

Courts of Honour in the Post-War Soviet Union

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INTRODUCTION

The Second World War transformed the Soviet Union in many ways. One of the major change occurred within cultural and scientific elites, bureaucracy and state management. Top apparatchiks together with local level officials had to solve complex problems, organize vast human resources and manage complicated systems without central planning and all-embracing guidance from above. Young and capable individuals achieved promotion, regardless to their political activism, and gained self-confidence and professional pride. WW2 redefined their perception of the official Soviet ideology, shifted their identifications and historical references, replaced past “icons” and brought doubts.¹ WW2 also transformed the nexus of the relations between central party authorities and other governmental and non-governmental bodies placing new challenges ahead of Stalin and his circle.

As an anticipatory statement, I argue that the majority of post-war ideological campaigns reflected a consistent effort to compromise pre-war societal arrangement with new post-war conditions. They were designed to discipline the society and especially its major independent strata and groups at the same time. The fact that the system of courts of honour was in a long perspective a failure indicates that it was impossible for the Stalin-led system to reverse societal and mental impacts of the past war that had changed Soviet society so dramatically. Secondly, it should be noted the foreign policy framework and the intrusion of the Cold War discourse into Soviet ideology and everyday usage.²

1 See for example ZUBKOVA, E., *Russia after war. Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments, 1945–1957*, New York — London 1998; BRANDEBERGER, D. L. — DUBROVSKY, A. M., “The People Need a Tsar”: *The Emergence of National Bolshevism as Stalinist Ideology, 1931–1941*, in: *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 5, Jul. 1998, pp. 873–892; WEINER, A., *The Making of a Dominant Myth: The Second World War and the Construction of Political Identities within the Soviet Polity*, in: *Russian Review*, Vol. 55, No. 4, Oct. 1996.

2 Nikolai Kremensov stressed the Cold War context and the role of courts of honour “to define for the high-level state bureaucracy the state’s interests.” KREMENTSOV, N. L., *Stalinist science*, Princeton 1997, p. 137.

The aim of the paper is to place the phenomenon of courts of honour into a structural web of relationships between individuals, particularly scientists and bureaucrats, and the official politics. Courts of honour can be viewed as a repressive and intrusive mechanism invented by central authorities to discipline not only scientific, but also local administrative bodies. Therefore this mechanism must be studied in the framework of attempts of the Communist Party to retain control over managerial elites which gained a substantial level of independence during WW2.

On the other hand, courts of honour were established particularly due to the situation in the Soviet science. In a broad context of the Soviet science, the party leadership attempted to discipline scientists, re-implement Soviet official ideology into the nexus of the scientific „knowledge management“ and transform several science branches, which seemed to be „escaping“ from the Marx-Leninist scheme due to their own development, in accordance to the official ideological framework. Science was thus designed not only be a servant of the official ideology, but it became an indispensable part of it. So, the management of the Soviet science should be included into the examination. Discussing other mechanisms of the interaction between central party apparatus and subordinated bureaucratic bodies, we can mention scientific congresses, official ideological campaigns, re-distribution of material sources and cadre policy. Serving the same purpose, courts of honour were introduced partly to target non-party members of scientific bodies because party members were viewed as already subjected to the party regulations and party code. Although the Bolshevik party experienced a renewal of its membership numbers during the war, mostly within the Red Army, it failed to reach intelligentsia more deeply.

Finally, courts of honour reflected and imitated patterns of the 1930's show trials. Courts were prepared, rehearsed and staged as shows to impact audience. Participants were given exact “theater-like” roles to play in a public drama. Stalin together with A. A. Zhdanov, who took a prominent position in staging first court of honour with the Soviet scientists, carefully observed and read protocols of interrogations.³ Rituals of criticism and self-criticism developed in the 1930's were re-established to foster community, seek for enemies and „wreckers“, and exert pressure on individuals.⁴ First court of honour with professors Kliueva and Roskin was also transformed in a film in order to influence broad public and to attach it to a discourse of Soviet patriotism and pride.⁵

COURTS OF HONOUR – A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The key questions are: why were courts of honour established, how they were structured and how they functioned. Creators of these courts inspired themselves with the

³ Ibid., p. 138.

⁴ Ibid., p. 143.

⁵ KREMENTSOV, N. L., *The Cure: A Story of Cancer and Politics from the Annals of the Cold War*, Chicago 2002, pp. 144–153.

example of the Tsarist army courts. Courts of honour were established on the basis of a common directive of the politburo and government on 28th of March 1947 and their purpose was “to examine antipatriotic, anti-governmental and anti-societal deeds committed by leading executive and scientific workers of the ministries and offices in case that these deeds are not subjects of the criminal law”.⁶ The opening formulation implied two things. Introducing new campaign, Stalin wanted to infuse a new set of values into the official ideology — a refusal of serving to the West, halting the admiration of Western technological and scientific achievements and praising the Western bourgeois culture. The aim of the campaign was to educate, train and teach a new form of an everyday patriotism, which would coincide with campaigns against cosmopolitanism and lack of national self-confidence. It filled a gap between mechanisms of local party cells which were able to reach and discipline local party members and between those who were not party members and thus “*de iure*” out of the reach of the Party. It also reflected a general pattern of the post-war Stalinist coercive policy to inject party rules relying on centralized democracy into academic or bureaucratic milieu.⁷

Courts of honour were designed to impose mechanisms of accusation and self-accusation and criticism and self-criticism used in the Communist party structure on them. We can talk about “duplication” of party cells’ structure which embraced all party members within bureaucratic or scientific bodies. “Honour” implied that those occupying certain positions should be obliged to feel proud of being part of a prominent scientific or bureaucratic collective and to have sense of service to the Motherland. An appeal to honour suggested the existence of a more or less strict code of behaviour which was obligatory to all members. It somehow originated from professional bodies themselves and all members of the scientific community were expected to obey a certain code of behaviour with strict rules in accordance with the interests of the Party and of the state. As Kremmentsov argues, the establishment of courts of honour was not intended as an all-nation sweeping campaign.⁸

Courts of honour were designed as criminal courts but with important exceptions. Anyone could have been accused of having breached an undefined code of behaviour. But as I argue below, the way of accusation was abused by heads of departments either to get rid of their employees or to punish subordinates. On the other hand, the mechanism was heavily used by the central apparatus to interfere into the

6 KOSTYRCHENKO, G. V., *Ideologicheskie chistki vtoroi poloviny-x godov: psevdopatrioty protiv psevdokosmopolitov*, in: AFANASYEV, Yu. N. (ed.), *Sovetskoe obshchestvo: vozniknovenie, razvitiie, istoricheskii final. Tom 2. Apogei i krach stalinizma*, Moskva 1997, p. 106; See also 200. Zapiska A. A. Zhdanova I. V. Stalinu o napravlenii proekta zayavleniia sudu chesti pri Ministerstve zdravookhraneniia SSSR (29 maia 1947 g.), in: KHLEVNIUK, O. V. — GORLITSKI, Yu. — KOSHELEVA, L. P. — MINIUK, A. I. — PROZUMENSHCHIKOV, M. Yu. — ROGOVAYA, L. A. — SOMONOVA, S. V. (eds.), *Politbiuro TsK VKP(b) i Sovet ministrov SSSR 1945–1953*, Moskva 2002, pp. 229–230.

7 KOJEVNIKOV, A., *Science in the Russian and Soviet Context, Rituals of Stalinist Culture at Work: Science and the Games of Intraparty Democracy circa 1948*, in: *Russian Review*, Vol. 57, No. 1, Jan. 1998, p. 28.

8 KREMENSTOV, N. L., *Stalinist science*, p. 138.

competence of ministries. No wonder that the implementation of courts of honour was met with resistance.⁹ For example, a top party apparatchik A. A. Kuznetsov criticized the fact that officials were reluctant to participate in the campaigns launched to elect courts of honour.¹⁰ The politburo and orgburo reserved a right for themselves to decide or approve who would be put under a court procedure. A commission was then established and it was designed to gather evidence and testimonies of those involved and to inquire the accused. After several hearings, the judgement was passed and a legal action against the accused could follow.¹¹

Denunciation quickly became a powerful tool for all the involved to participate in the decision-making process at least on the lower level. Again, I refer to a broad context of the relationship between the public sphere and authorities. There was a triangle structure with central authorities exerting power and influence on local authorities and managerial elites. Local elites were in the position of mediators between the Moscow centre and the local population while implementing central directives. Denunciation was, as Kozlov states, “an essential element in Russia’s traditional system of bureaucratic governance”.¹² People from below were then able to better or influence their position by denouncing or petitioning. It was a perfect instrument to harass lower authorities and to keep them obedient. It also gave credibility to central state authority. In the process of the punishment of local bosses, central authorities were able to apply justice and showed their responsiveness to the complaints of Soviet citizens. Finally, the practice of denunciation created a chasm between workers and managers on the lower level, which atomized local or professional communities.¹³

The absence of an official political sphere resulted in two features. Everything then became a matter of politics, every single act of economic or personal nature could be considered as an act either of conformity or resistance.¹⁴ Needless to stress that the scientific community was full of internal frictions, personal hostilities, and mutual animosities which were exploited in order to gain patronage, protection or state funding. Courts of honour thus opened a space for settling personal scores, or

9 202. *Vystuplenie A.A. Kuznetsova na zasedanii Orgbjuro CK VKP(b) pri rassmotrenii voprosa o merakh, prinyatykh v Ministerstvakh aviacionnoi i elektropromyshlennosti po zakryтому pis'mu CK VKS(b) o dele professorov N.G. Kliuevoi i G.I. Roskina (15 oktiabria 1947 g.)*, in: KHLEVNIUK, O. V. — GORLITSKI, Yu. — KOSHELEVA, L. P. — MINIUK, A. I. — PROZUMENSHCHIKOV, M. Yu. — ROGOVAYA, L. A. — SOMONOVA, S. V. (eds.), op. cit., pp. 233–237.

10 Ibid.

11 200. *Zapiska A. A. Zhdanova I. V. Stalinu...*, op. cit., pp. 229–230.

12 KOZLOV, V. A., *Denunciation and Its Functions in Soviet Governance: A Study of Denunciations and Their Bureaucratic Handling from Soviet Police Archives, 1944–1953*, in: *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 68, No. 4, December 1996, p. 867.

13 “It gave the population a final hope that justice would be done, preserved for the central power an aura of infallibility and righteousness, and redirected the population’s dissatisfaction into the channel of ‘local criticism.’” KOZLOV, V. A., p. 868.

14 RÉV, I., *The Advantage of Being Atomized. How Hungarian Peasants Coped With Collectivization*, in: *Dissent*, Summer 1987, p. 341.

promoting particular interests in the framework of a concept of survival strategies within a totalitarian society.¹⁵

Proceedings of court of honours anticipated another ideological disciplinary mechanism — scientific conferences and congresses based on bargaining between party officials and academic representatives reflecting serious conceptual disagreements, but also institutional conflicts and personal animosities.¹⁶ There were five major ideological disputes: over philosophy (1947), biology (1948), linguistics (1950), physiology (1950), and political economy (1951),¹⁷ followed with huge institutional restructuring and personal changes.¹⁸ They revealed a double-edged character of the relationship between science and state authorities. Scientific community as a professional body possessed a specific language, different mindset and institutional structure. From the outside, it was not easy to control, expertise, and evaluate scientists.¹⁹ The majority of scientific enterprises, particularly in totalitarian societies, were dependent on state funding and scientists were therefore obliged to “translate” their ideas, offer them on a public “market” and negotiate with state authorities of their usefulness. Stalin launched various “campaigns” aimed at the creation of a distinctively Soviet, non-Western science in the years following WW2.²⁰ Ethan Pollock, naming Stalin as a “coryphaeus of science” at the time and placing the *vozhd*’ in the centre of the scientists’ disciplination, argues that Stalin “...displayed deep concern about the content of scholarly work and its overall implications for Marxism-Leninism... recognised that in some respects the legitimacy of the system relied on the coherence of its ideology... and as the ‘coryphaeus of science’ constituted an attempt to deal with that crisis”.²¹

Undeniable successes of the post-war Soviet science were accompanied by erratic and contradictory campaigns where a clear interference of politics was obvious. The explanations offered ranged from logical but simplistic assumptions that Stalin at-

15 FITZPATRICK, S., *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, New York 1999, pp. 220–227.

16 KOJEVNIKOV, A., op. cit., p. 26.

17 Ibid., p. 26.

18 After the conference of physiology, the Institute of Physiology and Pathology of the Higher Nervous Activity and The Institute of Physiology of the Central Nervous System were transferred administratively to the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. GORDON, W. W., *The Pavlov Conference*, in: *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Jul. 1951, p. 41.

19 Therefore it is argued that it saved Soviet physics from ideologization and laicization. „It was thoroughly mathematicised and thus less accessible to politically influenced interpretations. Physicists lacked areas of politically exploitable vulnerability comparable with the eugenicists interests of some leading Soviet geneticists. /.../ Physicists therefore are considered to have confronted the return to the officially encouraged intolerance and xenophobia of the late 1940s from a position of relative strength when compared to geneticists.“ in: KNEEN, P., *Physics, Genetics and the Zhdanovshchina*, in: *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 7, Nov. 1998, p. 1187.

20 KOJEVNIKOV, A., op. cit., p. 25.

21 POLLOCK, E., *Stalin as the coryphaeus of science: ideology and knowledge in the post-war years*, in: DAVIES, S. — HARRIS, J. (eds.), *Stalin. A New History*, Cambridge 2005, pp. 272–273.

tempted to regain control over the whole society and science and exposed them to brutal ideological influence which caused deformation of the main branches of Soviet science. Recent studies speak more about a complicated structure of interplays, negotiations, pressures and bargains on different levels of the system. A. Kojevnikov offers us a diverse and vivid picture where “...many different ideological principles were pronounced, they often contradicted each other, and none was consistently carried through the entire campaign”.²²

THE AFFAIR OF ROSKIN AND KLIUEVA

The affair of two researchers, G. I. Roskin and N. G. Kliueva, and its consequences²³ constituted a major framework not only for the establishment of courts of honour but also for a series of disciplinary campaigns focusing on intelligentsia and bureaucracy.²⁴ The explanation of the evolution and establishment of courts of honour can help us to put a missing stone into mosaics of the relationship between Soviet authorities and bureaucratic and scientific bodies.

Briefly, both scientists studied microorganisms in the 1930's and later they claimed to have developed a medicine able to cure cancer. They published several articles in 1946. The publicity attracted the US ambassador Walter Smith who received a consent of the Minister of Health, Georgii Miterev, to visit the laboratory of both scientists on June 20th, 1946. The Smith's visit attracted also the security police. Then few copies of Kliueva and Roskin's book, *The Biotherapy of Malignant Tumors*, were in January 1947 distributed to the Politburo members and then finally released. Another person involved, Vasili Parin, the secretary of the Academy of Medical Sciences, then travelled to the USA and promoted the outcomes of the research. Although this visit was approved by Molotov as Foreign Minister, both scientists, Parin and Miterev, were

22 Ibid., p. 26.

23 For general overview of the Klyueva-Roskin affair see JESAKOV, V. D. — LEVINA, Je. S., *Delo KR. sudy chesti v ideologii i praktike poslevoyennogo stalinizma*, Moskva 2001; JESAKOV, V. D. — LEVINA, Je. S., *Stalinskiye “sudy chesti”*: Delo “KR”, Moskva 2005; KREMENTSOV, N. L., *Stalinist science*; KREMENTSOV, N. L., *The cure...*; For the consequences of the mechanism of the courts of honour in local districts see LEIBOVICH, O., *V gorode. Ocherki sotsialnoi povsednevnosti sovetskoi provintsii*, Moskva, 2008, pp. 37–71. For the reviews of this book see EASTMAN, P., *Russian Historian Shares Grim Lessons of Cold War Cancer Research Politics*, in: *Oncology Times* 10, Volume 25, Issue 5, March 2003, pp. 45–47.

24 KREMENTSOV, N. L., *Stalinist science*, pp. 131–136; FORBES, P., *Communist cells*. Peter Forbes reviews *The Cure* by Nikolai Krementsov, *The Daily Telegraph*, 20. 4. 2002, in: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/4727702/Communist-cells.html#>; FODOR, I., *The Cure: A Story of Cancer and Politics from the Annals of the Cold War*, in: *The New England Journal of Medicine*, August 22, 2002, <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJM200208223470821>; CANTOR, D., *The Cure: A Story of Cancer and Politics from the Annals of the Cold War*, in: *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Volume 77, Number 4, Winter 2003, pp. 977–979, in: http://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/bulletin_of_the_history_of_medicine/v077/77.4cantor.pdf.

reprimanded by A. Zhdanov afterwards and a legal procedure was triggered against them. At the end, Parin was arrested and Miterev lost his position.

First “court of honour” proceeded in June 1947 at the Ministry of Health against Kliueva and Roskin who were accused of handing over the manuscript of their work and a dose of their new medicine to the American side. On 16th July 1947, a secret document of the CC ACP(b) “The Affair of Professors Kliueva and Roskin” was approved. Two intentions can be distinguished — that Soviet intelligentsia should be put on alert in order to foster Soviet security and to fence off efforts of foreign intelligence and that intellectuals should undergo a new procedure of re-education “in a spirit of Soviet patriotism and devotion to the interests of the Soviet state”.²⁵ The document also reflected a certain level of sense of inferiority which was to be suppressed by stressing past achievements of Russian scientists and also the fact that imperialist world was constantly trying to steal Soviet inventions. The image of science was equalled with the image of the Soviet Union, scientists were branded as top representatives of the country.²⁶ Vice versa, the military power of the USSR was projected back onto Soviet science. For sure, Stalin and his prejudiced and suspicious mindset reappeared on the stage. In May 1947, he explained to Konstantin Simonov that “...if you take our middle intelligentsia, the scientific intelligentsia, professors, physicians, they have an insufficiently educated feeling of Soviet patriotism. They have an unjustified admiration for foreign culture”.²⁷

THE SITUATION IN THE MINISTRIES

I discuss the dynamism of courts of honour on the example of the speech of A. A. Kuznetsov addressing the members of the Orgburo on 15th October, 1947. It unveils an erratic and unlinear spillover of the mechanism down to ministries and bureaucratic bodies. The Orgburo was primarily responsible for implementation and supervision of the application of Central committee’s resolutions. Kuznetsov referred to a letter of the Central Committee about the Roskin and Kliueva affair entitled “Closed Letter of the Central Committee of the Communist Party about the Affair of Professors Kliueva and Roskin”, which circulated among major central ministerial and bureaucratic bodies and which was designed to be discussed, implemented and transformed into a new policy. Then the Orgburo received materials and reports back from the

²⁵ KREMENTSOV, N. L., *Stalinist science*, p. 139.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Stalin then continued: „They all feel themselves to be still under age, not a hundred percent, they have got used to thinking of themselves as eternal students. This as an obsolete tradition, it comes from Peter. Peter had good ideas, but soon, there were too many Germans, that was the period of admiration for Germans... First the Germans, then the French, there was admiration for foreigners... A simple peasant will not bow for nothing, take his cap off, but these people do not have enough dignity or patriotism, do not understand the role that Russia plays.“ HOLLOWAY, D., *Stalin and the bomb: the Soviet Union and atomic energy, 1939–1956*, New Haven 1994, p. 207.

ministries reviewing the discussions, party gatherings and measures implemented.

Initially, it was intended to open a forum to express dissatisfaction with functioning of bureaucratic bodies. But the new campaign somehow confused officials who were uncertain about what problems should be discussed and which issues should be criticized. Kuznetsov pointed out that, instead of providing a self-criticizing report and stressing failures and inefficiencies, the head of the Ministry of Electric Industry presented a list of technical innovations and successes achieved. Kuznetsov therefore concluded that local party officials underestimated the gravity of the CC resolution and misunderstood the nature of the letter. He added that the effort to launch a campaign for elections to courts of honour was met with resistance. He mentioned two functions of these gatherings — they were intended as a new form of “education and training of intelligentsia”. He said that “we now talk about a basic transformation of our work with intelligentsia, we talk about basic transformation of the work of ministries and party committees of these ministries including all party organisations of all institutions connected with the work of intelligentsia”. He also stressed the key role of local party bodies to persuade the others to act in the line with the new CC resolution.²⁸

As it was usual in the Soviet reality, the ideological and rhetorical premises were often left aside when power constellation was in question and when political interests were involved. A document from 15th of March 1948 reveals a straight and unmasked interference of the top bodies into the mechanism of courts of honour. It was decided that the head of the Ministry of Security, Abakumov, unlawfully and without prior consultation with the Politburo put two of his employees under the procedure of court of honour. At the same time, party secretary Kuznetsov was criticized because of approving this prosecution. As a result of the debate, it was decided to forbid to conduct any courts of honour without prior consultation and consent of the Politburo.²⁹ The political interference is evident also from the testimony provided by Andrei Zhdanov who accused Roskin and Kliueva of lying, providing biased information and deceiving politburo members.³⁰ His arguments were purely instrumental,³¹ maybe because of the fact that the party secretariat was involved in the early stages of the affair and it was necessary for Zhdanov to steer any hint of suspicion away from him.³² We can conclude that as a reaction to misunderstandings and mismanagement of the campaign which was not centralized from the beginning and which was designed

28 202. *Vystuplenie A. A. Kuznecova na zasedanii Orgbjuro*, op. cit., pp. 233–237.

29 224. *Postanovlenie Politbyuro o provedenii suda chesti v Ministerstve gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti SSSR (15 marta 1948)*, in: KHLEVNIUK, O. V. — GORLITSKI, Yu. — KOSHELEVA, L. P. — MINIUK, A. I. — PROZUMENSHCHIKOV, M. Yu. — ROGOVAYA, L. A. — SOMONOVA, S. V. (eds.), op. cit., p. 262.

30 201. *Proekt zaiavlenia A. A. Zhdanova sudu chesti pri Ministerstve zdravookhranenia SSSR po delu professorov N.G. Kliuevoi i G.I. Roskina (30 maia 1947)*, in: KHLEVNIUK, O. V. — GORLITSKI, Yu. — KOSHELEVA, L. P. — MINIUK, A. I. — PROZUMENSHCHIKOV, M. Yu. — ROGOVAYA, L. A. — SOMONOVA, S. V. (eds.), op. cit., pp. 230–232.

31 KREMENTSOV, N. L., *Stalinist science*, p. 137.

32 201. *Proekt zaiavlenia A. A. Zhdanova sudu chesti...*, op. cit., pp. 230–232.

more to create an atmosphere of an ideological campaign, Stalin decided to regain full control over who would be put under the procedure of courts of honour, at least in such sensitive and important ministries as security, interior or industry.

MICROCOSMS OF A KOLKHOZ

Supporting my argument that the mechanism of courts of honour is necessary to be viewed in a broader context of the post-war party policies to regain control over the disrupted society and to re-establish strict party control and discipline I point to the example of village courts established in 1948. The mechanism is very similar to that of courts of honour — people within a village community were encouraged to accuse their neighbours they disliked or perceived as enemies and expelled them from the community.

Ukraine was severely damaged by the collectivization and devastated by the war. It was very difficult to stimulate peasants by peaceful means to enter or at least not to leave kolkhozes. Nikita Khrushchev, a party secretary of Ukraine, drew his inspiration from a law from the Tsarist period according to which the members of a village community were empowered to exclude any member of the community if they considered him/her to be a socially or politically harmful element. Khrushchev proposed that such a measure should be adopted to force people to work and to fulfil their norms.³³ He received Stalin's consent.³⁴

The law "On expulsion of those who deliberately refuse to work in agriculture and who lead a parasitic way of life" was adopted on 2nd June, 1948.³⁵ Because of its secret nature, there was no campaign channelled through media and publicly pushed ahead by local officials, but still the kolkhoz's courts were launched.³⁶ According to the reports of the Ministry of Interior, 33,266 members of kolkhozes and 13,598 family members were expelled from their home from 1948 to 1953. No positive turn in the labour productivity followed but the tendency to the decline of labour discipline was halted.³⁷

The application of the law was supervised by local party officials, exemplary punishments were passed. In the Moshkovskii kolkhoz (Novosibirsk area), a special meeting took place during which the new law was discussed and the members of the kolkhoz participated in a strange game which rules were not so dissimilar to the rules of courts of honour. Importance of the meeting which took place on 14th and 15th June was underlined by the participation of the first secretary of the Novosibirsk obkom M. V. Kulagin. One after one, the kolkhoz' members held speeches praising

33 PIKHOYA, R. G., *Sovetskii Soiuz: istoriia vlasti. 1945–1991*, Moskva 1998, p. 22.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid., p. 21.

36 66. *Informatsia Novosibirskogo obkoma VKP/b/: O proshedshikh sobraniakh kolkhoznikov v kolkhozakh Moshkovskogo i Kochenevskogo raionov (18 iyulya 1948)*, in: ZUBKOVA, E. I. et al. (eds.), *Sovetskaia zhizn. 1945–1953*, Moskva 2003, pp. 234–242.

37 PIKHOYA, R. G., op. cit., pp. 22–23.

the new law, stressing their determination to fulfil norms and blaming their neighbours for braking common effort. Once certain names were pronounced, nobody in the discussion defended them. Accusations focused on three persons — N. V. Palkin, A. D. Palkina and E. M. Tomberg. First ones were branded as freeloaders, idlers and loafers. Palkin's main crime was that he refused to subscribe himself for a state loan. All participants of the meeting proposed to settle the accused out of the village for eight years. In the case of Ekaterina Tomberg more factors were involved. Her father was "dekulakized" and her husband was expelled from the village. When she was accused of wrecking and refusing to participate on a common work, she replied that the accuser was only willing to get her house after her expulsion.³⁸ People who were indicted were of two categories — with a suspicious past or dubious social origin or questionable, different, criminal or strange behaviour. Palkin was a freeloader, who would probably not have been working under any regime, but Tomberg was a daughter of a kulak, a social pariah with criminal stigma. She would have probably worked hard on her own property. She retained family pride referring to his hard-working father and accusing her accusers of purely materialistic interests.³⁹

The story is telling about the system imposed on the village structure. The burden of accusations was transferred to people who were encouraged to indict their neighbours of various crimes or misdeeds. Following pre-war patterns, it was done during an open and collective gathering. Compared with other accusatory practices, when people denounce their neighbours in private letters retaining their anonymous and passive positions, here public indictments and open ballots were enough for passing a judgement with legal consequences. In Moshkovskii kolkhoz, all three people mentioned above were found "guilty" and expelled from their native village to distant places of the USSR.⁴⁰

CONCLUSION

Courts of honour represented a mechanism imposed on bureaucratic and scientific institutional bodies from above in order to discipline bureaucratic cadres and freely-thinking scientists. In the paper, I have attempted to place courts of honour into various webs of interrelations and interplays within the structure of the Soviet society. First, it was a bureaucratic mechanism invented in the central apparatus in order to discipline not scientific and high administrative bodies. It was a relatively new invention, drawing the inspiration from the Tsarist period, but I have argued that the mechanism of them relied on a pre-war relationship triangle between central authorities, local authorities and „normal people“. Although courts of honour were not intended to be a whole country public ideological campaign, it reached also a broad public when authorities decided to create an artistic presentation and representation of a particular case connected to the system of courts of honour (the Kliueva and

38 66. *Informatsia Novosibirskogo obkoma VKP/b/*, op. cit., pp. 234–242.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

Roskin affair) in order to put it into an ideological context. Therefore we can speak also about an ideological mechanism which coincided with the Soviet educative and transforming project where stress was now put on state interests.

As I have argued, courts of honour extended party discipline and the notion of „partiinnost“ in to the scientific community which had been until the time left intact and profited from the fact that the Bolshevik party lost its tight grip over the society during the war. Therefore a general pattern of the post-war Stalinist coercive policy was mirrored in order to establish party rules as necessary grounds for academicians and bureaucrats. In science particularly, the campaign of courts of honour triggered a massive attempt of the Soviet state to interfere and to subjugate Soviet science. This process culminated in a series of scientific congresses and party-led disputes after which Soviet science lost last remnants of its independence.

ABSTRACT

COURTS OF HONOUR IN THE POST-WAR SOVIET UNION

This study discusses courts of honour, established in the USSR after WW2, as a bureaucratic mechanism to discipline scientific and high administrative bodies. Courts of honour were designed to extend party discipline and the notion of „partiinnost“ in to the scientific community. Therefore a general pattern of the post-war Stalinist coercive policy was mirrored in order to establish party rules as necessary grounds for academicians and bureaucrats. In science particularly, the campaign of courts of honour triggered a massive attempt of the Soviet regime to interfere and to subjugate Soviet science. This process culminated in a series of scientific congresses and party-led disputes after which Soviet science lost last remnants of its independence.

KEYWORDS

Courts of honour, the Soviet Union, discipline, Roskin, Kliueva, campaign, Soviet science

ABSTRAKT

SOUDY CTI V POVÁLEČNÉM SOVĚTSKÉM SVAZU

Článek se zabývá tzv. soudy cti, které byly v Sovětském svazu ustaveny pro druhé světové válce a měly sloužit k disciplinaci vědy a byrokracie. Cílem bylo rozšířit stranickou disciplínu a pojetí „stranickosti“ především mezi vědeckou komunitou. Zavádění soudů cti tak odráželo celkovou snahu poválečné stalinské politiky zavést a obnovit stranická pravidla jako nezbytný základ pro jednání a chování akademiků a byrokratů. Zvláště ve vědě kampaň související se soudy cti odstartovala masivní pokus sovětského režimu podřídit si sovětskou vědu. Tento proces kulminoval v celé řadě vědeckých kongresů a stranickými orgány vedených debat, během nichž sovětská věda ztratila poslední zbytky své nezávislosti.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Soudy cti, Sovětský svaz, disciplína, Roskin Kliueva, kampaň, sovětská věda