then this reminds us that the early years were not regressive in every respect. The involvement of large numbers of semi-educated activists in the Proletkult movement seems instructive and a reminder that Soviet society was created in a series of partnerships and collaborations that involved people at different levels in society.

The author's identification with the idea of a working class art seems problematic in this regard. Statements such as, "The Russian proletariat was too small, too overburdened, and too inexperienced to take power on its own" (p. 92) suggest the author shares this dream to a degree—but why? The whole Proletkult project floundered on a mistaken understanding of class and, in a sense, the revolution too. The idea of an art and literature based exclusively on factory workers seems implausible in general, and particularly so for a society with so few factory workers, so many mobile peasants and former peasants, and such a small educated minority.

The book is also fascinating in terms of the conflict between the Bolshevik Party and a revolutionary institution. In this sense, the story of Proletkult fits a scenario not only of the radical restructuring of civil society, but also its early suppression. Yet even at the outset the Proletkultists lacked autonomy as indicated by their reliance on state patronage rather than members and participants. The question of where the activists came from is also important because it raises the further issue of whether the Bolsheviks immediately brought new people into active political and social life or simply cannibalized the civil society they were in the process of destroying. The author stresses the "expansive nature of the movement," which at its peak claimed four hundred thousand members in three hundred branches. (p. xix) Yet in view of the preexisting workers' clubs, self-education societies, and the cooperative movement these numbers may be small rather than large.

Mally tells us that "Proletkult was a remarkably vital cultural institution" (p. 152), but what were its cultural achievements? Which artists, writers, or composers did it nurture? The ephemeral quality of the movement is perhaps explained by an emphasis on theater, which was characteristic of the early 1920s, but this is only a partial explanation. Proletkult was also bound up with the dream of a new Soviet culture, which in malevolently distorted form, became the rationale for the creation of yet another instrument by which new Soviet elites attempted to manipulate the population. The author concentrates on the period up to 1923, but provides a postscript on the subsequent decade.

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At last we have a sophisticated examination of a single industry in a discrete period of Soviet history. No other study enables us to see this deeply into the extraordinary complexity facing workers, managers, and the country's leadership in trying to work out industrial policy. Writers like Hiroaki Kuromiya and Lewis Siegelbaum have begun to restore some humanity to Soviet workers by discussing them as actors as well as recipients of actions, but in several key respects Chris Ward has gone beyond other Western contributions—while Soviet interest in the subject flags—to add to our understanding of the USSR's industrial life.
Cotton Workers focuses on events on the shop floor in textile mills as the new regime strained to boost output in the area most critical to maintenance of the link with the peasants. An array of contending forces met at the point of production: the leadership's desire to have more textiles at virtually any cost, while simultaneously molding a working class to fit Bolshevik mythology; workers' desire to maintain traditional, and effective in their own way, patterns of subordination, gender, and training; and management's efforts to placate both sides.

None of these had the odds stacked particularly in its favor. The ruling elite quickly found that its dreams of "rationalization," by which it meant control of the workers almost in the way the old capitalists had, foundered on the facts of making cloth. For one thing, Soviet Russia had inherited a dizzying range of textile machinery produced in different countries, though largely in Britain, over a long span of time. The machines, rather idiosyncratic even at first, grew more so as they aged. Thus it was impossible to set standard norms throughout the industry. The regime's attempts to break through the situation evoked sharp resistance from workers and led to declines in production, as well as intolerable wear on the machines. During 1925 the Party retreated and again allowed local setting of standards, while simultaneously granting large pay increases to workers.

All this occurred in a highly developed context, a specific mode of work adopted almost wholesale from Britain. The machinery was not neutral or value-free: it implied, perhaps demanded, a certain set of production relations which were cultural and ultimately political. Spinners "grew and aged with their own machines" (p. 76), for example. Such workers had important maintenance and managerial tasks, since they supervised a team of less experienced hands. In trying to achieve "scientific management" in this setting, the problem for the regime was "one of fracturing an entire culture." (p. 171) This was not possible during NEP for several reasons: workers were the only ones who really knew the secrets and habits of their machines, experienced operatives were in short supply, and cotton textile production was vital to the smychka. Only at the end of the decade, with the new rapid industrialization, did the balance tip somewhat against the old culture. However, there is nothing in the book to imply that a new set of relations would not have arisen on the shop floor, one perhaps only somewhat less resistant to control from above than the old patterns.

In the course of his study, Ward provides a wealth of insights and challenges to established notions of workers and what they did. The very idea of "skill" as a useful concept comes under effective fire, as does the argument that "hereditary" workers tended to sever their ties with the land as time went on. Indeed, the whole nexus of industrial-agricultural links receives a bracing treatment. Family relations and their impact on production, a subject hardly mentioned in discussions of Soviet industry, figure prominently in the work. The book greatly expands our understanding of the concept of the culture of production, and Ward provides some reasons why this culture evoked resentment among younger workers and thus played into the leadership's hands to some degree.

A few shortcomings must be mentioned. After a while one becomes a bit cheesed off at the extensive use of British slang. The many technical details are necessary, but additional brief summaries would have been helpful. More seriously, Ward is reluctant, unfortunately in my view, to venture beyond the milieu of cotton manufacture to muse about Soviet workers' impact on and resistance to policy initiatives in general. He lashes the new regime for not working through existing structures and traditions, for not "coming to terms with Russia." (p. 263) In his opinion, this was a question of choice and prejudice. This may be essentially correct, but clearly the Party leadership