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The Soviet Regional Leadership: The Brezhnev Generation

The secretaries of republic and regional party committees are the most important category of officials in the USSR after the supreme leadership. They formed 36 percent of the full members of the Central Committee chosen in 1976, while the next largest group, comprising members of the Council of Ministers, made up 24 percent. They are also the most important reserve from which members of the supreme leadership are co-opted. A study of the careers of Politburo members in 1971 showed that two-thirds of them had spent at least five years as regional or republic party first secretaries before being promoted to senior jobs at the center.¹ The same applies to nine of the twelve present members of the Central Committee Secretariat.²

This article focuses on the first secretaries of regional (*oblast'*) and territorial (*krai*) party committees—the obkom and kraikom secretaries—of the Russian Republic (RSFSR).³ They make up almost two-thirds of all republic and regional party officials elected as full members of the present Central Committee, but their importance lies not only in their numerical weight within the political elite. An RSFSR obkom first secretaryship is the most crucial career position for promotion to top jobs at the center, as several examples in the present article will show.

1. T. H. Rigby, "The Soviet Politburo: A Comparative Profile 1951–1971," *Soviet Studies*, 24, no. 1 (July 1972): 18. Changes in the Politburo since that date have slightly reduced the proportion.

2. This assumes that D. F. Ustinov, who was appointed minister of defense in April 1976, remains a member of the Secretariat, from which he has not been formally removed. Ustinov has never been an obkom secretary, and his career has been devoted to administration of the defense industry. The other two exceptions are B. N. Ponomarev and N. V. Zimianin, both ideology specialists. Ponomarev made his career entirely within the central agitprop establishment. Zimianin spent some years as a regional and later republican secretary (but not first secretary) in Belorussia before moving to Foreign Ministry and media jobs at the center. Another somewhat ambiguous case is Chernenko, who worked in the central party apparatus for a considerable period before his promotion to the Secretariat, but he also served for five or six years as a regional party secretary during the 1940s.

3. The criterion for inclusion is whether the party committee concerned comes directly under the Central Committee. The analysis therefore includes the first secretary of the Moscow City Committee (*gorkom*), since this body is not subordinate to the Moscow obkom, but excludes the first secretaries of obkoms of autonomous oblasts which are subordinate to krai administrations. By the same token, it includes the obkom first secretaries in Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics; although the state authorities in these areas enjoy a distinctive status, the rights, obligations, and status of their party bodies are indistinguishable from those of "ordinary" RSFSR obkoms. Altogether we are dealing with seventy-two party committees, comprising six kraikoms, sixty-five obkoms (of which sixteen are located in

The antecedents of the obkom secretary go back to the *voevody* of seventeenth-century Muscovy, who were the plenipotentiaries of the tsars in provincial centers which for the most part had been capitals of independent principalities in former times. In the eighteenth century the *voevoda* gave way to the provincial governor (*gubernator*) and the role became increasingly bureaucratized, without, however, declining in power. The governors were the key body of tsarist officials right up to 1917, and the post was a common stepping stone to high office in St. Petersburg.⁴ They were local embodiments of the sovereign's prerogative (the tsar, as "autocrat," being theoretically invested with unlimited power) so that within their provinces they were comparable in authority and status to the European governors of overseas colonial territories, a fact that was not lost on some contemporary Western observers.⁵

The post of provincial governor was abolished by the Provisional Government in 1917, but the requirements of administrative coordination soon caused the Bolsheviks to create a functional equivalent in the form of the provincial party

ASSR's) and one gorkom (Moscow). In terms of their current role and their prospects for advancement to top office, the RSFSR obkom and kraikom first secretaries have no real equivalent in the other Union republics. The central committees of the other republics are analogous to the RSFSR obkoms in coming directly under the CPSU Central Committee, but their first secretaries have no real prospect of promotion to high office in Moscow, with the exception of the Ukrainian and Belorussian first secretary. The second secretaries in the Union republics, who are usually Russians, are more similar in their career profiles to the RSFSR obkom secretaries, but it is unusual for men to go *directly* from this post to major appointments in Moscow (the recent appointment of the second secretary in Uzbekistan, V. G. Lomonosov, as chairman of the State Committee on Labor and Wages of the USSR is an exception). Four of the Union republics have oblast divisions, but with the exception of the Ukraine, their obkom first secretaries exercise responsibilities far inferior to those of the RSFSR, and their career prospects are effectively confined to their own republic. Ukrainian officials occupy an ambiguous position in these respects. The population and economic resources entrusted to them are comparable with those in an average RSFSR oblast, and in certain respects the position of their party organizations is also more analogous (for example, in electing delegates to CPSU congresses) to the RSFSR. Thus certain "elite" studies group the Ukrainian obkom first secretaries with those of the RSFSR. For the present analysis, however, this was felt to be misleading. Relations between the Ukrainian obkom first secretaries and the central party authorities are normally mediated through the Ukrainian Central Committee, and it is unusual for them to move to senior office in Moscow without either first (like Podgorny) gaining Ukrainian Republic first secretaryship, or (like Kirilenko) serving for a period in an RSFSR obkom.

4. On the role and powers of tsarist provincial governors, see N. M. Korkunov, *Russkoe gosudarstvennoe pravo*, vol. 2: *Chast' osobennaia* (St. Petersburg, 1905), pp. 311-24; V. M. Gribovskii, *Gosudarstvennoe ustroistvo i upravlenie rossiiskoi imperii* (Odessa, 1912), pp. 133-38; and Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, *L'Empire des tsars et les russes*, vol. 2: *Les institutions* (Paris, 1882), pp. 97-99. See also John A. Armstrong, *The European Administrative Elite* (Princeton, N.J., 1973). The obvious difference in the career prospects of provincial governors and obkom first secretaries is that the former could never achieve the topmost post in the country, whereas the latter may—and two of them, Khrushchev and Brezhnev, have achieved it. Apart from the tsar, however, most other leading positions in the state were filled by appointment, and provincial governors were a major source of recruitment to such positions.

5. Thus George Trevor, *Russia Ancient and Modern* (London, 1862), p. 339, stated that "a provincial governor in Russia resembles a military commander quartered on a subjugated people, more than a public officer among his fellow subjects."

secretary. The reforms of the 1860s, reinforced by those following the 1905 revolution, had introduced elements of the *Rechtstaat* and of local self-government into Russia, and after 1917 the soviets and their executive machinery to some extent perpetuated these elements. On the other hand, the party apparatus now came to embody the prerogative aspect of government (exercising the “dictatorship of the proletariat”—defined as “power unlimited by any laws”), with the regional party secretaries wielding the prerogative power in their regions on behalf of the supreme leadership, as the *gubernatory* had done before them. The speedy reemergence of this role must thus be seen as a decisive setback to the struggle against arbitrary government in Russia—and one from which it has not yet recovered.

Jerry Hough has aptly termed the obkom first secretaries the “Soviet prefects,” suggesting a role as local agents of the central authorities comparable with that of the French departmental prefect.⁶ In a sense the role is both less and more than this: less, because the existence of the obkom secretariat and

6. See Jerry F. Hough, *The Soviet Prefects: The Local Party Organs in Industrial Decision-Making* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), introduction. Similar characterizations of the role and status of obkom secretaries may be found in other studies of the Soviet political system, and several analyses of the characteristics of obkom secretaries are available. While in no case does the coverage permit direct comparison with the data presented in the present study, the following contain many relevant findings and evaluations: Robert E. Blackwell, Jr., “Elite Recruitment and Functional Change: An Analysis of the Soviet Obkom Elite 1950–1968,” *Journal of Politics*, 34 (1972): 124–52 (covers obkom first secretaries in all republics); Robert E. Blackwell, Jr., “Career Development in the Soviet Obkom Elite: A Conservative Trend,” *Soviet Studies*, 24, no. 1 (July 1972): 24–40 (same coverage); Peter Frank, “The CPSU Obkom First Secretary: A Profile,” *British Journal of Political Science*, 1 (1971): 173–90 (obkom first secretaries in all republics in 1966); Grey Hodnett, “The Obkom First Secretaries,” *Slavic Review*, 24, no. 4 (December 1965): 636–52 (obkom first secretaries of all republics during the bifurcation of 1962–64 and immediately before and after it); Philip D. Stewart, *Political Power in the Soviet Union: A Study of Decision-Making in Stalingrad* (New York, 1968), chapter 7 (covers obkom first secretaries in all republics 1950–66); K. A. Jagannathan, “The Political Recruitment and Career Patterns of Obkom First Secretaries in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union” (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1971), chapters 4 and 5 (covers all obkom first secretaries elected to the Central Committee between 1952 and 1966); and Joel C. Moses, *Regional Party Leadership and Policy-Making in the USSR* (New York, 1974), chapter 6 (covers first secretaries of twenty-five obkoms in the RSFSR and the Ukraine 1955–73). Also useful are several studies of wider groups in the Soviet political elite, especially George Fischer, *The Soviet System and Modern Society* (New York, 1968) (obkom first secretaries of all republics comprise two-thirds of the 230 posts analyzed for the early 1960s); Frederic J. Fleron, Jr., “Representation of Career Types in the Soviet Political Leadership,” in *Political Leadership in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, ed. R. Barry Farrell (Chicago, 1970) (covers all members of the CPSU Central Committee 1952–61); and Michael P. Gehlen, “The Soviet Apparatchiki,” in *ibid.* (covers all party officials among the full members of the Central Committee elected between 1952 and 1966). Scattered data of relevance may be found in the specialized literature, particularly in articles appearing in the journals *Osteuropa*, *Soviet Studies*, and *Problems of Communism*, and in the *Research Bulletins* of Radio Liberty; see especially Jerry F. Hough, “The Soviet System: Petrification or Pluralism,” *Problems of Communism*, 1972, no. 2, pp. 25–45. The information on the backgrounds and careers of officials analyzed in this paper is assembled from the Soviet press and official biographical compilations, particularly the series *Deputaty Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR* (Moscow, 1962, 1966, 1970, and 1974), and the yearbooks (*ezhgodniki*) of the *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*. It would be unwieldy to give specific references in these footnotes, but they can be supplied on request.

bureau dilutes to some extent the powers of the first secretary as a "line administrator"; and more, because of the global responsibilities of the party apparatus in Soviet society, such that there is scarcely an area of organized activity in his region on which the obkom secretary may not be called upon to make a decision, or a social institution or organization for whose performance he cannot be called to account.

The obkom secretaryship, of course, is in form an elective post, and this was not always a mere fiction. Officials sent out by the Central Committee as first secretary would sometimes encounter difficulty in gaining acceptance by the local organization, as Mikoyan discovered as late as 1920.⁷ These vestiges of democracy, however, did not survive the consolidation of the party apparatus in the early 1920s, when General Secretary Stalin turned the provincial party officialdom into a major basis of support in his struggle for power. Molotov, Kaganovich, and Mikoyan were among the many Stalinist stalwarts who served as provincial secretaries in this period, and they were followed by such future leaders as Kirov, Zhdanov, and Khrushchev. The way in which obkom secretaries were made and unmade under Stalin may be illustrated by A. I. Shakhurin's (perhaps somewhat embellished) account of how, when serving as first secretary of the Gorki obkom in 1940, Stalin summoned him to Moscow to tell him he was to be people's commissar for the aircraft industry. When Shakhurin asked if he could return to Gorki to wind up his work there, Stalin replied: "No, we will send a representative of the Central Committee there, who will inform the obkom of the decision we have taken." He then asked Shakhurin whom he would recommend as his successor. Shakhurin recommended M. I. Rodionov,⁸ then serving as chairman of the executive committee of the oblast soviet, and Rodionov was duly made first secretary. This case illustrates both the personal authority Stalin exercised over such appointments and their incumbents, and his willingness by this time to delegate responsibility to make nominations.⁹ Career evidence suggests that certain of his lieutenants, such as Zhdanov, Malenkov, and Khrushchev, were able to exploit their influence over nominations in order to build up personal followings among the obkom secretaries.

On his election as first secretary of the Central Committee in September 1953 Khrushchev acquired vast powers of patronage, and the obkom secretaryships became a major field for the deployment of these powers. By the time of the Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956 thirty-nine of the RSFSR obkom and kraikom first secretaries inherited from Stalin had been changed, and by the Twenty-second Congress in October 1961 all but two of the remainder had been replaced.¹⁰ Some of the new secretaries were men who had previously

7. A. I. Mikoian, *V nachale dvadtsatykh . . .* (Moscow, 1975), pp. 26 ff.

8. M. I. Shakhurin, in *Sovetskii tyl v Velikoi otechestvennoi voine*, ed. P. N. Pospelov, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1974), pp. 68–69.

9. This discussion assumes, of course, the basic accuracy of Shakhurin's account, and also ignores several important questions, such as Shakhurin's estimate (when recommending Rodionov) of the patronage enjoyed by Rodionov in Stalin's entourage; Rodionov was later executed in the "Leningrad case," thus being identified as a protégé of Central Committee Secretary A. A. Zhdanov, who was an extremely powerful figure at this time.

10. The exceptions were from the peripheral national minority areas of Tuva and Dagestan. In many cases more than one change of first secretary occurred in these years,

served under Khrushchev when he was party boss of the Ukraine (1938–49) or the Moscow oblast (1949–53).¹¹ Others were local officials picked out by him for promotion. In many cases appointment to an RSFSR obkom first secretaryship became a stepping stone for a Khrushchev protégé on the way to senior office in Moscow. At the same time, as Khrushchev's power grew and with it his responsibilities in both domestic and foreign policy areas, he probably left the initiation of obkom appointments increasingly to other members of the Central Committee Secretariat, notably A. B. Aristov up to 1960, and F. R. Kozlov from then till 1963.

In his rise to supreme power, regional party officialdom was Khrushchev's most important (though not only) base of support, as it had been for Stalin. In consolidating this support base, Khrushchev employed both the carrot and the stick. His power over appointments enabled him to reward loyal adherents and bind them closer to him, while removing or intimidating into cooperation those whose earlier loyalties had been to other leaders. Furthermore, his policies of decentralizing administration and of involving party bodies more directly in running the economy combined to enhance the significance and authority of regional and republic party officialdom. Thus, it was in the interests of this group to support Khrushchev and oppose those rivals, such as Molotov, Malenkov, and Kaganovich, whose power resided mainly in the central government machine. Given the weight of the regional officials in the Central Committee membership, this support evidently proved of great importance to Khrushchev in the "antiparty group" crisis of June 1957, when he managed to convene the full Central Committee to overrule and purge the hostile majority that had formed against him in the Politburo (then called Presidium of the Central Committee).

Subsequently, however, Khrushchev seems to have alienated this support. His constant reorganizations caused administrative confusion which made it very difficult for regional officials to meet the expectations he had of them, and for this many met with his displeasure and lost office. By the early 1960s something like two-thirds of the RSFSR obkom secretaries installed under Khrushchev in the mid-1950s had been replaced. The turnover undoubtedly created a sense of frustration and insecurity which was intensified by the change in the party rules in October 1961, when minimum turnover levels and limited periods in office were prescribed for party committee members for the first time. The final

as Khrushchev's initial choice proved unsatisfactory or alternatively went on to higher things. Thus thirty-three RSFSR first secretaryships changed hands twice between 1953 and 1961, sixteen changed hands three times, and three changed hands four times. In addition, all five of the first secretaries appointed to new obkoms formed after 1953 were replaced by 1961.

11. Thus, in 1955 A. P. Kirilenko (now number four in the Politburo hierarchy) was moved from the Ukrainian party organization, where he had made his early career under Khrushchev, to be first secretary of the large industrial Sverdlovsk obkom in the Urals and in 1962 was brought up to Moscow to be first vice-chairman of the Central Committee Bureau for the RSFSR. Similarly, A. I. Struev, another of Khrushchev's Ukrainian cadres, became first secretary of the Molotov (now Perm) obkom in 1954 and in 1959 was made vice-premier of the RSFSR (he is now USSR minister of trade). E. A. Furtseva, one of Khrushchev's protégés from the local party apparatus in Moscow, was made first secretary of the Moscow City Committee in 1954 (which had obkom status from 1956) and later went on to be Central Committee secretary and then minister of culture. There were numerous other such cases.

blow was the decision in November 1962 which split a large proportion of the regional party organizations into two, one for industry and one for agriculture, each with its own regional committee (obkom), executive bureau, and secretariat. This not only created further administrative confusion, but struck directly at the incumbent obkom first secretaries by duplicating their offices and thus sharply reducing their individual power and status.¹² Thus, when Khrushchev's lieutenants conspired to remove him in October 1964, they were evidently able to count on his having dissipated the support he had earlier enjoyed among the large bloc of regional secretaries in the Central Committee, support which had proved so valuable to him in 1957.

The obkom secretaries clearly had three major grievances at the time of Khrushchev's removal: (1) the bifurcation of their apparatus and organizations; (2) the constant reorganizations and administrative confusion; and (3) their career insecurity. There is evidence that the "collective leadership" recognized the seriousness of these grievances and immediately undertook to remedy them, thereby showing their concern to win the support and goodwill of regional party officialdom. While it is uncertain whether they entered into any specific commitments at the Central Committee meeting at which Khrushchev gave up office,¹³ articles appearing in Central Committee organs in the following weeks made their intentions clear enough.

The leading article in the first issue of *Partiinaiia zhizn'* to appear after the plenum, which, without mentioning Khrushchev by name, amounted to a critical review of his errors of leadership, included the following passage:

Without according assistance to lower-level officials [*rabotniki*], without knowledge of [their] circumstances, a demanding attitude can easily boil down to leadership "in general," which often leads to the unjustified re-shuffling of cadres. . . . Indisputably, bad officials must be replaced. The renewal of cadres is a natural phenomenon. Not infrequently, however, there are still efforts to represent frequent changes of them as a virtue. . . .¹⁴

Subsequent issues of the journal condemned the obsession with administrative reorganization and an appropriate quotation from Lenin was employed to raise the issue to a point of principle:

Do not start everything over again from the beginning, do not reorganize

12. See John A. Armstrong, "Party Bifurcation and Elite Interests," *Soviet Studies*, 17 (1965-66): 418-30, especially pp. 425-26. This article provides a valuable analysis of personnel changes and administrative and power relationships involved in the reorganization. It covers the kraikoms and obkoms of both the RSFSR and the Ukraine, but excludes the obkoms responsible for the sixteen Autonomous Republics of the RSFSR. See also Hodnett, "The Obkom First Secretaries."

13. It would appear that the major speech at the October 1964 plenum, given by Central Committee Secretary Suslov, contained a strong critique of Khrushchev's style and methods (see Michel Tatu, *Power in the Kremlin: From Khrushchev's Decline to Collective Leadership* [London, 1969], pp. 416-17). If so, the features that so concerned the obkom secretaries would undoubtedly have been mentioned, and an undertaking to remedy them at least implied.

14. *Partiinaiia zhizn'*, 1964, no. 20, p. 6.

right and left, but learn how to make the best use of what has already been created. As few general reorganizations as possible. . . .¹⁵

And the other major Central Committee journal, *Kommunist*, linked the two issues of reorganization and career security in the following terms:

Recently, however, work with cadres and the rational employment of them have been subjected to artificial complications [*iskusstvenno uslozhnilis'*]. The frequent restructurings and reorganizations have entailed repeated mass reallocation of officials [*rabotnikov*]. This switching around of cadres has not allowed them to concentrate on the decision of long-term questions of economic development of the oblast, krai, or raion, and has imbued officials with a feeling of lack of self-confidence which hinders them from working calmly and fruitfully.¹⁶

The promise of stability and "back to normal" conditions implied by such statements must be seen as a response to the confusion, frustration, and insecurity generated in all sections of the Soviet bureaucracy by Khrushchev's innovations. Indeed, within a year all the major structural changes he had initiated were reversed. It is striking, however, that the abolition of his regional economic councils (*sovmarkhozy*) and the restoration of the central industrial ministries had to wait eleven months, while a decision on the issue that most directly concerned regional party officialdom, namely, the bifurcation of their organizations, was taken only four weeks after Khrushchev's fall. The decision was promulgated—"with the aim of strengthening the leading role of the party and its local organs"—at another meeting of the full Central Committee held on November 16, 1964 and prescribed that oblast conferences reuniting the split obkoms were to be held during December.¹⁷

Altogether in the USSR eighty-five kraikoms and obkoms had been split, forty-two of them in the RSFSR (the twenty-nine RSFSR obkoms that were not split were mainly based on national minority areas—autonomous republics [ASSR's] or autonomous regions—or were in sparsely populated areas remote from Moscow). It is particularly revealing of the new leadership's approach to note who became first secretaries in the reunified obkoms. In thirty-one cases (three-fourths) the job was returned to the man who had held it before the split (and who had served as first secretary of either the agricultural obkom or the industrial obkom in the meantime). Seven of the remainder had already been removed from the oblast concerned by Khrushchev (either at the time of

15. *Ibid.*, 1964, no. 23, p. 4.

16. *Kommunist*, 1964, no. 16, pp. 7–8.

17. *Pravda*, November 17, 1964. The decision also restored the old rural district party committees (*raikomys*) which Khrushchev had replaced by party committees of collective farm/state farm production directorates. The raikoms were able to absorb some of the surplus (mainly junior) staff released from the duplicated obkom apparatus. In practice, the completion of these arrangements took longer than anticipated by the Central Committee after the November 1964 decision, but the regional party conferences had all been completed before the next plenary meeting of the Central Committee in March 1965 (see *Plenum Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza 24–26 marta 1965 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet* [Moscow, 1965], p. 5).

or during the split), in most cases receiving other senior positions. In all but one of these oblasts the man appointed first secretary of the reunified obkom had been serving as either agricultural or industrial first secretary under Khrushchev. The exception was in the Cheliabinsk oblast, where the industrial first secretary, F. F. Kuziukov, who "ought" to have been made first secretary of the reunified obkom in this heavily industrialized region, became instead deputy minister for the coal industry. This leaves only four oblasts where the presplit first secretary was serving as either agricultural or industrial first secretary but failed to get his original job back when the obkoms were reunited. Three of these were appointed to other positions, two of them clearly involving promotion: F. D. Kulakov (Stavropol kraikom) was made head of the Agricultural Department of the Central Committee, and I. V. Kapitonov (Ivanovo obkom) was named head of the party organs for the RSFSR Department of the Central Committee; both later became Central Committee secretaries. The third, L. I. Lubennikov (Kemerovo) became deputy chairman of the People's Control Committee of the RSFSR, a post of lesser importance, but his fortunes were already on the wane under Khrushchev.¹⁸ Only one of the four failed to get another post, namely, V. V. Skriabin, in the Rostov oblast.¹⁹

Clearly, then, the new "collective leadership" had instituted a policy of restoring the first secretaryship, in regions where the party organization had been bifurcated, to the original incumbent, or, should he no longer be available, to the "ranking" party official in the region. And this was a policy of the new leadership as a whole, not just of those members of it who were directly responsible for internal party matters. The relevant decision explicitly assigned to the Central Committee Presidium (rather than to the Secretariat as one would normally have expected) responsibility for "all organizational questions connected with the creation in the krais and oblasts of unified party organizations and their leading bodies"—and organizational questions, in Soviet usage, covers personnel as well as structural matters.²⁰ It is not difficult to see why the members of the Presidium oligarchy insisted on joint control of this operation. The obkom first secretaries were the most important cohort of their subordinates, and *who* held these positions was of major relevance to the delicate and fluid power balance in which they operated. This also may partially explain the actual policy that the "collective leadership" adopted in this matter, that is, to restore the regional leadership as closely as possible to what it had been before Khrushchev's bifurcation measures. As suggested above, the main motive was probably to foster support for their regime within this crucial elite group. Another influ-

18. Agriculture is of little relative importance in this region, but at the time of the split Lubennikov had been relegated to the agriculture obkom, and it was the man appointed to head the industry obkom under Khrushchev, A. F. Eshtokin, who now became first secretary of the reunified obkom.

19. This is an intriguing case because Skriabin had worked under Brezhnev in Zaporozhe in 1946–47, and his election as first secretary of the Rostov obkom in 1962, at a plenum over which Brezhnev's crony Kirilenko presided, looked remarkably like the installation of a Brezhnev protégé in an area where Suslov is thought by some to retain a special interest (dating from his service there before World War II). In this case, Skriabin's replacement when the Rostov obkom was reunified might appear as a concession to Suslov. If this line of speculation had any basis, however, one would have expected Brezhnev to contrive some other position of importance for Skriabin, but this did not happen.

20. See *Pravda*, November 17, 1964.

ential consideration, however, may have been that any other policy would have allowed certain of their number to install their own adherents in obkom posts, as well as causing divisive wrangles within the leadership.

Apart from the scrapping of most of Khrushchev's organizational innovations and other "half-baked schemes," the consensus among the leadership coalition that took over in October 1964 seems to have been limited to one major point: that power and responsibility should be widely shared within an oligarchy dominated by the party Presidium but extending also to the Central Committee Secretariat and the Presidium of the Council of Ministers. Within this oligarchy four leaders clearly carried more weight than the rest, namely, Brezhnev, Suslov, Podgorny, and Kosygin, of whom the first three were Central Committee secretaries.²¹ But Brezhnev's position as first secretary did not at this time allow him to dominate internal party affairs. It was Podgorny, assisted by his protégé Central Committee secretary V. N. Titov (who had served under Podgorny in the Kharkov party organization), who at first had primary responsibility for party structures and personnel. In the course of 1965, however, Titov and other Podgorny adherents (the "Kharkov group") were transferred to less strategic posts, and a public (if Aesopian) attack was launched on Podgorny's management of party organizational matters.²² The attack culminated in December, with Podgorny's transfer from the party Secretariat to the chairmanship of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. At the same time I. V. Kapitonov was promoted from head of the Party Organs Department to Central Committee secretary, with responsibility for party organizational affairs. Kapitonov was probably a compromise choice, because he seemed to lack close links with any of the major leaders. With regard to the RSFSR regions, however, he shared his organizational and personnel responsibilities with A. P. Kirilenko who, as first deputy chairman (under Brezhnev) of the Central Committee Bureau for the RSFSR, was Kapitonov's superior in this body. The departure of Podgorny from the Secretariat greatly strengthened Brezhnev's capacity to influence internal party developments, and this capacity was further increased by decisions approved by the Twenty-third Party Congress in April 1966. Brezhnev was made general (instead of first) secretary, a title previously held only by Stalin and one which emphasized his concern with all aspects of party policy and administration. At the same time the Bureau for the RSFSR was abolished and his protégé Kirilenko was made a member of the Politburo—which the Central Committee Presidium was now renamed (again restoring past nomenclature)—and a Central Committee secretary.

Against this background of power shifts in the central party command, let us now consider the appointments of obkom first secretaries made in the period between the resignation of Khrushchev and the first post-Khrushchev party

21. See T. H. Rigby, "The Soviet Leadership: Towards a Self-Stabilizing Oligarchy?," *Soviet Studies*, 22 (October 1970): 167-91.

22. The sharpest blow in this campaign was a Central Committee decision of July 20, 1965, which assailed "serious shortcomings" in party recruitment and training in the Kharkov region—Podgorny's (and Titov's) primary patronage base (see *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vol. 6 [Moscow, 1966], pp. 383-86). For a good summary of the campaign against the "Kharkov group," see Tatu, *Power in the Kremlin*, pp. 499-502.

congress (that is, October 1964–April 1966). Clearly, the operation of reuniting the forty-two split obkoms and kraikoms in the RSFSR, which occupied the first months of this period, was used only minimally to effect leadership changes. In the great majority of cases, the most senior party official already in the oblast was made first secretary of the reunified obkom, and this was nearly always the presplit first secretary where he was still serving in the region. The four exceptions to this pattern are, therefore, worth examining.

In the Ivanovo obkom, A. N. Smirnov, the chairman of the *oblispolkom* (executive committee of the regional soviet) became first secretary. Smirnov had formerly worked in the light industry area of the USSR government under Kosygin, and his appointment may have reflected the latter's sponsorship, as Kosygin seems to have retained a special interest in this center of textile manufacture. The other three cases, involving men brought in from outside the oblast, all present intriguing political facets. The industrially important Cheliabinsk oblast was entrusted to N. N. Rodionov, whose career had suffered a serious setback two years earlier at the hands of Central Committee secretary F. R. Kozlov, at that time Brezhnev's principal rival for the succession.²³ The Rostov oblast, containing one of the largest party organizations in the RSFSR, went to M. S. Solomentsev, who had been Rodionov's successor as second secretary of the Kazakh Central Committee. Though there is little in Solomentsev's career to suggest close links with Brezhnev, the subsequent flourishing of his fortunes, which are noted below, suggests sponsorship by someone at the top (Suslov?). His transfer to Rostov was also significant, however, in opening up a senior position in Kazakhstan to which Podgorny's protégé V. N. Titov could later be rusticated. Finally, the change in the Stavropol kraikom also killed two birds with one stone, and this time unambiguously to Brezhnev's advantage. On the one hand, it involved bringing up to Moscow F. D. Kulakov, who quickly emerged as Brezhnev's principal lieutenant in establishing his authority over agricultural policy. On the other hand, it created a suitable vacancy for the relegation of L. N. Efremov, a Khrushchev protégé who had been a first deputy chairman of the Bureau of the Central Committee for the RSFSR, leaving Brezhnev's adherent Kirilenko as the only first deputy chairman of this body,

23. Rodionov's career has been a curious one. He first rose to prominence under Kozlov in the Leningrad party machine, and in 1960 was made second secretary of the Kazakh Central Committee. In December 1962, however, he was removed from this position at a plenum presided over by Kozlov himself, in a purge of the Kazakh leadership that has been interpreted as an attack on Brezhnev's influence in that republic (see Tatu, *Power in the Kremlin*, pp. 155 and 515). For a fuller analysis of political alignments in Kazakhstan at this period, see J. W. Cleary, "Politics and Administration in Soviet Kazakhstan 1955–1964" (Ph.D. diss., Australian National University, Canberra, 1967), especially chapter 9. A contrary interpretation by Sidney I. Ploss, in his *Conflict and Decision-Making in Soviet Russia: A Case Study of Agriculture Policy 1953–1963* (Princeton, 1965), especially chapter 4, seems to the present author to be less plausible than Cleary's analysis, especially in the light of later events. Rodionov returned to Leningrad, where he received a relatively minor post as deputy chairman of the Regional Economic Council. Whatever his earlier links with Kozlov, the revival of his fortunes after Kozlov's rival Brezhnev assumed the first secretaryship of the CPSU suggests that he had, indeed, forged bonds with the Brezhnev "camp" that were now being rewarded. Rodionov remained first secretary of the Cheliabinsk obkom till 1970, when he was appointed deputy minister of foreign affairs, with responsibility for the "socialist" countries. He remains a full member of the Central Committee.

with implications which have already been discussed. Thus, even though there seems to have been an understanding among the party leadership to avoid making the reunification of the split obkoms an occasion for extensive and necessarily competitive deployment of patronage, it did enable at least Brezhnev and perhaps also Kosygin and Suslov to effect certain advantageous changes.

Following the reunification operation, some seven or eight months elapsed without a single obkom first secretary being changed. Between October 1965 and the Twenty-third Party Congress in March–April 1966, however, there were no less than eleven changes.²⁴ It seems reasonable to hypothesize that these changes were related to the power shifts in the Central Committee Secretariat in the latter part of 1965, which seem to have greatly enhanced Brezhnev's capacity to influence personnel and organizational developments. Indeed, it is likely that the spate of obkom leadership changes was in part intended as a demonstration of this enhanced capacity, so that actual or aspiring first secretaries should fully realize that it was *his* favor they should now be seeking. This supposition is supported by the fact that Brezhnev took the unusual step of going in person to preside at the meeting in Gorki, where the most important of these changes was effected.²⁵ Moreover, the new first secretary, K. F. Katushev, was a young construction engineer who had received his first party appointment only eight years earlier, and was thus living evidence of Brezhnev's capacity for generous promotion.²⁶ Another of the changes in this period seemed to demonstrate the limited capacity of Kapitonov, despite his role as head of the Party Organs Department, to frustrate changes desired by Brezhnev. In the Orel obkom, First Secretary N. F. Ignatov, who had earlier been publicly identified in the party press as an associate of Kapitonov,²⁷ was removed in favor of Brezhnev's candidate T. I. Sokolov, another victim of Kozlov's 1962 purge in Kazakhstan.²⁸ A second change at this time, which surely must have galled Kapitonov, was the removal of another old associate, I. T. Marchenko, as first secretary of the Tomsk obkom.²⁹ The successor in this case (E. K. Ligachev) is interesting, however, for as former deputy head of the Central Committee Agitprop Department he may well have been sponsored by Suslov.

24. It is true that the regional party conferences preceding the CPSU congress provided an appropriate occasion for leadership changes, but the number of such changes is striking coming so soon after the post-Khrushchev reorganization and it is also noteworthy that the majority of them occurred at special "organizational plenums" held *before* the oblast conferences.

25. Brezhnev's gambit closely parallels Khrushchev's similar display of power, at an equivalent stage in his own rise, when in November 1953 he went personally to Leningrad to preside over the removal of Malenkov's protégé Andrianov and to install F. R. Kozlov as obkom first secretary.

26. Four years earlier, when he was merely party secretary in the Gorki Automobile Works, Katushev had attended the Twenty-second Party Congress in Moscow: perhaps he caught someone's (Brezhnev's?) eye there. Since 1963 he had been first secretary of the Gorki City Party Committee. He was only 38 years old in 1965.

27. See Tatu, *Power in the Kremlin*, p. 35.

28. See Cleary, "Politics and Administration in Soviet Kazakhstan." Ignatov received the relatively minor appointment of deputy minister in one of the less important machine building ministries.

29. Marchenko, like Ignatov, had served under Kapitonov when he was first secretary of the Moscow City Committee from 1954 to 1959. He was appointed a minister in the RSFSR government, which was a demotion, though not as drastic a one as Ignatov's.

This paper does not attempt to explore the patronage and power aspects of all the changes of obkom first secretaries in the years since 1965. It does, however, give some attention to these aspects in the account of the early post-Khrushchev period in order better to appreciate the implications of later changes generally. What emerges is that the period in which Brezhnev's influence over the composition of the obkom leadership has been dominant should be dated from the latter part of 1965 rather than from 1964. Moreover, to speak of Brezhnev exercising a "dominant influence" in this matter is not to say that he had a free hand. Changes of obkom first secretaries certainly would be discussed by the Secretariat of the Central Committee and would require the endorsement of the Politburo, and despite Brezhnev's increasing preeminence within these bodies, there are no grounds for assuming that he has reduced either of them to a mere rubber stamp for his personal decisions. The election in April 1966 of Kapitonov, whom we have characterized as a compromise choice for head of the Central Committee Party Organs Department, as a secretary of the Central Committee probably reflects the concern of Brezhnev's colleagues to hinder the general secretary from too freely disposing over obkom appointments. Of course, Kapitonov's promotion was more than offset by the simultaneous elevation to the Politburo of Brezhnev's protégé Kirilenko, thus establishing the latter's clear precedence over Kapitonov in intraparty affairs.

At the Twenty-third Party Congress in March–April 1966 Brezhnev gave fair warning that further changes of leading party officials could be expected. Although he reaffirmed the assurances contained in the early party statements about the pernicious effects of constant reorganizations and personnel changes, he balanced this by speaking of the need, as he put it, "to promote young and energetic officials more boldly," and of combining old and new cadres.³⁰ By the time of the next party congress in 1971 a further thirty-two regional first secretaries were changed. After that, changes became less frequent and there were only nineteen from 1971 to October 1976.

In comparison with the Khrushchev period, the rate of turnover of obkom first secretaries has been relatively modest since 1965. Moreover, Brezhnev has by and large avoided Khrushchev's performance of sacking in the second half of his incumbency most of the regional leaders he had installed in the first half. Under Brezhnev, only nine regions have seen their first secretary changed twice, and two of them three times—and several of these were cases where the original first secretary installed under Brezhnev was later moved up to a leading position in Moscow (for example, Katushev, Dolgikh, and Riabov, who were all made secretaries of the Central Committee). The majority of the new first secretaries appointed under Brezhnev are still in office, and twenty-six of the first secretaries inherited by Brezhnev have not been changed. Brezhnev could fairly claim, therefore, that he has kept both his promise of providing stability of tenure and his promise of combining old and new cadres. All the same, two-thirds of the first secretaries now in office were installed under Brezhnev. Thus it seems reasonable to assume that he has succeeded in building up what any leader aspiring to be top man in the USSR must seek, namely, a solid base of support among this crucial body of officials, a point to which we shall return at the end of this paper.

30. *XXIII s'ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza: 29 marta–8 aprēlia 1966 goda: Stenograficheskiĭ otchet*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1966), p. 90.

Table 1. Last Position Before Appointment as RSFSR Regional First Secretary

	September 1965	September 1976
Second secretary, same obkom (including Moscow city)	15	17
Other secretary, same obkom	5	7
First secretary, gorkom of oblast center	1	4
Chairman, Soviet Executive Committee (government), same oblast (ASSR)	16	21
Chairman, Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, same ASSR	1	1
Total in same oblast	38 (53%)	50 (69%)
Second secretary, republic party Central Committee	2	1
First secretary, other obkom	10	5
Second secretary, other obkom	7	7
Other secretary, other obkom	1	1
First/Second secretary, city party committee, other oblast	2	
Chairman, Soviet Executive Committee (government), other oblast	4	2
First deputy chairman, Executive Committee (government), other oblast	1	
Deputy chairman, Economic Council, other oblast	1	
Total from other region	28 (39%)	16 (23%)
Central Committee apparatus: Head of department	1	1
Deputy head of department	1	
Head of sector	1	2
Inspector/instructor	1	2
unknown post	2	
Chairman, Central Trade Union Council		1
Total sent from Center	6 (8%)	6 (8%)
Total	72 (100%)	72 (100%)

Sources: The information on the backgrounds and careers of officials analyzed in this paper is assembled from the Soviet press and official biographical compilations, particularly the series *Deputaty Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR* (Moscow, 1962, 1966, 1970, and 1974), and the yearbooks (*ezhegodniki*) of the *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*. It would be unwieldy to give specific references in the tables, but these can be supplied on request. See footnote 6 for similar studies by Western scholars.

Another policy pursued by the general secretary which is clearly designed to foster support at the regional level is to recruit a higher proportion of his new first secretaries locally. Under Khrushchev many first secretary appointments were made from outside the region, mainly from those serving as party secretaries or Soviet Executive Committee chairmen in other oblasts. It must have been extremely frustrating for someone to work his way up the party hierarchy to one of the leading positions in his region only to find the top job given to someone from the outside. As table 1 shows, 69 percent of the present obkom first secretaries were locally recruited as compared with 53 percent at the outset of the Brezhnev period.³¹

Brezhnev referred specifically to this policy in his report to the Twenty-fourth Party Congress in 1971 and earned the applause of the assembled dele-

31. Moses, *Regional Party Leadership*, pp. 230-34, also notes the increasing appointment of "insiders" to obkom first secretaryships, and offers some valuable discussion of the motivation behind it and its effects.

gates for doing so.³² The dynamics of this policy can be seen more clearly if actual appointments made within the Brezhnev period are examined. Two-thirds of the first secretaries appointed between October 1965 and March 1971 were selected from within the region, but five-sixths of those appointed between April 1971 and April 1976 were selected locally.

Table 1 also indicates that there is something less than a rigid *cursus honorum* for the aspiring CPSU functionary: altogether there are at least eighteen different positions from which first secretaries have been selected in the Brezhnev period. Nevertheless, certain lines of transfer or promotion are far more probable than others, and the table shows that there are some half dozen positions from which the great bulk of first secretary appointments are made. Furthermore, there are two jobs—second secretary of the obkom and chairman of the Executive Committee of the Regional Soviet—that are by far the best jumping-off points for the first secretaryship. These jobs are in fact next in importance to the first secretaryship within the regional party bureau and, the two are roughly equal in seniority. If the 1976 figures are compared with the 1965 figures we can also see a tendency to narrow the sources of recruitment to the advantage mainly of men at the second echelon of local officialdom.

Another point worth noting is the small number of people sent out from Moscow to be obkom first secretaries, and the fact that these central officials were nearly all transferred from apparatus jobs within the party Central Committee. The one exception—the Trade Union Council chairman—is rather misleading: it was Politburo member Grishin, who stayed in Moscow as first secretary of the City Committee, which has obkom status. Contrary to what might be expected, a back-room job in the Central Committee apparatus is *not* a good jumping-off point for top office in the Soviet system (Georgii Malenkov is the outstanding exception to this). Because regional experience is generally necessary for party advancement, the transfers from the center shown in our table probably should not be seen as rustications but rather as cases of *reculer pour mieux sauter*. At the same time such cases are becoming rarer. Between October 1965 and March 1971 only three Central Committee *apparatchiki* got obkom first secretaryships, and from April 1971 to 1976 only one.

Table 2 shows what happened to the sixty-two obkom first secretaries replaced under Brezhnev from 1971 to 1976. Nine of the first secretaries died in office and four reached retirement age and went on to a pension—an indication in itself of the trend to normalization of Soviet career patterns. As was mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the obkom first secretaries have been, ever since the 1920s, the most important source of high-level appointments at the center. But for every one who has been promoted there have been several who have fallen by the wayside and disappeared into obscurity. Under Khrushchev this usually meant demotion to some minor post, under Stalin it often betokened something worse. What is most remarkable about the first secretaries replaced under Brezhnev is that only three of them have been so reduced in status that they have disappeared from public view. Most of them have received other honorable positions, usually in Moscow.

32. XXIV *s'ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza: 30 marta–9 aprilia 1971 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow, 1971), p. 124.

Table 2. *New Appointments of RSFSR Regional First Secretaries Who Were Relieved October 1965–October 1976*

Secretary, Central Committee, CPSU	4
Vice Head of Department, Central Committee, CPSU	1
Official Party Control Committee	5
Chairman, Central Revision Commission	1
Total central party jobs	11
Chairman, Soviet of Union (of Supreme Soviet, USSR)	1
Deputy Chairman, Council of Ministers, USSR	1
Other positions, Council of Ministers, USSR	6
Junior positions in USSR government	9
First Deputy Chairman or Deputy Chairman, Council of Ministers, RSFSR	4
Other positions, Council of Ministers, RSFSR	3
Junior positions in RSFSR government	2
Total USSR or RSFSR governments	25
Total positions in Moscow	37
Ambassadors	6
Chairman, Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, same ASSR	2
First secretary of different obkom	1
Retired on pension	4
Died in office	9
No further information (probably demoted)	3
Total	62

Moscow, of course, does not necessarily mean promotion. If an obkom first secretary becomes a Central Committee secretary or a deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers that is clearly a move up; if he becomes a deputy minister it is a move down; and if he becomes a minister it is probably a move sideways. However, for any Soviet official a job in Moscow is in itself immensely desirable, not only because there lies the fountainhead of power, but because of the vastly superior conditions of life as compared with Russian provincial cities other than Leningrad. For an obkom first secretary whose prospects of further promotion seem poor, a transfer to Moscow, even with somewhat reduced status and responsibilities, can be a most attractive proposition, especially for his wife and children. (In some measure this also applies to ambassadorial appointments, but these are more ambiguous; appointments to minor nonsocialist countries amount to expulsion from the corridors of power; appointment to a Soviet bloc state, however, is more likely to be a lateral movement than a demotion and is not always a dead end—for Iurii Andropov, for example, it led to a Central Committee secretaryship and ultimately to chairmanship of the KGB and membership in the Politburo). The Moscow appointments also have the great advantage of affording a dual opportunity for the exercise of patronage: comfortable if not always glittering appointments are provided for one set of officials while obkom first secretaryships are opened up for another. In the process functionaries responsive to the general secretary's views can be placed in key central organizations—for example, in the Council of Ministers—and at the same time his support at the regional level can be further reinforced.

Table 3. *RSFSR Regional First Secretaries: Age*

	Number		Percent	
	September 1965	September 1976	September 1965	September 1976
Up to 45	6	6	8.3	8.3
46-50	20	13	27.8	18.1
51-55	33	14	45.8	19.4
56 +	13	37	18.1	51.4
Unknown		2		2.8
Total	72	72	100.0	100.0
Average age 1965: 52				
Average age 1976: 56 (2 unknown)				

Table 4. *RSFSR Regional First Secretaries: Date of Joining Party*

	Number		Percent	
	September 1965	September 1976	September 1965	September 1976
1925-1928	6	1	8.3	1.4
1929-1932	15	3	20.8	4.1
1937-1941	32	20	44.5	27.8
1942-1945	16	20	22.2	27.8
1946-1953	3	16	4.2	22.2
1954-1959		10		13.9
Unknown		2		2.8
Total	72	72	100.0	100.0

Table 5. *RSFSR Regional First Secretaries, September 1965: Education*

Field	LEVEL OF EDUCATION			TOTAL	
	Complete Higher	Incomplete Higher	Secondary	Number	Percent
Industry	20	2	1	23	31.9
Agriculture	21			21	29.2
Education	4			4	5.6
Law	1			1	1.4
Military	1			1	1.4
Other/Unspecified	4	2	2	8	11.1
Higher Party School	22: of whom H.P.S. only			14	19.4
Total				72	100.0
Possess higher degree (candidate's)				4	5.6

Table 6. *RSFSR Regional First Secretaries, September 1976: Education*

Field	LEVEL OF EDUCATION				TOTAL	
	Complete Higher	Incomplete Higher	Secondary	Unknown	Number	Percent
Industry	23				23	31.9
Agriculture	23				23	31.9
Education	6				6	8.4
Military	1				1	1.4
Other/Unspecified	6	2	2	2	12	16.7
Higher Party School	20: of whom H.P.S. only				7	9.7
Total					72	100.0
Possess higher degree (candidate's)					7	9.7

Tables 3–10 contain data about characteristics of the obkom first secretaries today as compared with the outset of the Brezhnev period. There are two respects in which no change has occurred. First, there were no women among the first secretaries in 1965 and there are none today. Second, the ethnic composition remains identical: fifty-two Russians, eight Ukrainians, and twelve representatives of the minority nationalities of the RSFSR. In all other major respects, however, interesting changes may be discerned. Tables 3 and 4 show that although the first secretaries have aged significantly they also contain substantially larger numbers of officials whose initiation to political life dates from as recently as the wartime or postwar periods. In 1965 less than one-fifth of the first secretaries were over 55, by 1976 more than half of them were. Yet, as Jerry Hough has recently argued, the age pattern of this group of officials is not very persuasive evidence of the onset of gerontocracy in the Soviet Union. In 1971 the average age of the first secretaries was only one year greater than that of the nearest equivalent group in the United States—the state governors.³³ It is also useful to compare the age patterns of obkom first secretaries with those of members of the Council of Ministers, the next largest group in representation in the Central Committee. In 1965 the latter group's average age was 56—what the obkom first secretaries average is now—but this had risen by 1976 to 64, and gerontocratic tendencies were unmistakable. Two-thirds of the Council of Ministers in 1965 are still in office today, compared with only one-third of the obkom first secretaries. There is some evidence that Brezhnev has long been seeking to introduce large doses of new blood into the Council of Ministers, as he has done in the regional party leadership, but that he has encountered stubborn opposition to this, and has only recently made much headway.³⁴ Moreover, because of the changes since 1965, men who joined the party during the 1930s no longer dominate the ranks of obkom secretaries, although the overwhelming majority are still men who began their political life under Stalin, even if in a quarter of the cases this was during the Second World War, when political orthodoxy was relatively relaxed.

For many years now an official could not hope to gain appointment as an obkom first secretary unless he had higher educational qualifications. Most per-

33. Hough, "The Soviet System: Petrification or Pluralism," p. 40. See also Blackwell, "Career Development in the Soviet Obkom Elite."

34. See T. H. Rigby, "The Soviet Government since Khrushchev," *Politics* (Adelaide), 12 (1977): 5–22.

Table 7. *Main Areas of RSFSR Regional First Secretaries' Career Experience Outside Party Apparatus*

	Number		Percent	
	September 1965	September 1976	September 1965	September 1976
Industry (management or technical)	23	30	31.9	41.7
Agriculture (management or technical)	33	20	45.8	27.8
Education (teaching or administration)	17	17	23.6	23.6
Komsomol apparatus	19	18	26.4	25.0
Soviet (government) apparatus	41	36	57.0	50.0
Armed Forces during War	23	24	32.0	33.3

sons aspiring to these positions had professional training—especially as engineers or agriculture specialists—and if they lacked educational background it was necessary to take a full-time or correspondence course with the Higher Party School. The main conclusions that emerge from comparison of tables 5 and 6 are the sharp decline in the number of first secretaries lacking professional qualifications and having only party training, the continued predominance and rough equality in numbers of the industrial and agricultural specialists, and the fact that men trained as school teachers remain the only other significant group of professionals.³⁵

When we examine tables 7 and 8, however, we get a different picture of the balance between industrial and agricultural specialists. Table 7 shows the number of obkom first secretaries whose careers include experience in certain major fields of activity. The most commonly encountered areas of experience are the Soviet or governmental apparatus and industrial and/or agricultural production. The only other major areas of experience represented were in Komsomol jobs or in teaching or school administration, both of which are found in about a quarter of the cases in 1965 and in 1976.³⁶

The main change over this period is the shift away from agriculture in favor of industry as the best-represented career component.³⁷ This shift could not

35. See Blackwell, "Elite Recruitment and Functional Change," especially p. 136. Blackwell's data show a marked shift from agricultural to industrial training in appointments of obkom first secretaries in the early post-Khrushchev years. Some caution is needed in interpreting the patterns of educational qualifications found among obkom first secretaries, for, as Hodnett points out, "many received their higher education while holding full-time jobs, and many were preoccupied with Komsomol and other extracurricular activities. The circumstances in which a number of diplomas were granted lead one to surmise that not much education, if any, occurred" (Hodnett, "The *Obkom* First Secretaries," p. 644).

36. Most government positions held were as chairman of the executive committee of a local or regional soviet, or in some cases as head of its agriculture department. Hodnett ("The *Obkom* First Secretaries," p. 650) is correct in labeling these as essentially "party" functions, characteristically performed by officials already well set on a party career. Occupancy of a paid Komsomol office is a common initiation to a subsequent career in the party apparatus.

37. See Blackwell, "Elite Recruitment and Functional Change," p. 141.

Table 8. *Primary Occupation of RSFSR Regional First Secretaries*

	Number	
	September 1965	September 1976
Industrial specialist	22	28
Agricultural specialist	24	20
Teacher	10	10
Party/Komsomol/local soviet official	8	5
Military/Airforce officer	2	1
Railway official		1
Journalist		1
Economist		1
Manual worker	6	3
Unknown		2
Total	72	72

have been predicted from the data on educational patterns but it reflects long-term trends in the preoccupations of the regional party apparatus. The logic of the politicoadministrative system as it evolved under Stalin was to orient local party officials more to the problems of agriculture than of industry, most of which was directly administered by the centralized ministries. This tendency was intensified by Khrushchev in his drive to build up agricultural output in the 1950s. The situation is somewhat paradoxical when one considers the urban origins of the party and its role as the spearhead of industrialization.³⁸ Khrushchev himself seems to have perceived the paradox. His desire to win for the party as effective a role in the running of industry as it enjoyed in agriculture was undoubtedly a major motive in the establishment of the regional economic councils in 1957 and especially in the splitting of the regional apparatus into industrial and agricultural wings in 1962. These measures were later scrapped, but the problem remained, and one of the ways Brezhnev has sought to tackle it is by staffing the party apparatus with men better equipped to handle industrial problems.

The same shift of emphasis is apparent in table 8, which seeks to establish the primary occupational identification of the obkom first secretaries, but the relevant information here is incomplete and often difficult to interpret, and of course the subjective correlates of these career data are not available. Thus, it would be risky to generalize too confidently from the figures shown in this table. For what they are worth, however, the figures do indicate a trend from the primacy of officials best prepared to deal with problems of agriculture to officials best prepared to deal with problems of industry.

This trend raises important questions about the relationship between party officialdom and the "specialized elites," which have been the subject of considerable speculation and research in recent years. The central issue is to what extent party officials tend to be men formed by their training and experience in a different mold from managerial, administrative, and other groups, and conversely to what extent people who have been closely associated with these specialized

38. One curious aspect here was that in the early 1960s two-thirds of obkom first secretaries were of peasant origin, compared with only one-sixth of the party membership at large (see Hodnett, "The *Obkom* First Secretaries," p. 643).

Table 9. RSFSR Regional First Secretaries: Date of First Party Appointment

	September 1965	September 1976
Up to 10 years previously	6	3
11–20 years previously	24	19
21–30 years previously	31	26
Over 30 years previously	3	16
Data unknown or unclear	8	8
Total	72	72

fields gain access to the party elite. It has been suggested that this could have a vital bearing not only on the responsiveness of the regime to special interests, but also on the attitudes and values of this crucial body of officials, from whose number the next generation of national leaders will come, and thus have major implications for the pace and direction of sociopolitical change in the USSR.

The problem, which is many-faceted, cannot be discussed adequately in this context, but some light may be thrown on the central issue of fact. As Grey Hodnett remarked in 1965, “perhaps a qualitative change in the character of the *obkom* leadership depends not so much on how many young men with fresh technical diplomas are drawn into lower Party work as on how many older, experienced non-*apparatchiki* transfer to the Party apparatus well along in their careers, affecting its character rather than vice versa.”³⁹ Precisely this question was explored by Frederic Fleron, who established a marked trend between 1952 and 1961 for senior party officials (of whom *obkom* first secretaries formed the majority) to be “co-opted,” as he put it, at a relatively late stage in their careers after working for many years in one of the specialized bureaucracies, rather than being “recruited” as professional party officials early in their working lives.⁴⁰ This trend, despite some contradictory evidence,⁴¹ apparently has been modified in the Brezhnev period, and the importance of specifically *party* experience has been upgraded. Blackwell has noted that 44.1 percent of the *obkom* first secretaries appointed between November 1964 and 1968 possessed *both* specialized professional training *and* nonparty professional experience, compared with 55.5 percent of those appointed in 1958–64.⁴² This trend has con-

39. *Ibid.*, p. 652.

40. See Frederic J. Fleron, Jr., “Representation of Career Types”; and also Frederic J. Fleron, Jr., “Toward a Reconceptualisation of Political Change in the Soviet Union: The Political Leadership System,” *Comparative Politics*, 1 (1969): 228–44.

41. Moses, *Regional Party Leadership*, p. 236, found an increase in the proportion of “co-opted” first secretaries in 1965–73 as compared with 1955–64, which is contrary to the evidence adduced by Blackwell and the present article. This contradiction does not seem to be more than partially explicable in terms of definitional differences. An important factor may be the different periods of comparison. As Blackwell’s evidence shows, there was a marked increase in the proportion of “co-opted” officials appointed as first secretaries in the period 1958–64 as compared with 1953–57. It is possible, however, that the contradictory findings may be partly due to differences in the groups studied. As mentioned earlier, the present article is based on appointments in all RSFSR *kraikoms* and *obkoms* and the Moscow *gorkom*, and Blackwell’s analysis relates to all *obkoms* in all republics, while that of Moses is based on a sample of twenty-five *obkoms* in the RSFSR and the Ukraine: perhaps the sample was not entirely representative with respect to the variable under consideration.

42. Blackwell, “Elite Recruitment and Functional Change,” p. 144.

Table 10. RSFSR Regional First Secretaries: Level of First Party Appointment

	September 1965	September 1976
Regional level*	26	17
City level	9	8
District level	23	28
Workplace level	9	13
Other or unknown	5	6
Total	72	72
* Including: as first secretary	1	
as second secretary	3	1
other secretary	8	2
Total	12	3

tinued. Between 1965 and 1976 the proportion of obkom first secretaries whose career experience had included managerial or technical work in industry or agriculture declined from 77.7 percent to 69.5 percent (see table 7). The percentage change is not great, but takes on significance when one considers changing age patterns (cf. table 3). Obkom secretaries appointed in the intervening years have tended to be older than their predecessors, and thus have had greater opportunity to include nonparty experience in their careers. Blackwell has shown that for the earlier part of our period the longer "apprenticeship" of post-Khrushchev obkom first secretaries was spent in the party apparatus or jobs closely related to it, rather than in gaining longer or more diverse nonparty experience.⁴³

The obkom first secretaries appointed under Brezhnev include some conspicuous examples of "co-opted" officials—among them the present Central Committee secretaries Katushev and Dolgikh, whose cases have been noted. But the main trend revealed by tables 9 and 10 is clearly in the opposite direction. As we see from table 9, the obkom first secretaries now in office have had, on the whole, a substantially longer period behind them since their first experience of party work than was the case with their predecessors in 1965. This is not simply a consequence of higher age levels. Table 10 shows a clear tendency for obkom first secretaries to be chosen from among those officials who have worked their way up from the lower echelons of the party hierarchy. The number whose initiation to party work occurred at the place of work or the district (*raion*) level has increased from thirty-two to forty-one. At the other extreme, the number who were appointed to the obkom secretariat without any prior experience in the party apparatus has decreased from twelve to three. What

43. Blackwell, "Career Development in the Soviet Obkom Elite." Blackwell further demonstrates that greater party or party-related experience is the main factor in the longer careers of those first secretaries he designates as "specialists" (having both specialist training and career experience) and "semi-specialists" (having one of these), as well as those designated as "professional politicians" (having party and party-related experience only) (*ibid.*, pp. 36–38).

this means is that the obkom first secretaries of the Brezhnev generation have had, on the whole, less opportunity than their predecessors of the early 1960s to develop a close association with one of the "specialized elites," and are likely to identify themselves less ambiguously as career party officials. At the same time, the proportion of these officials with some form of professional training has risen from 80 to 90 percent, and the great majority have had some experience working in a specialized field. Consequently, their capacity to intervene in the name of the party in these fields probably has not been impaired.

Despite the policy of "stability of cadres," the majority of regional party leaders in the RSFSR have been changed under the Brezhnev regime, and the newcomers tend to differ from their predecessors in important respects. Typically they are some years older. They are more likely to have been locally recruited, and have spent considerably longer working their way up the party hierarchy, taking their first party job at a lower echelon. They are even more likely to possess higher specialized education but have spent a smaller proportion of their careers working in specialized nonparty organizations, and the most common field of nonparty experience is now industry rather than agriculture.

On the face of it the present generation of obkom first secretaries has every reason to be grateful to Brezhnev. He has restored their traditional role and status.⁴⁴ Unlike Khrushchev, he has not abused his powers over appointments to name constant replacements, nor does he publicly badger and humiliate them. Their sense of security must therefore be much enhanced. Observing the treatment accorded to themselves and their peers over the last decade, they may reasonably count on either retaining their present office or obtaining a transfer to the center—which, even if not a promotion, will mean a senior position in the privileged circles of Moscow officialdom. Thus the obkom first secretaries should be a satisfied and confident group who can be relied upon to back up the general secretary, in contrast to Khrushchev's obkom secretaries on the eve of his removal.

44. In this connection it is worth considering the representation of first secretaries of RSFSR obkoms (including the six kraikoms and the Moscow gorkom) in the Central Committee and the Central Revision Commission (membership of which mostly goes to officials next in standing to those elected to the Central Committee). In the Central Committee formed in 1966 there were thirty-six RSFSR obkom first secretaries among the full members, thirty-one among the candidate members, and five among the members of the Central Revision Commission. In the Central Committee formed in 1971 these numbers were respectively forty-one, twenty-nine, and two, and in that formed in 1976 there were sixty among the full members and the remaining twelve were candidate members of the Central Committee. To put the figures in perspective, however, it must be noted that there was a considerable expansion in these bodies over this period—the full members of the Central Committee, for example, increasing from 195 in 1966 to 287 in 1976. Thus the obkom first secretaries grew from 18 to 21 percent of the full members of the Central Committee over the decade. The other major group of officials who improved their Central Committee representation over the same period were the members of the Council of Ministers who increased from 22 to 24 percent of the full members. Of course, the RSFSR obkom first secretaries are not the only category of party officials in the Central Committee, although they are the largest of them. Altogether 42 percent of the full members in 1976 were party officials. The proportion of RSFSR obkom first secretaries among them increased from 43 percent in 1966 to 50 percent in 1976.

This supposition, however, deserves closer scrutiny. In what sense can these officials be classed as "Brezhnev's men"? There are four factors commonly found underlying patronage relationships in political or bureaucratic systems: (1) shared loyalties and attitudes arising from common ethnic, local, religious, organizational, or professional backgrounds; (2) bonds formed through former work together; (3) shared policies or ideas; (4) the act of appointment itself, in the absence of any previous bonds. Whatever the underlying factor—and in any particular case there may be more than one factor operating—what is involved is a *personal* relationship of reciprocal protection and support. All four factors are encountered in the Soviet system, although number two seems to be particularly salient.⁴⁵ Many cases have been noted where men who had previously served under Brezhnev, especially in the party organizations of the Dnepropetrovsk or Zaporozhe oblasts of the Ukraine or of Moldavia, have risen to prominence in recent years evidently because of his patronage. It is striking, however, that there seem to be no such cases among the RSFSR obkom first secretaries appointed under Brezhnev since 1965. His record in this respect contrasts sharply with that of Khrushchev, whose rise in 1953–55 was accompanied by the appointment of many former subordinates from the Ukraine and Moscow region to obkom first secretaryships. In fact, it is difficult to detect evidence of any of the first three factors listed above operating in the "Brezhnev generation" of obkom first secretaries. Thus, the one basis of a putative patronage link is number 4—the fact that Brezhnev was in charge at the time of the appointment and therefore presumably approved it even if he did not initiate it. This is in general the *weakest* basis of a patronage relationship, unless the appointment depends in some peculiar way on the "patron's" good will—for example, the "client" has suffered at the hands of the "patron's" predecessors or rivals,⁴⁶ or his rise is unusually rapid and involves the by-passing of more obvious candidates. Brezhnev's appointment of K. F. Katshev as first secretary of the Gorki obkom in December 1965 and of V. I. Dolgikh as first secretary of the Krasnoyarsk kraikom in 1969 are examples of unusually rapid promotion, and both of these men soon moved on to more senior positions in the Central Committee Secretariat. This type of appointment, however, is not typical. As was noted in the discussion of table 1, the selection of obkom first secretaries under Brezhnev has been increasingly focused on the most obvious candidates from among the oblast leadership, that is, the seniority principle has been emphasized. Thus, it is difficult to detect in most of these appointments the presence of personal factors making for a strong patronage relationship.

On the other hand, such a relationship may develop over time. The mere fact that Brezhnev has kept an obkom first secretary in office for many years should contribute to a sense of personal loyalty. At the same time, the official's working style and commitments undoubtedly become progressively adapted to

45. See T. H. Rigby, "Politics in the Mono-organizational Society," in *Authoritarian Politics in Communist Europe: Uniformity and Diversity in One-Party States*, ed. Andrew C. Janos (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1976), pp. 55–60. Under Soviet conditions cases of patronage based on shared policies or ideas are difficult to identify, but this factor may be present more often than is supposed.

46. This was a factor in Khrushchev's early patronage of Brezhnev himself, and in Brezhnev's patronage of the Kazakh first secretary Kunaev, whose previous demotion had involved Brezhnev's rival F. R. Kozlov.

working for Brezhnev, even to a point where adjusting to a new general secretary would perhaps be difficult to contemplate. Strongly reinforcing this loyalty is the expectation that a new general secretary would be likely to replace many of the first secretaries to make way for his own men, and this probability increases as an obkom secretary grows older. Another aspect of the situation is the position of the first secretary's colleagues and subordinates in the oblast leadership. Although they may have taken encouragement from the policy of recruiting more first secretaries locally, it is reasonable to assume that their personal hopes have been increasingly soured by the slowdown in replacements of first secretaries, especially since 1971, and that frustrated ambition must be building up at these levels.⁴⁷ Thus, because a potential successor might find ready support in these circles, the dependence of the incumbent first secretaries on Brezhnev is heightened.

There is, however, another aspect to this stability of leadership: frustrated ambition may well exist among the obkom first secretaries themselves. Despite the advantages they have enjoyed in being left in office (or when they have been transferred to Moscow) many of them have been marking time in their oblasts for a long time and the prospects of achieving major office at the center—a natural aspiration of any obkom first secretary—must seem to be receding as they move into their sixties. Moreover, they may see that those of their number who have been transferred to Moscow have by and large remained on the fringes of power. In fact, only one of the Brezhnev generation of obkom first secretaries has achieved full membership in the Politburo, namely, the Leningrad leader G. V. Romanov—and he has so far *remained* in Leningrad. There are likely to be some obkom first secretaries, therefore, who would not be averse to a “new broom” taking over from Brezhnev and effecting changes in the Politburo which might give them their chance.

In summary, the RSFSR obkom first secretaries, the most important group of officials in the Central Committee excepting the top leadership, would appear on the whole to be a “satisfied” group who would be likely to view with apprehension any move to replace Brezhnev as general secretary. On the other hand, the strength of their commitment to him lacks the reinforcement of antecedent personal bonds and the commitment is not without its ambiguities. There may be some potential “defectors” among their number. How the obkom first secretaries would react to a challenge to Brezhnev's leadership is likely to be affected by their varying personal situations, and the balance of relevant factors will change over time.

47. See Moses, *Regional Party Leadership*, pp. 229–40.