ABSTRACT

ENGINEERING A SOVIET LIFE: GUSTAV TRINKLER'S BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION

by Zinaida Osipova

This thesis examines the life of an engineer and professor Gustav Trinkler under the Imperial and Soviet Russia. By using archival materials, such as letters, certificates, reports, questionnaires, and a memoir, it explores his living conditions and interactions with authorities before and after the 1917 Russian Revolution. Trinkler was born in 1876 to a prosperous family of a predominantly German ethnicity. Despite his origins, he identified as a Russian throughout his life. Before the 1917 Revolution, Trinkler enjoyed cultivating his estate, sent his family on vacation to the south and petitioned his superiors requesting positions and financial assistance. After 1917, Trinkler aspired to maintain his living standards and re-engineered the life he knew: he obtained a new summer house, enjoyed family vacations in the south and kept sending petitions asking new, Soviet, authorities for assistance and benefits based on his technical skills. He managed to manufacture a Soviet life that was strikingly similar to his Imperial one even after his imprisonment as a "bourgeois" specialist in 1930. Using Trinkler's biography as a microhistory, this thesis points to the need to examine individuals' lives before 1917 to better understand the Soviet system and what constituted novel, "Soviet," behaviors.

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Introduction

On May 7, 1934, two years after having been released from imprisonment for "sabotage," an engineer and professor Gustav Trinkler petitioned the Deputy People's Commissar of Heavy Industry, comrade Mikhail Kaganovich, asking for better living and working conditions. After emphasizing his expertise and ideas for future projects, to "smoothly carry out [his] work," he requested a "decent salary," an increased allowance, and an "immediate" reception of a living space of thirty-six square meters. Considering that he was occupying nine square meters, asking to quadruple his living space was an audacious request. He allowed for an alternative, however, saying that "if it is not possible… then I request to be transferred to Gorky (as Nizhny Novgorod had been renamed in 1932), so that I could use cultured living conditions with my family in my apartment." Transferring to Gorky where he had worked before his arrest was his goal because he asked for approval to obtain a professorship at a Gorky institute where he was "known and appreciated."[1]

Trinkler appealed for improvement of his living and working conditions based on his prominence in the profession, but petitioning for better living conditions was not uncommon during the Stalinist era.[2] Trinkler's case is remarkable because only two years before, he had been imprisoned by the Joint State Political Directorate (OGPU), and he did not try to remain invisible after his release. Instead, he voiced his discontent with his current situation. Despite his recent criminal record and the fact that he had a German name at a time of an unfavorable view of Germans amidst Stalin's collectivization drive, he did not fear drawing the authorities' attention to his case.[3] The authorities, in turn, did not mind his vociferous attitude, for they

[1] Mikhail Kaganovich was the older brother of Lazar Kaganovich – one of Stalin's top officials. Tsentral'nyi arkhiv Nizhegorodskoi oblasti (GKU TsANO) [The Central Archive of Nizhny Novgorod], f. [collection] R-6043, op. [inventory] 1, d. [file] 115, ll. [page(s)] 292-293.

[2] Sheila Fitzpatrick draws attention to a 1935 petition to Soviet authorities for better housing by Grigorii Martikin, who, curiously enough, supported his case with the fact that he needed '"a cultured personal life,' domestic comfort, a wife, a home," which were hindered by his current housing situation. Both Martikin and Trinkler used petitions to express their wishes for better housing as a way of making their lives more "cultured," implying a more becoming way of life, and, as Fitzpatrick notes, a more comfortable (*uiutnyi*) one. Sheila Fitzpatrick, "The Letter as a Work of Art: A Housing Claim in the Style of an 'Anketa'," *Russian History* 24, no. 1/2 (1997): 191-192.

[3] Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 320.

granted at least one of Trinkler's requests – by September of the same year, he was teaching at the Gorky Institute of Engineers of Water Transport (GIIVT).[4]

Gustav Vasil'evich Trinkler was a notable figure in the community of Russian engineers. He devised an engine that took his name, "Trinkler-motor," worked on projects for internal combustion engines which were built by Soviet factories, taught at universities, and wrote several scholarly works in his area of expertise. At the end of the day, however, whether delivering lectures or designing a new engine, Trinkler was a citizen of his country. Born in 1876, Trinkler spent half of his life as a citizen of the Russian Empire and the second half until his death in 1957 – as a citizen of the Soviet Union. Despite his remarkable contributions to the technical advancements of his time, the subject of this thesis is not Trinkler's biography of an engineer, but rather his life of a man caught between the two eras of Russian history.

This master's thesis focuses on Trinkler's life across both the pre and post-revolutionary periods by examining his petitions, letters, notebooks, and financial documents related to his professional and personal matters. It illustrates the persistence of Trinkler's "bourgeois" (that is, being concerned with individual material benefits and aspiring to a social status affording comforts and certain luxuries) way of living, his sense of intellectual and Russian identity as well as his determination to appeal for resolution of his issues, whether it was under the tsars or commissars. Although Trinkler's life, just like that of any individual, was unique, it "serves as an allegory for broader issues affecting the culture as a whole."[5] In other words, narrowing in on stories of individuals like Trinkler – their decisions, actions, and material life – allows for a more precise understanding of the context in which the individuals operated during years of revolutionary change. Even though Russian scholars have written about Trinkler before, they focused on his engineering career and inventions rather than his life of a Soviet citizen.[6] This

[4] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 111, l. 5ob.
[5] Jill Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 1 (2001): 133.
[6] Tatiana Akimova's biography of Trinkler traces his accomplishments in the technical field, while briefly touching on major events of his life, such as his service in the Great War and his arrest. She assesses Trinkler's character and his life's trajectory, concluding that "he lived his life, completely dedicating himself to his beloved profession; he did not betray anyone and was honest with himself and God." While notable for Akimova's desire to commemorate Trinkler, the book does not aim to analyze Trinkler's life as a historically significant indicator of the larger context. Tatiana Akimova, *Gustav Vasil'evich Trinkler. Izobretatel' i ego epokha* [Gustav Vasil'evich Trinkler. The Inventor and His Epoch], (Nizhny Novgorod: Nizhny Novgorod State Technical University, 2013), 85.
Similarly, Evgenii Andrusenko and Iurii Matveev discuss Trinkler's path of an engineer strictly with the purpose to detail his inventions. See Iu. I. Matveev and E.I. Andrusenko, *Razvitie i rasprostranenie dizelei v Rossii: k stoletiiu*

work includes a discussion of previously unused archival materials and introduces Trinkler as a citizen of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union rather than a prominent engineer. Trinkler's being an engineer played an important role in his life of a Soviet citizen because he was a member of the technical elite that the Bolsheviks associated with bourgeois culture and elitism, denoting such experts of the imperial generation as "bourgeois specialists."[7] "Engineering a Soviet Life" therefore takes Trinkler and uses him as a useful subject for reevaluating life in the provinces and the life of a middle-aged, bourgeois specialist across the 1917 divide.

By his origins, Trinkler was an ethnic minority. Throughout his entire life, however, he claimed Russianness. In his *War of Images,* Stephen Norris summarizes the scholarly debate over Russian national identity. The dominant historiographical argument stresses that before 1917, Russia had a weak sense of national identity, and Norris challenges this paradigm by demonstrating that beginning during Napoleon's invasion in 1812, the country's wartime images sought to articulate Russian national identity and illustrate Russianness.[8] Geoffrey Hosking explains that nationhood has two main aspects: civic – the one encompassing government, law and other institutions of civil society and ethnic – the one entailing a community bound by shared culture and language.[9] In Russia, the word *rossiiskii* denotes belonging to the civil society of the country as a citizen regardless of ethnicity, while *russkii* means being ethnically Russian. Despite his being a son of non-Russian citizens, Trinkler claimed being *russkii* throughout his life. Rather than signifying that Trinkler thought of himself as a purely ethnic Russian, his adoption of the *russkii* identity points to a less rigid division between *rossiiskii* and *russkii* than scholars have traditionally allowed. Trinkler changed his patronymic from a German to a Russian one but kept his German first and last names. He named his children both Russian and non-Russian names. In faith, he was a Westerner and in self-perception, he was a Russian, thus broadening the notion of who makes a *russkii* man.

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russkoi privilegii G.V. Trinklera na dizel'nyi dvigatel' [the Development and Proliferation of Diesel Engines in Russia: To the Centenary of Gustav Trinkler's Russian Privilege on the Diesel Engine], (Nizhny Novgorod: Volzhsky State Academy of Water Transport, 2010).

[7] Asif Siddiqi, "Scientists and Specialists in the Gulag Life and Death in Stalin's Sharashka," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 16, no. 3 (2015), 561-562.

[8] Stephen M. Norris, *A War of Images: Russian Popular Prints, Wartime Culture, and National Identity, 1812-1945*, (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006), 7-8.

[9] Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), xx.

The microhistory of Trinkler's biography also reenergizes the debate on Soviet subjectivity and demonstrates that his story does not neatly fit in established accounts of Soviet people's attitudes towards the state. The generally accepted argument historians have made so far suggests that the Soviet system's insistence on remaking everyone after 1917 worked on some level: Soviet citizens had to transform themselves somehow, particularly under Stalinism. Since Trinkler was a representative of an older, imperial generation under the Bolshevik system, his case serves as a useful corrective to the narrative of the novelty of "Soviet" behaviors, such as the practices of fashioning one's self-representation and writing letters of complaints. This thesis argues that Trinkler saw himself as a Russian intellectual entitled to a comfortable lifestyle before 1917 and neither the change in the regime nor his arrest as a "bourgeois specialist" significantly changed the way he represented himself to his superiors or carried on with his life.

Trinkler's desire for a comfortable life to which he was born remained with him his entire life. He enjoyed living in spacious apartments, vacationing in the south of the country, cultivating a *dacha* (summer house), and going to theatre. He managed to preserve his "bourgeois" habits and desires while living in the state built on the idea of waging war against the bourgeoisie. In her seminal work, *In Stalin's Time*, Vera Dunham argues that in the post-World War II period, the regime entered a concordat, or "the Big Deal," with the middle class. The regime expected apolitical conformism, loyalty to the leader, unequivocal nationalism, hard work and professionalism in return for "careers backed by material incentives," such as housing, leisure time, and consumer goods.[10] Trinkler made a similar deal with the Soviet government well before the postwar period. He expected various material incentives in exchange for his hard work for the benefit of the state' technological progress throughout his entire Soviet life.

Much of Trinkler's success in securing benefits was due to his petitioning skills. Trinkler wrote petitions throughout his entire life – before and after the 1917 October Revolution. By examining the ways in which individuals expressed themselves in written conversations with the authorities across the major divide in the country's history, we can better understand the significance of 1917 to people's lives. The Soviet citizens' adaptation to the new system and their self-perception vis-à-vis the state – known as the debate on Soviet subjectivity – has been the subject of fruitful research in the field. David Hoffmann defines subjectivity as "the capacity

[10] Vera S. Dunham, *In Stalin's Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 13-14, 17.

to think and act based on a coherent sense of self" and underscores its importance for historians of the Soviet period.[11] Although historians have written about several ways in which people were positively or negatively – but always *necessarily* – affected by the change in regime, few have explored subjectivity across 1917 and no one has looked at established specialists in the provinces. Trinkler's case was one of consistency in requesting money, positions, and other state responses under both Imperial and Soviet Russia. He kept drawing on his engineering expertise to represent himself as an accomplished specialist throughout his life, thus indicating that neither the events of 1917 nor Stalinism altered the general theme of his self-presentation.

Stephen Kotkin pioneered the argument that regardless of whether Soviet people fully embraced the new ideological line, they learned to "speak Bolshevik."[12] His study convincingly demonstrates that workers accepted the official agenda on some level because of the benefits that properly narrating their stories conveyed: Soviet workers (Kotkin studied the factory built in Magnitogorsk) learned to use language provided to them by the regime such as "shock worker" and "shirker" in order to explain their lives. Trinkler's case, in turn, illustrates his ability to properly communicate with the authorities not only during, but also before the Bolshevik rule, thus pointing to a similarity of his understanding of how to deal with the state pre- and post-1917. Trinkler's case complicates Lewis Siegelbaum and Andrei Sokolov's argument that "the way Soviet citizens lived… [and] how they fashioned themselves in so doing" was shaped by Stalinism.[13] His case also demonstrates that he practiced a form of self-fashioning under both Imperial and Soviet regimes and had found his "usable self" before it became an urgent matter for many Soviet citizens.[14] Trinkler engineered his self-representation long before the criteria of *Soviet* authorities existed.

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[11] David L. Hoffmann, "Power, Discourse, and Subjectivity in Soviet History," *Ab Imperio*, no. 3 (2002): 272-273.
[12] Kotkin argues that Soviet people engaged in "the game of social identification" by learning the proper way to narrate their life stories and request things. He points out that "acquisition of the new socialist identity conveyed benefits" and that "people made their individual compacts with the regime's ambitions, adopting them in whole, or, more often, in part." Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 223, 235-236.
[13] In their edited collection of documents *Stalinism as a Way of Life*, Siegelbaum and Sokolov argue that because of shortages and the state's adjudication of its citizens, "(re)fashioning oneself to suit the criteria of political authorities… was often a necessity." Lewis Siegelbaum and Andrei Sokolov, *Stalinism as a Way of Life: A Narrative in Documents,* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 26-27, 424.
[14] Sheila Fitzpatrick points out that people not only learned to "speak Bolshevik," but they also sought to find a "usable self" for their autobiographical narratives. Fitzpatrick argues that self-reinvention for presentation in petitions, questionnaires and autobiographies was a practice that "became second nature to Soviet citizens." She asserts that because the Soviet system classified people based on their social positions, it was in the interest of

Jochen Hellbeck argues that it was not merely self-representation but their entire selves that Soviet citizens tried to remake according to the Bolshevik ideology. Although his argument that the new ideology was appealing "to the self" of some Soviet diarists is convincing, it is difficult to extend it to the entire Soviet population: Hellbeck's source base consists of a number of diaries, mostly written by people who were young at the time of the Revolution.[15] Trinkler was forty-one, and his case suggests no urgency to embark on a fundamental transformation of his self. Rather, he held on to his identity of an intellectual committed to his profession. Olga Velikanova notes that in the 1920s, the range of popular perceptions of the Soviet regime was diverse and not limited to consent or dissent. She asserts, however, that following the Bolsheviks' "socialist offensive" of 1927, the population was largely disillusioned with the new regime.[16] In Trinkler's case, there was no sense of disillusionment following the "socialist offensive."

The abundance of scholarship on Soviet subjectivity indicates the importance of the question to historians of Russia. Michael David-Fox astutely points out, however, that those grappling with the question of what Soviet citizens "'really' thought" have paid little attention to the issue of the distinctive experiences of age cohorts and their subjective embrace of generational identities."[17] Differentiation by generation is crucial to a better understanding of Soviet society. Based on the 1926 census, the first undertaken in the new system, over fifty-three percent of the *adult* (that is, excluding anyone under the age of fifteen) Soviet population at that time were aged thirty and older.[18] This means that over half of the adult population – including

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individuals to present themselves in the most favorable light and conceal "bad" backgrounds. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off the Masks! Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 5, 152.

[15] By analyzing diaries as "laboratories of the soul," Hellbeck suggests that for many diarists, "history provided the impetus to align their selves with the political present." His book demonstrates that the individuals whose diaries he examined embraced socialist values and aspired to transform themselves into new Soviet men. Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 347, 359.

[16] Olga Velikanova, *Popular Perceptions of Soviet Politics in the 1920s: Disenchantment of the Dreamers,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 189, 191.

[17] Michael David-Fox, "Stalinist Westernizer? Aleksandr Arosev's Literary and Political Depictions of Europe," *Slavic Review* 62, no. 4 (2003): 734-735.

[18] 1926 Soviet census: there were a total of ~147 million people living in the Soviet Union: ~54.7 million were aged 0–14 and ~92.3 million were adults (aged 15 and older; according to a separate census distribution, there were a number of 15-year-old married men and women, thus it is reasonable to consider anyone aged 15 and older as adult for the purposes of analyzing the census of the corresponding time period). Out of the adult population, ~42.8 million were aged 15–29 and ~ 49.4 million were aged 30 and older. Calculations were made based on the data obtained at the Institute of Demography of the National Research University "Higher School of Economics," http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/ussr_mar_26.php

Trinkler – were at least twenty-one years old when the Bolsheviks took power in 1917. These individuals clearly had their formative experiences during Imperial Russia. By 1939, this cohort of the population, now aged forty-three and older, made up only twenty-nine percent of the adult population. This means that by 1939, over two-thirds of adult Soviet citizens had very little to no experience operating in a non-Soviet context.[19] Nonetheless, even twenty years after its founding, the Soviet Union contained at least two different *adult* generations, implying distinct ways in which each cohort understood themselves vis-à-vis the Bolshevik state.

Trinkler's case points to the existence of an established way of interacting with the world of officials. Thus, modifying the way of interacting with the officials to reflect the Soviet reality was a conscious process – distinct from the one that the younger generation, who had not operated in a non-Bolshevik context before, experienced. There is an important distinction between *growing up* "speaking Bolshevik" and *learning* the language as an adult: learning a language as a child or a teenager implies an undisputed trajectory that one takes as a member of a society that speaks the language; adopting a language as an adult, however, indicates *choice*, particularly for an individual already speaks another language vis a vis the state (in this case, an imperial language). Similarly, modifying one's behavior in adulthood is distinct from growing up with a set of expectations about how to behave. Whereas some Soviet citizens had to discover a "usable self," Trinkler had discovered his before the Soviet Union existed. If the experiences of different generations were similar, then the question is: how revolutionary was the practice of adopting a new language and new behaviors?

In order to understand what was new and how people adapted to the new system, it is necessary to examine and contrast Soviet experiences with that of Imperial ones. The abundance of scholarship on self-representation and expression of people under the Soviet Union makes the deficiency of similar scholarship on Imperial Russia striking.[20] Furthermore, there is little scholarship tracing ordinary individuals' lives across the 1917 divide. Trinkler's meticulous

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http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_age_26.php (accessed October 27, 2019).

[19] 1939 Soviet census: there were a total of ~164.8 million people living in the Soviet Union: ~55.7 million were aged 0–14 and ~109.1 million were adults (aged 15 and older). Out of the adult population, ~77.1 million were aged 15–4, and ~32 million were aged 43 and older. Calculations were made based on the data obtained at the Institute of Demography of the National Research University "Higher School of Economics," http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_age_39.php (accessed October 27, 2019).

[20] Illustratively, *Russian History*'s Vol. 24, No. 1/2 on "Petitions and Denunciations in Russia from Muscovy to the Stalin Era" published three articles on the period covering everything before the Soviet Union and five articles and four documents on the Soviet period.

recording of written communication and documents makes his life an excellent case study for tracing the ways in which he did and did not express himself differently after the Revolution. Catherine Evtuhov successfully demonstrates the value of a microhistorical approach in her case study of the Nizhny Novgorod province, where she challenges the widely accepted categorization of the imperial society as predominantly peasant.[21] Similarly, by paying attention to details of Trinkler's life across 1917, we find that it does not fit the notions of either embracing or rejecting socialist values; rather, it points to a lack of change in his attitude and persistence of character developed under Imperial Russia.

In both Imperial and Soviet Russia, Trinkler justified his requests primarily through his engineering expertise. Undoubtedly, Trinkler's specialized knowledge played a key role in his confidence about his standing, allowing for continuity in his practice of petitioning. As a representative of the imperial era generation of intellectuals, his experiences speak to one possibility of how an individual's interactions with the state did not change. He was not the only specialist who continued working for Soviet institutions after the Revolution, so his navigation through the new system as a specialist of the imperial generation was one others negotiated.[22] The Bolsheviks valued the technical intelligentsia's practical skills and recognized their knowledge as critical to the reconstruction of the devastated state.[23] Trinkler certainly understood the value of his expertise to the state. Although he was not a member of the Academy of Sciences, Trinkler's prominence in the technical profession implied a greater degree of freedom of expression similar to that of technical academicians.[24] This means that his professional experiences and concomitant interactions with the state were similar to that of other technical specialists, implying that Trinkler's Soviet experiences were comparable to experiences of other imperial intellectuals.

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[21] In her work, Evtuhov illustrates late imperial life stories that "do not fit comfortably into standard notions of a privileged elite on one hand and an impoverished peasantry on the other." Catherine Evtuhov, *Portrait of a Russian Province: Economy, Society, and Civilization in Nineteenth-Century Nizhnii Novogord*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 247.

[22] For collaborations between imperial ethnographers and the Bolsheviks see: Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

[23] Stuart Finkel, "Purging the Public Intellectual: The 1922 Expulsions from Soviet Russia," *The Russian Review* 62, no. 4 (2003): 598, 611.

[24] Tolz points out that members of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in the natural and exact sciences enjoyed a greater freedom of expression in questioning Soviet policies. Vera Tolz, "The Formation of the Soviet Academy of Sciences: Bolsheviks and Academicians in the 1920s and 1930s," in *Academia in Upheaval: Origins, Transfers, and Transformations of the Communist Academic Regime in Russia and East Central Europe*, edited by Michael David-Fox and György Péteri, (Westport, CT and London: Bergin & Garvey, 2000), 68.

"Engineering a Soviet Life" will explore Trinkler's significance in three chapters. Chapter 1 delves into Trinkler's imperial life and demonstrates that his childhood experiences cultivated the personality of a future intellectual who thought of himself as a Russian. It explores his family life, military service, and a chain of petitions during the Great War, serving as foundation for his later Soviet attitudes. Chapter 2 focuses on Trinkler's life after the collapse of the Russian Empire. It demonstrates Trinkler's determination to maintain and improve his lot even after his arrest for being a "bourgeois specialist." Chapter 3 discusses Trinkler's navigation of the Soviet system after his release from incarceration in 1932. It shows that even after being a Soviet prisoner, Trinkler maintained his line of requesting privileges and upholding as much of the "bourgeois" lifestyle he had been used to as possible. The three chapters demonstrate that Trinkler successfully engineered his Soviet life – one that was similar to his pre-1917 one and allowed him to preserve his middle-class lifestyle as well as the identity of an ethnically Russian intellectual – with the help of the tools, such as petitioning skills, technical expertise, and practicality, that he obtained in his Imperial life.

Chapter 1: Fashioning a Comfortable Imperial Life, 1876-1917

At the twilight of his life in the 1950s, Gustav Trinkler was working on his memoir. He explained the desire to write one by quoting Grand Prince of Kievan Rus' Vladimir II Monomakh, who wrote his *Pouchenie (Instruction)* edifying his children on a range of matters, famously saying "sitting on a sleigh, I thought in my soul and praised God, who has preserved a sinner-me until these days."[25] Trinkler noted that in ancient Kiev, people used sleighs to transport the dead to the cemetery, meaning that Vladimir Monomakh thought of himself as an old man nearing his grave. "And I also feel myself 'on the sleigh' and hurry to share my life experience with the youth," concluded Trinkler in his introduction to the memoir.[26] In drawing this parallel between himself and a Kievan Grand Prince, Trinkler revealed both his view of himself as an important persona and his view of himself as a Russian. Despite his family's roots stemming from elsewhere in Europe, he connected his narrative to that of an ancient Slav ruler, implicitly claiming his membership in the nation that derived its name from Rus'.

Trinkler asserted his Russianness despite his parents' heritage: his father, Ioann-Vil'gel'm Trinkler, was of Baltic German descent, and his mother, Ekaterina-Adel', was the daughter of a native German, Freidrich Adolf Gaspari, and a Frenchwoman, Theresa Mortier.[27] In the memoir, Trinkler enumerated all the different national roots his family boasted, particularly in his maternal line: on his grandfather's side – the Swiss descending from an Italian, who were actually Germans; on his grandmother's side – a Frenchwoman descending from her mother – a Pole. Trinkler dedicated less space to his paternal line, mentioning that his father's family "originated in Estonia" and that his grandmother was of Swedish origin. He stressed that "all of the communicated above rather curiously indicates that our family was strongly 'international' even though even by culture and education we are altogether Russian (*iavliaemsia vpolne russkimi*)."[28] Similarly, in his autobiography written three years earlier, in 1952, Trinkler included a section titled "on the question of nationality." In addition to his father's "Estonian-

[25] Trinkler's memoir, published in Tatiana Akimova, *Gustav Vasil'evich Trinkler. Izobretatel' i ego epokha*, 90.
[26] Ibid.
[27] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 107, l. 2; "Kuptsy i fabrikanty prikhoda Sv. Mikhaila [Merchants and Manufacturers of the Parish of St. Michael]," Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Michael (St. Petersburg), https://spbstmihail.jimdo.com/музей/прихожане/купцы/ (accessed November 28, 2019); Trinkler's memoir, published in Akimova's book, 91.
[28] Trinkler's memoir, published in Akimova's book, 91-92.

German origin" and his mother's multinational ancestors, Trinkler mentioned his uncle's wife's being Ukrainian and his own wife's being Russian.[29] Evidently, Trinkler preferred to think of himself as a Russified descendant of multiple nationalities rather than an ethnic German living in the Empire of Nations that his name indicated.[30]

This chapter explores Trinkler's pre-Soviet experiences and argues that his character, perceptions, preferences, and lifestyle were all well-cemented before the 1917 Revolution. It provides the basis for examining Trinkler's Soviet life and the way he navigated a new political system while retaining his old habits. Drawing on his memoir, letters, and certificates, the chapter portrays Trinkler as an established middle-class engineer who thought of himself as a Russian possessing skills that were vital for the society and thus deserving of a comfortable life.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Germans made up almost seven percent of the population of the Baltic provinces.[31] Despite their minority status, they occupied the upper rungs on the social ladder of Kurland, Livland, and Eastland.[32] Following Alexander II's Great Reforms of the 1860s, the rate of unplanned Russification – voluntary adoption of Russian culture and language as a result of marrying Russians, serving the state or residing in areas where Russian was spoken – accelerated as a result of building railways and economic expansion.[33] Trinkler's father was born in Reval (Tallinn), but his commercial interests were between Saint Petersburg and Moscow where he had his factory.[34] Although Ioann-Vil'gel'm Trinkler did not marry a Russian, he found opportunities in the interior of the Empire, which led to his children's adoption of Russian culture and language.

Trinkler's viewing himself as a being a Russified multiculturalist (or someone with multiple cultural heritages) stemmed from his early childhood exposure to different cultures. The

[29] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, ll. 91-92.
[30] Francine Hirsch introduced the term "Empire of Nations" to refer to the Soviet Union where the state initially promoted assimilation of the population into nationality categories, with the idea that eventually, these nationally categorized groups would assimilate into the Soviet state. Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 14.
[31] Toivo U. Raun, "The Revolution of 1905 in the Baltic Provinces and Finland." *Slavic Review* 43, no. 3 (1984): 454.
[32] Anders Henriksson, "Minorities and the Industrialization of Imperial Russia: The Case of the Baltic German Urban Elite," *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes* 24, no. 2 (1982): 116.
[33] Michael H. Haltzel, C. Leonard Lundin, Andrejs Plakans, and Toivo U. Raun, "Introduction," in *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*, edited by Edward C. Thaden, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 8-9.
[34] "Kuptsy i fabrikanty prikhoda Sv. Mikhaila," https://spbstmihail.jimdo.com/музей/прихожане/купцы/ (accessed April 5, 2020).

Trinkler children – Gustav was the youngest and had three older living siblings, George, Lilia, and Vilia – heard fairytales in both Russian and German. George and Gustav, or diminutively Gulia, shared their children's room with a German nursemaid who taught them to speak German. Gustav credited his mother, "an intelligent woman" who became a widow when Gustav was eleven years old, with giving her children an education. When Gulia was six, his mother started his education with the Russian *Native Word* (*Rodnoe Slovo*). The children also had multiple French teachers, including two Frenchwomen.[35] Even before Gustav enrolled in a formal secondary educational institution, he had multiple language instructors who cultivated the boy's early multicultural experiences.

Eventually, Trinkler's mother placed him in a private progymnasium (similarly to elementary school, progymnasia comprised four to six grades; Trinkler's progymnsium had two preparatory grades and four regular secondary school grades). After he finished the second preparatory course, he transferred to the Larin gymnasium where he received the rest of his secondary schooling.[36] Trinkler's attending the Larin gymnasium was indicative of his social background, for the infamous 1887 "Circular Letter on Cooks' Children" recommended restricting access to gymnasium education to the privileged classes.[37] Trinkler's father was a first-guild tradesman and an honorable citizen, and the family's lifestyle even after his death remained "bourgeois" in style.[38] By the time Trinkler reached his twenties, his family's position put him in the non-peasant minority in the Russian population. In 1897, over three quarters of the population classified themselves as peasants, with the remaining quarter of the population being divided between nobles, merchants, *meshchane*, clergy, Cossacks, and foreigners.[39]

The Trinkler family led a relatively prosperous life: in addition to hiring language instructors for the children, they could afford "a rather spacious apartment in the sixth line of

[35] In the memoir, Trinkler referred to his siblings by their official Russian names: Georgii, Elizaveta, and Vasilii. Trinkler's memoir, published in Akimova's book, 91-92, 98-101.
[36] Trinkler's memoir, published in Akimova's book, 101.
[37] The circular recommended that directors of gymnasiums restrict enrolment of lower-class students except those "gifted with genius abilities." Ivan Delianov, "On the Reduction of Gymnasium Education," 1887.
[38] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 107, l. 2; "Kuptsy i fabrikanty prikhoda Sv. Mikhaila," https://spbstmihail.jimdo.com/музей/прихожане/купцы/ (accessed November 28, 2019).
[39] 1897 Census: merchants and their families made up 0.22% of the population of the country. Calculations were made based on the data obtained at the Institute of Demography of the National Research University "Higher School of Economics," http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_sos_97.php (accessed January 22, 2020).

Vasilevsky island [in Saint Petersburg]" and spending summers in dachas outside the city.[40] Stephen Lowell argues that the conditions necessary for the creation of a middle class have never come together in Russia and suggests that the closest group to the middle-class category in the Russian context are "the dachniki," or people looking "to the nearby countryside for recuperation, domestic comfort, and enjoyment."[41] Trinkler's family fits this description, and his love of spending time outside the city on a personal piece of land originated in his childhood and remained with him until old age. In his memoir, he wrote, "from the first years spent at Lakhta, [I] got interested in gardening (*ogorodnoe delo*)." Describing his early gardening experiences, he reflected on his hobby: "I fulfilled my dream of growing large pumpkin fruit only much later, in adulthood. And now pumpkin is my favorite vegetable crop."[42] It was at the time of Trinkler's childhood, in the second half of the nineteenth century, that the merchant bourgeoisie and intelligentsia came together at the dacha and cultivated a "middle-class" lifestyle.[43] Trinkler's childhood, in other words, laid the foundation for his middle-class personality in adulthood.

After graduating from the Larin gymnasium in 1894, Trinkler attended Nicholas I's Technological Institute in St. Petersburg, where he obtained a degree in engineering in 1899.[44] Having a university degree allowed Trinkler to fulfill his military service obligations in an accelerated manner: not waiting to be conscripted, Russian men could volunteer their services to the army and be transferred to the reserve after a year of service.[45] Following his graduation from the university, he served one year as a volunteer (*vol'noopredeliaiushchiisia*) at the Izmailovsky regiment.[46] Trinkler's educational and family background as well as the military privileges it afforded him helped shape his self-image as a member of the burgeoning intellectual society of late imperial Russia.

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[40] Trinkler's memoir, published in Akimova's book, 92-93, 100.
[41] Stephen Lovell, *Summerfolk: A History of the Dacha, 1710-2000,* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 2, 236.
[42] Trinkler's memoir, published in Akimova's book, 105.
[43] Lovell, 93.
[44] Trinkler's memoir, published in Akimova's book, 101; GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 109, l. 40.
[45] *Ob uvelichenii srokov deistvitel'noi voennoi sluzhby dlia lits, poluchivshikh vyshee i srednee obrazovanie, i o vyzyvaemykh seiu meroiu izmeneniiakh v ustav o voinskoi povinnosti [on the Increase of the Terms of Active Service for Persons Who Received Higher and Secondary Education, and on Changes to the Military Service Charter Generated by This Measure],* March 11, 1886, article 205.
[46] GKU TsANO, f. P-6043, op. 1, d. 112, l. 111ob.

Trinkler's full name on his university diploma from August 28, 1899 appeared as "Gustav Vil'gel'movich Trinkler."[47] Sometime between 1899 and 1906, however, he changed his patronymic from the German Vil'gel'movich (from German Wilhelm) to an explicitly Russian one – Vasil'evich as his letter correspondent from March 23, 1906, referred to him as "Gustav Vasil'evich."[48] At some point in their lives, Gustav Trinkler's siblings also changed their patronymics to Vasil'evich/Vasil'evna. Unlike Gustav, they took Russification a step further and changed their first names as well: George became Georgii, Luiza Karolina (Lilia) became Elizaveta, and Vil'gel'm (Vilia) became Vasilii.[49] The Trinkler siblings lived in Saint Petersburg where nearly fifty thousand Germans constituted a "conspicuous minority community."[50] Anders Henriksson points out that "the late imperial political climate fostered German alienation from the Russian mainstream," not least because of the last two Romanovs' Russification policies. After the 1905 revolution, a nationalist movement emerged in the capital's German colony. The German community, however, lacked unity as there were German-Russians, Baltic Germans, and German citizens, with each group having a different affinity to the Empire. While Baltic Germans maintained a discrete identity, German-Russian naturalized descendants of immigrants from Central Europe did not feel a close tie to their ancestral homeland. Interestingly, German citizens saw themselves as the only "real" Germans, considering the Baltic Germans and German-Russians semi-aliens. The Russian mainstream also exerted assimilative pressure on Germans, and after a generation or two in the capital, many families adopted Russian as the language of private and public discourse.[51] At the same time, there was an anti-German ethos among educated Russians.[52] Most likely, with the rise of the German nationalist movement in the capital and with an increased disassociation of Germans and Russians, the Trinklers wanted to emphasize their affinity with Russia rather than their ancestral homeland. This does not explain, however, why Trinkler changed only his patronymic and not

[47] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 109, l. 40
[48] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 234, l. 2.
[49] Trinkler's sister's name was either Amalia Adel' or Luiza Karolina (one of the two died as a child), but based on the dates and mentions of "aunt Karolia" in correspondence, it must have been Luiza Karolina. "Kuptsy i fabrikanty prikhoda Sv. Mikhaila," https://spbstmihail.jimdo.com/музей/прихожане/купцы/ (accessed November 28, 2019). GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 328; d. 329 – the title of the *dela* refer to brothers Vasilii Vasil'evich, Georgii Vasil'evich and sister Elizaveta Vasil'evna.
[50] Anders Henriksson, "Nationalism, Assimilation and Identity in Late Imperial Russia: The St. Petersburg Germans, 1906-1914," *The Russian Review* 52, no. 3 (1993): 341.
[51] Ibid, 342-343, 345-346.
[52] Dominic Lieven, "Pro-Germans and Russian Foreign Policy 1890-1914," *The International History Review* 2, no. 1 (1980): 41.

his first name, which revealed his foreign ethnicity. Kaiser Wilhelm II ascended the throne in 1888 and was ridiculed and negatively depicted in images at the time of the Great War.[53] Perhaps, even a decade before the war, Trinkler did not want to be associated with the German monarch.

Changing his patronymic to a Russian one was likely an attempt at claiming Russianness, and Trinkler's patronymic change produced the effect of distancing himself from his German heritage to an extent. In 1907, the woman whom Trinkler wanted to marry and who must have known him better than a random acquaintance, wrote to him, "you, as a Turk or a Bashkir," revealing that she did not know his family's origins and did not immediately associate him with Germanness.[54] Trinkler's patronymic change is even more curious considering his move to work in Germany in 1902. Shortly before moving, he sent a petition (*proshenie*) – an action that would stay inherent in Trinkler's attitude in years to come – to the director of his alma mater, the Saint Petersburg Technological Institute, saying "I humbly ask Your Excellency to enroll me in the position of Senior Laboratory Assistant at the Engineering laboratory" of the institute. He briefly outlined his relevant experiences to support the case, but whether because his request was denied or because he decided to continue his career abroad, he did not end up working at that laboratory and left Russia several weeks later.[55] In his later autobiographies, Trinkler would describe the move as a necessity.[56]

Regardless of the exact reason, Trinkler thought it would be advantageous for his career to work in Germany, and this experience of living abroad left an imprint for his later life. While in Germany, he signed two contracts – in 1902 and 1904 – with the Hannover-based Brothers Kerting's company, and worked on testing what became known as "Trinkler-Motors," which were put out on the market in several European countries under this name.[57] At the Kerting factory, Trinkler worked on developing his engine, oversaw the process of its production and testing and installed the engines for the customers. Later in life, he described this experience at

[53] Stephen M. Norris, *A War of Images*, 137-138.
[54] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 243, l. 4ob. In 1907, Trinkler exchanged letters with Ol'ga D'iakonova; the letters reveal his desire to marry Ol'ga, but eventually, she rejected him – see d. 243.
[55] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 196, l. 15; d. 111, l. 17ob. Materials of Trinkler's personal archive (f. R-6043) examined for this thesis contain no evidence of Trinkler's petitions between 1902 and 1914. Since he spent the years between 1902 and 1907 in Germany, he likely sent no petitions in Russian during this period.
[56] See footnotes 275-278. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, ll. 20ob, 83ob, 90, 99.
[57] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, l. 20ob.

"one of the first-class German factories" as providing him with a "diversified practical experience (*stazh*), which a rare engineer manages to acquire."[58] In Trinkler's eyes, his German work experience distinguished him from other engineers and elevated his professional standing.

In 1907, he returned to Russia to work at the Sormovo factory outside Nizhny Novgorod, later describing his moving back similarly across four of his autobiographies. He wrote, "[I] was invited (*priglashen*) to" (1917 and 1932), "I entered" (1937) or "subsequently, my work proceeded at" (1952) the Sormovo factory.[59] It is not clear what motivated Trinkler to return to Russia, particularly when one considers that just a year before, his brother wrote that "now, in Russia, hope for earnings is low" and wondered if he himself should go abroad because "there life is cheaper and it is possible to learn something…"[60] Nonetheless, in 1907, Trinkler was appointed head of the Department of Heat Engines at the Sormovo factory.[61] In late-imperial Russia, Sormovo was a town functioning as part of Balakhna district and had a population of 33,000, most of whom were temporary residents. The combination of the steel factory's mechanical, iron-smelting, shipbuilding, and railroad-engine manufacturing and its 8,500 personnel made it one of Russia's largest and put it on par with Saint Petersburg's Putilov factory.[62] Trinkler's German experiences helped him successfully launch his career in the major factory right outside the provincial capital (Sormovo would be incorporated into the territory of Nizhny Novgorod in 1928).

In his imperial life, Trinkler referred to his German experiences on multiple occasions, not limiting his narrative to his professional experiences at the Kerting factory. In 1909, Trinkler presented a report on "the military system of Germany in connection with general conditions of life of the country" at the officer summit of the 237th Kremlin reserve battalion. In the report, Trinkler briefly discussed German history, its unification, while also mentioning the labor legislature and a peaceful and fast progress of Germany. He detailed the current conditions of the German army, noting that "the general reason of the German army's energy is [soldiers'] realization of duty to the pinched (*stesnennoi*) motherland and the desire to dominate everywhere." Trinkler concluded by giving credit to the successes of German technology, the

[58] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, l. 99ob.
[59] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, ll. 24ob, 83ob, 99ob,
[60] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 329, ll. 40ob., 41.
[61] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 111, l. 3ob.
[62] Evtuhov, 72.

conscientiousness of the work and dynamism of the population, stressing that "Russian people (*russkii narod*) are rather talented and could very well keep up with Western Europe." Given his return to Russia, his patronymic change, and his report on Germany as a foreign place of interest to the military men, Trinkler likely saw himself as part of the *russkii narod* (or ethnically Russian masses of the country), believing in its ability to catch up with Germany.[63] In the report, Trinkler discussed cultural conditions of the city life, parks, and trams in Hannover and in Sormovo (Nizhny Novgorod), likely presenting the German case as one with which the talented Russian people could keep up.[64]

Three years later, Trinkler referred to his European experiences once again. On April 9, 1912, he expressed his concerns over a newly constructed building in Saint Petersburg in a letter to the editorial office of the journal *Gorodskoe Delo* [City Affair]. He was disgruntled with the fact that the building was incongruous with the long-existing line of structures. Trinkler enumerated European examples of proper city planning, focusing on that of German cities, where he had lived. He explained how seven years ago, Linden's city government successfully satisfied the need to widen a busy space. He wrote, "I lived there myself at that time, and all this work was done in front of my eyes!" He further commented that "it turns out that the Saint Petersburg city government is not up to the task (*ne po plechu*)" of solving a problem similar to that of another German city that he described.[65] Trinkler's life experiences in Germany left a favorable impression on him, and he portrayed it as a progressive place.

The year following his return to Russia, in 1908, Trinkler married an ethnic Russian "Nizhny Novgorod *meshchanka*," Mariia Evgen'evna Sviiazeva, who was eighteen years old at the time – fourteen years his junior.[66] In the fall of 1909, they had a daughter and when deciding on a name, Gustav wrote to his wife, "will we name the daughter Erika? Let's wait, maybe we will want [to name her] something else… In principle, I am not against naming her that, but how would we call her diminutively – Rika? Or Er'ka? What do you think?"[67] Erika is a Western

[63] The summary of the report indicated that "impressions and materials were personally collected during a five year stay in Germany between 1902 and 1907." GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 112, ll. 42-42ob.
[64] Ibid., l. 42ob.
[65] Regarding Zagorodnyi avenue in Saint Petersburg, Trinkler wrote: "A ruthless hand erected a stone mass in place of a garden: the street lost its unity, became congested and disfigured!" GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 81, ll. 1-2ob.
[66] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 113, ll. 3 ob., 5ob., 10.
[67] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 146.

name, so this choice demonstrates Trinkler's ties to his multinational heritage in addition to his claims to Russianness. Sadly, little Erika did not live to be a year old – the Trinklers buried her the next year.[68] For at least twenty years to come, the family would visit her grave.[69] Gustav and Mariia soon had another daughter and despite the untimely death of Erika, they remained attached to the name and referred to their new child as Erika throughout her life even though her official name was Irina.[70] They named their next daughter a much more Russian name – Nina – thus demonstrating the family's decision to introduce their daughters into society as Russian.[71]

Trinkler married an ethnic Russian, named his daughters Russian names and considered himself Russian, but his multinational heritage remained, among other things, in his faith: he was Lutheran and a member of the parish of the French Reformed Church in Petrograd.[72] His wife, in turn, was Orthodox, but at some point she converted to Lutheranism only to convert back to Orthodoxy in 1915.[73] At the time of the 1897 Census, sixty-nine percent of the population were Orthodox, and everyone in the population was classified according to their religious beliefs, including categories such as "Old Believers and [Persons] Evading Orthodoxy," "Persons of Other Christian Confessions," and "Persons of Other non-Christian Confessions." Despite Trinkler's belonging to a minority religion (Lutherans made up less than three percent of the population), his being a member of a church was nothing unusual.[74] According to expectations of the time, the Trinkler parents baptized their daughters into the Orthodox faith.[75]

As a prominent engineer, Trinkler lived his life accordingly, making sure that not only his intellectual but also his family's material status allowed for a comfortable living. The Trinkler

[68] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, l. 4622ob.; d. 113, l. 14.
[69] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, l. 1283.
[70] In almost all their letters, the Trinkler family referred to their oldest daughter as Erika. A 1928 picture of the family, however, listed "sisters Irina and Nina…" GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 2, d. 14, l. 3. In 1931, Gustav Trinkler addressed a letter to "Irina Gustavovna Trinkler," while writing in the letter "my dear daughter Erika." GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 248-248ob.
[71] In the picture from 1913-1914, signed "Trinkler, wife Mariia and daughters Nina and Irina," they already had two daughters. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 2, d. 14, l. 1.
[72] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 113, ll. 5-5ob, 11.
[73] Ibid., 5ob., 8.
[74] 1897 Census: ~87.1 million people out of the total ~125.6 million were Orthodox. "Old Believers and [Persons] Evading Orthodoxy" made up ~2.2 million or 1.75% of the population. Lutherans made up ~3.6 million or 2.8% of the population. Calculations were made based on the data obtained at the Institute of Demography of the National Research University "Higher School of Economics," http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_rel_97.php (accessed March 6, 2020).
[75] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, l. 1856ob., 2543. Trinkler mentioned his daughters' being Orthodox Christian in his 1917 autobiography. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, l. 20.

family rented an apartment and hired a cook and a maid to help Mariia with housekeeping.[76] He could also afford to send his wife and daughter to Crimea for vacations even though Mariia complained that "the expensiveness of life here is impossible."[77] In the late Russian Empire, there was a bustling resort culture along the Black Sea coast, in Crimea and in the North Caucasus. Diane Koenker points out, however, that "before the revolution, this Crimean Eden was accessible only to the rich, powerful, and well-born."[78] On the eve of World War I, the average salary in the Russian Empire was 360 rubles per year, and engineers on state factories made up to 2000 rubles per year and those on private ones – up to 3000 rubles.[79] Considering Trinkler's standing as head of a department and the Sormovo factory's private ownership, he earned much more than an average citizen of the Empire. Trinkler was an ambitious man and despite his successful position, he was looking into university teaching.[80] Professorships conveyed intellectual but also material benefits: in 1912, the average workers' salary was 255 rubles per year and professors made seventeen times as much as did industrial workers.[81] As there were no higher education institutions in Nizhny Novgorod, Trinkler had to be satisfied with his engineering position at the Sormovo factory. Both professions – his current and his desired ones – illustrated his claim to membership in the intellectual community.

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[76] Tatiana Akimova, *Gustav Vasil'evich Trinkler. Izobretatel' i ego epokha* [Gustav Vasil'evich Trinkler. The Inventor and His Epoch], (Nizhny Novgorod: Nizhny Novgorod State Technical University, 2013), 39.

[77] On April 15, 1912, Trinkler made a note in his notebook "M. left for Crimea with Erika." GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, l. 1959ob. Later in life, Trinkler would reuse his old planners (which were originally left almost empty). It is possible to distinguish between his imperial and Soviet notes in the same planner by paying attention to the language (pre-revolutionary Russian was distinct from modern Russian) and context. In case with this 1912/1923 planner, he wrote *Krym* (Crimea) using a hard sign at the end, which was an attribute of the old Russian. On April 19, 1912, Mariia Trinkler sent Gustav a letter from the hotel "Kist'" in Sevastopol' where she told him about their daughter's mischievous behavior during their travels. On May 28, 1912, she was complaining about the expensiveness and the rising prices for the following year while thanking Gustav for sending the money. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 18-20ob., 45-51ob.

[78] Diane Koenker, *Club Red: Vacation Travel and the Soviet Dream*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 16, 25.

[79] O.A. Kudinov, "Zarplata Professorov Dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii (K Obsuzhdeniiu Kontseptsii Kodeksa Rossiiskoi Federatsii Ob Obrazovanii) [Salary of Professors of Pre-Revolutionary Russia (on Discussion of the Conception of the Education Code of the Russian Federation)]," *Ekonimika obrazovaniia*, no. 4 (2014): 84.

[80] Trinkler corresponded with his friends working at universities, who advised him on the matter. In 1909, he exchanged letters with the Petersburg Technological Institute drawing teacher, Konstantin Kurbashov, discussing the teaching profession. In a letter from March 5, 1909, Kurbashov was dissuading Trinkler from teaching. In the next letter from April 7, 1909, Kurbashov further discussed the possibility of Trinkler's working at his alma mater. See GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 269, ll. 6, 8 ob. A month later, Trinkler received a letter from another Petersburg Technological Institute professor, Georgii Depp, who also shared his thoughts on the possibility of Trinkler's teaching at the university level. See GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 239, l. 4-4ob.

[81] A.V. Shipilov, "Zarplata rossiiskogo professora v ee nastoiashchem, proshlom i budushchem [Salary of the Russian Professor in Its Present, Past and Future]," *Alma Mater. Vestnik vyshei shkoly*, no. 4 (2003): 7-8. http://ecsocman.hse.ru/data/473/908/1217/shipilov_AlmaMater.pdf (Accessed April 6, 2020)

Trikler was also a member of the Nizhny Novgorod provincial community. Catherine Evtuhov describes the province as "a set of shifting relationships and interactions that together make up a larger whole" and points out that its peculiarities are always of interest to its inhabitants. She proposes the notion of "province" as a category for people's identity in the late Imperial Russia.[82] As a member of the provincial community, Trinkler was interested in participating in its civic matters. Trinkler could spare some of his income for charity and in accordance with his self-perception and professional aspirations, he chose to donate money for education: in 1913, the Society for Dissemination of Elementary Education of the Nizhny Novgorod province expressed their gratitude for Trinkler's paying rent for an apartment occupied by the Sormovo reading library. He sponsored the library's quarters for at least several months in 1912 and 1913.[83] Trinkler choice of this society is not surprising given its location in the village of Sormovo, where he worked. His decision to donate the money underlined his status of a successful intellectual, for, as Adele Lindenmeyer has illustrated, charitable giving was a prominent means of displaying social status, while the cause of improved education was dear to the Russian intelligentsia.[84] As a highly educated man, Trinkler sought to make his contribution to raising literacy rates of his locality. This was similar to his desire for improvement of the local city life evident from his 1909 report on Germany and comparisons of Hannover with Sormovo.

Aside from his intellectual endeavors, Trinkler led an active lifestyle: in 1910, Trinkler bought a pair of skis with accessories.[85] Even more than skiing, Trinkler enjoyed gardening and horticulture outside the city: in 1910, he was spending time at a summer house in the village of Kstovo, and in 1912, he rented one in V. Vrag on the Volga River. In 1910, he informed the insurance company that he was moving some of his personal property to the summer house, meaning that he intended to spend a prolonged period of time there and that he wanted to avoid risking losing his property.[86] At the end of 1913, his financial wellbeing materialized into his own estate for 18,000 rubles for which he was supposed to pay in several installments. His purchase was massive, both financially and physically: the land in Doskino (outside Nizhny Novgorod) was almost 33 hectares (79 acres) according to the documents and "according to the

[82] Evtuhov, 6, 247, 249.
[83] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 165, ll. 1-7.
[84] Adele Lindenmeyr *Poverty Is Not a Vice: Charity, Society, and the State in Imperial Russia,* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 214, 222.
[85] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, l. 202.
[86] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 196, l. 13; 114, l. 6.

[ground] plan," about 84 hectares (208 acres).[87] Shortly thereafter, he purchased a horse for his estate.[88] Introduced to leisure time in the dachas of his childhood, Trinkler followed in the footsteps of his parents who took him outside Saint Petersburg two decades before, thus reaffirming his being a middle-class *dachnik* and demonstrating his desire to elevate his status. Unfortunately for Trinkler and many other citizens of the Russian Empire, the Great War broke out a few months after he had started settling in his estate.

Although Trinkler was ethnically German and had a German last name, he served in the Russian military during the Great War. Eric Lohr notes the imperial state's leniency towards Baltic Germans, including those occupying civil and army service positions, pointing out that over fifteen percent of the officer corps had Germanic last names. This was despite the anti-German sentiments of right-wing organizations and the state's campaign against enemy aliens at the time. Lohr notes that during the Great War, the Russian Empire engaged in nationalizing state practices, such as the expropriation of property, liquidation of enemy-alien businesses, and forced migrations. These practices unified minority groups affected by them and led to coming together of different ethnicities, including Germans. The naturalization of foreigners was banned, and ethnic origins rather than evidence of assimilation was a more decisive factor in the deliberations of committees considering appeals for exemptions.[89] The state's nationalizing policies, as well as Trinkler's serving in the war on the Russian side, may have reaffirmed his self-perception as an Russian. Having changed his patronymic a decade before the war, his affinity with Russia solidified even more as the Empire was conceiving of itself in increasingly nationalist terms.

During the war, Trinkler sent several petitions to his superiors asking for assistance in obtaining a more suitable position as well as financial assistance due to his unexpected loss of income as a result of the war. In one petition, he asked his commanders for a position. He wrote a summary of his experiences working in the technical sphere, including his work experience in Germany, hoping to be transferred to a relevant assignment. He explained that several months

[87] In the bill of sale, the measurements used were "thirty *desiatin* and ninety-six square *sazhen'*," which equals ~32.82 hectares in the modern measurement system and "seventy-seven *desiatin*," which equals ~84.12 hectares. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 114, ll. 7, 9-9ob.
[88] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 114, l. 13.
[89] Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens During World War I*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 2003), 9, 24, 166-167, 169-170.

earlier, in 1915, he had already submitted a report (*raport*) where he had "offered his technical knowledge to the military department." He further elaborated that he had provided a "technical consultation" at the Kars Engineering Fortress where a commander had expressed his intention to provide Trinkler with a technical assignment following his report. Trinkler lamented that even after submitting yet another report, he "did not get a technical post." He concluded this petition with an explanation of the types of positions in which he could prove most useful due to his specialized expertise.[90] Trinkler's determination in trying to secure a suitable assignment for himself is evident from his continuous pressing the matter until he finally obtained the desired post.

By December 1915, Trinkler had been transferred to serve in Persia, where he was responsible for commissioning transport in the rearward of expeditionary forces.[91] While at this post, he asked the head of the rearward to station a second officer to help with his workload. He wrote that "the amount of clerical work… is growing and I alone cannot manage despite my utmost diligence." He pointed out that "a thorough check" of documentation performed by him allowed for saving of 500 rubles of state money, yet he did not have time to check some other papers, which led to a contractor insulting Trinkler. Trinkler urged the head of the rearward to hire a second officer as soon as possible.[92] This instance illustrates Trinkler's keenness to petition for better working conditions and his ability to justify the case by noting his diligence. Trinkler was confident in the value of his skills as the ground for approval of his requests and used logical arguments to support them. His superiors recognized his qualifications and hard work, and, on April 3, 1916, an order to transfer him to the Kars Engineering Office was issued.[93] Trinkler's wish to serve in a technical position was satisfied: his abilities, combined with determination proved helpful in securing him a desired position at the war front. His case also illustrates that the petitioning culture often associated with the Soviet system existed well before it.

[90] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 112, ll. 51-52.
[91] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 112, l. 51ob.
[92] Because the contractor was "poorly educated," Trinkler disregarded his "tactless behavior." GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 112, ll. 70-71.
[93] In the order, Trinkler's current commander praised his usefulness in organizational matters and regretted having to "yield to the offer of the other superiors and part with" Trinkler. He thanked Trinkler for his service and expressed his confidence that he would distinguish himself in the new position. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 112, l. 74.

During the war, Trinkler petitioned not only to get transferred, but he also requested financial assistance from his director at the Sormovo factory. The war soon brought financial hardship to the Trinkler family and their properties. Trinkler was unable to pay for the estate he had purchased shortly before the war. Unable to continue his regular employment due to having been drafted to the military, on December 11, 1914, he wrote, "I have to petition (*prinuzhden khodataistvovat'*) for a one-time assistance in the amount of five hundred forty-four rubles, if that is possible, in order to fulfill my urgent obligations…"[94] Two year later, he sent his wife a letter that included a note to the factory "so that they give you 75 rubles, or you will simply die of starvation."[95] The fact that Trinkler petitioned for extra money on at least two occasions illustrates his confidence in his requests being justified by his previous contributions to the factory and his professional value.

Even during his service during the Great War, Trinkler remained involved in the matters of his estate. While he was at the front, his wife kept him updated on her financial matters, frequently discussing Doskino.[96] Shortly after the February Revolution of 1917, which toppled the tsarist system and replaced it with a democratic one, she communicated her worries about their estate in in light of peasant unrest in the Nizhny Novgorod region. On April 11, 1917, Mariia wrote to her husband at the front: "I will go to Doskino again, but I cannot say that I am drawn there; that is, I love the estate… but uneasiness involuntarily creeps to my soul after reading about what is happening in Kniaginin and Lukoianov counties (*uezdy*)…. I do not know if the peasants will allow me to remove grass in the meadow…"[97] When mentioning events in Kniaginin and Lukoianov, she was referring to conflicts between peasants and landowners, which, by mid-May, led to landowners acquiescing to peasant use of his fields, gardens and equipment on terms of bona fide rent. Moreover, in two villages of the region, peasants took possession of the lands of the Noble bank (*Dvorianskii bank*).[98]

On May 14, 1917, before receiving the worrisome letter from April 11th from his wife, Trinkler was concerned with the situation in the village of their estate: "You do not write

[94] He explained that he had hoped to work at the Sormovo factory for a long time, which is why he ventured to purchase "a small estate with a dacha…" GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 196, l. 18.
[95] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 155.
[96] GKU TsANO, f. P-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 92, 104-106, 121.
[97] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 78.
[98] *Pravda*, May 19, 1917.

anything about your relationship with the peasants and if everything is calm in Doskino. Judging by individual phrases of your letter… it seems that it is more or less calm."[99] On May 26, 1917, however, Gustav Trinkler responded that he had just received this letter from April 11th. Alarmed about the situation, he wrote, "Marusia, let's hope that things will get better with the peasants; you write that… you do not know who will collect the harvest – even if the village men (*muzhiki*) do – we will drink a bowl of misery to the bottom, but nevertheless, I hope that we will get to better days at last. I also feel that your hard work will touch the peasants, and they will not encroach on our shrine (*sviatynia*)."[100] Trinkler's language indicates not only his hopes of a good relationship with the peasants, but also his separating himself from the *muzhik* (a toiling peasant with rough manners) and not identifying with the lower class of the society.

Considering the ongoing peasant unrest some 130-170 kilometers away from their estate, it is interesting that Mariia Trinkler wrote to her husband, "Yes! Our Russia showed herself from the best side. It will be a glorious and bright page in her history! We can bow to the new government - everything is so honorable and clever (*umno*)."[101] Evidently, she was agreeing with something her husband must have said in an earlier letter. This was not the only time she expressed her delight with the February Revolution, which, however, was not free of worry. Soon after the Revolution, on March 14, 1917, she expressed her mixed feelings: "The first days of the revolution I was so happy, so believed in the bright future that no doubt crawled into my soul… And now, on the contrary, [I feel] terrible alarm. I am so afraid lest these "comrades" mess up the cause. I do not like a lot [of things]…The Council of Workers' Deputies constantly unnerves them [the new ministers], and [they] will bring the poor Kerensky to death."[102] The February Revolution made the Trinklers concerned for the estate in Doskino, but it did not wreak havoc in their lives. Unlike some other *dachniki* who were scared away by the unrest and left their property behind, the Trinkler family did not abandon Doskino.[103] Moreover, they welcomed the events and approved of the interim government, and Mariia did not feel a connection to the cause of the workers, thus indicating the family's self-perception of not belonging to lower class masses.

[99] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 73-73ob.
[100] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 79.
[101] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 74-74ob.
[102] Mariia also wrote about her irritation with the Sormovo factory workers who proclaimed wishes for a coup but were not doing anything other than mockery. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 130.
[103] Lovell, 119.

Shortly after these letter exchanges, Trinkler returned from the front. He retained his confidence in petitioning for positions in the civilian world. He did not abandon his desire to become a professor, and when the Warsaw Polytechnic Institute was evacuated to Nizhny Novgorod, Trinkler decided to seize the opportunity to realize his longstanding career wish. In 1917, he expressed his resolve in a letter to his wife shortly before returning home: "I only dream of one thing – to secure a professorship…"[104] His phrase "to secure a professorship (*dobit'sia professury*)" highlights his dogged determination. On June 30, 1917, Trinkler asked the director of his alma mater to send him a certificate of his distinction at graduation due to his "petition (*khodataistvo*) to the director of the Warsaw (now Nizhny Novgorod Polytechnic Institute) concerning [my request] permitting me to engage in a pedagogical activity."[105] Trinkler, in other words, once again engineered his own hire: on October 1, 1917, he became a teacher (*prepodavatel'*) at the university, while retaining his position at the Sormovo factory (renamed "Krasnoe Sormovo" in 1918).[106]

Before the Bolsheviks took power, Trinkler was an established engineer beginning his career in higher education. He claimed his place in the provincial community of intellectuals by his own status of a successful inventor, by being a benefactor of an educational society and a citizen with lived experiences in a developed Western European country, as well as by his family members' traditions in working in intellectual professions. As a technical intellectual, he enjoyed a material wellbeing consisting of active leisure time outside the city and sending his family on vacation to the south of the Empire. Trinkler's position also afforded him a notion of self-worth, which manifested itself in Trinkler's requests for assistance with obtaining jobs or receiving additional money during his service in the Great War. As ethnic minorities, and Germans in particular, were becoming more unified in an increasingly nationalizing empire, Trinkler's self-perception as a Russian was clear and likely reinforced by his service in the war. At the time of the October Revolution of 1917, Trinkler was forty-one. He had an established way of life with his habits and attitudes shaped by the Imperial context in which he operated. As the Bolsheviks took power, Trinkler would encounter major impediments but he would work hard to maintain his well-established "bourgeois" way of living as well as his sense of intellectual prominence.

[104] "…and have my own free space (*mesto*) (?)…" GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 79ob.
[105] Trinkler was asking for a certificate that after his graduation in 1899, his name was engraved on the marble board. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 196, l. 21.
[106] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 111, l. 17ob.

His revolutionary self, in other words, could be engineered according to the ways he had learned well before 1917.

Chapter 2: Re-Engineering a Middle-Class Life, 1917-1932

On September 30, 1930, Gustav Trinkler wrote to his wife Mariia, "During [your] visit on Monday, I noticed a rather despondent state in you, and I think that you are excessively nervous at the time when there are not as many reasons to worry as you think."[107] Trinkler was writing from his place of imprisonment in Moscow, where he served at the EKU-OGPU, or *sharashka* – a prison dedicated to the forced labor of scientists, engineers, and technicians – after having been sentenced to 10 years of forced labor earlier that year.[108] Understandably, Mariia was worried about her husband, but Trinkler was right: even though he was unfree, he continued working on his engineering projects and even oversaw constructors of the Kolomna Locomotive Works.[109] Trinkler's ability to negotiate favorable conditions for himself under the new regime and even during his arrest stemmed from the skills he cultivated before 1917. His case illustrates how one individual of the imperial generation managed to obtain accommodations for his personality from the Bolshevik government.

This chapter explores Trinkler's new Soviet life, up to and including his time of incarceration. Trinkler had an established way of living before 1917, including his desire for material wellbeing and his sense of being an important intellectual. The problem was that the Bolshevik regime sought to eradicate "bourgeois" living and was suspicious of old specialists. Remarkably, despite being a "bourgeois" specialist with a German name, Trinkler successfully navigated the new system. Even upon encountering a major hiccup in 1930 – his arrest – he managed to preserve his character line. This chapter traces Trinkler's successful adaptation to the system which, in his case, allowed him to remain a middle-class specialist with "bourgeois" habits and sense of entitlement to auspicious conditions for life and work. Unlike Hellbeck's diarists, Trinkler did not attempt to remake his self to fit the new ideological line, nor did he make efforts to wear a mask like the subjects of Fitzpatrick's study. He drew on his imperial experiences to re-assemble the comforts he had been used to.

[107] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 240.
[108] Tsentral'nyi arkhiv FSB, R-34299 (official written response from the archive); GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, ll. 84ob., 85, 91; Siddiqi, 558.
[109] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 121, l. 10 ob.

During the chaos of the Civil War, the Polytechnic Institute and other higher educational institutions were reorganized as one university – the Nizhny Novgorod University (NGU). In 1919, after missing one winter of work, Trinkler became a professor in the department of Internal Combustion Engines at the newly formed institution.[110] Outside work, Trinkler kept enjoying time at his estate. In this regard, he was far from unique, for, as Stephen Lovell has written, the *dacha* was "one of several prerevolutionary cultural status symbols that were appropriated by a new Soviet 'middle class.'"[111] Following the Revolution, exurban locations were less prone to sudden appropriations by the new regime (although estate owners – with Trinkler being one – were more vulnerable than regular *dachniki*). In the 1920s, the legal status of ownership was hazy, with frequent uncertainties regarding whether some *dachas* were municipal or private. This was despite a decree calling for a compilation of *dachas* that had been municipalized during the Civil War on local initiatives and because there was no coherent overall municipalization policy, thus permitting for some property to stay in private hands.[112] Trinkler was one of the property owners who retained his land at this time of legal uncertainties. He was confident in his ability to keep the estate as he expanded his livestock by purchasing a cow and a horse in 1922, the year the USSR itself came into existence.[113]

In 1921, Trinkler combined two of his passions – care for his estate and writing petitions – in submitting requests related to his land. In August, he noted in his planner that he "was writing a request (*proshenie*) to the Provincial Land Office (*Gubzemleotdel*) the whole day." A month later, he "filed a petition regarding Doskino [his estate]" with the Provincial Electoral Commission (*Gubizbirkom*).[114] It is likely that he was solving the legal uncertainties, hoping for a positive resolution of his case. Around the same time, he also wrote in his planner that he had

[110] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, l. 84; d. 149, l. 14.
[111] Lovell, 118.
[112] Ibid., 119-120, 124, 135,
[113] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 114, l. 16-16ob.; d. 105, l. 2344.
[114] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, ll. 4626ob., 4631. In April of the same year, Trinkler received manure for his horse, indicating that he had at least a horse as his livestock: the goat's rue petition may have been related to that. Other than the horse, Trinkler and his wife had discussed cows and pigs in connection to the estate several years prior. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, l. 4607; d. 193, ll. 104-107, 121.
Trinkler made notes regarding 1921 (including a hand-written inscription "1921" at the beginning) in his planner that was originally sold as the "technical calendar for 1910." It is possible, however, to distinguish his 1921 notes from his sparse 1910 ones by paying attention to the difference in language and the style of note-taking (he made his 1921 notes perpendicular to the planner's print). Additionally, he could not have made petitions related to the summer house in 1910 because he bought his land in Doskino in 1913. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, l. 4573; d. 114, l. 7.

"submitted a petition regarding the goat's rue (*kozliatnik*)," most likely related to its use as a provision for livestock.[115] In these petitions, Trinkler demonstrated a strong commitment to his status and the material benefits he enjoyed from it, even though the early Bolshevik state engaged in appropriations and land seizures. Even more remarkably, he succeeded in these efforts. In 1923, he successfully obtained a certificate from the Nizhny Novgorod Provincial Land Administration, stating that "the farm (*khoziaistvo*) of engineer Trinkler… of manor land (*usadebnaia zemlia*) purchased in 1914, was a cultural economy (*kul'turnoe knoziaistvo*). The proper grass sowing has started… with proper cultivation and handling of the garden and kitchen-garden, with the appropriate cultural tools and was exemplary for the surrounding peasant population."[116] Evidently, to game the system and protect his property, Trinkler needed a document that would demonstrate the usefulness of his owning and cultivating the land, which could act as a protective device of his property right and, by extension, his "bourgeois" status.

Despite his petitioning abilities, during the early post-revolutionary years, Trinkler encountered hardships and scrambled to maintain a stable life – a situation familiar to the rest of the population. On November 3, 1921, Trinkler "received the last 60 f. [pounds] of butter," presumably as an academic ration, which he was selling at a market the very next day.[117] In the same year, he received flour at his job and at least one academic ration.[118] He was also soliciting (*khlopotat'*) shoes for himself and his family, eventually succeeding.[119] In other words, the chaos and hardships of the Civil War did not leave Trinkler untouched, motivating him to procure commodities for himself and his family. During the early post-revolutionary years, Russia experienced disastrous harvests that led to famines starting as early as 1919.[120] Although Trinkler was an established engineer and professor, he dealt with the same issues that the rest of the population experienced. Seeking to obtain resources was not a new exercise for him, however: his ability to procure commodities stemmed from his pre-revolutionary experiences soliciting resources and benefits from his superiors.

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[115] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, l. 4622.
[116] In this document, Trinkler's land amounted to 23 *desiatin* (~25.13 hectares) – 7 *desiatin* (~7.65 hectares) less than the 1914 bill of sale documented. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 114, l. 15.
[117] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, l. 4644.
[118] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, l. 4606, 4622ob.
[119] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, l. 4638-4638ob.
[120] Andrei Markevich and Mark Harrison, "Great War, Civil War, and Recovery: Russia's National Income, 1913 to 1928," *The Journal of Economic History* 71, no. 3 (2011): 688.

During the hardships of the Civil War, in January of 1921, Trinkler's brother Vasilii, known in the family as "Vilia" (a diminutive form of his birth name Vil'gel'm), was worried about his younger brother's well-being and suggested that they consider a move to Estonia, where, "they say, work and a decent living (*prilichnoe sushchestvovanie*) are guaranteed." "Migration to the motherland of our father" was not the only idea suggested by Vilia. He also advised Gustav to abandon his professorship in Nizhny Novgorod because it was exhausting, and he was not receiving an allowance (*paek*). Instead, he suggested that Gustav should move to Saint Petersburg because "life here is, of course, much easier than in the province, especially for scientists who receive an academic allowance."[121] In other words, moving to Estonia was one – but not the only – way to improve the family's quality of life at a time of upheaval in Russia.

Moving to Estonia could have been possible following the 1920 Peace Treaty of Tartu between Estonia and the Russian Soviet Federative Republic and which legally guaranteed Estonian independence for the first time in history. According to Article 4 of the Treaty, all persons of Estonian origin over the age of eighteen, including those whose parents had been entered in into Estonian parish registries, could opt for Estonian citizenship.[122] Trinkler's father was born in Reval (Tallinn), so they could have tried petitioning for Estonian citizenship.[123] Despite this possibility and the unfavorable conditions in the early 1920s, the extended Trinkler family remained in Russia. By July 1921, Gustav Trinkler's life slightly improved as he made a note that he "received an academic allowance in full."[124] Nonetheless, Vasilii Trinkler kept entertaining the idea of moving abroad, about which he wrote to Gustav. In 1925, Vilia communicated "good news that our house in Finland has been bought out, and although, it seems that our almost all of our property has been plundered, but it is nice to know that we still have some pied-à-terre, which, perhaps, we will sometime be able to use."[125] Up until 1927, legal migration was almost unhindered, thus the Trinklers', and particularly Gustav's, remaining in

[121] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 328, ll. 40-41ob.
[122] Helen Rohtmets, "The Repatriation of Estonians from Soviet Russia in 1920-1923: A Test of Estonian Citizenship and Immigration Policy," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 42, no. 2 (2011): 171.
[123] "Kuptsy i fabrikanty prikhoda Sv. Mikhaila," https://spbstmihail.jimdo.com/музей/прихожане/купцы/ (accessed November 28, 2019).
[124] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, l. 4622ob.
[125] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 328, ll. 43-43ob.

Russia indicates his decision not to emigrate.[126] Whether it turned out to be too difficult a move to pursue or the ties to Russia were too strong, it is telling of the *choice* Gustav Trinkler made.

In 1929, the Soviet government tightened regulations on who could travel abroad, limiting the privilege to those traveling for medical reasons and foreigners' family members returning home.[127] Four years before that, in 1925, Trinkler took an official trip to Germany that went through unhindered. Upon his return, he gave a report on his trip, describing factories he visited and technical practices he encountered. He ended with conclusions on "equipment, rationalization, normalization, increasing of workers' productivity, transport" and "intelligent work and increasing its productivity."[128] Trinkler's including such a conclusion seems to point to his using his trip to Germany to describe practices that the Soviet Union could adopt. In this, the 1925 report appears similar to his 1909 report on the state of German military, which ended with discussion of trams in Hannover and Nizhny Novgorod.[129] At the end of 1925, Trinkler remained an attentive traveler hoping to make his experiences useful to his motherland.

Trinkler's desire to share his ideas and spread knowledge both within and outside his expertise points to his self-perception as a member of the intellectual circle, one he cultivated before 1917 and adhered to after revolution. After the revolution, as a technical intellectual, he became part of the rising Soviet technical intelligentsia. The intelligentsia is a concept that lacks a precise definition. Benjamin Tromly points out that in the Russian context, the nineteenth century origins of the concept are "relatively clear": "intelligentsia" was the mantle for commitment to truth, progress, and equality by educated Russians under the Tsarist regime. He underlines that during Stalin's era, educated elites became more integrated in the Soviet order, thus indicating that ideas about what "intelligentsia" meant changed across time.[130] Stuart Finkel argues that in the Soviet Union, intellectuals were no longer "the defenders of the popular masses," but rather, they were supposed to perform "mental labor" and refrain from criticism in

[126] L.P. Belkovets and S.V. Belkovets, "Vyezd za rubezh sovetskikh grazhdan v 1920-1930-e gody [Soviet Citizens' Travel Abroad in the 1920s and the 1930s]," *Migratsionnoe pravo [Migration Right]* 5 (2006), 2.
[127] Ibid., 20.
[128] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 87, l. 15.
[129] See footnote 64.
[130] Benjamin Tromly, *Making the Soviet Intelligentsia: Universities and Intellectual Life under Stalin and Khrushchev*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 3-5.

return for privileges.[131] Additionally, in the Soviet Union, a distinct group within the intelligentsia became apparent – the technical intelligentsia. Robert Daniels defines the technical intelligentsia as "the class of trained experts and professional people, whose status and income is based on their specialized education and skills."[132] Trinkler's specialized knowledge in engineering defined both his status and income, placing him in the category of the technical intelligentsia. Here too, however, he had already manufactured his self-perception of an intellectual prior to 1917.

In Finkel's discussion of the early Soviet years, he points out that upon solidifying their power, the Bolsheviks recognized that expertise of technical specialists was crucial to the reconstruction of the devastated state. Yet the Bolsheviks sought to redefine the norms for "intellectual public behavior," and consequently, in the early 1920s, they enacted numerous deportations and restrictive measures against those intellectuals whom they deemed enemy to the new regime. The new government's attitude towards members of the technical intelligentsia was more favorable than that towards "the cultural or humanistic intelligentsia," evident in the deportations of primarily philosophers, litterateurs, and social scientists in the early 1920s. The technical intelligentsia's practical skills were of great value to the Bolsheviks.[133] Pál Tamás discusses the importance of engineers to the Soviet system and asserts that beginning in the 1930s, engineers were "prioritized and inscribed in the ideological system of the regime."[134] While the nineteenth-century Russian intelligentsia was dominated by writers, the twentieth-century Soviet regime prioritized intellectuals with practical skills. Gustav Trinkler was precisely the intellectual with practical skills that the Soviet Union needed for its rapid development.

Trinkler's knowledge of his value to the state reaffirmed his desire to request things he believed he deserved. In 1929, during the year of "the great break (*velikii perelom*) on all fronts of socialism building," Trinkler did not break with his tradition of writing petitions.[135] On July 8,

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[131] Stuart Finkel, *On the Ideological Front: The Russian Intelligentsia and the Making of the Soviet Public Sphere*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 3.
[132] Robert V. Daniels, "Intellectuals and the Russian Revolution," *American Slavic and East European Review* 20, no. 2 (1961): 275.
[133] Stuart Finkel, "Purging the Public Intellectual: The 1922 Expulsions from Soviet Russia," *The Russian Review* 62, no. 4 (2003), 592, 598, 611.
[134] Pál Tamás, "Was the Soviet Engineer So Unique?" *Ab Imperio* 2013, no. 1 (2013): 190.
[135] I.V. Stalin, *Pravda*, November 7, 1929.
There are no records of Trinkler's petitions between 1921 and 1929 in the documents examined for this master's thesis. Although instances discussed in this chapter point to Trinkler's increased petitioning activity in times of crisis

he filed a claim with the Nizhny Novgorod prosecutor's office and the directorate of the Volga State River Navigation, asking to be paid for overtime work. He attached certificates proving the amount of overtime worked during evenings and holidays by each member of the expert commission he was heading. He wrote, "based on the above-mentioned, I ask to order payment to the members of the commission, according to the provision."[136] Trinkler presented the case in a logically organized request supported by documentation and explanation of why the overtime work was required. Similarly, Trinkler's awareness of his status as a member of the intelligentsia reaffirmed his claim to comment on issues outside his immediate expertise. In the same year, Trinkler wrote a detailed report complaining about the fickleness of the walls in an emerging second building of the housing cooperative where he had an apartment. He provided ample justification before concluding that "I ask the Directorate to urgently discuss the current situation" with the head engineering supervisor.[137] Trinkler felt confident in his right to request compensation for extra work and to demand action from the housing cooperative's directorate.

In the late 1920s, Trinkler made enough money to afford summer vacations for his family. In 1912, Mariia Trinkler went to Crimea with their daughter Erika. After the Revolution, "former aristocratic pleasure zones would serve as centers of recuperation for… the new beneficiaries of Soviet power," including workers and peasants.[138] Nationalization of resort facilities and the goal of making them accessible to the masses had little impact on the Trinkler family, for in the 1920s, they kept up with the practice of vacationing in the south. In the summer of 1926, Trinkler visited Soviet resort towns, such as Kislovodsk, Batumi and Sochi.[139] In 1929, Trinkler made a note in his planner "M+ Nina to Sochi," meaning that his wife once again took their daughter (now the second eldest) to the southern part of the country.[140] A year earlier, the whole family went to the south on vacation, taking a lovely family picture with a palm tree in the

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(World War I, the Civil War, his arrest, and World War II), the nature of available sources indicates persistence of his attitude throughout his life: he likely wrote at least some requests between 1921 and 1929, but either did not preserve drafts and copies or his family did not include them in the donation of his documents to the archive.

[136] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 149, l. 45-45ob.

[137] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 114, l. 19-19ob.

[138] Diane Koenker, *Club Red: Vacation Travel and the Soviet Dream*, 17.

[139] He also visited Mineral'nye Vody, Piatigorsk, Baku, Armavir, Rostov, Kharkiv, and likely Sevastopol. Most likely, this was part of a cruise as Trinkler spent short amounts of time in each and mentioned a steamboat. The whole trip seems to have lasted over a month. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, ll. 2741ob., 2742, 2744, 2744ob., 2748ob. In 1929, he also went on a steamboat cruise, noting in his planner that he "left with a steamboat 'Trud'" and that he visited Baku and Ashkhabad. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, ll. 1511ob., 1512, 1515ob.

[140] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, l. 1507.

background. The back of the photo was signed as "The whole Trinkler family in the south… 1928."[141] These areas were one of the most desired ones by Soviet vacationers. By the mid-1930s, the Caucasian Mineral Waters area, the Caucasus coastline of the Black Sea, and Crimea would account for two-thirds of the country's health resorts. Despite the aim of the government to prioritize productive workers, many vacationers in the best resorts remained white-collar employees.[142] Trinkler took advantage of the system and retained his middle-class status in his vacationing practices.

When not on vacation, Trinkler enjoyed leisure activities, such as theater. In 1926, Trinkler took his daughter Erica to see *Notre-Dame de Paris*, and later in the year, he went to see a play at the Moscow Academic Theatre of Satire, which had been established two years earlier.[143] In 1929, Trinkler went to see *Swan Lake* and, two days later, he went to Music-Hall, which would be closed in 1937 because of its "bourgeois" art.[144] In the 1920s, Trinkler frequented Moscow on official trips related to his profession, which allowed him to take advantage of cultural events.[145] In the 1920s, the Trinkler family also visited churches and celebrated Easter, Trinity, and Christmas, meaning that they kept practicing Christianity despite the anti-religious campaigns of the Bolshevik government, which nationalized church property and engaged in anti-religious propaganda and education.[146] In other words, Trinkler and his family led a life, similar to the one they had before 1917 – one that the Bolsheviks could label as "bourgeois."

Most likely, Trinkler did not anticipate a major turn of events that happened to him several months later. He held his positions at the NGU and at Krasnoe Sormovo until January 3, 1930, when he was arrested by the OGPU on suspicion of sabotage at the factory. Between 1928 and 1930, however, Trinkler was no longer the head of the engine construction but a consultant at Krasnoe Sormovo, which could mean that his position at the factory had weakened.[147] In 1928

[141] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 2, d. 14, l. 3
[142] Diane Koenker, *Club Red: Vacation Travel and the Soviet Dream*), 24, 31.
[143] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, ll. 2749, 2765.
[144] Most likely, Trinkler attended these two cultural events in Moscow. Both Moscow and Leningrad Music-Halls closed in 1937 for the same reason. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, l. 1474ob.
[145] Trinkler made many notes about his going to Moscow and returning home in his planner. See, for example, notes from 1926, 1927, and 1929: GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, ll. 1312-1424, 1469-1576, 2675-2793.
[146] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, ll. 1366, 1374ob., 1396ob., 1410, 1502, 2355; d. 193, ll. 172ob., 175; Daniel Peris, "The 1929 Congress of the Godless," *Soviet Studies* 43, no. 4 (1991): 711-712.
[147] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 111, l. 17ob.; d. 106, l. 91.

and 1930, the Bolshevik suspicion of the old scientific and technical intelligentsia was embodied in the form of the Shakhty and Industrial Party trials. Thousands were accused of "wrecking" and sentenced in the process.[148] Trinkler and several of his colleagues were suspected of acting under the command of Russian émigré industrialists, the French general staff, and even Raymond Poincaré himself to "destroy achievements" of the factory workers. A local newspaper, *Nizhegorodskaia kommuna*, described the accused as the "bloody pack (*krovavaia svora*), beginning with Poincaré and ending with… Bobrishchevs, Trinklers and others."[149]

On August 16, 1930, Trinkler – a member of the "bloody pack" – was sentenced to a forced labor camp for 10 years, which he served at the EKU-OGPU, or *sharashka*, where he was subjected to forced labor alongside other scientists, engineers, and technicians.[150] Although Trinkler did not leave a diary, there is no indication that these extraordinary circumstances led to his interpreting his life and arrest as part of a significant historical process. The case of another Soviet intellectual – a prominent playwright Alexander Afinogenov – expelled from the Communist party in 1937 illustrates his grappling with the government's disfavor in terms of the overall historical significance of the purges. He viewed his case as a mistake that inevitably happened during the purge that "would allow the whole country to breathe freely and happily."[151] In Trinkler's case, the opposite proved true, for he continued with his pre-arrest practices of appeals and requests. Trinkler's expertise in engineering and constant self-promotion played a part in the OGPU's favorable disposition towards him despite the serious accusation. While imprisoned, Trinkler frequently mentioned his technical endeavors in letters to his wife and asked her to run errands and send him materials related to his work. The tone of his discussion of his work changed over the course of the arrest. Knowing that his correspondence was read by the Soviet security services, and likely *because of this*, in the initial letters from under arrest, Trinkler drew attention not only to his expertise and devotion to his profession, but also to his prominence in the field. These initial letters represented *an implicit form of petition* to notice his expertise and treat him accordingly.

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[148] Siddiqi, 563.
[149] *Nizhegorodskaia kommuna*, December 19, 1930, digital copy in "Gibel' Ingenera Khrennikova [Death of Engineer Khrennikov]," 2015, Livejournal.com, https://zaton50.livejournal.com/11580.html (accessed November 21, 2019).
[150] Tsentral'nyi arkhiv FSB, R-34299; GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, ll. 84ob., 85, 91; Siddiqi, 558.
[151] Hellbeck, 303-345.

On January 14, 1930, Trinkler asked his wife to send him several papers related to his invention of a diesel engine (*teplovoz*), including suggestions of the directorate of the Union of Factories to consider Trinkler's invention at the Railroad and River Navigation Offices.[152] A week later, he urged his wife to show his eight-page report on lab equipment directly to the NGU chancellor (*rektor*), who was "keenly interested in this work." He wrote to her that it was the gas generating engine "which, you know, interested and agitated me so much. Work could continue smoothly with this report." In this, Trinkler demonstrated his loyalty to his profession and his importance by mentioning the university chancellor's interest in his project. He underlined his invention of a new theorem and kept inquiring about the installation of the lab equipment, which had been his initiative and bore "great public importance."[153] A few days later, he continued his self-promotion campaign by noting the Commissariat of Railways' interest in his project, which "was not surprising."[154]

Trinkler's initial letters emphasized his recent and ongoing successes, work that imprisonment had cut off. Certainly, Mariia Trinkler must have had previous knowledge of her husband's excitement about the equipment and the chancellor's interest in his work. Trinkler's intended audience in showcasing the significance of his contributions, then, was not his wife but secret police officers reading correspondence.[155] Trinkler's dwelling on his projects' importance was an implicit petition to the OGPU: he was demonstrating his dedication to the profession and recognition that his work had received, likely hoping that his prominence could influence his conditions under arrest. His pre-arrest petitions involved outlining the case and providing justification for the request. In the letters to his wife, Trinkler did the latter – provided justification – for his implicit request to note his contribution to the technological progress and consider his case accordingly.

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[152] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 181-181ob.

[153] Trinkler also noted that his new ideas could become a matter of "major importance" (*ochen' krupnoi*). GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 183-183ob., 185.

[154] Trinkler wrote that based on the report of the People's Commissariat of Railways, the construction of his diesel engine could soon begin. He asserted that the reception of such reports was "a sign that [they are] interested in his project there," which, according to Trinkler, "was not surprising" because a similar project was described in a foreign journal, but his own invention was even better. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 186-186ob.

[155] In addition to the distinct way in which Trinkler discussed his work in his initial letters from under arrest, he also referred to his daughter Erika by her official (and a more Russian sounding) name Irina in letters from February 26, and March 2, 1930. On March 11, however, he began referring to her as Erika as she was called at home. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 191ob., 193ob., 199ob.

Trinkler's initial abundance of self-promotion in letters to his family was distinct from his mentions of work in his later letters. Whereas in the first weeks after the arrest, Trinkler made sure to be specific about the importance of his projects, in subsequent weeks, his mentions of work were of a conversational rather than a promotional character. On April 29, 1930, he wrote, "I am satisfied with today's work because I cooked up (*sostriapal*) a new engineering construction." "Cooked up" is a colloquial phrase distinct from the more serious language he had used before. In addition to a more casual tone, he was less adamant about impending success; he wrote that his work could lead to "practical inventions, which, perhaps, *could be* brought to life."[156] Similarly, in a letter from May 14, he was having a dialogue rather than a monologue about his work.[157] In contrast to this conversational tone, his initial letters from under arrest sought to not only inform and discuss, but also to emphasize the significance of his work with concrete examples rather than generalities.

In addition to such initial implicit petitioning to OGPU officers, he prepared to make his case explicit. In his letters from May 1930, he asked Mariia to quickly send him papers related to his diesel engine. He asked to "send me all known [newspaper] clippings about me and my diesel engine," a letter from Secret Advisor Lauster to the Union of Factories where he "praises my motor ship," and committee meeting minutes dating back to 1925.[158] Trinkler must have needed these papers discussing and praising his invention to make a case for himself. He knew of the key role that his prominence in the profession played in his current situation and mentioned it in his letters. On May 28, he wrote, "thanks to my work and creative endeavors, my condition has greatly improved, and it is necessary to maintain that."[159] Even six weeks earlier, when requesting technical books that he needed right away from Mariia, he knew that he could ask for their expeditious arrival, noting "I will ask the superiors to make an order to receive them in the

[156] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 216.
[157] Trinkler wrote that his work was leading to "a very interesting version" of a diesel engine; as opposed to earlier assertions of major importance of his projects, his tone signified a personal rather than a public evaluation of the work. He was upset, however, that his wife did not expect use (*tolk*) from his work; he underlined that the use "is and will be" and that his inventions deserved attention. The fact that his wife felt that she could question his prominence points to a degree of stability in Trinkler's situation at the moment. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 222-222ob.
[158] In a letter from May 3, 1930, Trinkler also requested a newspaper clipping of "a big [article] about me." GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 219-219ob., 227.
[159] Similarly, on June 7, he was comforting his wife: "I think about the time when we [the family] will be together again; my creative and hard work and my inventions will help that." GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 228, 230ob.

commandant's office."[160] During his arrest and sentence, in other words, Trinkler once again relied on his engineering skills and his proficiency in writing to the authorities to improve his current conditions and hoped that his work would eventually help him return to his regular life. Thus, even in custody, he adhered to his tactics of appealing for better conditions based on his hard work and expertise. In this case, his petitions were similar in nature to that of imprisoned Stalin's outcasts – people without voting, education, employment, and other rights – asking for "rights in exchange for [their] productive labor."[161] At the same time, in Trinkler's case these were not new appeals: he had been making similar claims for a quarter century.

Just like Trinkler's petitions were successful when he was free, his implicit and explicit appeals were successful during his time of imprisonment. Trinkler expressed his gratitude to Gorky's OGPU investigators who helped him conduct his creative work while incarcerated. He could freely continue working on his own projects until one of them was reviewed and approved in Moscow and led to his transfer and a specific assignment there.[162] While incarcerated at the *sharashka,* where both imprisoned and free specialists worked together, Trinkler worked on a project for an engine.[163] Here again the old specialists' value to the state was reaffirmed, for even imprisoned experts like Trinkler typically found themselves in charge of free "civilian" scientists.[164] Just as other imprisoned old specialists directed the work of younger individuals, Trinkler oversaw constructors of the Kolomna Locomotive Works. He wrote about his project, "I finally obtained the auspicious conditions which I had sought in vain (*tshchetno dobivalsia*) at my previous works" on other engines. The OGPU received a million rubles for Trinkler's project and distributed the money and the work across several factories.[165]

In addition to status, Trinkler had financial and personal support from the OGPU. According to the Regulation on Labor Camps from 1930, convicts demonstrating exemplary behavior and hard work, could receive monetary rewards.[166] Trinkler's wife received

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[160] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 211ob.
[161] Golfo Alexopoulos, *Stalin's Outcasts: Aliens, Citizens, and the Soviet State, 1926-1936,* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 2-3, 9.
[162] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 121, l. 10.
[163] Siddiqi, 565; GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, ll. 84ob., 85, 91.
[164] Siddiqi, 565.
[165] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 121, l. 10ob.
[166] Council of People's Commissars, Article 248: *Polozhenie ob ispravitel'no-trudovykh lageriakh [Regulation on Labor Camps]*, in *Sobranie zakonov i rasporiazhenii Raboche-Krest'ianskogo Pravitel'stva SSSR za 1930 god*

compensation for his employment at the *sharashka* on at least one occasion: in 1932, the OGPU sent her 1000 rubles, which was almost eighty percent of an average yearly salary in the Soviet Union at the time.[167] It was also five times more than the amount that five convicts of EKU OGPU received as lump sum allowance in 1931.[168] Trinkler asked his wife whether she received the money promised by comrade Sokolov, who "is well disposed to us."[169] Furthermore, in 1931, Trinkler received 200 rubles to help cover the healthcare of his daughter who was at the hospital at the time.[170] A year and a half earlier, Trinkler already instructed his wife that in order to request a meeting with him, she needed to call and ask for comrade Shakhovskoi or, if he was not there, to ask when it would be possible to get a hold of him.[171] Thus, Trinkler's attempts to draw attention to his prominence were not futile: although unfree, he could continue his professional activity and attain financial and personal support of the OGPU.

Despite the OGPU's leniency, Gustav's arrest was a trying time for the family not only emotionally, but also financially. Initially, Mariia could supply her husband with a variety of foodstuffs. Shortly after the arrest, Mariia Trinkler sent her husband a package of semolina porridge, kissel, sour cabbage with cucumbers, eight pies, and four bottles of milk. Trinkler asked her to send less produce, noting that the salad and the milk had gone bad. Less than a week later, she must have sent him another package for Trinkler wrote back, "the first butter still lies untouched; I forced myself to finish the old bun; I have not eaten the old cabbage. I have plenty of black bread, do not give it to me; only rarely give half a bun." Mariia continued sending food, however: "sending you a soup with rice, pilaf with chicken, [Russian] vinaigrette salad, four bottles of milk, eight apples, two French buns, one little bag of salt, one little bag full of

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[Collection of laws and orders of the Workers'and Peasants' Government of the USSR for 1930], Section III, Part V, points 23, 24, 25, http://istmat.info/node/49637 (Accessed April 5, 2020).

[167] In the fall of 1932, Trinkler wrote that his wife had received 2000 rubles for his work in the previous winter, so she must have received an additional compensation around that time. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, ll. 242, 250. In 1931, the average yearly wages across all trades in the USSR were 1127 rubles, and that in 1932 were 1427 rubles, making the average between these two years 1277 rubles. "Average Wage and Salary Payment in Various Industries in Ohio, 1916 to 1932: Part 3 Wages and Hours of Labor," *Monthly Labor Review*, no. 1 (1935): 175.

[168] Five convicts working at the Special Technical Bureau 11 were to receive 200 rubles and one – 150 rubles. Report "On issuing of a "lump-sum allowance" to specialists working in OKB No. 11," September 27, 1931 [RGAE, f. 38, op. 1, d. 2, l. 86], in *Sudebnyi protsess "Prompartii" 1930 g.: podgotovka, provedenie, itogi [The "Industrial Party"Trial of 1930: Preparation, Execution, Results]*, edited by S.A. Krasil'nikov, (Moscow: Politicheskaia entsiklopediia, 2016). http://istmat.info/node/30751 (Accessed April 5, 2020).

[169] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 286ob.

[170] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 260.

[171] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 231.

sugar…"[172] Clearly, in the early weeks of Trinkler's arrest the Trinkler family was well-fed: at this time when a rationing system still held, Muscovites and Leningraders received up to 0.6 kg of butter and 1.5 kg of sugar per month as well as up to 0.8 kg of bread per day.[173]

The situation quickly took a turn for the worse. Three years earlier, in 1927, Trinkler had made a note in his planner "NGU applied for an apartment," meaning that he was hoping to improve his living conditions.[174] In December of the same year, he made notes "Hooray NGU gave 500 rubles [we] could move [to the] apartment" and "the construction of the apartment began."[175] The Trinkler family occupied this apartment in the housing cooperative "Scientific Worker" shortly – in January 1928.[176] It is with the construction of a building of this housing cooperative that Trinkler became disgruntled in 1929 (his note to authorities about the second building).[177] Unfortunately for the family, the happiness of moving to a brand-new apartment gave way to the necessity to rent it out due to the dire financial situation after Trinkler's arrest. Writing while under arrest on March 2, 1930, he attached a newspaper ad and urged Mariia to consider renting out two rooms, "otherwise you will not be able to manage (*osilit'*)."[178] In 1930, Gustav and Mariia frequently discussed the apartment, with Gustav advising his wife "to not give up the apartment in any case" because "in the city [you] will settle much worse."[179] Less than three months after his arrest, Mariia and the children moved to a different apartment, on the occasion of which Gustav reminded his wife to "take everything that fell through the cracks" [of the floor].[180] It is difficult to imagine what could have fallen "through the cracks" in the floor other than the family's money reserves, which they must have kept hidden in the floor. In 1930,

[172] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 182-182ob., 183ob., 190.
[173] Elena Osokina, *Our Daily Bread: Socialist Distribution and the Art of Survival in Stalin's Russia, 1927-1941,* trans. Translated by Kate Transchel and Greta Bucher, (Armonk, NY and London: M.E. Sharpe, 2001), 206.
[174] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, l. 1390ob.
[175] Ibid., l. 1490.
[176] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 244.
[177] See footnote 137.
[178] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 193ob.
[179] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 203ob.
[180] On March 26, 1930, Trinkler wrote to his wife that he assumed she had not written to him recently because "you were moving to the new apartment" and asked her to send the number of the building and the apartment. He did not ask for the street address, meaning that they were most likely moving to the second building of the cooperative with the construction of which he had been disgruntled in 1929. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 204. In his later letter, Trinkler mentioned occupying apartment 7 in the first building of the housing cooperative since 1928. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 244. The apartment number of the Trinklers' apartment for the remainder of Gustav's life was 4, meaning that the family indeed changed apartments in the housing cooperative during his arrest. See insurance document for the permanent apartment number: GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, l. 192.

Mariia could still send money to her daughter Erika who, in turn, used the money to pay for her apartment in Leningrad and pay for part of the courses she was taking.[181]

Later in the year, Gustav instructed his wife on how to solve the issue with the directorate of the housing cooperative, which requested that the family pay an extra 15 rubles for each month they had occupied the apartment in addition to the 60 rubles they had paid monthly. Under these calculations, the sum amounted to 400 rubles, which Trinkler hoped they would not have to pay. Naturally, he crafted a petition from prison to the directorate of the housing cooperative that Mariia could use, concluding with "in light of wrongness of such a late demand (*trebovanie*), (and our extremely difficult material situation), I ask the board to reconsider this demand and relieve me from such an unexpected additional contribution (*vznos*)."[182] Perhaps, the directorate recalculated the monthly payment based on the fact that at the time of the project's initiation in 1926, apartments sized over 60 square meters were priced higher than those smaller than 60 square meters and someone could have mistakenly given Trinkler the lower price.[183] Trinkler's apartment was 78.23 square meters and consisted of five rooms, which placed it in the more expensive category (although neither the 60 rubles he was initially paying nor the 75 rubles that the directorate later said he should have been paying exactly corresponded to the initial amounts set by the cooperative).[184] Regardless of the reason why the directorate retroactively asked for payment, the 78.23 square meters that the Trinklers occupied was a large apartment by Soviet standards. In 1930 Moscow, the average living space norm per person was 5.5 square meters and in Magnitogorsk, it was 4 square meters.[185] Nonetheless, in the mid-1930s

[181] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 497-497a ob**.** In the late 1920s, prior to her father's arrest, Erika had moved to Leningrad. In 1928, she mentioned that her aunt and she "were getting used to each other." In her letters from 1928 and the following years, she mentioned details about her life there. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 401-406ob., 411-417ob., 447, 470-472ob.
[182] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 243-244.
[183] In 1926, apartments sized over 60 square meters were priced at 90 kopecks per square meter, whereas those smaller than 60 square meters were priced at 70 kopecks. The amounts were likely adjusted as the project moved along. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 114, l. 18.
[184] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, l. 265.
[185] O.V. Brigadina, "'Zhit' stalo luchshe, zhit' stalo veselei': zhilishchno-bytovye usloviia zhizni gorodskogo naseleniia SSSR v 1930-e gg. ["'Life Has Become Better, Life Has Become Merrier': Housing and Living Conditions of the Urban Population of the USSR in 1930s]," *Pratsy gistarychnaga fakul'teta BDU [Works of the BDU History Department]* 9 (2014): 143.

Magnitogorsk, factory workers and their families could possess as much as 15-22 square meters of living space, which was still *at least* three and a half times less than what Trinkler had.[186]

Trinkler hoped to preserve his large apartment despite the debts. By the fall of 1931, the Trinklers' apartment-related indebtedness amounted to 1825 rubles, and the housing cooperative allowed Mariia to pay the debt in installments but threatened to transfer the case "to the appropriate authorities" for collection of debt if she failed to make payments.[187] Gustav felt uneasy about his family's experiences with the issue, petitioning his superiors for help with getting deferment in paying the debt for the apartment or any other help. He wrote a proxy letter so that they could sell bonds and "to not lose the apartment," he asked the family to think of what they could do to get at least some money or "if you have something left to sell, then sell [it]."[188] Hoping to alleviate the dire financial situation, in November of 1931, Mariia rented out three rooms, totaling 33 square meters for a year.[189] Trinkler's determination "to not lose the apartment" despite the family's inability to pay for it indicates his desire to maintain a high standard of living and his belief in this possibility despite the circumstances. Aside from the obvious comfort that an individual apartment allowed for his family, Trinkler must have been well aware that having such a big apartment placed him in a higher position in the social hierarchy, thus allowing him to hold on to his middle-class identity despite his debt and incarceration.

While incarcerated, Trinkler also held on to his intelligentsia identity. In addition to working on his engineering projects and leading the staff of the Kolomna Locomotive Works, Trinkler requested non-engineering books and took an interest in his children's education. On February 18, 1930, he asked Mariia to send him the first book of *War and Peace*, a month later noting that "*War and Peace* finishes up and I will soon send it back to you. For new readings, try to send something recent, such as Natal'ia Tarnovaia, etc."[190] Considering that Gustav kept requesting materials and books related to his engineering work, he finished *War and Peace*

[186] Kotkin mentions one metal worker possessing 16 square meters, a coke master possessed 15 square meters, and a foreman of rolling mill construction – 22 square meters. It is not clear whether this living space included common areas, such as bathrooms and kitchens and what type of building it constituted (i.e. barracks or permanent buildings). Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*, 168.
[187] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 272.
[188] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 274.
[189] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, l. 260.
[190] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 189, 202.

quickly, returning books 9, 10 and 11 on March 26, 1930.[191] On April 9, he returned another book ("a novel") and asked Mariia to "more books for reading of the same kind."[192] Reading was one of the available pastimes in prison, and it also allowed Trinkler to preserve his sense of being an educated fellow.

Trinkler knew the value of education instilled in him from early childhood, and he aspired to do the same for his children. At the time of his arrest, Trinkler's youngest child, son Iurii, was about to turn seven.[193] In August 1930, the Soviet government issued a decree introducing universal compulsory education of at least four years of elementary school of children aged eight, nine and ten, meaning that next year, Iura would need to go to school.[194] His father had plans to educate him before the decree was issued; however, and the parents had already started teaching Iura how to write: in the spring of 1930, Trinkler kept asking his seven-year-old son to write him a letter.[195] In May 1930, Trinkler was concerned with his son's intellectual development, asking the family to sit down and engage with Iura. In one letter, he was wondering if Nina, their teenage daughter, "would study (*pozanimaetsia*) grammar with Iura a little bit, or he, a poor chap, will completely lag behind. Although it will, perhaps, be bad for health, but nonetheless, it is necessary (*nado*) for him to read and write."[196] Next year, Trinkler was much more at ease regarding his son's progress, writing that Iura "makes great strides in composing letters and, it seems, likes to solve [math] problems. I am very glad that my dear son is such a smart boy (*umnitsa*) and it is very flattering for me, his dad. I think that he can study at home until the fall and then let him go to school with peace."[197] Trinkler's concern over Iura's education and his pride in his son's successes in the intellectual field demonstrate the high value that he assigned to fostering an intellectual environment for his children before they received any

[191] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 204ob.
[192] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 208.
[193] On January 12/25, 1923, Trinkler made a note "Iurik was born at 5 pm." GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, l. 1943ob.
[194] Central Executive Committee of USSR, №43; Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, №308, *Postanovlenie o vseobshchem obiazatel'nom nachal'nom obuchenii [Decree on Universal Compulsory Elementary Education]*. M. Kalinin, Ia. Rudzutak, A. Enukidze, August 14, 1930, http://www.libussr.ru/doc_ussr/ussr_3667.htm (Accessed March 15, 2020).
[195] In March and April, Trinkler asked Iura to write him a letter at least three times. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 202ob., 204, 206.
[196] A couple of days later, he was once again writing to his wife, "I ask you once again – study (*pozanimaites'*) with Iurii at least a little bit lest he will completely lag behind in his progress (*razvitie*)." GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 228ob., 231ob.
[197] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 247.

formal training. In that, Trinkler mirrored his own imperial childhood experiences when his mother started teaching him grammar before enrolling him in the gymnasium.

Having received an excellent education from early on, Trinkler was proficient in three foreign languages – German, French, and English.[198] In 1931, he wrote back to his family, saying that his oldest daughter Erika's knowledge of French and German "will undoubtedly be of significant use" and suggesting that she learn stenography as well. He noted that learning how to write shorthand in foreign languages would be good, although may be difficult to do in Nizhny Novgorod. Furthermore, he wrote, "Of course, it would be good if you could also learn English – then you would be of great value; I myself know German, French, and English well, and my late mother freely spoke these languages (of course, Russian as well)."[199] In 1932, he gave his younger almost eighteen-year-old daughter Nina similar advice: "if you study foreign languages, I think it will be very good and useful for you then."[200] Interestingly, he dissuaded Nina from training in a typical proletarian profession – a machinist (*tokar'*), writing: "regarding your transfer to a turner trainee, I would think that signing a contract for two years would be very bad for you – then you would not be able to get into a VTUZ [Higher Technical Educational Institution] for a long time, and for now, your wages are also important to you; I would suggest to abstain for now."[201] Unlike some other children of the intelligentsia who might want to work in a factory for a year or so to enter college as a "proletarian," Nina was discouraged from entering a proletarian profession by her father.[202]

Trinkler's wish for his children to follow his footsteps in obtaining an education illustrates his strong sense of intellectual identity, which was fostered by his parents and teachers in the late-nineteenth century. Trinkler himself openly expressed his desire to be surrounded by other educated fellows: towards the end of his imprisonment, he wrote, "I am a little bored because I have more free time now, and I miss the company of scientists and professors [who

[198] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 111, l. 18.
[199] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 276.
[200] On March 18, 1930, Trinkler was wishing Nina a happy sixteenth birthday. The letter with advice from February 27, 1932. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 202ob, 286.
[201] In the same letter, Trinkler followed his advice by saying that "if you get into a Moscow VTUZ, we could all live together in Moscow," meaning that he was wishing for his daughter to embark on a higher education journey. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 286.
[202] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off the Masks!*, 16.

are] my equals in their knowledge."[203] Staying engaged in his engineering endeavors, reading technical and non-technical literature, and advising his children regarding their education all point to Trinkler's continued self-understanding as an intelligent man. Despite being imprisoned, he did not relinquish his sense of importance *because of* his specialized skills and intelligence. He was sure of their value and hoped that his children would see it the same way – as a pathway to success.

In the spring of 1932, the Politburo decided to begin the process of liquidation of the *sharashka* institutions by keeping the specialists until they "finish their work."[204] Despite his ten-year sentence, Trinkler was released on April 16, 1932 and kept working at the technical department of the OGPU until the spring of 1934.[205] His early Soviet experiences, including his period of incarceration, further cemented his belief in his importance and in the power of petition, both of which were first evident in his pre-Soviet life. Furthermore, despite the upheavals in his life as well as in the life of the country, he persisted in efforts to maintain his quality of life, which manifested itself in his obtaining a spacious apartment in the center of the city and attempting to hold onto it at all cost. The trying years of Trinkler's arrest did not break his character; rather, they further defined it.

[203] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 288.
[204] Siddiqi, 568.
[205] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, ll. 84ob.-85, 91.

Chapter 3: Retooling A Life Under Stalinism, 1932-1957

On the day of his release from imprisonment, April 16, 1932, Trinkler wrote a "Concise Biography of the Technical Preparation and Practical Engineering Work of Gustav Vasil'evich Trinkler."[206] He detailed his engineering experiences starting with "an irresistible craving for mechanics" stemming from his father's "heredity" and taking the reader of his autobiography through his lifetime's professional achievements until the time of his arrest in 1930. Trinkler titled the last section of his autobiography as "G.V. Trinkler – organizer of shock work," where he listed three major projects led by him at Krasnoe Sormovo, which, he claimed, should qualify as shock work.[207] In the Soviet Union, shock work (*udarnyi trud*) was a type of work that was predicated on the belief that better work organization and labor exploits could lead to vastly higher productivity.[208] Yet reading over his narrative, Trinkler realized that shock work did not fit his life's story for he crossed out the entire section.[209] Despite spending over two years as a prisoner of the Soviet system, Trinkler was not set on the path of self-transformation into an exemplary Soviet citizen. Rather, he emphasized his professional accomplishments stemming from his childhood, teenage and German pre-Soviet experiences.

This chapter explores Trinkler's post-imprisonment experiences, including his autobiographical narratives, continuation of his petitioning practice and his strong anti-German sentiments during World War II. After his release, Trinkler wanted to go back to his lifestyle of working and living in Gorky with his family. Employing his engineering expertise and his writing skills describing it, he kept enjoying recognition as a prominent technical specialist. He also managed to obtain a new place for his summer leisure and gardening. Trinkler's arrest did not halt his attempts at re-creating his imperial lifestyle. As he aged, Trinkler remained a petitioner certain of his deserving a comfortable lifestyle and a man who was able to accomplish that. Trinkler, in short, reengineered the bourgeois life he had first constructed before the revolution. Remarkably, he did so without the need to forge a revolutionary self or hide his blemishes, such as German connections and criminal record.

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[206] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, ll. 91, 97.
[207] Ibid., l. 104-104ob.
[208] Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*, 203.
[209] This was not the only part of the autobiography he crossed out, however. Trinkler's written works, including this hand-written autobiography, often had his notes on the margins and edits as he was perfecting his writing.

After his release, Trinkler held a dual employment as an engineer of the technical department of EKU-OGPU and a teaching professor at the Moscow Electro-Technical Institute of Engineers of Transport (MEMIIT).[210] Following his 1934 petition requesting a transfer back to Gorky, Trinkler became a professor at the Gorky Institute of Engineers of Water Transport (GIIVT), while retaining his part-time teaching position in Moscow.[211] His almost immediate reemployment at a university in Moscow and his 1934 reception of a teaching position in Gorky were consistent with the experiences of professors who had been removed from their positions during Stalin's "great break."[212] Many of them may have been reinstated to the same or similar positions in higher education following the purges of the "great break."[213] Moreover, in 1935, Stalin noted that if previously, "during the time of defeating wrecking," the government's attitude towards the old intelligentsia was expressed in "the politics of defeating," now it was time for "politics of attracting and caring for it [the old intelligentsia]."[214] In 1934, the Council of People's Commissars issued a decree allowing for the granting of advanced degrees for special merit without completion of a dissertation or receiving a prior degree.[215] In May 1935, Trinkler received a doctoral degree in technical sciences (*doktor tekhnicheskikh nauk*) without a public defense of a dissertation.[216] In the same year, he was appointed to the academic rank of Professor at the department of Internal Combustion Engine at the GIIVT.[217] Thus, after his release and despite his criminal record, Trinkler enjoyed a favorable disposition of the Soviet authorities, granting his wish to move back to his family in Gorky and even granted him the highest advanced degree for his accomplishments.

Trinkler's criminal record did not hinder him from reemployment, and it also did not stop him from continuing to petition. In addition to his 1934 request for a larger living space, a bigger salary and a transfer to Gorky, he sent another request to Kaganovich, asking to "give (*vydat'*)

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[210] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 111, l. 17ob.
[211] In his petition, Trinkler requested a position at the Gorky Industrial Institute rather than the Gorky Institute of Engineers of Water Transport where he ended up working. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, l. 293; d. 111, l. 17ob.
[212] The end goal of the purges and reorganizations was to "remake conceptions and agendas" in science and learning by imposing the Bolshevik organization on institutions. Michael David-Fox, *Revolution of the Mind: Higher Learning among the Bolsheviks, 1918-1929*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 258.
[213] Ibid.
[214] I.V. Stalin, *Pravda*, July 5, 1935. Quoted in Akimova, 60.
[215] Akimova, 60-61.
[216] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, l. 32.
[217] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, l. 29.

me an award for my creative work."[218] The government indeed recognized his work and awarded him 8000 rubles "according to my petition and at the direction of M.M. Kaganovich." This was in addition to his honorary doctorate degree and other monetary awards Trinkler received around the time.[219] In the case with this petition and unlike others in his position, the newly-freed Trinkler did not make assertions based on a "disempowered, weak self," as other scholars have described petitions under Stalinism. [220] Instead, Trinkler retained his self-promoting attitude based on his skills and successes.

It was during a rare moment of desperation that Trinkler drafted a plea to the technical department of the EKU-OGPU in the fall of 1932. Due to his family's debt for an apartment in the housing cooperative "Scientific Worker," the case was being transferred to the court. Trinkler implored for help, writing: "I ask [you] to understand my and my family's predicament and save me from insolvency and the disgrace of levy of execution of [my] property."[221] The Trinkler family had an issue with the cooperative requesting extra money for the apartment since he had been arrested, and it was then that Trinkler even instructed his wife how to petition the building's board to reconsider their case.[222] To be able to repay their debts, the family rented out a room even after Trinkler had been released from imprisonment – at least until the summer of 1934 (although by the end of 1934, they still owed 1456 rubles).[223] The gravity of the financial situation and the urgency of the case caused Trinkler to use a more emotional appeal asking for help rather than his usual tone of self-promotion and entitlement. Despite the tone, this request for assistance still echoed that of his 1914 request to help him pay for the newly purchased estate, which he could no longer afford due to a different set of extraordinary circumstances – World War I.

Trinkler mentioned Doskino – the place where he had purchased his estate in 1914 – as late as 1929.[224] Most likely, he did not manage to preserve the estate given his arrest in 1930 and the collectivization campaign. As a dedicated *dachnik*, however, he still obtained a new piece of land after his release. In 1937, Trinkler came to a pragmatic agreement with the summer house

[218] In this petition, Trinkler emphasized his engine IAGG. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, l. 289.
[219] Trinkler specified that this award was for the "IAGG machine." GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 121, l. 11ob.
[220] Alexopoulos, *Stalin's Outcasts,* 9.
[221] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, ll. 241-242.
[222] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 243-244.
[223] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, ll. 197, 262-264.
[224] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, l. 1477ob.

association (*tovarishchestvo*) that he would set up a dacha of the association for his own money and would receive a piece of land nearby in exchange.[225] The next year, he made notes in his planner regarding visiting and planting "81 potatoes" and melons in Zelenyi Gorod, which was a resort settlement and a dacha getaway in the Nizhny Novgorod region.[226] In 1940, Trinkler wrote a letter to his family, urging them to become members of the association to avoid losing the land. He was on the train with his ex-colleague, whose plot was taken away (*otobrat'*) because it was a kolkhoz's land, whereas "our land is DOKT's [the association's] land." "Nonetheless," stressed Trinkler, "Nina and Erika should urgently join our association – let them send an application with a request to transfer them parts (one third and one third) of my plot."[227] Urging his family to become members of the association shows that Trinkler knew the "rules of the game."[228] Like other Soviet people, Trinkler knew that he could "work the system" to his "minimum disadvantage." Kotkin asserts that "these were the lessons that life itself taught them [people]."[229] This is true in Trinkler's case, except his lessons came from both his Soviet and his Imperial life. On the surface, he figured out a way to keep the dacha by having his daughters join the association and share the land. Beneath this practice of "playing" by the rules of the Bolshevik state, there was a long-standing practicality which Trinkler employed throughout his whole life. In a way, this was similar to his changing his patronymic in the early 1900s: both the land and Trinkler's national identity remained the same before and after his gaming the system. The value of his actions was, then, in their practical applications asserting his claim to the dacha and Russian ethnicity, respectively.

Trinkler wanted not only to preserve his dacha, but also to keep it safe. He urged his family to insure the summer house "in the same amount" and on time, adding that, "perhaps, Korolev would agree to give out an urgent certificate that the construction of the summer house has been completed… and would assess its value at 15,000 rubles."[230] Trinkler's pragmatism is evident from his procuring a piece of land, anticipating the government's future actions and

[225] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 114, ll. 23-24.
[226] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, ll. 1128-1129.
[227] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, l. 322.
[228] Kotkin, 154
[229] Ibid, 237.
[230] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 322ob.-323.

acting accordingly. Just as he did in 1910, Trinkler kept insuring his belongings thirty years later, indicating the established nature of his life's habits.[231]

Trinkler insured not only his summer house, but he also continuously insured his belongings at the apartment at least from the late 1930s until the early 1950s.[232] He had insured his belongings in the 1910s, and although the insurance company was now state-owned Gosstrakh, it did not disrupt Trinkler's practicing a "better safe than sorry" policy.[233] After his release from imprisonment in 1932, Trinkler remained full-time in Moscow for two years. It was his living space in Moscow that he wanted increased in his 1934 petition. In 1938, the Moscow university where Trinkler was an employee petitioned the All-Union Committee on Higher Education to preserve Trinkler's room of eight square meters even though "comrade Trinkler left (*vypisalsia*) the apartment for Gorky city, where he also has a job." Echoing Trinkler's language, the petition noted that preserving Trinkler's living space in Moscow would allow him to "undisturbedly carry out scientific and pedagogical work at MEMIIT [the university]."[234] Trinkler remained practical in both insuring his property and working to preserve his square meters under the Moscow sun.

Meanwhile, the Sochi sun kept shining for Trinkler. In 1936, he went to the southern health resort because he had a "metabolic disease" (*narushenie obmena veshchestv*).[235] In the Soviet Union, vacations had a purpose to "restore socially useful labor power," so Soviet vacationers were to spend their days of rest in scientifically planned and medically certified activities. [236] This blurred the line between treatment and rest, "patients" and "resters." To obtain a voucher to a health resort, one needed to visit the doctor first and obtain permission from a resort selection committee, which could deem the treatment necessary and allow the person a free stay and transport. Interestingly, however, many Soviet citizens took advantage of the

[231] For the 1910 letter to the insurance company, see GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 196, l. 13. Also see footnote 84.
[232] Most likely, Trinkler insured his property throughout his entire life. The archive contains his insurance records for many years, including 1936-1945, 1947-1949, 1951-1952. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, ll. 182-184, 186-187, 189-193, 196.
[233] Trinkler's archive contains insurance records for at least years 1909-1910 and 1916. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, ll. 194-195, 199-200.
[234] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, l. 267.
[235] This is what Trinkler's therapeutic spa book from August 13 – September 11, 1936 indicated. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 117, ll. 1-18.
[236] Koenker, 14, 15

system and arrived at sanatoria "completely aware of their good health."[237] It is likely that Trinkler's age (he was sixty in 1936) was manifesting itself in the worsening of his health. Most probably, it was his desire to visit Sochi once again rather than his concern over his metabolism that led Trinkler to seek a voucher to visit the Sochi resort. Even at the dawn of the Soviet system, in 1920, Trinkler already knew to obtain a certificate saying that he needed a "sanatorium treatment."[238] Like many other Soviet citizens visiting these health resorts, he played by the rules of the Soviet system to afford the benefits he had enjoyed prior to the system's existence. At the very time when Stalin was ordering the arrests of prominent Bolsheviks, purging the Red Army, and initiating sensational show trials, Trinkler was enjoying his summer vacations, renewing his insurance policies and cultivating a new dacha.

As he worked to recreate his pre-Soviet middle-class lifestyle, he also preserved his claim to Russianness. In his labor list (*trudovoi spisok*) of the late 1930s, he indicated his nationality as Russian (*russkii*), his social status as employee (*sluzhashchii*) and his party membership as non-party (*bespartiinyi*).[239] In the late 1940s, he filled out a questionnaire in the same way – *russkii, sluzhashchii, bespartiinyi.* As this questionnaire asked for social origins, Trinkler noted that his father was also *sluzhashchii* working at the Krengol'mskaia manufactory.[240] If Trinkler's story indicates his sense of Russianness from the early years, his being *sluzhashchii* was a category that fit the Soviet criteria of acceptable. His lifestyle and aspirations point to his sense of importance that exceeded that of a *sluzhashchii*. While "speaking Bolshevik" and playing by the rules of the Bolshevik game during Stalin's USSR, Trinkler was attempting to live the life he knew before 1917.

The height of Stalin's purges in 1936–1938 left Trinkler untouched; moreover, in the late 1930s, he enjoyed recognition as a prominent specialist. In 1938, he was a delegate of the Gorky Institute of Engineers of Water Transport at the All-Union council on higher education and attended a reception at the Moscow Kremlin. The next year, he served as a member of the commission on thermodynamics at Krzhizhanovsky Energy Institute at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. The next year, he received an award of "Excellence of the Socialist Competition of

[237] Ibid 15, 29, 30.
[238] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 117, l. 20.
[239] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 111, l. 2ob.
[240] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 111, l. 17.

River Fleet" on the occasion of the ten-year anniversary of the Water Transport Institute.[241] Perhaps, Trinkler's professional recognition favorably disposed him towards the Soviet government and led him to take courses at the Gorky Evening University of Marxism-Leninism for scientific and engineering workers at the Regional Committee of the union of workers of higher education and scientific institutions. Trinkler attended lectures on the history of the Communist Party, the history of Philosophy and Dialectical materialism and Historical materialism.[242] Most likely, however, attending these lectures was either required or recommended because Trinkler obtained a certificate of his attendance indicating the need to present it somewhere. It was one of the nuts and bolts that Trinkler used to manufacture his comfortable living.

The Great Patriotic War introduced new professional milestones as well as a set of disturbances to Trinkler's personal life. In 1944, Trinkler began working on organizing a department of tank engines at the Zhdanov State Industrial Institute. In the same year and until 1949, Trinkler was head of the department of Internal Combustion Engines at the State Industrial Institute where he had requested to be transferred from Moscow ten years earlier.[243] At the same time, he had to face the inconveniences that the war brought to his living situation. To improve his lot he, not surprisingly, turned to petitioning. In 1943, likely at the request of Trinkler himself, the Institute of Water Transport petitioned the head of the Regional Card Bureau asking to give Trinkler a "card of special ration (*kartochka osobogo snabzheniia*)" due to his participation in work of the Academy of Sciences.[244] As Trinkler was getting older, he added a new element to his writing strategy: along with emphasizing his valuable expertise, he mentioned his old age to justify his requests. Due to the war, he experienced consolidation (*uplotnenie*) of his apartment's space and had to give up two rooms to another family in July 1941. In August, he wrote to the presidium of his district, "I cannot agree to further condensing of the apartment occupied by my family" and listed several reasons to back up this petition to not give up more space. "As a major (*krupnyi*) scholar (known even abroad)," he needed a "complete quietude

[241] Akimova, 65. Although Akimova does not explicitly provide references for Trinkler's recognition, in May of 1938, Trinkler made notes in his planner, saying "Going to the congress of KVSh [Committee on Higher Education]" and "reception at the Kremlin," followed by a note saying he returned home two days later, meaning that he was not referring to the Nizhny Novgorod Kremlin. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 105, l. 1129.
[242] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, l. 3.
[243] Akimova, 80.
[244] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, l. 212.

(*pokoi*)" to conduct the work that "the scientific-technical public of the country is awaiting." He pointed out that he "does not have much longer to live" because he was already sixty-five. In addition to his age and importance, he listed his family's ills to help his case.[245] This time, it did not work because two and a half months later, he received the direction to temporarily give up one room to another family.[246] There were limits to what Trinkler could appeal for, particularly during total war.

Not only did the Soviet state take his living space, but it also ordered him to give up his dog to the Military Technical School of the Red Army. Amy Nelson writes that the Bolsheviks' initial strident attitude towards dogs and pet keeping as incompatible with the revolutionary desire to eradicate "bourgeois" practices and public health discourses gave way to *sobakovodstvo* or "breeding and management of dogs for the benefit of socialist society" on the eve of World War II.[247] The Bolshevik view on dog keeping did not affect children's desire for pets, for Trinkler's children had previously asked their father to get them a dog.[248] To avoid giving up his dog during the war, once again, Trinkler emphasized his age and his accomplishments: "I am an elder (*stareishii*) scholar… I am 68 years old, and in my time, I fulfilled my duty to the homeland [in 1914-1917]." In addition to his own old age, Trinkler argued that "there is no basis for depriving me of my friend" because the dog's mature age meant she could not be trained. In his request, Trinkler both invoked the image of a dog as a friend while also acknowledging her future usefulness to the country. He promised to give up his dog's offspring, and once again emphasized the need for a "complete quietude" for his work of public importance.[249] Although Trinkler's reference to his service in World War I contradicted "revolutionary rhetoric," it was not that unusual at the time.[250] It is not clear whether the order to give up the dog was retracted, but it is clear that Trinkler's commitment to fight for his space and wellbeing remained with him until his old age. Rather than primarily focusing on his accomplishments and future projects, he

[245] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, ll. 273-274ob.
[246] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, l. 268.
[247] Amy Nelson, "A Hearth for a Dog: The Paradoxes of Soviet Pet Keeping," In *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia*, edited by Lewis H. Siegelbaum, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 126-128.
[248] There was no date written on the letter, but because its part was written by Trinkler's son, Iurii (born in 1923), it must have been no earlier than in the late 1920s. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 193, ll. 87-87ob.
[249] Similarly to the 1941 housing petition, Trinkler asserted that "the technical public" was awaiting his work on engines. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, ll. 162-164.
[250] Soviet authors and editors at the time repeatedly embraced heroic depictions of World War I as essential to mobilization efforts during World War II. Karen Petrone, *The Great War in Russian Memory*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011), 281.

now presented himself as a renowned expert, who deserved to have his requests granted not only based on his usefulness, but also based on respect for what he had achieved and contributed.

The war affected Trinkler beyond being asked to accommodate strangers in his apartment and give up his pet. Hitler's invasion made Trinkler a vehement anti-German writer. In this way, his other lifelong self-fashioning—embracing Russianness over his multinational heritage—reached a logical conclusion. Geoffrey Hosking notes that the Great Patriotic War consolidated the feeling that people of different social classes and ethnicities "belonged to a society whose nature was determined by its Russianness" and that by 1945, "the USSR was closer to being a huge compound nation state than ever before."[251] It is not surprising then, that Trinkler's claim to Russianness was strongest during the war. In addition to the overall rise in the country's patriotism prompting Trinkler to express Russianness, he had personal motives for strong anti-German proclamations. His siblings, who had lived in Leningrad their entire lives, died of starvation during the Leningrad blockade in 1941-1942.[252] Their deaths were at least partly the reason for his wartime anti-German writing. In a series of articles he submitted for publication during the war, Trinkler denounced Germany for atrocities committed in Russia. Interestingly, during the time when one would not want to be associated with Germany, Trinkler openly advertised his experiences in Germany in his writing, using them to support his stance regarding the enemy.

In one 1944 article, Trinkler drew on his personal experiences dealing with Germans to discuss the culpability of the German population rather than Hitler alone in the war. According to his account, only Germans of Aryan origin could be members of the gymnastics society, Germans proclaimed that the Polish "needed to be ruthlessly exterminated," and the various strata of the population were proprietorial and "infected with ideas of the great Germany" and racial theory.[253] This, Trinkler asserted, "illustrates petty bourgeois, cruel and annexationist (*zakhvatnicheskie*) instincts of the wide strata of the German population." Similarly, he noted that during his 1925 official trip to Munich, many buildings had wreaths dedicated to lost

[251] Geoffrey Hosking, "The Second World War and Russian National Consciousness," *Past & Present*, no. 175 (2002): 178.
[252] Although in his autobiography Trinkler only mentions the cause of death of his two brothers, his sister also died in 1942, most likely also of starvation that was wiping out the population of Leningrad during the blockade. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, l. 91; d. 115, ll. 222, 229.
[253] It is not clear where Trinkler intended to send this article. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 81, ll. 29-30.

German territories, also, in Trinkler's words, signifying that "we will show [you]."[254] This time, unlike his pre-World War I discussions of German urban spaces, Trinkler focused on the negative aspect. Not surprisingly, he no longer suggested that Russia should follow Germany's example, but rather, exposed its undesirable character.

In the same article, Trinkler not only drew on his experience living in Germany between 1902 and 1907, but he also mentioned his 1920s interaction with a German engineer at the Sormovo factory and his official trip to Germany in 1925. The German engineer had told Trinkler that despite losing the war of 1914, "we will show [you] (*my eshche pokazhem*)."[255] Trinkler clearly separated himself from this engineer despite the fact that his very name might be seen as that of a German engineer of the Sormovo factory. Trinkler also alienated himself from German society when speaking of his membership in the gymnastics society. Trinkler wrote that he voluntarily left the society telling the chairperson that he must leave because "being Russian (*russkii*), I have no right to be in their society."[256] Although he had always made this assertion, it was crucial for Trinkler to assert his Russianness during the war. Indicating that he left the society because he was Russian reaffirmed his national identity (while broadening our understanding of the term "russkii" to include someone like Trinkler) and alliance with ethnic Russians despite his Germanic name and origins.

It is notable that Trinkler simultaneously claimed his Russianness and deep knowledge of German society. On February 12, 1943, *Gor'kovskaia kommuna* published Trinkler's article titled "Vi zibtsig" (German: *wie siebzig*), where he explained how German self-importance had been crushed in Stalingrad. He argued that "vi zibtshig," a saying frequently used by Germans to denote success and translated as "like seventy," illustrated German conceit based on their win over France in 1870. He asserted that ever since this win, Germans had been "shoving their supposed superiority in the face of every foreigner, and Russians especially, whom they regarded as savage barbarians." And now, after the onslaught of the Red Army, "[they] had to capitulate. German impudent conceit did not save [them]. And the saying 'vi zibtsig' will be forgotten."[257] A year later, on February 18, 1944, Trinkler sent a similar article for publication in one of the

[254] Ibid., 31
[255] Ibid., 31
[256] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 81, l. 30.
[257] G.V. Trinkler, "Vi Zibtsig," *Gor'kovskaia kommuna*, February 12, 1943, 2.

most influential Soviet newspapers, *Izvestiia*. Largely drawing on his 1943 "Vi zibtsig" article, he added details about other Red Army successes "under the command of the genius chief (*vozhd'*), marshal, comrade Stalin," once again pointing out the need to "cancel the saying, which had lost its meaning." He accompanied his article with a letter to the editorial office of the newspaper, where he elaborated on his time living in Germany between 1902 and 1907, explaining that "this is why I am intimately familiar with the manners and customs of Germans."[258] Trinkler's attempts at publishing denunciations of Germany at both the local and the national level under his own German name indicate that he did not fear drawing attention to his own Germanic name. Not only he was not afraid to draw attention to his foreign connections, he even felt that these experiences gave more weight to his arguments. *Izvestiia* did not publish his article, but this did not prevent Trinkler from trying to (and failing) get another one published by another state-wide newspaper.

On May 9, 1945, the date Nazi Germany capitulated to the USSR, Trinkler sent another article denouncing Germans to the editorial office of *Pravda*, attaching two relevant postcards "for greater persuasiveness." The postcards depicting Berlin and Leningrad sculptures were supposed to illustrate the similarity between the two, demonstrating the Berlin's sculptures' Russian origins. This, in turn, was the basis for returning them to Russia because Trinkler thought it "unacceptable" that these Russian sculptures decorated Berlin. In addition to these sculptures, he mentioned other works of art of Russian origins that were still in Germany and should be repatriated.[259] Just as he did in 1909 and 1912, Trinkler felt empowered to use his lived experiences in Germany, and his noting the city space in particular, to advise others on what needed to be done. A year earlier, Trinkler wrote a similar article about reparations that Russia should claim by way of taking German art objects. He referred to his experience living in Germany to discuss several art objects of Russian origin, which he stressed Russia should "seize (*otobrat'*) as a compensation for caused destructions and return to the homeland." Drawing on his visits to museums and other cultural sites, he noted the locations of the art objects in question; he went so far as to describe Chinese collections which had been taken by the Germans during the Boxer rebellion of 1900, and which he suggested should be returned to China. He also

[258] He also noted that he did not request an honorarium and provided his address, asking to send him a few copies of the newspaper if his article got published. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 84, ll. 1-4.
[259] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 81, ll. 26-28.

"drew attention to the famous 'Sistine Madonna' by Raphael" located in Dresden, obviously implying the possibility of taking it as a compensation.[260] Trinkler's discussion of art and its value and future possession indicates his claim to knowledge outside of his profession – a trait characteristic of the Russian intelligentsia.

Isaiah Berlin notes the Russian intelligentsia's predilection for expressing their views as "heralds and prophets solely because they take it upon themselves to speak in public" and not necessarily based on their professional knowledge.[261] In 1912, even though he was not an architect or a city planner, he felt it imperative to publicly question the city government's actions and discuss successful examples of dealing with similar problems in the West. During World War II, Trinkler, despite not being an artist or a diplomat, believed in his right to suggest specific art collections as retributions, including that of another country. In both cases, Trinkler's insistence on his ability to engage in the public sphere as an advisor points to his understanding of himself as a member of the Russian intelligentsia, who inherently believed in their right to publicly discuss the country's affairs and its necessary future direction. That he was also drawing attention to his German name and time in Germany seems not to have bothered him at all.

Trinkler's self-understanding as an intellectual is evident not only from his writing newspaper articles, but also from his writing his memoir and his discussion of his family history in the 1952 autobiography. When discussing his family, Trinkler did not fail to highlight their intellectual professions: doctors, teachers, an engineer, a chemist, a surgeon, and a botanist. Trinkler's desire to be perceived as a member of a family of intellectuals is evident in his omission of several of his relatives from his accounts. His 1952 autobiography mentioned his son working on his dissertation in Botany but did not mention his two daughters' professions. Trinkler discussed his mother's ancestors with practical professions but he left out his father's ancestors. He mentioned his cousin who was a prominent surgeon and professor, but he did not mention his sister.[262] In 1952, Trinkler also made an inquiry about a Kharkiv street being named

[260] It is not clear where Trinkler intended to send this article. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 81, ll. 9-11.
[261] Isaiah Berlin, Introduction to *Russian Intellectual History: an Anthology,* by Mark Raeff, (New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Atlanta: Harcort, Brace & World, 1966), 6-7.
[262] Trinkler's memoir, published in Akimova's book, 91; GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, ll. 91-92. One of Trinkler's daughters passed away before his writing the 1952 autobiography, but this did not mean he could not have discussed her past professional life.

after his cousin, a surgeon and professor of the Kharkiv University.[263] Shortly thereafter, he received a response confirming this information about Nikolai Petrovich Trinkler (although he included this information about him in his autobiography even before the official confirmation – so eager he was to let the world know about "the man of immense popularity.")[264] Clearly, Trinkler took pride in his relations' occupations and sought to portray his family in the most favorable light. His choice of who to include directly speaks to his understanding of what was important – having an intellectually-rich profession.

In the Soviet Union, an autobiography was a free-form narrative that might include discussion of topics, such as "formative experiences, personal philosophy, and family life" in addition to covering education, social origin, employment and army service history as well as political involvements.[265] A narrative structure that many sought to emulate, as Sheila Fitzpatrick has noted, was one in which "a young man rises from the working class or peasantry by dint of hard work and commitment to the Revolution, is helped by the party to acquire an education, and becomes a member of the 'new Soviet intelligentsia' – that is, the professional and administrative elite."[266] Partly because Trinkler's age would not allow for such a narrative (he was forty-one at the time of the 1917 October Revolution) and largely because he felt pride in his origins, Trinkler's narrative of becoming an intellectual did not fit the oft-embraced one by other Soviet citizens.

Rather than illustrating any difficulties he had overcome to become an engineer, he stressed his family line in his 1932 autobiography, writing: "I obtained secondary education in the 4th (Larin) Leningrad classical gymnasium… Learning ancient languages – Greek and Latin – could hardly predispose for technical activities; however, as it seems, from my father's heredity (*po nasledstvennosti ot ottsa*), I felt an irresistible craving for mechanics already from a young age."[267] During Stalin's time, workers often boasted about who started work at the youngest age.

[263] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, l. 218.
[264] The official telegram response was dated July 29, 2952, while Trinkler dated the autobiography on July 21, 1952. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, l. 217; d. 106, ll. 91-92.
[265] Sheila Fitzpatrick, "The Two Faces of Anastasia," in *Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside*, edited by Eric Naiman and Christina Kiaer (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 25.
[266] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off the Masks!*, 45.
[267] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, l. 97.

Tracing one's lineage back to a family of workers was "the ultimate boast."[268] Although not a worker asserting his proletarian roots, Trinkler thought it would be advantageous to mention his ancestry and early engagement in the technical field. In his later Soviet autobiographies – from 1937 and 1952 – he did not discuss his genetic predisposition for the technical profession, but he mentioned his having an in-house amateur workshop and in 1937, related it to having "a solid practical preparation" before entering the university.[269] Trinkler's narrative did not center on the Revolution's helping him achieve major milestones. In the three Soviet autobiographies, he explained his embarking on an engineering profession with his familial line or his having access to a workshop whose presence depended on the availability of space and resources, thus pointing to a well-off family situation.

Although Trinkler remained a man whose personality was shaped by the former empire, he used new Soviet terms in the process of adapting to the new government. In addition to using the term "shock work" in 1934, he referred to World War I as the "imperialist war." He also referred to his native city as Leningrad rather than Petrograd as he did in his 1917 autobiography.[270] In 1917, Trinkler included his family's religious affiliation. Not surprisingly, he did not mention his and his family's religion in his Soviet autobiographies.[271] Writing in the midst of the Great War, Trinkler devoted a significant part of his 1917 autobiography to his military service. In his Soviet autobiographies, he devoted no more than a couple of sentences to his service. [272] Trinkler mentioned his arrest in his 1937 and 1952 autobiographies. In 1937, he did not specify the reason for his arrest and focused on describing the project he worked on during imprisonment.[273] In 1952, he mentioned that he was arrested "on suspicion of sabotage," but did not go into details of his incarceration project. He did note, however, that "my criminal record has been lifted, and I enjoy the full trust of the Government (*pol'zuius' polnym doveriem Pravitel'stva*), which is evident at least from the works entrusted to me by GII [State Industrial

[268] Kotkin, 216.
[269] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, ll. 83, 88.
[270] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, ll. 20, 97, 100ob., 104.
[271] Trinkler was member of the French Reformed Church and his wife and children were Russian Orthodox GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, l. 20.
[272] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, ll. 21, 24ob., 83ob., 90, 100ob., 101.
[273] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, ll. 84ob.-85.

Institute]"[274] The major emphasis of all four autobiographies, however, remained unchanged: his professional path and accomplishments.

In discussing his professional path, Trinkler described the move to Germany as a necessity, eventually blaming a specific person for having to leave. In the 1917 narrative, he explained his leaving the Putilov factory in Saint Petersburg in 1902 with the fact that his "experiments with the construction and reconstruction of engines time and again did not lead to desired results."[275] In 1932, however, he wrote that it was "the change in the directorate and its little interest in [his] invention" that forced (*zastavit'*) him to leave.[276] In 1937, he expanded on this to include a financial aspect to the situation: he blamed the "change in the directorate and its unwillingness to spend money on a creative object not understood by it."[277] In 1952, the story of his departure acquired an actual person to blame: "S.I. Smirnov demanded termination of the experiments and refused to finance my work anymore. There is a possibility that Smirnov acted under pressure from Nobel, from whom I had received a threatening letter earlier."[278] Smirnov's negative role in the events of 1905 made him an oppressor in the eyes of the Soviet government and, consequently added a positive connotation of having been oppressed under the old regime to Trinkler's biography.[279]

Trinkler's writing his memoirs towards the end of his life demonstrates the value he saw in what he had to say. The relentless enumeration of his accomplishments in autobiographies and in other writing highlights Trinkler's high opinion of his importance to the profession and the public that justified his claim to a comfortable life.

At the age of seventy-two, Trinkler encountered a new inconvenience – his criminal record. In 1948, he wrote to the head of the Directorate of the Ministry of State Security of the USSR in Gorky, "currently, an impediment to assigning me the rank of a general on service at the Ministry of River Fleet becomes apparent. Due to this, I petition to have my criminal record

[274] Evidently, Trinkler was referring to the 1944 commission to organize a department of tank engines at the institute that he received from the USSR's Ministry of Higher Education. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, ll. 91, 95.
[275] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, l. 20ob,
[276] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, l. 99.
[277] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, l. 83ob.
[278] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 106, l. 90.
[279] Smirnov was the one who refused workers' demands in 1905, thus leading to a strike and, eventually snowballing into a Bloody Sunday in January of 1905. See Georgii Gapon, *Istoriia Moei Zhizni.* [The Story of My Life], (Moscow: Kniga, 1990, orig. 1905): chapter 12.

(*sudimost'*) lifted." As usual, Trinkler listed his numerous achievements, but he also noted that he had had no limitations to his rights, no obstacles teaching the youth, and had been allowed to conduct secret work since 1944.[280] Evidently, the criminal record played no big role in his life for he, the man who kept record of everything in his life, drafted a response to the question about the details of his conviction, saying "I do not remember the article of the sentence… I think, it was the 58th."[281] The Soviet state, in turn, decided that it was not a big deal as well and on April 1, 1950, lifted his criminal record and the concomitant restrictions.[282] It is noteworthy that Trinkler's criminal record was lifted in the postwar period when prisoners had little reason to expect an amnesty and the Gulag population was not on the decline, but rather grew dramatically.[283]

In 1948, Mariia Trinkler became paralyzed and could no longer walk. In 1951, Gustav hired a housekeeper to "clean the accommodation (*pomeshchenie*), cook food, [and] take care of the sick wife of the hirer." The housekeeper was to live in the apartment, work eight hours per day with Sundays free and receive food and a salary of 150 rubles per month.[284] Although driven by his wife's health condition, Trinkler's hiring a housekeeper who would not only take care of Mariia but also clean and cook evokes the image of the Trinkler family and their housekeeping staff before World War I as well as Trinkler's childhood and his nursemaid. At the dusk of his life, Trinkler remained a man who valued comfort – the effect of his "bourgeois" upbringing and pre-Soviet adulthood. Throughout his life, Trinkler fought for this comfort and was successful at securing it because of his engineering expertise. Whereas the housekeeper's salary was 150 rubles per month, Trinkler's salary listed in the same document was 6000 rubles.[285] In 1951, the average national salary across different industries of the economy (*narodnoe khoziaistvo*) was 661 rubles.[286]

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[280] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 121, l. 2.
[281] Trinkler also explained that no one showed him his verdict, but rather they explained on words that it was a ten-year sentence. GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 121, l. 18.
[282] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 121, l. 20.
[283] Golfo Alexopoulos, "Amnesty 1945: The Revolving Door of Stalin's Gulag," *Slavic Review* 64, no. 2 (2005): 277, 283.
[284] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, l. 207.
[285] Although the document did not specify whether this 6000 rubles was monthly salary, it most likely was since both Trinkler's and the housekeeper's salary was indicated in the same document, so it is reasonable to assume that they were quantified over the same periods of time. Ibid., 206ob.
[286] Central Statistical Directorate of the USSR, "Srednemesiachnaia denezhnaia zarabotnaia plata rabochikh i sluzhashchikh po otrasliam narodnogo khoziaistva SSSR v 1940, 1945, 1950-1955 gg [the Average Monetary Salary

Trinkler's non-proletarian status in life remained with him in both monetary and intellectual sense. He remained committed to his profession even after he had been fired from the Institute of Water Transport in 1952. He attributed his being fired to his being "a cosmopolitan."[287] Nonetheless, at the age of seventy-seven, he was determined to keep working, for he requested and received money for testing his engine in 1954. In 1953, he began working on a textbook titled *Theory of Engines*.[288] In the year of his eightieth birthday, *Pravda* published a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR acknowledging Trinkler by awarding him an Order of the Red Banner of Labor. The bottom of the front page of the major Soviet newspaper read: "For fruitful scientific-pedagogical activity and merits in the sphere of constructing internal combustion engines and on occasion of the eightieth birthday, to award Doctor of Technical Sciences, Professor of the Gorky Institute of Engineers of Water Transport Trinkler Gustav Vasil'evich an Order of the Red Banner of Labor."[289]

Even though Trinkler's wartime article did not make it to *Pravda*, he himself did. Despite having a German name, "bourgeois" origins, and a later criminal record, Trinkler successfully navigated the Soviet system by employing the techniques he had learned before 1917 to engineer his life according to the living standard of middle-class intellectual familiar to him from his early childhood. He had to adjust his language and de jure social status. He remained, however, a "bourgeois" intellectual whose persistence and talent helped him preserve as many of his habits and as much of the comforts he was used to as was possible in the context of the new socialist system.

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of Workers and Employees in Industries of the Economy of the USSR in 1940, 1945, 1950-1955]," 1956. http://istmat.info/node/18454 (accessed March 22, 2020).

[287] Quoted in Akimova, 69.

[288] Akimova, 70.

[289] *Pravda*, July 1, 1956.

Conclusion

Gustav Trinkler knew the value not only of his technical expertise, but he also understood the importance of being able to petition. He imparted this knowledge to his son, Iurii Trinkler, an emerging biologist. He wrote a draft of a request to get him a job at a university, which, eventually, he did.[290] Trinkler's determination and skill to write and re-write requests for better conditions is remarkable. It is remarkable not only because he was successful at this trade, but also because the skill proved useful under all circumstances. In both Imperial and Soviet Russia, he presented himself as a prominent engineer whose work bore public importance. In both Imperial and Soviet Russia, this approach worked. Trinkler's success at being a shock worker of writing self-praising petitions stood in stark contrast to that of another Soviet citizen, Vladimir Gromov. Both men flaunted their skills, with Gromov asserting his engineering and architecture expertise when he had none until his execution in 1935. Gromov was confident in manipulating Soviet officials, reflecting the "hyperbolic style of Stalinist culture."[291] Golfo Alexopoulos argues that Gromov's behavior was "entirely consistent with the culture and conditions of his time."[292] Similarly, Trinkler emphasized his accomplishments over and over with an understanding that it would be useful. Unlike Gromov, however, he was not a pretender and his claims to usefulness were successful.

Trinkler's effective reengineering of his life on the basis of his technical skills in Stalinist Soviet Union stemmed from his imperial experiences of requesting positions and money. The events of 1917 did not disturb Trinkler's way of dealing with the world of officials. Neither did his 1930 arrest. The continuity of his practice of petitioning and of the justification for it illustrates that it was not necessary for him to alter his ways of bettering his life. Neither 1917 nor Stalin's terror served as a watershed for a new model of Trinkler's presentation of a "usable self" to the state, and there is no indication that Trinkler was "disenchanted" with the Soviet system after 1927. Rather, drawing on his past experiences and self-fashioning, he made his "individual compact" (strikingly similar to the one that postwar middle class made with the

[290] GKU TsANO, f. R-6043, op. 1, d. 115, ll. 296-307.
[291] Golfo Alexopoulos, "Portrait of a Con Artist as a Soviet Man," *Slavic Review* 57, no. 4 (1998): 774-776.
[292] Ibid, 790.

regime that Dunham mentions in her work) with the new regime, which entailed a common ambition of the state and Trinkler himself – to advance the technical field of the Soviet Union.[293]

Sheila Fitzpatrick writes that "in Stalin's time, almost everyone had something to hide – relatives abroad, relatives who were priests, the wrong class background, military service in the wrong army, being in the wrong place during the civil war, family members arrested or dekulakized, religious belief, criminal convictions, pre-revolutionary membership in another political party, sympathy with the opposition in the 1920s, and so on."[294] Time and time again, Trinkler exposed his self, even when it would seem he should don a mask. In his autobiographical narrative, Trinkler sought to expose his family and their intellectual professions, thus showing his own claim to membership in the intelligentsia circle. He adopted the use of Soviet terms, such as *sluzhashchii,* to classify himself and his origins in the official hierarchy. This did not prevent him, however, from taking pride in his upbringing and relations, as evident from his memoir written in 1955.

Vera Dunham argues that the postwar middle class was "born out of Stalin's push for the industrialization, reeducation, and bureaucratization of the country, flesh out of the flesh of Stalin's revolutions from above in the thirties." She describes the new communist as one "resembling a middleclass careerist" who "progressed rapidly in his career. He was content in his family life. He aspired to a private house and, perhaps, to a dacha."[295] By this token, Trinkler was a middle-class citizen his entire life. A diligent engineer and a devoted husband and father, he valued material comfort and loved his estate and his dacha. Born to a family of a first-guild merchant, Trinkler was accustomed to a degree of comfort. It was not during the post-war period when he aspired for a private house and a dacha; he lived his entire life as a "bourgeois" to the extent that he could in a socialist society.

Although Trinkler was noticeable for his intelligence and practicality, he was affected by the atmosphere surrounding him and the general social context at the time. He acted based on the rationale that his way of petitioning would be beneficial. He did not fear drawing the authorities' attention to his German name or even his criminal record. Given his aptitude for logical reasoning, his actions illustrate that this individual with a questionable social and ethnic record

[293] See footnote 12.
[294] Sheila Fitzpatrick, "The Two Faces of Anastasia," 24.
[295] Dunham, 13, 18.

did not feel the need to stay invisible to the state. If he did not change his ways, what about those who had "appropriate" ethnic and social history? What were experiences of other members of the imperial cohort, who, like Trinkler, were set in their ways? How new was the idea of finding a "usable self" and petitioning the authorities? How revolutionary was it to learn to speak in new, Bolshevik, terms as opposed to speaking in imperial terms?

Trinkler's case does not answer these questions; rather, it raises them. In order to better understand the Soviet system, it is necessary to distinguish between practices that came about with the new Bolshevik regime and those that were already in place and whose substance, regardless of shape, remained the same. Paradoxically, to better understand people's Soviet experiences, it is imperative to study their lives – how they represented themselves, with whom they communicated and how – under late imperial Russia. By juxtaposing the two, we can note the difference that 1917 did or did not make in their lives. In Gustav Trinkler's case, his lifelong efforts to engineer a life and to manufacture an identity—efforts underway well before 1917—merely required retooling after the revolution.

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105: Trinkler's notebooks

106: autobiographies and related materials

107: a metric book statement

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