberkieker”); and constructed wide pavements for pedestrians. Propaganda, aimed at the conscious and the unconscious mind, was used in the training of drivers and other transport staff and in the education of passengers, especially children, in the safe use of public transport. Graphic design, a skill that was integral to NOT, was imaginatively employed in the posters, city maps, route maps and timetables that were located throughout the city in such a way as to encourage efficient use of the system.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Émile Coué de la Châtaigneraie (1857–1926): a French psychologist and pharmacist who developed techniques of psychotherapy and self-improvement based on optimistic autosuggestion.

<sup>54</sup> Prof S.S.Chakhotin, ‘Zagranichnaya khronika NOT’, *NOT i khozyaistvo* (1927), No.1

<sup>55</sup> K.A.Tramm was also the author of books on Taylorism and applied psychology, for example *Psychotechnik und Taylor-System* (Berlin, 1921).

<sup>56</sup> Professor S. Chakhotin, ‘NOT v Germanii’, *Khozyaistvo i upravlenie* (1925), No.4, pp.107-110. The dateline of this article is “February 1925”.Chakhotin would later employ his own skills in propaganda and graphic design in his campaigns against Fascism. In *Organizatsiya* (1923) he provides many examples of the use of graphic design and “propaganda” in advertising.

## **Vogel-Verlag**

Another example for Chakhotin of a “rationalized” and “humanized” enterprise was the Vogel-Verlag publishing company, based in Pössnek in Thuringia. This company possessed impressive modern technology (14 linotype printers capable of working over 4 times faster than human typesetters); its system of financial management was advanced (every journal published had its own accounting department); and its marketing department had a staff of 70 employees to manage an up-to-date card-index system).<sup>57</sup> But rationalization was evident not only in the spheres of technology and administration. Psycho-technics had discovered the importance of harmonizing work processes with the needs of the worker: there had to be a clear work plan; a precise delineation of responsibilities; the involvement of each worker in the work of the group and encouragement of solidarity with workmates. Safety considerations should have a high priority; wages should be adequate to the satisfaction of material and spiritual needs. Above all, the worker should believe in the importance of his or her work. In all of these respects and for the attention that it paid to welfare considerations, Vogel-Verlag was remarkable even in Germany, providing special flats for workers, a school, clubs, sports facilities and a leisure centre (*dom otdykha*) located in a splendid park.<sup>58</sup> The importance of rest and leisure was being recognized also at a national level, in the widespread adoption of the “week-end” - a period of “rational repose” that began on mid-day on Saturdays. In the spring of 1927 the magistrates of Berlin were planning a special exhibition on this custom that had been borrowed from the Americans.<sup>59</sup>

## **New professions**

Though the development of civil society does not figure prominently in Chakhotin’s social thought, he was struck by the fact that the spread of management science had led to the emergence of new professions in Germany, as it had in the USA. Foremost amongst these were the professions of management consultancy - the “efficiency engineer” (*inzhener-konsultant*) and of “certified auditor and accountant” (*prisyazhnoi*

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<sup>57</sup> Systems of classification and cataloguing were one of Chakhotin’s interests and he had invented a system of his own, which he named “Mass-Time” (M-T) for use in research and scientific work.

<sup>58</sup> Chakhotin, ‘NOT v Germanii’, *NOT i khozyaistvo* (1926), No.12.

<sup>59</sup> Chakhotin, ‘Zagranichnaya khronika NOT’, *NOT i khozyaistvo* (1927), No.1.

*bukhgalter-revizor*). New consultancies, which most often assumed the form of “trust companies” (*doveritel'noe revizionnoe obshchestvo – Treuhandelgesellschaft*) provided not only the usual financial services - guarantees of credit worthiness, company liquidation - they could also introduce completely new financial and management systems: in other words reorganize or “rationalize” a company.<sup>60</sup> Already, Associations of management consultancies were being formed, notably the *Gesellschaft für Organisation* (G f.O) whose members were corporate bodies, and, within it, the *Mitglieder des Organisatoren-Verbandes* (M d.O) for individual consultants.<sup>61</sup>

### **Rationalizing Soviet Russia**

Chakhotin was, essentially, a “non-Party socialist”. In his memoirs, he claims that during 1917 he “was a member of the party of Plekhanov”; however, whilst he did move increasingly to the left during 1917 there is no evidence that he was guided by the policies or directives of Plekhanov’s *Edinstvo* group.<sup>62</sup> Chakhotin was not a Marxist. He referred to his own brand of socialism as “Active Socialism”. In his political writings he often drew upon the vocabulary of the cell-biologist and in his campaigns against Fascism in Germany, Denmark and France during the 1930s he preferred to work with the youth wing of the labour movement rather than with the established leaderships, which he regarded as intellectually senescent.

At the same time, Chakhotin was not a “market-socialist”. Whilst he acknowledged the role of private enterprise and of civil society in facilitating the process of “rationalization” in Germany, his conception of the rationalization of Soviet Russia presupposed central planning. As we have seen, he appears to have regretted the

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<sup>60</sup> Chakhotin, ‘NOT v Germanii (Doveritel'nye obshchestva – odin iz elementov NOTa)’, *NOT i khozyaistvo* (1927), No.4.

<sup>61</sup> Chakhotin, ‘Za granitse: Germanskii Soyuz Organizatorov’, *NOT i khozyaistvo* (1927), No.6-7. In this article Chakhotin reports that he has contributed articles on NOT in the Soviet Union to the journal of the association, *Organisation: Zeitschrift für Betriebswissenschaft, Verwaltungspraxis u. Wirtschaftspolitik; offizielles Organ des Organisatoren-Verbandes u. d. Ausschusses für Büro-Organisation (ABO)*.

<sup>62</sup> See *Un phare me guidait...* p 57 and his autobiography of 1956, published in M.Yu.Sorokina, “Nevozvrashchentsy” ili kak Serge Chakhotin vernulsya v SSSR’ in *Tret'i chteniya pamyati V.Iofe. Pravo na imya: Biografiya vne shablona. 22-24 aprelya 2005. Sbornik dokladov* (SPb. NITs “Memorial”, 2006), pp.73-87.

failure in Russia of the “Moellendorf model”. The nationalization of trade and the natural circulation of goods had been superseded by a system in which state, cooperative and private commerce co-existed. This meant that there were “risks inherent in NEP”. It was some comfort that measures of central state planning were being re-introduced “by stages”.<sup>63</sup> Chakhotin noted with approval the work being undertaken by Gosplan and the Council of Labour and Defence in the delineation of economic regions (*raionirivanie*) and in electrification.<sup>64</sup> Another means of offsetting the risks of NEP would be the development of NOT, that is, the introduction of “rational planning principles” in production and trade.<sup>65</sup> Arguably, this commitment to central planning made Chakhotin a theoretical ally, albeit an unwitting one, of the central planners who eventually prevailed in the Soviet economic debates of the later 1920s.<sup>66</sup>

During the earlier years, the Bolshevik with whom Chakhotin most closely identified was the leading “technicist” within the Soviet government, Leonid Krasin. During the Genoa Conference Chakhotin had obtained an interview with Krasin and it was with some satisfaction that he had reported in *Nakanune* that Krasin shared his view of the importance of methods of “rational organization”, especially if Soviet Russia was to be compelled to develop in economic isolation.<sup>67</sup> According to Krasin, there was “an enormous interest in Taylorism in the New Russia. Lenin had even asked all our foreign representatives to gather all available information on this subject and report to Moscow.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *Organizatsiya...*(1923) pp.66-69.

<sup>64</sup> *Organizatsiya...*(1923) pp.66-69.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Za kem pobeda?’, *Nakanune* (Chakhotin Archive, no date but 1923).

<sup>66</sup> One leading economist who combined an interest in scientific management with a commitment to central planning was Stanislav Gustanovich Strumilin (1877-1974). See the outline of his speech to the First Conference on the Scientific Organization of Labour in *Sbornik tezisov k dokladam, predstavlenykh na konferentsiyu po nauchnoi organizatsii truda v proizvodstve* (Moscow, 1921), pp.35-36. On continuities and discontinuities between early Soviet “Taylorism” and the “rationalization” of the First Five Year Plan, see Beissinger, *op.cit.*(1988).

<sup>67</sup> On the “technicism” of Krasin, see Timothy Edward O’Connor, *The Engineer of Revolution. L.B.Krasin and the Bolsheviks 1870-1926* (Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford, 1992).

<sup>68</sup> See ‘L.B.Krasin o Genuie i vytekayushchikh iz nee zadach’, *Nakanune* (Signed, “Prof. S.Chakhotin”, no date on copy but written towards end of the Genoa Conference of 10 April-19 May 1922). Chakhotin Archive.

At this time not only Krasin, but other members of the Bolshevik leadership such as Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin and Tomsy were favourably disposed towards “scientific management”.<sup>69</sup> Chakhotin would have been aware of the fact that Lenin, a former critic of Taylor, had revised his position to the point where, during a session of the Presidium of the Supreme Economic Council (VSNKh) in April 1918, he had declared that “In the decree we must explicitly speak of the introduction of Taylorism into Russia.”<sup>70</sup> In 1922, Lenin had written a largely positive review of Osip Arkadievich Ermansky’s *Nauchnaya organizatsiya truda i sistema Teilora*<sup>71</sup> and in his last writings, drafted between January and March 1923 for the XII Congress of the RKP(b) (17-25 April 1923), he would put forward proposals for institutional change to facilitate the “introduction of Taylorism into Russia”. These last writings are frequently cited as evidence of Lenin’s determination to “de-bureaucratize” the Party and Soviet administrative apparatus.<sup>72</sup> However, they also express a commitment to “Taylorist” rationalization - a task to be entrusted to a reformed Workers’ & Peasants’ Inspectorate, which, Lenin argued, should become a joint institution of the Communist Party and the state apparatus.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Trotsky was one of the leading political patrons of NOT (as were G.E.Zinoviev, N.I.Bukharin and M.P.Tomsy) and it was Trotsky’s initiative that the First Conference of NOT had been convened in January 1921. See ‘E.B.Koritskii, ‘Pervye stranitsy NOT’, in *U istokov NOT: zabytye diskussii i nerealizovannye idei* (Leningradskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet, Leningrad, 1990). We find Trotsky listed as one of the contributors to the NOT journal *Vremya* in the issues 1923 (No.1) to 1924 (No.3) inclusive, after which his name disappears from the list.

<sup>70</sup> See ‘Vystuplenie na zasedanii Prezidiuma VSNKh, 1 aprelya 1918 g.’. See also ‘Variant stat’i ‘Ocherednye zadachi Sovetskoi vlasti’, 23 and 28 March 1918; ‘Ocherednye zadachi Sovetskoi vlasti’, 13-26 April 1918 (*Pravda* 28 April 1918) and ‘Shest’ tezisov ob ocherednyakh zadachakh Sovetskoi vlasti’, 29 April-3 May 1918 (*Bednota*, 9 May 1918), in PSS, T.36 (Moscow, 1962), pp.212, 140-141, 189-190, 279. For Lenin’s earlier critique of Taylor, see: ‘Nauchnaya sistema vyzhmaniya pota’ (*Pravda* 13 March 1913), PSS T.23 (Moscow, 1961), pp.18-19; and ‘Sistema Teilora – poraboshchenie cheloveka mashinoi’ (*Put’ Pravda*, 13 March 1914), PSS T.24 (Moscow, 1969), pp.369-371.

<sup>71</sup> O.A.Ermanskii, *Nauchnaya organizatsiya truda i sistema Teilora* (Moscow, Gosizdat, 1922). Lenin criticized the book only for its “repetitiveness”. See ‘Lozhka degtya v bochke meda’, written later than 19 September 1922. PSS, T.45 (Moscow 1964), pp.206-207.

<sup>72</sup> See Moshe Lewin, *Lenin’s Last Struggle* (London, 1969).

<sup>73</sup> See ‘Kak nam reorganizovat’ Rabkrin? Predlozhenie k XII S’ezdu RKP (b)’, 23 January 1923, *Pravda* 25 January 1923, V.I.Lenin, PSS, T.45 (Moscow, 1964), pp.383-388; ‘Luchshe men’she, da luchshe’, written 2 March 1923, *Pravda* 4 March 1923), PSS, T.45 (Moscow, 1964), pp.389-406.

In April 1923, in two articles published in *Nakanune* before and during the Twelfth Congress of the RKP(b), Chakhotin sought to steer a course between Lenin's proposals for *Rabkrin* and Krasin's swingeing criticism that they epitomized the "hypertrophe of control and an over-evaluation of its significance." In an article in *Pravda* of 24 March, Krasin had deplored the prospect of incompetent Communists entrenched in a "super-commissariat" dictating terms to experienced producers and managers. These managers were already, in any case, "party members of necessity"; only if control were exercised at the level of production would specialists who were not party members but whose contribution to the economy was essential, agree to work under the new régime.<sup>74</sup> Chakhotin, glossing over the obvious disagreement between Lenin and Krasin, chose to dwell on the suitability of *Rabkrin* as a school of public administration: in both Russia and the West there were very few experts in the methods of rational organization; rather than rely upon "bourgeois specialists", Soviet Russia should create a centre ("*organizatsionno-instruktorskii apparat*") for the selection and training of its own cadres. The People's Commissariat of the Workers' & Peasants' Inspectorate (*Rabkrin*) could serve this purpose.<sup>75</sup>

This public endorsement of *Rabkrin* may have assisted Chakhotin in becoming, by the time he was employed by the Soviet Trade Mission, the "foreign representative of *Rabkrin* in Berlin."<sup>76</sup> As we have seen, his bibliography, *European Literature on the Scientific Organization of Labour* was published in 1924 under the auspices of *Rabkrin*. From 1924 he contributed to the *Information Bulletin* of what was by this time (Lenin's proposals having been adopted by the Twelfth Party Congress) the "Central Control Commission of the Russian Communist Party and of the Workers' & Peasants' Inspectorate".<sup>77</sup> Between 1924 and 1928 a total of twelve articles by

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<sup>74</sup> See Krasin, 'Control or production?', *Pravda* 24 March 1923. At the Twelfth Party Congress, from which Lenin was absent, Krasin's arguments were criticized by Zinoviev and Bukharin. See E.A.Rees, *State Control in Soviet Russia. The Rise and Fall of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, 1920-1934* (London, 1987), pp.52-54; and Beissinger, *op.cit.*, (1988), pp.48-50.

<sup>75</sup> See 'V chem evolyutsiya?', *Nakanune* (no dateline but April 1923); and 'Spor Lenin-Krasin', *Nakanune* (no dateline but written during the XII Party Congress). See also 'Organizatsiya, ne improvizatsiya', *Nakanune* 12 December 1923. On the clash between Krasin and Zinoviev at the Twelfth Party Congress, see O'Connor, *op.cit.*, pp.141-144.

<sup>76</sup> See his autobiography of 1956, published in M.Yu.Sorokina, *op.cit.* (2006).

<sup>77</sup> This was, possibly, the *Byulleten' TsKK VKP(b) NK RKI RSFSR i SSSR*. See *Un Phare me guidait...*p.68.

Chakhotin, the majority of which were devoted to current developments in scientific management in Germany, appeared in the *Rabkrin* journal *NOT i khozyaistvo* (*The Scientific Organization of Labour and the Economy*).<sup>78</sup>

### **Technicism and ouvrierisme**

In contrast with his model of the socialist economy, Chakhotin's model of a socialist political system was not centralized. Of course, he was no liberal: it was with approval that he noted the rejection by the Soviet system of "the classical 'democratic' law of the election of individuals by 'universal, equal, direct and secret' ballot in favour of the election of representatives of labouring collectives, that is, factories, rural associations, trade unions, etc."<sup>79</sup> At the same time, he was a critic of the system of Soviet and Party government as it existed during the early years of NEP. Presciently, he noted "problems in the structural and functional relationships between, on the one hand, the legislature – the Soviets – and their executive committees – the VTsIK, the *Sovnarkom* – and, on the other, the three main institutions, the competencies of which within the Soviet state are at present interwoven and insufficiently delineated, namely the Soviet, the principal vehicle of power, the Party, which serves as a kind of spine or lever used by the executive power to prepare and implement the legislative decisions of the Soviet and, finally, *the trade unions, which are the natural foundation of a state-based on labour.*"<sup>80</sup> Chakhotin considered that this confusion of functions would be transitional, but it is characteristic of his semi-technicist, semi-"*ouvrieriste*" conception of socialism that he did not recommend Party hegemony as a means of resolving these conflicts. Rather, "the success of this entire project, which is very interesting from a socio-organizational point of view, depends upon the creation of the right kinds of relationship between the Soviets and the trade unions."<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> *NOT i khozyaistvo* (*Organ ZKKK VKP (b) i NK RKI ZSFS*), the journal of the Transcaucasian Central Control Commission of the Russian Communist Party and People's Commissariat of Worker-Peasant Inspection of the Transcaucasian Soviet Socialist Republic was published in Tiflis.

<sup>79</sup> *Organizatsiya...*(1923) pp.135-136.

<sup>80</sup> *Organizatsiya...*(1923) p.136. My emphasis [jb].

<sup>81</sup> *Organizatsiya...*(1923) p.136.

## The avoidance of polemics

In 1923, Chakhotin wrote approvingly of the work of the Central Institute for Labour (*Tsentra'lny Institut Truda*) that had been formed in 1920 under the auspices of the All Russian Central Council of the Trade Unions with Aleksei Kapitonovich Gastev as Director and which, in 1923, had been subordinated to the reformed *Rabkrin*.<sup>82</sup> He was gratified to find that, like its American and European counterparts, the Central Institute was carrying out research in the field of psycho-technics.<sup>83</sup> During the 1920s, leadership of the NOT movement was fiercely contested in Soviet Russia but Chakhotin did not engage in these debates.<sup>84</sup> In 1919, during the Civil War, he could well have been unaware of the exchanges between Aleksei Gastev and Alexander Bogdanov that had been published in the journal *Proletarskaya kul'tura*.<sup>85</sup> It would somewhat more surprising if he had not read the proceedings of the First All-Russian Initiative Conferences on the Scientific Organization of Labour and Production, held in Moscow from 20-27 January 1921, at which Bogdanov had delivered the keynote opening address.<sup>86</sup> For whatever reason, Chakhotin makes no mention of Bogdanov's position in his writings. Given Bogdanov's status as a theorist of organization (Chakhotin does list Bogdanov's *Universal Organizational Science: Tektology* in his

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<sup>82</sup> Aleksei Kapitonovich Gastev (1882-1941), founder of the Central Institute of Labour in 1920, was influenced by Frederick W. Taylor, Frank Gilbreth and Henry Ford. On Gastev in the history of Soviet Taylorism, see Kendall Bailes, 'Alexei Gastev and the Soviet controversy over Taylorism', *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 29, No.3 (1977), pp. 374-375; Beissinger, *op.cit.* (1988); and A.I.Kravchenko, *Klassiki sotsiologii menedzhmenta: F.Teilor. A.Gastev* (St. Petersburg, 1998).

<sup>83</sup> See *Organizatsiya...* (1923), p.115. On the role of the Central Institute of Labour in worker education between 1923 and 1928, see Beissinger, *op.cit.* (1988), pp.66-73 and Chapter 3.

<sup>84</sup> On the controversies within NOT, see Samuel Liberstein, *op.cit.* (1975); Kendall Bailes, 'Alexei Gastev and the Soviet controversy over Taylorism', *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 29 (No.3 (1977), pp.373-394 and *Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin: Origins of the Soviet Technical Intelligentsia, 1917-1941* (Princeton, 1978); Zenovia A. Sochor, 'Soviet Taylorism Revisited', *Soviet Studies* (1981), No.2, pp.246-264 and *Revolution and Culture: The Bogdanov-Lenin Controversy* (Ithica and London, 1988); and Steve Smith, 'Taylorism rules OK? Bolshevism, Taylorism and the Technical Intelligentsia in the Soviet Union, 1917-1941', *Radical Science Journal* (1983), No.13, pp.3-27; Rees, *op.cit.* (1987), pp.85-87; Beissinger, *op.cit.* (1988), pp. 55-58; and E.B.Koritskii, 'Pervye stranitsy NOT' in *U istokov NOT - Zabytye diskussii i nerealizovannye idei* (Leningrad, 1990).

<sup>85</sup> See Gastev's article in *Proletarskaya kul'tura*, No.9/10 (June-July), pp.34-45 and Bogdanov's reply, 'O tendentsiyakh proletarskoi kul'tury (Otvét Gastevu)', pp.46-52. Bogdanov's article was republished in *O proletarskoi kul'ture - Stat'i 1904-1924* (Moscow/Leningrad, 1925).

<sup>86</sup> For Bogdanov's speech, 'Organizatsionnaya nauka i khozyaistvennaya planomernost', see *Trudy Pervoi Vserossiiskoi initsiativnoi konferentsii po nauchnoi organizatsii truda i proizvodstva 20-27 yanvarya 1921 goda, Vyp.I (Zasedaniya Plenuma Konferentsii)* (Moscow, 1921), pp. 8-12, republished in his *Ocherki vseobshchei organizatsionnoi nauki* (Samara, 1921), Appendix No.1, pp.297-306.

bibliography of 1924) and the fact that Bogdanov had written on Taylorism<sup>87</sup>, one can only assume that, having become aware of Lenin's hostility towards Bogdanov, Chakhotin found it prudent to refrain from any comment on his work.

Nor did Chakhotin take sides in the debate over aims and objectives that was waged in the period between the First (January 1921) and the Second (March 1924) All-Russian Conferences of NOT between the supporters of Gastev and those of Platon Mikhailovich Kerzhentsev (1881-1940).<sup>88</sup> He listed one work by each of these authors in his bibliography on NOT, but in *Nakanune* on 12 December 1923 he went no further than to describe the competition between the different tendencies as "regrettable" and called upon *Rabkrin* to "take steps to unite the trends and provide them with organic leadership".<sup>89</sup> This is indeed, in a sense, what came to pass: by the time Chakhotin met Gastev in the Trade Mission in Berlin in 1925 the rival camps had been allotted their respective spheres of influence by Valerian V. Kuibyshev, Chair of the Central Control Commission of the RKP (b). Gastev's Central Institute was instructed to concentrate upon research and the primacy of *Rabkrin* was upheld in the training of new cadres.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> See A.A. Bogdanov, 'O sisteme Teilora', *Pravda*, 14 April, 1913; *Mezhdru chelovekom i mashinoyu. O sisteme Teilora* (St. Petersburg, "Priboi", 1913; second revised edition Moscow, 1918) and *Mezhdru chelovekom i mashinoy. O sisteme Teilora* (Khar'kov, 1919).

<sup>88</sup> In February and May 1924, two articles by Chakhotin were published in *Vremya*, the journal of Kerzhentsev's "Time League". The name of "Professor Chakhotin (Berlin)" appears in the list of contributors between the issues for 1924 (No. 3) of *Vremya* and April 1925, inclusive.

<sup>89</sup> See 'Organizatsiya, ne improvizatsiya', *Nakanune*, 12 December 1923. In his bibliography of 1924 Chakhotin lists both A.K. Gastev, *Nashi zadachi*, 1921 and P.M. Kerzhentsev, *Printsipy organizatsii* (1922).

<sup>90</sup> The two groups summarized their views in the "Platform of the 17" (Kerzhentsev) and the "Platform of the 4" (Gastev) on the eve of the Second Conference of 1924. V.V. Kuibyshev had chaired the Conference and steered a course between the two platforms. See the section "*Rabkrin* and the 'Scientific Organization of Labour' in Rees, *op.cit.*, pp.85-87; Beissinger, *op.cit.*, pp.55-58; and E.B. Koritskii, 'Pervye stranitsy NOT', in *U istokov NOT... (op. cit., 1990)*.

### **Chakhotin in the Soviet Trade Mission in Berlin (1924-1926)<sup>91</sup>**

As we have seen, there was a close relationship between *Nakanune* and the Soviet Embassy in Berlin. In 1921, Duchesne, without leaving the editorial board, undertook work for the Soviet Trade Mission that continued until his return to Moscow in 1926.<sup>92</sup> In October 1923, Kirdetsov left the editorial board to become head of the press office in the Soviet Embassy. At the Genoa Conference in 1922, Krasin had asked Chakhotin to visit Berlin and make recommendations for the rational organization of the Trade Mission and this invitation, together with his new role as a shareholder and editor of *Nakanune*, doubtless influenced his decision to move from Genoa to Berlin in 1922.<sup>93</sup> It is not clear from Chakhotin's memoirs whether he completed this assignment and whether he undertook any further consultancy work for the Soviet Trade Mission between 1922 and 1924. What he does tell us is that in early 1924 he was invited by Vasilii Vasilievich Fomin (1884-1938), the head of a *Sovnarkom* Commission that was visiting Berlin, to contribute to an enquiry into the work of the Trade Mission.<sup>94</sup> Upon the completion of this task, in the summer of 1924, he attended the First International Congress on Scientific Management in Prague where, although not a member of the Soviet delegation, he is reported as having spoken "on its behalf".<sup>95</sup>

Chakhotin's work for the Trade Mission led, in the autumn of 1924, following the closure of *Nakanune*, and at a time when the Mission was led by

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<sup>91</sup> "In those countries where the Soviet Republic received *de jure* recognition, trade delegations were set up as an adjunct of the diplomatic mission and themselves enjoyed certain diplomatic privileges". Commercial representation was institutionalized by a decree of VTsIK "On Foreign Trade" on 16 October 1922. See O'Connor, *op.cit.*, p. 197. The official name of this body was the *Torgovoe predstavitelstvo SSSR v Germanii* (Торговое представительство СССР в Германии)

<sup>92</sup> See Hardeman, *op.cit.* (1994), p.160 and the biographies of Kirdetsov and Duchesne in A.V.Kvakin, *op.cit.*

<sup>93</sup> See *Un Phare me guidait...* pp.67.

<sup>94</sup> In the summer of 1925 Chakhotin was asked to contribute to yet another enquiry into the work of the Trade Mission, this time for a commission of Sovnarkom headed by B.S.Roizenman of the RKI See *Un Phare me guidait...* pp.70-71 (where his name is given as "Roizman").

<sup>95</sup> See *Report of the Proceedings of the First International Management Congress in Prague (PIMCO) July 20-24*, Published by The Institute for the Technical Management of Industry, Masaryk Academy of Work (Prague, 1925); and E.B.Koritskii, 'Pervye stranitsy NOT', in *U istokov NOT: zabytye diskussii i nerealizovannye idei* (Leningradskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet, Leningrad, 1990), p.4. Chakhotin describes this Congress in *Un Phare me guidait*, p.70

Boris Spiridonovich Stomonyakov, to a full-time appointment as head of the Mission's "Organization Department".<sup>96</sup> He now gave lectures on the scientific organization of labour, sought to rationalize the work of the Delegation and responded to the requests of Soviet institutions for information in this sphere. In his autobiography, he provides an account of his work at this time.

"Convinced that the success of the Soviet experiment depended upon increases in productivity in all spheres, I set my Section the following tasks: to gather information on new developments in the scientific organization of labour in Germany and other foreign countries; to see to the training in organizational matters of the staff of the Trade Mission; and to respond to the requests of various institutions in Soviet Russia for the delivery of office technology suited to the new norms of rational organization. As part of this work, I organized within my Section a permanent exhibition of office equipment and methods of organization of office work, of advertising material with an explanation of its psychological basis, in short of everything that had to do with the scientific organization of labour. At that time I was particularly interested in psychotechnics and so procedures for aptitude testing were prominent in my exhibition. This permanent exhibition, which was unique in Berlin, aroused great interest amongst professionals in the sphere of organization and was frequently visited by members of the German Society for Organization (*Gesellschaft für Organisation*) of which I was a member, who came to find out about the latest developments in this field. Visiting representatives from various Soviet institutions also looked in on our exhibition which enabled them to select amongst the various installations available for their office needs.<sup>97</sup> We were visited by, amongst others, Gastev, very well known in Russia and the Director of the Institute for the Scientific Organization of Labour. My section undertook the organization of similar exhibitions inside Russia, in Moscow, in the Volga region and in Siberia where we sent individual items, complete installations

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<sup>96</sup> See *Un Phare me guidait...* pp.70. Boris Spiridonovich Stomonyakov (1882 - 1941) was trade representative in Berlin from 1920-1925 and from 1934-1938 Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR.

<sup>97</sup> Chakhotin reported on this exhibition in 'Vystavka po podyatiyu proizvoditel'nosti truda pri Berlinskom Torgpredstve', *NOT i khozyaistvo* (1925), No.12, pp.92-93.

and all the necessary instructions.<sup>98</sup> Within the Trade Mission I carried out analyses of our work processes and gave advice to *Gostorg*<sup>99</sup> and other independent organizations.”<sup>100</sup>

### **The “disappearance” of Chakhotin**

Given Chakhotin’s acquisition of Soviet citizenship in 1922, his employment in the Soviet Trade Mission between 1924 and 1926, the publication of his books by *Gosizdat* and *Rabkrin* and his ability to publish in *Rabkrin* journals, one might wonder why he has not acquired greater prominence in the history of the NOT movement inside Russia and why, in general, he has disappeared from histories of Russian social thought. When Lenin wrote “Better fewer but better” on 2 March 1923 and called for the publication of “two or more text books on the organisation of labour in general and on management in particular”, Chakhotin’s *Organizatsiya* had only just been published in Berlin.<sup>101</sup> Lenin cited Ermansky’s *The scientific organization of labour and the Taylor system (Nauchnaya organizatsiya truda i systema Teilora*, Moscow, 1922), which he had recently reviewed, as one possible source for such a textbook and also a “recent book by Kerzhentsev”.<sup>102</sup> However, in relation to Ermansky, Lenin had entered a caveat: “he displays a marked sympathy for the Mensheviks and is not suited to be the author of a text book for the Soviet régime.”<sup>103</sup> If Ermansky was unsuitable as the author of an approved text book, Chakhotin, given his far more chequered political past, might have been considered even less suitable and this factor

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<sup>98</sup> In a report that he published on his exhibition he was at pains to point out that the motto of the exhibition was Lenin’s slogan “Better fewer but better”. See ‘Vystavka po podtyatiyu proizvoditel’nosti truda pri Berlinskom Torgpredstve’, *NOT i khozyaistvo* (1925), No.12, pp.92-93.

<sup>99</sup> The “Gostorg” (*Gosudarstvennaya eksportno-importnaya kontora*) were responsible, under the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Trade (NKVT), for handling imports and exports at regional level.

<sup>100</sup> *Un Phare me guidait*, pp.70-72. In a “matrix” *curriculum vitae* that he prepared during the Soviet period, Chakhotin described his work in the Trade Mission as having included the “training of staff in the methodology of NOT” and “organization of records (“vedenie del”) in the Organization Department”..

<sup>101</sup> The dateline of Chakhotin’s introduction to 1923 edition of *Organizatsiya* is “Berlin, February 1923”. The second edition was not published in Russia until 1925.

<sup>102</sup> Probably, P.M.Kerzhentsev, *Printsipy organizatsii* (1922)

<sup>103</sup> ‘Luchshe menshe, da luchshe’ (written 2 March 1923, published in *Pravda* 4 March 1923), V.I.Lenin, *PSS*, Vol.45 (Moscow, 1964), pp.389-406.

would have weighed with Lenin's successors.<sup>104</sup> His prolonged residence abroad would not have helped. And, of course, from the late 1920s "neo-Taylorism" in the Soviet Union fell into disrepute.<sup>105</sup>

In 1926, at a time when reductions in staffing were affecting his work, exhausted by internal conflicts within the Soviet Trade Mission and following a "serious illness", Chakhotin resigned from the Trade Mission and took up residence with his family in Stuttgart.<sup>106</sup> In departing from the Trade Mission he lost a convenient platform for the transmission of his ideas into Russia, though he continued to publish in *NOT i khozyaistvo* until 1928. In Germany between 1930 and 1932 Chakhotin published a number of articles on the "rational organization of scientific work" and in his campaigns against fascism in Germany, Denmark and France during the 1930s he would continue to propagate and deploy the methods and principles of Pavlov and Taylor. But it was not until after his return to Soviet Russia in 1958 (when he took up a position in the USSR Academy of Sciences) that he was able to resume the dissemination inside Russia of the principles of scientific management.<sup>107</sup> On 24 October 1962 with the publication in *Pravda* of Academician Aksel Ivanovich Berg's, article 'Lenin and the scientific organization of labour', the discipline of "scientific management" was finally rehabilitated and Chakhotin was able to resume his tireless advocacy of the value of NOT, this time in Soviet industrial and educational enterprises.<sup>108</sup> During the 1960s and 1970s the journalist Alexander Samuilovich Kharkovsky drew attention to Chakhotin's achievements as a biologist and to the

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<sup>104</sup> O.A.Ermansky (Kogan) (1866-1941), a Menshevik Internationalist in 1917 and member of the editorial board of *Letopis'* (December 1917-December 1918). He became a member of the Menshevik Central Committee in 1918 but left the Mensheviks in 1921 to devote himself to scientific work in Moscow. See V.I.Lenin, *PSS*, Vol. 45 (Moscow, 1964), p.632. Ermansky's early works include: *Sistema Teilora* (Moscow, 1918) and the title reviewed by Lenin - *Nauchnaya organizatsiya truda i sistema Teilora* (Moscow, 1922, four editions). In his bibliography of 1924 Chakhotin listed this work and also Ermansky's *Problema ritma v rabote*.

<sup>105</sup> E.B.Koritsky, 'Pervye stranitsy NOT', in *U istokov NOT* (*op.cit.*), p.15. See also Beissinger, *op.cit.*, especially Chapter 3 and 4.

<sup>106</sup> *Un Phare me guidait...*p.71-72.

<sup>107</sup> On the circumstances of Chakhotin's return to the USSR, see Sorokina, *op.cit.*, 2006 and 2007.

<sup>108</sup> Aksel I.Berg, 'Lenin i nauchnaya organizatsiya truda', *Pravda* 24 October 1962. See also Beissinger, *op.cit.*, Chapter 5 "The Rebirth of Managerialism".

range of his interests in social theory.<sup>109</sup> It is understandable why, during the Soviet “years of stagnation”, he could not find a publisher. However, over twenty years after “perestroika”, the publication in Russia of his key works on scientific management and propaganda theory is overdue.<sup>110</sup>

**ENDS**

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<sup>109</sup> Alexander Samuilovich Kharkovsky, ‘Chakhotinskaya Odisseya’, *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 4 December (1965), No.44 (3913), pp.1-2; ‘Poka lekarstvo ne vypito’ *Nedelya* No.47, 17 November, 1968; ‘Na semi vetrakh’, *Sotsialisticheskaya industriya*, 5 September 1971; ‘Chakhotinskaya Odisseya’ *Ogenek* (1974). No.8, pp.6-7.

<sup>110</sup> Particularly timely would be the publication of a Russian edition of *Le viol des foules par la propagande politique* (Paris, 1939, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1952), translated into English as *The rape of the masses. The psychology of totalitarian political propaganda* (New York, 1940; London 1940).