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The Autonomous Industrial Colony “Kuzbas” and S. J. Rutgers (8･Supplement) : Contents, Summaries, and Selected Bibliography

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The Autonomous Industrial Colony “Kuzbas” and S. J. Rutgers

(8, Supplement) : Contents, Summaries, and Selected Bibliography

by

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Part 1 A New Interpretation on Its Foundation
（https://doi.org/10.15017/6781001）

Part 2 The Establishment and Operations of the American Organization Committee
（https://doi.org/10.15017/7151988）

Part 3 From Preparations for the Start of Operations to the Restart under the New Contract （https://doi.org/10.15017/7182144）

Part 4 From the Reorganization of the New York Bureau to Its Dissolution
（https://doi.org/10.15017/7236532）

Part 5 From Regular Operations to the Expansion of Enterprise Scale
（https://doi.org/10.15017/7331661）

Part 6 From Further Enterprise Development to Its Liquidation
（https://doi.org/10.15017/7361467）

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The Autonomous Industrial Colony "Kuzbas" and S. J. Rutgers (1): A New Interpretation of Its Foundation

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2 The First Draft of the Plan
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Following the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in March 1921, Soviet Russia accelerated its acceptance of foreign capital, foreign labor. It was in this context that S.J. Rutgers, a Dutch engineer, together with H.S. Calvert, an IWW activist, and others, sought to establish "the first industrial colony in the world, where engineers will find freedom to work out experiments they cannot attempt under the profit-system, and where workers will find that self-government, that sense of social creativeness, that solidarity and equality they have never found anywhere in the history of the world until the present hour." The term "autonomous" signaled their intension to create a distinctive experiment in international labor solidarity and worker-directed industrial organization.

Part I of this study aims to reconstruct in detail the process by which the Colony was founded and to offer a new interpretation of its origins. The analysis draws primarily on documents of the Soviet Russian Government and the Russian Communist Party, the researchers in the former Soviet Union and contemporary Russia have not fully exploited, as well as on the personal papers of its principal initiators, including Rutgers, Calvert, W.D. Haywood, and T. Barker. Above all, this section demonstrates the central importance of the question of "autonomy" within the Colony, a principle that Rutgers consistently and vigorously advocated throughout the founding process.

The principal reason why the deliberations concerning the foundation of the Colony extended over nearly six months was not, as previous researches have tended to emphasize, the question of whether the Soviet Government's substantial financial support was advantageous or disadvantageous. Rather, the decisive issue was the dispute over which governmental organ would

exercise jurisdiction over the Colony and, consequently, which institution could best guarantee the “autonomy” that Rutgers repeatedly insisted upon throughout the negotiations. The two competing organs were, on the one hand, the Council of Labor and Defense (STO) and, on the other, the Supreme Council of National Economy (VSNKh), which was actively promoting concessions to foreign capitalists and maintained that the Colony should likewise be operated on a commercial basis. In the end, it was decided that the Colony would be founded under the jurisdiction of the STO. Yet the STO had already delegated thepreliminary examination of the project to the VSNKh, which had been a specialized committee responsible for the Colony’s creation and management. Precisely for this reason, attempts by the VSNKh to “intervene” in the Colony’s affairs were effectively unavoidable even after its formal establishment. It was therefore foreseeable from the outset that the jurisdictional conflict between the two institutions would persist.

Key words: Autonomous Industrial Colony “Kuzbas”, S.J. Rutgers, V.I. Lenin, STO, VSNKh, Soviet Russia

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The Autonomous Industrial Colony “Kuzbas” and S. J. Rutgers (2):
The Establishment and Operations of the American Organization Committee

1 Toward the Start of Activities
2 Toward the Establishment
3 Issues of Management
4 A Survey of the Labor-Dispatch Program

Part 1 examined in detail the sequence of events that culminated in the agreement to establish the Autonomous Industrial Colony “Kuzbas” (AIC-K).[1] As indicated at the outset of that section, Part 2 likewise focuses on internal issues: specifically, what the initiatory group undertook as its first steps toward realizing the AIC-K and what kinds of problems subsequently emerged.

The initiatory group began its activities even before the final agreement had been concluded. Their plan was to divide the work among four locations (Kuzbas, Moscow, the Netherlands, and the United States) each responsible for a distinct set of tasks. Of particular significance was the organizational configuration: S.J. Rutgers, based in the Netherlands, served as the central coordinating figure, while H.S. Calvert and T. Barker in the United States and W.D. Haywood in Moscow functioned as the two operational “wings.” Rutgers assumed responsibility for issuing instructions and mediating between these two wings. The attempt to conduct long-distance operations within a compressed timeframe produced two major difficulties: (1) a shortage of qualified personnel, as the group embarked on its work with only a small cadre; and (2) several unavoidable misunderstandings among members, despite their efforts to maintain close correspondence.

The American Organization Committee (AOC) was established in New York by Calvert, Barker, and others to manage labor recruitment and dispatch. The AOC failed to secure organizational cooperation or sponsorship from either the local Communist Party (CP) or the IWW. Worse still, “factional strife” soon developed between the AOC and both the CP and the IWW. More concretely:

（1） My article, “The Foundation of the Autonomous Industrial Colony ‘Kuzbas’ and S.J. Rutgers” which was made open access in the Kyushu University Repository on 5 April 1923, has since been revised, expanded, and reissued on 17 October 1923 under the new title, “The Autonomous Industrial Colony ‘Kuzbas’ and S.J. Rutgers (1): A New Interpretation on Its Foundation” (hereafter cited as Part 1).

(1) The communist J. Heiman, “Rutgers’ personal representative in New York,” attempted to secure a factional majority within the AOC (an action that appeared to exceed his mandate). Furthermore, the repeated negotiations between the AOC and the communist-leaning Society for Technical Aid to Soviet Russia (STASR) broke down, leaving the two organizations competing separately in the labor-dispatch field. The dispute between Rutgers and L.K. Martens discussed in Part 1 resurfaced here: Martens effectively directed the Supreme Soviet of National Economy (VSNKh) on matters concerning immigrant industrial workers. A.A. Heller, who shared Martens’ views, was appointed VSNKh’s American representative and placed in charge of supervising the STASR. This reappeared, though not publicly, as the conflict between the AOC, including Calvert and Barker, and Heller’s STASR.

(2) The IWW Executive, already in confrontation with the Comintern Executive over the foundation of the Profintern, found it difficult to support the Kuzbas project, which was backed by the Soviet Government. Moreover, because Haywood and J.H. Beyer (both Wobblies and founding members of the AIC-K) had fled the United States while out on bail, the IWW Executive blamed the CP for organizing their escape. Some Wobblies, who had posted bail and suffered substantial financial losses, were furious not only with the CP but also with the two fugitives, leaving no room for negotiation.

In the end, the AOC resorted to directly inviting CP members, IWW members, and individual class-conscious engineers and workers to apply for dispatch. Rutgers had prescribed this policy in advance: the AOC, he argued, should have “the advantage [over the STASR] of combining different elements (IWW, CP, and others) and offer a good chance of avoiding domination by political influence of one kind or another,” that is, it should maintain “a non-partisan attitude.”

The AOC’s conflicts with the CP and the IWW also affected its internal operations, particularly the composition of the committee, which became divided into three broad groups: namely, Communists, Wobblies, and liberals. In addition, because the AOC depended on Soviet Government funding, it was essential for the committee to obtain approval from the Council of Labor and Defense (STO). Yet its members were divided over how to respond both to STO directives and to Rutgers’ instructions as intermediary. Partly as a result of these internal tensions, the AOC underwent a fundamental reorganization in early 1923.

What, then, became of the AOC’s core undertaking, the worker-dispatch program? Drawing on quantitative data, I provide here a preliminary overview of dispatch operations from spring 1922 through the end of 1926, when the decision was made to dissolve and reorganize the AIC-K itself. Despite the AOC’s initial disadvantages (its lack of organizational support from either the CP or the IWW and its need to build operations from the ground up), its performance in the first year of dispatch was not inferior to that of the STASR. In fact, the AOC contributed more than the STASR in one crucial respect: the dispatch of expert engineers.

Key words: Autonomous Industrial Colony “Kuzbas”, American Organization Committee, STASR, Communist Party, IWW, S.J. Rutgers

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The Autonomous Industrial Colony “Kuzbas” and S. J. Rutgers (3):
From Preparations for the Start of Operations to the Restart under the New Contract

1 Preparations and the Start of Operations
2 Negotiations for a New Contract
3 Provisions of the New Contract
4 Restarting Operations under the New Contract

The Autonomous Industrial Colony “Kuzbas” (AIC-K) encountered a series of difficulties at the outset of its operations. Initially, J.H. Beyer, W.D. Haywood, and S.J. Rutgers were each dispatched to Kemerovo in turn to serve as director. However, significant differences in managerial ideas and approaches soon emerged among them. Beyer nearly broke away (and then passed away unexpectedly), while Haywood left shortly after Rutgers’ arrival and ultimately aligned himself with the opposing side before the “New Contract” was signed. As a result, Rutgers was left to continue the undertaking as the sole director. Compounding these difficulties, Soviet governing bodies, particularly the Gosplan, quickly proposed downsizing the AIC-K project and revising the terms of the original contract. This forced Rutgers and other members of the Organization Committee (the provisional Managing Board) to devote their efforts to negotiating these issues. Three members of the American Organization Committee (AOC) also traveled from New York to Russia to assist in the negotiations. Yet at this critical juncture, the two Committees themselves were divided over how to respond to the Soviet proposals, and internal conflict erupted. The repercussions of this conflict spread further, ultimately leading to the liquidation of both the Organization Committee and the AOC.

The AIC-K signed the New Contract with the STO on 25 December 1922 and completed the transition from joint Russian-foreign management to sole management on 1 February 1923. Full-scale operations officially commenced on 1 March 1923.

What, then, changed under the New Contract, and in what ways? What new problems emerged? The following section examines these key issues and offers perspectives and interpretations that have been largely overlooked in the existing historiography.

1. On the Term “Autonomous”

The principle that the AIC-K sought to establish was that of social and individual efficiency. The first step toward achieving this goal was to adapt the Colony’s operations to the realities of the NEP system. To this end, the AIC-K established its headquarters in Moscow as the central hub for purchasing and distribution. It also became necessary to clarify the meaning of the term

“autonomous,” which had not been defined in the original contract. Many colonists had interpreted “autonomy” as individual license and freedom of action within the industry, rather than as organizational autonomy within the framework of Russian institutions. As a result, they attempted to resolve operational and technical issues through mass meetings. Recognizing that the Colony had not yet achieved a stable organizational structure, the leadership postponed elections to the Managing Board and temporarily allowed the STO to select or nominate its members.

From the outset, Rutgers had aimed for “organizational autonomy within Russian institutions.” Yet several problems arose in attempting to maintain this form of “autonomy”: (1) Due to internal disagreements within the Organization Committee, the 14-member Committee was dissolved and replaced by a 3-member Managing Board (Rutgers, V.C. Shatov, and Th. Reese). Moreover, the AIC-K temporarily relinquished its right to vote on the composition of the Board to the STO; (2) The statute guaranteeing all colonists the right to offer “advice and suggestions” in an advisory capacity was criticized as meaningless in practice; (3) Mass meetings, regarded by many colonists as a key mechanism for securing autonomy, were increasingly criticized, particularly from the standpoint of maintaining “technical efficiency” in production.

The following section examines these three issues in turn.

(1) Restructuring the Managing Board and Relinquishing the Right to Vote

The dissolution of the Organization Committee and the restructuring of the Managing Board were proposed by Shatov at a joint meeting of the Organization Committee and AOC members. The proposal passed by a vote of 3 to 2 and was subsequently submitted to the STO. What is troubling here is that the proposal originated from Shatov, the STO’s representative, suggesting that the STO’s intentions were operating behind the scenes in ways that could potentially undermine the independence of the AIC-K. Nevertheless, Rutgers agreed to the proposal, likely for the following reason. In a letter to the STO dated 30 October 1922, he (together with Reese) wrote: “This proposal is important because in the current Managing Board there are differences of opinion which would put a brake on the work for the preparation of production.” In other words, production “efficiency” was his highest priority. He feared that internal conflict would reduce efficiency and, worse still, hinder the AIC-K’s primary objective of contributing to the economic reconstruction of Soviet Russia.

Although the selection of three Board members was intended as a temporary measure until the Colony could be properly organized and the colonists could elect their own representatives, the measure, combined with the STO’s right to dismiss Board members, only deepened the AIC-K’s dependence on the Soviet Government. The AIC-K never regained its voting rights and remained subject to the personnel authority of the Soviet Government until the very end.

(2) Securing Freedom of Opinion and Criticism “from Below”

Regarding the changes introduced in the New Contract, R.E. Kennell argued that “another clause practically takes the ‘autonomous’ out of ‘the AIC-K’ by specifying that the management board, responsible only to the STO, is absolute dictator and the colonists have no voice in the administration of Kuzbas affairs.” This criticism, however, can be countered in several respects: Although the provisions guaranteeing freedom of opinion and criticism may indeed have been

overly idealistic and later lost much of their practical significance, they were effective, at least in the initial phase. One example is the following: Acting on the advice of chemical engineers, including N. Sparks, Director Rutgers shifted the Colony's industrial focus from coal production to coke production. Moreover, "Rutgers had previously asked the workers at Kemerovo what they required to be done at Moscow and had asked for suggestions [when negotiating a new contract]." Kennell's sharply critical assessment was written only five and a half months after her arrival in Kemerovo. As J.P. Morray has noted, "She evolved in her political views during the troubles of 1922 from an initial identification with the IWW partisans to an acceptance of the Rutgers reforms and the pragmatic Colony regime resulting from the new Agreement." In light of this subsequent shift in Kennell's political stance, it is doubtful that she would have continued to uphold her early criticism.

(3) Mass Meetings *vs.* "Technical Efficiency"

Shortly after arriving in Kemerovo, Rutgers raised concerns about the functioning of mass meetings, particularly the inefficiency of discussing and resolving even highly technical matters in such a forum, and sought to improve the situation by establishing "a certain discipline." Although this initiative provoked opposition from IWW supporters, Rutgers criticized the mass meeting primarily from the standpoint of technical efficiency in production, emphasizing the necessity of industrial management by professional engineers. His position found support in an article published in a local IWW organ, "Workers' Control," *Industrial Worker*, 1 July 1922 (reprinted in *Kuzbas*, 20 September 1922), which stated: "Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as 'Democratic Control of Industry,' at least not in the sense of 'Democratic Management'"; "The IWW plan is to organize each industry not only to fight the capitalist, …, but to also run it efficiently, … That means a certain amount of subordination of individual whim to the will of expert. It might, it is possible to imagine, result in some sort of dictatorship of the technician, rather than a dictatorship of the proletariat, as far as production is concerned."

This prioritization of "technical efficiency" also led Rutgers to assert the following right: "We will not be able to comply with all paragraphs of law, particularly of the mining laws, if we are to introduce American methods. We take it for granted that our contract gives us the right to disregard certain formal provisions of minor laws if they conflict with good American methods and practice."

2. On the AIC-K's "Adaptation" to the NEP System

(1) Rejection of the "Commercial Trust"

In negotiations with Soviet governing bodies, Rutgers firmly rejected proposals to convert the AIC-K into an ordinary Russian "commercial trust" (that is, "a form of Cooperative with profit-sharing"). The founding principle of the "Autonomous Colony," as conceived by Rutgers and his colleagues, required the Soviet State to guarantee both the living conditions of the colonists and the developmental potential of the state-owned enterprise. Nevertheless, with the introduction of a wage system, the relinquishing of voting rights, and other institutional changes, the AIC-K itself began to diverge significantly from its original form as early as the previous year.

(2) Evaluating “Adaptation”

L.Iu. Galkina has summarized the AIC-K’s history, characterized by project downsizing and the achievement of centralized management under the New Contract, whose primary purpose was to “adapt” to the NEP system, as follows: “The AIC-K *lived through* a period of ‘excitement, romance, and adventure.’ The members of the AIC-K ‘*started* to work for reconstruction,’ while intending to build a ‘New Pennsylvania’ in Kuzbas” (my *italics*). As noted in Part 1, Galkina takes the “Russification of the Colony” as a given. Consequently, she fails to appreciate the “birth pains” of the “Autonomous Colony” and instead assumes that the AIC-K only “*started* to work” after the conclusion of the New Contract. Her account lacks the attention to detail necessary to examine historical developments that do not conform to this “Russification” narrative.

Yet given that the original purpose of the Kuzbas project was to contribute to the reconstruction and development of the Russian economy, and given that the AIC-K was unable to obtain active support from Soviet governing bodies, Rutgers had little choice but to introduce institutional adjustments compatible with economic development under the NEP. In fact, such adaptation was likely the only viable path for the Colony’s economic progress. Rutgers’ original vision of creating a new workers’ state (in the words of one colonist, a “new REPUBLIC OF LABOR”) had faded, leaving only the question of how to accelerate economic development by maximizing the “technical efficiency” of production while preserving as much organizational “autonomy” as possible within the AIC-K.

Key words: Autonomous Industrial Colony “Kuzbas”, STO, Gosplan, NEP, American Organization Committee, IWW, W.D. Haywood, S.J. Rutgers

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The Autonomous Industrial Colony "Kuzbas" and S. J. Rutgers (4): From the Reorganization of the New York Bureau to Its Dissolution

1 The Reorganization of the New York Bureau
2 Rutgers' and T. Barker's Critique of Th. Reese
3 From Barker's Return to the Bureau's Dissolution

Based on the new contract concluded between the Autonomous Industrial Colony "Kuzbas" (AIC-K) and the Council of Labor and Defense (STO) on 25 December 1922, the American Organization Committee (AOC) resolved at its meeting of 1 April 1923 to dissolve itself, and its chairman, H. S. Calvert, accordingly withdrew from the organization. In its place, the New York Bureau was reorganized with Th. Reese appointed as representative. Although M. Mulari, P.P. Cosgrove, and T. Barker were no longer members of the AOC, they were retained on salary. Reese's tenure, however, proved short-lived. His views diverged markedly from the ideals and principles upon which the AIC-K had been founded—what Barker later referred to as the "Kuzbas idea"—and he also demonstrated insufficient competence in administrative matters. Although a cooperative working relationship was soon established between his successor, Barker, and S.J. Rutgers, the differences of opinion that had existed earlier persisted, and their relationship ultimately ended with the liquidation of the AIC-K. The main issues that emerged in this process are examined below.

Shortly after assuming his post as head of the New York Bureau, Reese exchanged a series of letters with Rutgers (29 May–15 August 1923). These letters reveal Rutgers' strong criticism of Reese's views and policies. The principal points were as follows:

(1) Rutgers stated unequivocally: "Personally I am also convinced that the policy you are pursuing is not quite correct." Reese's proposal to incorporate the AIC-K was especially problematic. Rutgers regarded it as an attempt "to make 'Kuzbas' appear as a business enterprise, rather than as a definite proletarian organization." The incorporation plan had originally been suggested to Reese by a "liberal" lawyer appointed to the Advisory Committee, and Reese intended to bring it before the Committee. Rutgers also opposed, in principle, the very establishment of the Advisory Committee, which Reese had again proposed. It is evident that Reese's proposals deviated too far from the "Kuzbas idea."

(2) Reese continued to avoid joining the "Group," that is, the Workers Party of America. According to Rutgers, the decision taken by the Managing Board in Moscow that the representative should join the Party was "not a formality, but an administrative one" and "could

give satisfactory guarantees for control" (Reese's handling of the matter, in Rutgers' view, demonstrated his unfitness for the position. Barker expressed this criticism even more concretely in his letter of 15 August 1923 to W. Haywood, S. Berg, and J. Masukevich). The demand that the representative join the Workers Party was made by the Managing Board, including Rutgers, not "to ruin Kuzbas as a proletarian organization." From the standpoint of management, appointing a "liberal," non-political figure such as Reese may have been controversial. Yet the demand for Party membership clearly contradicted the "non-partisan attitude" that had underpinned the AOC's earlier administration.

After Reese's dismissal, Rutgers had little choice but to entrust the management of the New York Bureau to Barker.

Although a considerable gap in opinion separated them, close cooperation between Rutgers and Barker became indispensable for the Bureau's operations. The reasons for their ability to cooperate may be summarized as follows:

(1) Rutgers had criticized Barker's IWW orientation from the outset (though less sharply than his criticism of Calvert, and not directly). Under the pressure of circumstances, however, Rutgers felt compelled to acknowledge Barker's administrative competence and his justified criticism of Reese. It goes without saying that the Managing Board could not again demand that a hard-core Wobbly such as Barker join the Workers Party.

(2) Although Barker had repeatedly and openly criticized Rutgers, he appears to have accepted the position of representative because he wished to renew his contract with the AIC-K and "to know what is going to be doing." As representative, however, Barker does not seem to have fully supported Rutgers' management policy. While the first half of his tenure is difficult to document due to the scarcity of surviving sources, the latter half suggests that he continued to adhere to the "Kuzbas idea." In his letter of 15 August 1923, Barker's harsh criticism of his comrades is striking, yet he nevertheless believed that former AOC members, including even Reese, could still contribute to the development of the AIC-K: "If you [Haywood, Berg, and Masukevich] are able to make contacts with either the New [Managing] Board or with some of the live folks connected with Kuzbas, you should suggest that the Board recall Cosgrove, Reese and myself to the Colony as members. Also Mulari. … [M.] Schuyler should also be recalled and the recall should be framed in proper language."

A group committed to preserving the original "Kuzbas idea," including Barker, Haywood, Berg, and Masukevich, had indeed begun to coalesce. Their arguments, however, proved unconvincing in the heated debates over whether the AIC-K should adapt itself to the NEP system and accept certain institutional reforms. Rutgers' overriding objective was to contribute to the reconstruction and development of the Soviet Russian economy by maximizing the technical "efficiency" of production, while retaining a functional degree of organizational autonomy (cf. Part 3). By contrast, the members of this group continued to place their hopes in the international social "experiments" that, as Barker and Calvert had written in the early AOC prospectus, *Kuzbas*, "could not be attempted under the profit-system." They—and most of the former AOC members, with considerable overlap—never severed their ties with the AIC-K until its liquidation on 1

January 1927.

During his stay in Moscow, Barker even submitted an independent petition on 1 September 1926 to “Dear Comrade Stalin,” expressing his dissatisfaction in stark terms: “they [those concerned] are liquidating this organization without any coordination or direction, and without taking into account the specific characteristics of the colony.” Rutgers, who despite illness continued to conduct crucial negotiations with Soviet governing bodies, interpreted Barker’s intervention as evidence that “the still strong Syndicalist [i.e., IWW] tendency” persisted within the group. It may be said that Rutgers never fully dispelled this suspicion, even as the AIC-K approached the brink of extinction.

In the end, the differences between the two sides remained unresolved, and the AIC-K was liquidated, followed by the dissolution of its New York Bureau. Of course, the conflict between these factions was not the principal cause of either outcome. The decisive factor was the sustained external pressure exerted by central and local organs of the Soviet Government and the Russian Communist Party. This pressure was expressed in euphemistic terms in the notice of dissolution of the New York Bureau, written on 31 January 1927 by S.S. Shipman who had been appointed by Rutgers to replace Barker shortly before the latter’s departure for Russia: “The elimination of an independent American representation comes as a consequence of gradual changes in the character of the administration of the Kuzbas enterprises. These changes resulted in the placing of an increasing proportion of Russian technicians and administrators in responsible positions in the industries. This has done away with the necessity of retaining the special American contacts for which purpose a separate New York office has been maintained up to the present time.”

Key words: Autonomous Industrial Colony “Kuzbas”, American Organization Committee, New York Bureau, H.S. Calvert, Th. Reese, T. Barker, S.S. Shipman, S.J. Rutgers

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The Autonomous Industrial Colony "Kuzbas" and S. J. Rutgers (5): From Regular Operations to the Expansion of Enterprise Scale

1 Enterprise Development immediately after the Transition to the Sole Management
2 Negotiations with Governmental Bodies over Competition and Mergers
3 Rutgers' Illness, Problems of Deputization, and Bronka Kornblitt's Death

On 1 February 1923, the Autonomous Industrial Colony "Kuzbas" (AIC-K) completed its transition from a dual Russian-foreign management structure to a unified administrative system. Immediately thereafter, the enterprise entered a phase of notable development, as demonstrated by various indicators. For example, between October 1922 and April 1923 the total workforce was reduced from 2,307 to 2,041 (88.5%), primarily through cuts in office staff, watchmen, and other non-production personnel. Despite this reduction, output increased significantly: coal production per worker in March-April 1923 was three times higher than in October 1922. The year 1923 thus marked the organizational consolidation of the AIC-K as a Soviet enterprise with special features.

In 1924, although the AIC-K continued to receive substantial subsidies from the Soviet Government, the pace of its development slowed less than originally anticipated. According to G.Ia. Tarle, the AIC-K—effectively under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Council of Labor and Defense (STO)—operated entirely outside the institutional framework and oversight of Soviet economic organs. While the Soviet Government formally assumed control over Kemerovo coal, the enterprise's sales channels remained restricted, making the initiation of coke production all the more urgent. The opening of a chemical plant on 2 March 1924 provided a major stimulus to the Colony's industrial expansion. From this initial combination of coal mining, coke production, and chemical processing, an industrial nucleus began to emerge. This also represented "a new financial basis" for the AIC-K.

Although the AIC-K was again compelled to postpone the transfer of the Nadezhdinsk plants under the "New Contract" of 25 December 1922, it had already begun planning the integration of the Kol'chugino and Prokop'evsk operations, south of Kemerovo. Kemerovo itself was conceived merely as the starting point of the broader Kuzbas project. Capitalizing on the prospects of coke production, the AIC-K aimed to advance the integration of coal mining and metallurgical industries across the entire Kuznetsk Coalfield.

Responding to the AIC-K's demands for expansion, the STO established a committee within the People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection to investigate both the AIC-K and its rival, the Kuzbas Trust, from March to June 1924. Following a two-month on-site investigation beginning in late June, the STO approved in early September the transfer of the

Leninsk (formerly Kol'chugino) and Prokop'evsk coal mines, as well as the Gur'evsk plants, from the Kuzbas Trust to the AIC-K. As a result, the AIC-K acquired control over half of the Trust's territory and simultaneously assumed responsibility for 50% of its debts. When additional liabilities were uncovered after the decision, S.J. Rutgers initially refused to accept the transfer. The issue was ultimately resolved only after the STO promised further financial support. By early 1925, the AIC-K acquired an area roughly equivalent to the entire Netherlands and operated seven mines and three plants employing 6,100 workers (L.Iu. Galkina).

Throughout this period, Russian "spetsy" (technical specialists) remained consistently hostile to both the establishment and expansion of the AIC-K. Rutgers and his colleagues were continually troubled by bureaucratic obstruction, excessive red tape, and deliberate acts of sabotage. The delay in completing the Kemerovo chemical plant, for instance, resulted largely from the former director, Engineer I.I. Lokhanskii, having concealed many of the original blueprints in his home and elsewhere. Russian technical personnel were anxious and deeply suspicious, fearing that the Americans would seize control, politicize the mines, and wage a struggle against the Kuzbas Trust. The AIC-K demanded the transfer of the Kuzbas Trust's poorly performing management. However, the "spetsy" serving on the STO committee openly opposed the investigative report and "displayed a tendency to obscure the management and operational system of the Kuzbas Trust, which had in fact failed to justify itself, and to underestimate and conceal the achievements of the AIC-K." Russian researchers have generally paid insufficient attention to these hostile actions. Rutgers regarded such slander and false accusations as "political crimes" and submitted a detailed memorandum, including a supplement on his conflict with the "spetsy," to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. On 9 July 1924, the Politburo of the Central Committee referred the matter for discussion and adopted several resolutions, including one addressing countermeasures against the "spetsy"—a point largely overlooked in existing research.

Since contracting pneumonia shortly before the closing of the Comintern's Founding Congress in March 1919, Rutgers had worked continuously while in precarious health. During the Kuzbas period he suffered from diabetes and, due to overwork, sciatica. Bronka Kornblitt—Rutgers' secretary and interpreter, herself a survivor of tuberculosis—was frequently sent to sanatoria because of her demanding workload and died prematurely in June 1925 at the age of 33.

The deterioration of their health made the appointment of additional representatives necessary. Rutgers requested that the Central Committee recommend an assistant to replace Bronka. In autumn 1923 he returned from Moscow to Kemerovo accompanied by Domberg, whom the Central Committee had selected. By June 1924, however, Domberg had proven ineffective and was dismissed at Rutgers' recommendation.

By December 1924, Rutgers admitted in a letter to his wife, Bartha, that he could no longer endure the situation, writing: "Continuing to work here would be like committing suicide for me." He contemplated taking an extended leave and asked the STO to appoint a deputy to serve as acting chairman of the AIC-K Managing Board. A.E. Kalnin, chosen for the position, arrived in

Kemerovo that month. Before temporarily returning to the Netherlands for medical treatment from January to April 1925, Rutgers conducted negotiations in Moscow concerning funding for the AIC-K's expansion and efforts to avoid selling coke at low prices to "Uralmet." In his absence, Kalnin created considerable confusion in Kemerovo by means of his rough-and-ready reorganization "in a Russian sense." Consequently, Rutgers and his colleagues launched a campaign to remove Kalnin, ultimately succeeding in the summer of 1925.

This episode set a precedent for the case of K.N. Korobkin, who was appointed Rutgers' deputy in April 1926. Whereas the dismissal of Kalnin alone had required significant time and effort, Korobkin, accompanied by 40 associates, caused even more serious difficulties, which in some respects proved fatal to the AIC-K. The immediate cause of both crises lay in the deterioration of Rutgers' health under the constant pressure of his directorial responsibilities. In neither instance was he able to find anyone comparable to Bronka who could consistently support him.

When the Colony cooperative voted in late 1924 to abolish the 60-per-cent contribution system of wage, Ruth E. Kennell declared: "Thus passed the last remnant of our experiment in pure communism." Yet this assessment is not entirely accurate. Wage differentials among engineers remained minimal, and more importantly, Rutgers and his colleagues remained committed to preserving the "special features" rooted in the founding principles of the AIC-K. In the midst of the campaign to remove Kalnin, Rutgers articulated the following view to the Siberian Revolutionary Committee: "I would like once again to emphasize that I am in favor of transferring the AIC to Russian leadership. The AIC must, perhaps very soon, relinquish its independence and enter the normal system of the Soviet economy. But it is essential to retain *the special features of our organization*, that is, *the high efficiency of leadership achieved through a minimum number of administrative personnel*, and *combining clearly our statistics and the system of control with the introduction of the newest production method.* The latter is the most important achievement of our Colony. I fear that Comrade Kalnin, who is attempting to transform the AIC into a Russian enterprise as rapidly as possible, may, despite the sincerity of his intentions, throw out the baby with the bathwater, causing more harm than good" (my *italics*). In short, the preservation of these distinctive features—embodied above all by the foreign personnel—was, in Rutgers' view, a necessary precondition for the successful "Russification" of the AIC-K.

Key words: Autonomous Industrial Colony "Kuzbas", STO, Gosplan, H.P. Rastopchin, A.E. Kalnin, Bronka Kornblitt, S.J. Rutgers

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The Autonomous Industrial Colony “Kuzbas” and S. J. Rutgers (6): From Further Enterprise Development to Its Liquidation

1 Further Development of the Enterprise
2 The System of Management and Communication during Rutgers’ Medical Treatment
3 The K.N. Korobkin Affair and Its Liquidation

The enterprise of the Autonomous Industrial Colony “Kuzbas” (AIC-K) continued to expand and develop between 1925 and 1926. A characteristic feature of this period is that the Colony moved rapidly to formulate and pursue the next major initiative, the “Tel’bess” plan, even though it had only just begun, in early 1925, the practical integration of the Leninsk and Prokop’evsk coal mines and the Gur’evsk plants. In other words, from an early stage the AIC-K aimed at the comprehensive integration of the entire Kuznetsk Coalfield and never abandoned this objective. It is therefore evident that the decision to liquidate the Colony at the end of 1926 came as a complete surprise to its leadership.

What became clear during the process leading up to the liquidation decision was that the AIC-K, previously under the jurisdiction of the STO, was to be transferred to the authority of the VSNKh and, further, effectively incorporated into Gosplan’s planning framework (cf. the resolution of the Presidium of Gosplan, 16 April 1926). The VSNKh’s proposal to consolidate all enterprise operations within the Kuznetsk Coalfield may be seen as broadly consistent with Rutgers’ long-standing aim of unified management of the entire region. Yet it must be recalled that Gosplan’s “large-scale plan for constructing new metallurgical plants in the Urals and Siberia,” later realized in the First Five-Year Plan, differed significantly from the original conception of the Kuzbas project. Rutgers and his associates had initially envisioned the Industrial Workers’ Colony in Kuzbas and the Northern Urals (Nadezhdinsk plants). Moreover, Rutgers had vigorously advocated the so-called “Ural-Kuznetsk Industrial Complex” at the Presidium of Gosplan on 31 October 1922—a proposal dismissed at the time due to prevailing economic and financial constraints (see Part 3). This earlier episode should not be overlooked.

Rutgers returned to the Netherlands for medical treatment toward the end of 1925. Believing he could no longer bear the heavy burden of directing the Colony, and convinced that its affairs were now in order and its prospects improved, he considered it an appropriate moment to hand over leadership. Nevertheless, he received repeated complaints from several colonists regarding dissatisfaction with K.N. Korobkin’s management and appeals for his own return. Consequently, Rutgers stated that although he “could not take over full management,” he believed Engineer Begemann should assume leadership with a capable Russian assistant; in such an arrangement,

Rutgers was prepared to continue contributing as an “advisory engineer.”

A.G. Struik, S. Hahn, and others in Kemerovo expressed sharp criticism of Korobkin and regarded “any compromise with him as no longer possible.”

Although Rutgers was “fully aware that the enterprise was in fact paralyzed,” he attempted to persuade them to continue working with Korobkin on the assumption that Korobkin had to fulfill an obligation to prevent the departure of foreign staff. The following considerations appear to explain Rutgers’ stance.

(1) Rutgers lacked sufficient allies to challenge Korobkin’s management system. Struik and other colonists were fully aware of this. Even so, they believed that “a battle, perhaps a decisive one” was imminent and that the “Isolation” of the AIC-K (in opposition to “Russification”) had become unavoidable. Rutgers, by contrast, drew their attention to Korobkin’s broader political circumstances: “One should not underestimate that our operational bases in Russian life in general have also been weakened. [The local Party in] Novonikolaevsk no longer supports us, and the central Party cannot be involved in the details.” In addition, organized attacks by Russian spetsy (specialists) showed no sign of abating.

(2) Under such conditions, the “Isolation” of the AIC-K would be a dangerous experiment. “Russification”—that is, the integration of the Colony into the general economic system of Soviet Russia—was inevitable, meaning that the AIC-K would ultimately fall under the jurisdiction of the VSNKh. Rutgers’ overriding concern was that a strong insistence on resisting “Russification” would “undermine the general interests of the USSR,” thereby obscuring the Colony’s primary objective (see Part 3): contributing to the reconstruction and development of the Soviet Russian economy. In this light, the Korobkin issue was of only secondary importance to Rutgers.

In this situation, during a conversation with B. Foot, Rutgers delivered his final assessment: “My work in the AIC-K is no longer as clear as it was before. It is time to adapt the Colony to the overall economic system of Soviet Russia.” He went so far as to state that “state organs can no longer be involved in individual enterprises. Russian industry, now standing firmly on its own two feet, does not need the autonomy of the Colony anymore.” The “autonomy” of the AIC-K thus gradually receded, and the preservation of certain “special features”—rooted in the Colony’s founding principles (Part 5)—became the last remaining bastion of “autonomy.” To borrow expressions cited in this Part 6, these features included “the right to appeal to the STO,” “all the good in the organization, all the progressive and rational,” and “foreign staff and a small [but select] bureaucracy.” The Colony’s “final” struggle was no longer directed against “Russification” itself, but was confined to the effort to preserve these “special features.” Stabilizing the employment of foreign staff was the essential precondition for maintaining them.

As a consequence, Rutgers, Korobkin, D.M. Kotliarenko, and Foot agreed to establish a provisional Managing Board to prevent the departure of foreign personnel and to facilitate cooperation. But Korobkin never convened a meeting of this Board. Rutgers therefore requested, through Kotliarenko, that the Party and its Central Control Committee set up an Inspection Committee. He also directly appealed to the V.V. Kuibyshev Committee to consider the matter. Although the degree of overlap between these two Committees remains unclear—perhaps because

Kuibyshev had just shifted from chairing the People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection to the VSNKh—the Kuibyshev Committee did deliberate on Korobkin's recall. However, the subsequent STO conference on 19 November 1926 did not resolve the issue.
Finally, at a meeting chaired on 2 December 1926 by S.V. Kosior, secretary of the Party's Central Committee, Rutgers declared: "I am ready to keep taking on the leadership of the AIC-K, provided that Korobkin be replaced by a Russian manager."

The interpretations offered by L.Iu. Galkina, G.Ia. Tarle, and J.P. Morray regarding Rutgers' conditional consent are problematic. Galkina explains: "Rutgers' requirement was willing to be satisfied *only* on condition that he could undertake complete direction of, and responsibility for, integrating the AIC-K into the overall economic system. But Rutgers, tired of the constant struggle for what he had built with his own hands, demanded an experienced assistant. His condition was not accepted" (*italics* mine). Tarle similarly reframes the condition and presents the declaration as a final settlement: "In November 1926 S.V. Kosior, secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, took over him [Rutgers]. S.J. Rutgers agreed to return to the Colony *only* on condition that his deputy of the outstanding Soviet specialist be appointed" (*italics* mine). Morray honestly reports the condition but appears to overinterpret it: "At the end of 1926 he again returned to Moscow, where he offered to resume duties as Director in Kemerovo on condition that Korobkin be removed and a new Russian deputy named. His condition was not met, and Rutgers had to face the fact that his authority in Moscow was not sufficient to vanquish a Russian of Korobkin's standing."

All three accounts are imprecise. Galkina and Tarle, in particular, omit Rutgers' explicit demand for Korobkin's dismissal and replacement. Rutgers insisted on Korobkin's removal because retaining foreign staff—and, more importantly, preserving the "special features" embodied by the foreign personnel—was becoming increasingly difficult under Korobkin's leadership. This issue was central for Rutgers.

Despite the STO conference's resolution of 19 November 1926 to take necessary measures to retain and utilize foreign workers and engineers, neither the STO nor the Party was willing or able to appoint a deputy for Rutgers. They decided instead to keep Korobkin as deputy. Under these circumstances, the STO had no possibility of accepting Rutgers' condition. Yet Rutgers did not abandon his efforts. Struggling with illness and unable to assume full responsibility without a competent deputy, he withdrew his conditional agreement and temporarily entrusted his chairmanship to Korobkin, on the condition that Engineer Begemann be appointed not only as one of Korobkin's two deputies but also as "representative of the remaining colonists." Rutgers again urged Korobkin to "issue necessary instructions to do everything necessary to retain the foreigners." After the AIC-K was liquidated on 1 January 1927, Rutgers continued for some time to seek the appointment of such a deputy as representative of the colonists—an effort sustained by a faint glimmer of hope (to be continued in Part 7).

Key words: Autonomous Industrial Colony "Kuzbas", STO, VSNKh, Gosplan, K.N. Korobkin, A.G. Struik, S.J. Rutgers

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The Autonomous Industrial Colony “Kuzbas” and S. J. Rutgers (7): The Aftermath of Its Liquidation and Toward a Conclusion

1 The Final Attempt at the Time of Reorganization and Korobkin’s Downfall

2 The Aftermath for the Foreign Colonists

Final Chapter Toward a Conclusion

(1) A New Interpretation of Its Foundation

(2) Problems of Periodization

(3) Issues in Interpreting the IWW Tendency

(a) Mass Meetings *vs.* Technical “Efficiency”

(b) Dreams and Realities of the Wobblies Group

(c) The Wobblies as the “Counterpart” of the Communists

(4) “Autonomy” and the Retention of the “Special Features”

(5) Reassessing Rutgers

(6) A New Evaluation from the Perspective of Post-liquidation Developments

(7) Was It a Failure of Idealism?

Previous research has touched only briefly on the reorganization of Kuzbassugol (the State Coal, Chemical, and Metallurgical Trust) and on the downfall of K.N. Korobkin following the liquidation of the Autonomous Industrial Colony “Kuzbas” (AIC-K). In contrast, Part 7 of this series newly demonstrates that even after the Colony’s liquidation, S.J. Rutgers, assisted by Begemann, continued efforts to retain departing foreign engineers and to advance the next project, “Tel’bess,” with a glimmer of hope. Ultimately, however, Rutgers’ attempts were unsuccessful. The likely reasons are as follows: (1) Although the successor manager, Kotin, did not oppose the “Tel’bess” plan in principle, he repeatedly interfered in technical matters and had a poor working relationship with Begemann; (2) The departure of the Colony’s leading engineers from Kemerovo made it difficult to carry the plan forward; (3) Begemann faced significant obstacles in assuming Rutgers’ role in negotiations in Moscow.

The subsequent careers of the leading staff who remained with the AIC-K until the end are then briefly outlined. Many continued to work in enterprises similar in character to the Kuzbas project within Soviet Russia, while others returned to their home countries and found new employment. Yet despite their divergent paths, many of them continued to believe in, and to hold high hopes for, the possibility of “a new Kuzbas.”

A supplementary explanation is provided regarding the Dutch engineers. N. Sparks, who participated in the first half of the AIC-K, recalled their role as follows: “Besides the Americans,

Rutgers had brought out half a dozen Dutch engineers [ultimately about two dozen]. The Americans were somewhat taken aback to find some of the Hollanders contemptuous not only of the Russians but of the Americans also, and convinced of their own superiority. But while all these attitudes muddies the waters slightly, they never seriously hindered the work. Then, too, certain individuals stood out in their efforts and ability at smoothing relations between Russians and Americans, Americans and Dutch, Communists and non-Communists." This mediating role likely continued during the second half of the AIC-K. It is noteworthy that among the Dutch engineers, Rutgers, A. Baars, A.G. Struik, D. Schermerhorn, and others were graduates of the Polytechnic School of Delft (renamed the Technical College of Delft in 1905). At the turn of the century, it was not uncommon for Delft graduates to be involved in social reform movements and even in socialist activism. The student movement of the so-called "Red Delft" period became one of the origins of Dutch socialism. This social milieu shaped the trajectory through which Rutgers and his colleagues became both engineers and socialist practitioners.

The final chapter offers a summary leading toward the overall conclusion. It should be noted, however, that each Part of this series has already included a brief summary, and in synthesizing them here (albeit in revised form), some degree of repetition is unavoidable.

1 A new interpretation of its foundation

The principal reason why the deliberations concerning the foundation of the Colony extended over nearly six months was not, as previous researches have tended to emphasize, the question of whether the Soviet Government's substantial financial support was advantageous or disadvantageous. Rather, the decisive issue was the dispute over which governmental organ would exercise jurisdiction over the Colony and, consequently, which institution could best guarantee the "autonomy" that Rutgers repeatedly insisted upon throughout the negotiations. The two competing organs were, on the one hand, the Council of Labor and Defense (STO), which was legally authorized as commission of the People's Commissars' Council, and, on the other, the Supreme Council of National Economy (VSNKh), which was actively promoting concessions to foreign capitalists and maintained that the Colony should likewise be operated on a commercial basis. In the end, it was decided that the Colony would be founded under the jurisdiction of the STO. Yet the STO had already delegated the preliminary examination of the project to the VSNKh, which had been a specialized committee responsible for the Colony's creation and management. Precisely for this reason, attempts by the VSNKh to "intervene" in the Colony's affairs were effectively unavoidable even after its formal foundation. It was therefore foreseeable from the outset that the jurisdictional conflict between the two institutions would persist.

2 Problems of Periodization

Galkina's periodization of the AIC-K is reproduced in the left column of the table below, with my own proposed periodization presented in the right column.

Periodization of the AIC-K

L.Iu. Galkina's Periodization	A. Yamanouchi's Periodization
① Organizational period（**20.X.1921 ～ VIII.1922**） ".....characterized by the predominance of the syndicalist orientations within the colony"	① From Proposal to Approval of the Foundation（**12.VI.1921 ～ 12.XI.1921**） ○ The Establishment and Early Operations of the AOC （2.I.1922 ～ III.1923）
② Preparatory period（**VIII.1922 年～ III.1923**） ".....characterized by the weakening of the Wobbly influence "	② Preparation for Operations until Restart under the New Contract（**16.XI.1921 / I.1922 ～ II.1923**） ○ From Reorganization of the New York Bureau to Its Dissolution（1.IV.1923 ～ 1.II.1927）
③ Managing period in the Kemerovo district（**III.1923 ～ XII.1924**） ".....distinguished by the consolidation of the position of communists and the highest tempo of development"	③ From Regular Operations to the Expansion of Enterprise Scale（**1.III.1923 ～ XII.1924**）
④ Active period of the expanded colony（**1.I.1925 ～ XII.1926**） "the intensification of Russification; the elimination of distinctions between AIC and ordinary Soviet enterprises"	④ From Further Development of the Enterprise to Its Liquidation（**1.I.1925 ～ XII.1926**） ⑤ Aftermath of Its Liquidation（**1.I.1927 ～ II.1928**）

Galkina provides only brief annotations for each period (representative excerpts are cited in the table). These annotations indicate that her primary concern lies not with the developmental trajectory of the AIC-K as an enterprise, but rather with a partisan narrative centered disproportionately on the conflict between the Wobblies and the Communists. As a result, her periodization offers limited insight into how the AIC-K's industrial operations actually evolved over time. My own periodization, by contrast, is derived principally from the subtitles of each Part in the aforementioned series of articles and is designed to track the concrete shifts that occurred as the AIC-K's enterprise developed.

3 Issues in interpreting the IWW tendency

(1) Mass meetings *vs.* technical "efficiency"

The "mass meeting," regarded by pro-IWW colonists as a mechanism ensuring "freedom of criticism from below," soon revealed significant limitations. Shortly after his arrival in Kemerovo, Rutgers identified the inefficiencies inherent in this system (most notably the tendency for even highly technical matters to be debated and resolved in the mass meeting) and sought to remedy these deficiencies by introducing "a certain discipline." Although this initiative provoked resistance among IWW supporters, Rutgers' primary concern lay in the problem of technical "efficiency" in production; that is, the unavoidable need for industrial management by specialized

technicians. This position was consistent with arguments advanced in the article "Workers' Control," published in the IWW's *Industrial Worker* on 1 July 1922 and reprinted in *Kuzbas* on 20 September 1922. The article asserted that "strictly speaking, there is no such thing as 'Democratic Control of Industry,' at least not in the sense of 'Democratic Management,'" and warned that such an arrangement might well result in "some sort of dictatorship of the technician, rather than a dictatorship of the proletariat, as far as production is concerned." Rutgers's critique of the mass meeting and his emphasis on technological "efficiency" thus constituted a valid challenge to IWW-style management within the Colony.

(2) Dreams and realities of the Wobblies group

Within the Colony, a group of the leading Wobblies (W.D. Haywood, T. Barker, J. Masukevich and among others) who continued to uphold the original ideals and principles upon which the AIC-K had been founded, the so-called "Kuzbas idea" (to use Barker's later recollection) was being formed. The only instance in which this group collectively opposed the Managing Board concerned the question of whether the AIC-K should adapt to the emerging NEP system and undertake institutional reforms in the autumn of 1922. In heated debates, however, their position proved unconvincing when confronted with the practical question of how the Colony could contribute to the economic reconstruction of Soviet Russia. So deeply committed were they to the "Kuzbas idea" that they were unable to propose alternatives beyond maintaining the *status quo*. Even so, they preserved a sense of hope in the international social "experiments they could not attempt under the profit-system." Importantly, their disagreements with the Managing Board did not amount to the kind of antagonistic conflict with the "Communists" emphasized by Galkina and others. Most members of this group maintained their association with the AIC-K until its liquidation.

(3) The Wobblies as the "counterpart" of the Communists

Why, then, have not only American researchers such as Smith and Morray but also Russian researchers like Galkina tended to frame the Colony's internal dynamics in terms of a binary opposition between "Communists *vs.* Wobblies"? The most consequential conflicts were, in fact, those between the AIC-K and governmental organs such as the VSNKh and Gosplan. These were disputes between institutional actors, and given the severe economic and financial conditions of the period, such disagreements were inevitable. A second, and in many ways more serious, conflict arose from the hostile actions of Russian "spetsy" (technical specialists). From the beginning of the AIC-K's operations through its expansion, these specialists consistently opposed the Colony. N.P. Rastopchin, chair of the STO [investigative] committee that examined this conflict, later recalled that the "spetsy" serving on the committee openly opposed its report and revealed "a tendency to obscure Kuzbas Trust's management and operation system, which did not actually justify itself, and to underestimate and conceal the achievements of the AIC-K enterprise." For Rutgers, the "struggle with the spetsy" was so serious that he regarded their slander or false allegations against the AIC-K as "political crimes." Russian researchers have sometimes treated the former conflict in vague terms and have rarely addressed the latter directly;

no account comparable to Rastopchin's recollection appears in their works. It is therefore likely that Russian researchers have not placed importance on these two conflicts, and perhaps in order to divert attention from them, have instead elevated the Wobblies into a convenient "counterpart" or "villain," thereby overstating the significance of the "Communists *vs.* Wobblies" dichotomy beyond what the historical record supports.

4 "Autonomy" and the retention of the "special features"

Originally, in the first "Plan for an Industrial Labor Colony of Foreign Workers" submitted to Lenin in June 1921, the following principle was stated unequivocally: "It will be absolutely essential that the labor Colony gets a free hand to manage its own affairs and to stimulate what energy can be put to further the development." Rutgers reiterated this point in the opening article of the inaugural issue of *Kuzbas*: "'Autonomous' Colony means that the Soviet authorities have guaranteed a sufficiently free hand to manage their own interior affairs in order to make possible the highest degree of efficiency. No more." Given that the primary objective of the AIC-K was to contribute to the economic reconstruction of Soviet Russia, enhancing "efficiency"—both technical and social—was indispensable. To achieve this, the Colony required precisely such a "free hand," that is, a meaningful degree of "autonomy."

Founded on these principles, the AIC-K gradually developed despite the numerous difficulties inherent in such an unprecedented undertaking. In order to advance further toward its primary objective, the Colony needed to secure positive support from Soviet governing bodies. In practice, however, such support proved increasingly difficult to obtain. As a result, the AIC-K had little choice but to undertake institutional adjustments in accordance with the economic transformations brought about by the NEP. In fact, this would have been the Colony's only viable option. Rutgers' original vision of creating a new workers' state—what one colonist described as a "new REPUBLIC OF LABOR"—had effectively vanished. What remained was the task of accelerating economic development by maximizing technical "efficiency" in production, while preserving as much "autonomy" as possible within the organizational framework of the AIC-K.

First, the AIC-K's headquarters was to be located in Moscow, the center of trade. This relocation also made it necessary to clarify what was meant by "autonomy." Many colonists—including leading Wobblies—interpreted "autonomy" as individual license and freedom of action in their conduct within the industry, rather than as autonomy of an organization operating within the institutional framework of Soviet Russia. This interpretation led them to attempt to resolve the Colony's operational and technical problems through mass meetings. Their arguments, which sought to uphold the founding principles, ultimately proved unpersuasive in the heated debates that preceded the institutional changes described above. At the time, Rutgers (together with Th. Reese) wrote to the STO warning that "within the present Managing Board there are various differences of opinion which will put a brake on the preparatory work for actual production." In other words, Rutgers feared that internal conflict would undermine production "efficiency" and thereby hinder the Colony's primary objective of contributing to the economic reconstruction of Soviet Russia.

Galkina regarded this trend within the AIC-K, namely its "Russification," as a natural and inevitable process. From her perspective, it simply marked the beginning of full-scale operations, with the AIC-K being transformed into a normal Russian "commercial trust," that is, incorporated into the broader Soviet economic system (and thus placed under the jurisdiction of the VSNKh rather than the STO). For Rutgers, however, the "Isolation" of the AIC-K was a dangerous experiment that could jeopardize the general interests of Soviet Russia. He considered the strengthening of "Russification" unavoidable, but insisted that the Colony's gradually weakened "autonomy" be preserved in the form of certain "special features." Concretely, these included "all the progressive and rational things that the colonists had been adhering to," "high efficiency of instruction with a minimal amount of administrative personnel [foreign staff]," "combining our statistics and management system with the introduction of the latest production methods," and the right of appeal to the STO. In the end, none of these conditions were accepted. The issues were instead resolved through the liquidation and reorganization of the AIC-K, which was the worst possible outcome. The significance of Rutgers' persistent efforts to preserve the "special features" that constituted the last bastion of "autonomy," and to retain the foreign staff who embodied these features, has never been recognized by AIC-K researchers to date.

Why, then, has the importance of this point not been recognized? The primary reason is that previous researchers did not thoroughly examine the documents left by Rutgers, who was the individual most directly involved in the AIC-K's formation and dissolution. The only Rutgers materials they consulted were his 1935 memoir "Encounters with Lenin" and the articles and reports he published in *Kuzbas*. Rutgers' personal papers were donated by his daughter, G.C. Trincher-Rutgers, to the Institute of Marxism-Leninism (now RGASPI) on 31 January 1983.
While earlier scholars such as G.Ia. Tarle may not have had access to these materials, contemporary researchers, including Galkina, certainly do. In fact, these documents constitute the principal sources for the present series of articles. Of course, the Rutgers papers used here still require further verification through comparison with the minutes of the STO and other relevant bodies, as well as with the reports Rutgers submitted on various occasions (I leave this task to future researchers).

5 Reassessing Rutgers

The on-the-spot report written by two colonists—secretary Helen C. Wilson and physician Elsie R. Mitchell—shortly after their return to the United States following the liquidation of the AIC-K was specific and detailed. However, it was based solely on what they had personally seen and heard about, and it consistently portrayed Rutgers as a "dictator." They wrote, "It seemed a pity that the man on whom the dictatorship fell was a Hollander. His brief residence in the United States had resulted in a dislike and distrust of everything American—especially democracy." Smith subsequently adopted this characterization of Rutgers as a "dictator."

In response to such criticisms, Sparks, chemical engineer who served as a colonist during the first half of the AIC-K, offered a markedly different assessment of Rutgers: "He was the only one of the management board that commanded, if not agreement, at least a necessary modicum of

respect from all sides at the enterprise." It should be noted that the reservation was embedded in the phrase "if not agreement." This hesitation reflects the "bureaucratic" or "centralized" tendencies frequently attributed to Rutgers, which have often been treated critically. Yet for Rutgers, "top-down" management and instruction were at times unavoidable. The introduction of "a certain discipline" was necessary to compensate for the shortcomings of mass meetings, and the emergence of "some sort of dictatorship of the technician" was, in his view, an inevitable response to the need to improve technical "efficiency" in production. In this respect, Paula Garb expands on Sparks' evaluation, summarizing Rutgers' role in a way that was likely accurate—at least during 1923–24, before his health deteriorated: "[Rutgers] put a stop to the endless meetings and bickering over petty daily problems. To the displeasure of many of the workers, who believed every single matter should be decided by the collective, Rutgers began making decisions himself and insisted that they be followed without question. Fortunately for the Colony, he made the right decisions. He became so well respected that by the time he asked to leave in 1925 no one wanted to see him go. He was strict but fair and, most importantly, an excellent manager."

Rutgers, who was known for his "strict" sense of discipline, made the acceptance of such discipline a condition for assuming leadership at a moment of acute institutional crisis. His determination is clearly expressed in a long typed letter addressed to Haywood and A. Pearson, Jr., dated 27 August 1922, written after the Colony's general meeting that introduced Pearson—newly arrived with the fourth group—as chief engineer: ".....the Soviet Government would not turn over this property to a group of colonists, no matter how well they were organized, unless they had a man whom they considered qualified to administer it. It seems I am the Goat [=Scapegoat]. If we take over these mines, I am going to take them over. If they get on fire, I will be called to trial in Tomsk [by local governing bodies]. I am the man that is responsible. It is rather a serious situation for a man to get into. I cannot undertake this unless discipline is accepted in this colony."

6 A new evaluation from the perspective of post-liquidation development

With regard to the evaluation from the perspective of economic development after AIC-K's liquidation, researchers have been almost unanimous. Two contemporary evaluations illustrate this consensus. Ruth E. Kennell wrote: "Taken as a colonization scheme or a social experiment, Kuzbas was a failure. But as an industrial undertaking it succeeded and its work lives on." Similarly, Wilson and Mitchell observed: "The specific task of completing the chemical plant and modernizing the Kemerovo mines had been accomplished; both were producing and profitable. Our coke was being used in the steel-mills in the Urals….. Some of our successes were not lasting, but the completed, producing plant remains as a substantial contribution to the industrial system of Russia."

The Colony's contribution became even more significant during World War II. "When the Germans overran Donbas, the Soviet Union lost over 60 per cent of her coal output. But in 1943 Kemerovo produced 25 million tons of coal. The chemical plant was the only coke plant still in Soviet hands during the Nazi occupation. It supplied 2,000 enterprises with coke."

Kuzbas was fortunate to be located in a region geographically insulated from German invasion.

It is worth recalling here Rutgers' rebuttal to one of the early arguments against the Kuzbas project, that is, that the Kuznetsk Coalfield should be granted as a capitalist concession. Rutgers emphasized that the region bordered the undeveloped interior of Russia and that "chances for a bona fide concession in the Kuznetsk Basin on basis of immediately putting up a large amount of capital, are at present very small. Moreover it would be extremely important, if a region of so tremendous significance for the future development could be kept out of the hands of our class-enemies." He further argued that "Russia can utilize foreign experience and training in modern industries without the interference of capitalist concessionaires."

Rutgers' original conception of the project stemmed from a search for ways to utilize "foreign *capital*" while avoiding the intervention of "foreign *capitalists*." He sought cooperation with foreign *labor* rather than foreign *capitalists*, and envisioned concessionaires providing "labor and technical and organizing abilities" as well as "*capital* in the form of machines, initial expenses, food funds, etc." Lenin, facing severe financial constraints, was prepared to grant concessions to foreign capitalists. Yet despite his views on concessions, he supported Rutgers' plan "without the help of foreign capitalists," recognizing its significance within the broader movement for international labor solidarity. For Rutgers, granting concessions in the Kuzbas region to capitalists would have been absolutely unacceptable. He appears to have avoided directly opposing it by cleverly using its geographical location as a pretext. In retrospect, the AIC-K's Kuznetsk Coalfield indeed became "a region of so tremendous significance for the future development."

The fact that the AIC-K had already laid the foundations for such economic development within only five years, despite extreme cold and other adverse conditions, and despite the country's slow emergence from the chaos of the Civil War, was likely due to **its consistent and proactive attitude toward expanding its operational scale**: (1) From an early stage, the AIC-K had begun merging enterprises in surrounding areas and consistently pursued the integration of management across the entire Kuznetsk Basin, culminating in the Tel'bess plan. (2) The AIC-K was originally conceived as an industrial workers' Colony operating in both Kuzbas and the Northern Urals (Nadezhdinsk plants). When approval for the latter became uncertain in the autumn of 1922, Rutgers vigorously promoted the so-called "Ural-Kuznetsk Combinat" plan at a Presidium meeting of the Gosplan. Although dismissed at the time due to the dire economic and financial situation, the plan was later realized after the First Five-Year Plan.

Had the AIC-K not established the foundations for economic development during its brief existence, it is doubtful that the Ural-Kuznetsk Complex could have supported the Soviet economy to the extent it did during World War II. In this sense, the AIC-K's reputation as an enterprise that began as the "Little International in Siberia" and ultimately laid the groundwork for a major industrial complex remains firmly justified.

7 Was it a failure of idealism?

As we conclude this series of articles, we may return to the question posed at the outset: "Was this project, based on international labor solidarity, ultimately a failure of idealism? If it was, where did the problems lie?"

The AIC-K was founded with two principal aims: **(a) contributing to the economic reconstruction of Soviet Russia** and **(b) realizing social experiments and creation based on international labor solidarity and the principle of "autonomy**." Yet because **(a)** constituted the primary objective of the enterprise, any threat to **(a)** necessarily subordinated the pursuit of **(b)**. From the outset, therefore, the AIC-K faced a structural dilemma in which the simultaneous realization of both aims proved difficult. Despite these fundamental tensions, two major factors motivated the colonists to join the Kuzbas project. As Rutgers later recalled in the 1950s: "The first is the **enthusiasm** among workers and technicians in capitalist countries **for the social experiment** to overthrow capitalism and to build socialism. The second may be found in an overestimating of the all-powerfulness of modern technique, when liberated from the restraints in the capitalist world. Together they explain as well the difficulties and the disappointments, as the successes and the final results." In short, it was above all the "enthusiasm for the social experiment" of aim **(b)** that sustained the proactive drive to expand operations and thereby strengthened the contribution to aim **(a)**.

The Soviet Government, for its part, initially placed some measure of hope in the AIC-K and provided financial support for aim **(a)**. However, once the NEP system took shape, the Government came to believe that it could achieve **(a)** independently, that is, by "russifying" the AIC-K. A further problem then emerged. In the wake of Rutgers' prolonged medical treatment and the controversy surrounding the appointment of his deputy, the "Russification" advanced so rapidly that the pursuit of **(b)** was effectively rendered impossible.

In this sense, the AIC-K's inability to realize aim **(b)** makes it difficult to reject the assessment that the project represented a "failure of idealism." Internal difficulties certainly existed: a shortage of senior staff, conflicts over the meaning and scope of "autonomy," the death of Bronka Kornblitt (Rutgers' secretary and interpreter), and Rutgers' own medical absences. Yet the AIC-K consistently demonstrated high productivity. As Galkina observed, "It is evident that the colony was much more efficient when operated by its own management than it was under the command of the Soviet director." For the AIC-K to achieve further economic development (for example, expanding markets for coal, coke, and chemical products) it had no choice but to enter the Russian economic system as a whole. The Soviet Government regarded this necessity as a favorable condition for accelerating the "Russification." Not a few colonists opposed this process and advocated the "Isolation" in order to preserve aim **(b)**. Rutgers, however, recognized that rejecting the "Russification" would make aim **(a)** more difficult and that some degree of integration had already become unavoidable. His final condition was the retention of foreign staff, whose presence would preserve the "special features" essential to aim **(b)**. In the end, the fact that even this minimal condition was disregarded by Soviet governing bodies suggests **a deeper structural problem on the Soviet Russian side**, in that they refused to accept even the last vestige of "autonomy." It should also be recalled that sentiments contrary to international labor solidarity were sometimes expressed not only among Russian "spetsy" but also among governmental organs, where the view circulated that they could manage on their own without help

from foreigners.

In conclusion, the AIC-K's "idealism" did not simply collapse under its own weight, nor can its failure be attributed solely to internal shortcomings. Responsibility also lay with the Soviet Russian side. One may well ask how far Rutgers and his colleagues had come from Lenin's words at the turbulent STO meeting of 30 September 1921: "Dear Comrade Rutgers, don't get too excited, I promise you not only some freedom, but complete freedom [within the organization]"!

Key words: Autonomous Industrial Colony "Kuzbas", Periodization of the AIC-K, STO, VSNKh, Gosplan, IWW, Begemann, S.J. Rutgers, autonomy

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Map 15: Nederlanders bouwen in Siberië（1921-1927）

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