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WOMEN WORKERS IN LATE IMPERIAL RUSSIAN INDUSTRY: HIRING POLICY AND EMPLOYER ATTITUDES ON THE RAILWAYS TO 1914

By defining ‘worker’ to include low-paid white-collar as well as blue-collar staff, and taking a broad definition of industry, this article reveals whereas factory managers increasingly hired blue-collar women during roughly 1895–1914, the situation with women’s employment in the railway industry was very different. Railway policy was to restrict numbers tightly and prioritise literate women in certain low-paid mostly white-collar jobs for which men were hard to recruit. Railway policy-makers were influenced by not just enduring patriarchal attitudes, but also military demands together with financial concerns associated with pension rights and retrospective wage increases. At the same time, local labour shortages increasingly forced managers to seek exemptions to the hiring policy or even ignore the restrictions, especially in regions like Central Asia where qualified people of both genders were relatively scarce. The article concludes with some general questions. How typical by that time were the MPS as an employing ministry and state-owned railways as industrial employers? Did hiring policy in state-owned industrial enterprises differ significantly from the private industrial sector? What should be understood by the term ‘skilled worker’? And how important are white-collar workers as a category for analysing women’s employment in late Tsarist Russia’s industrial economy?

The literature about paid female employment in Russian industry has highlighted significant growth in the number of women factory workers during the last 15–20 years before the First World War. The prevailing explanation is that the strike waves of the mid-1890s and especially 1905 began to persuade government and employers to view women more favourably as potential substitutes for men. Women could be paid less, and they were considered much less likely than men to go on strike.¹ The related issue of fear among so-called skilled male industrial workers about rising female employment has also been discussed. The efforts by these men to create trade unions during the last two pre-war decades have been explained in part as a means to defend themselves

against the ‘dilution’ of the labour force with less skilled women.² Against this background, the war itself has tended to be seen as an accelerator of substitution and dilution in Russia’s industrial settings, much as has been argued with the other major belligerent countries. And as in other countries, political expedience, national defence priorities and personal economic necessities have all been evident in Russia as contributing factors.³

At the centre of this literature are so-called blue-collar labouring workers (*rabochie*) in factories, most of whom were unskilled and illiterate. But this definition of industrial worker excludes numerous workers who were unquestionably employed in industry, notably low-paid ‘white-collar’ personnel (*sluzhashchie*) such as office clerks and typists. Analysis of this latter category seems essential for obtaining a comprehensive understanding of women’s employment in industry. Equally, for an industrializing society where the majority of the population were illiterate, there is an argument for regarding literacy and numeracy as significant skills and potential advantages in the labour market, and thus for treating office staff as skilled workers at least to some extent, especially if they were also able to type quickly. Indeed, referencing a leading imported typewriter brand of the late Imperial period, the term *remingtonistka* became a formal job title and seems only ever to have been used with the ‘-ka’ feminine suffix. In short, to eschew the traditional distinctions between blue-collar and white-collar workers, and potentially also between working class and lower middle class, should reveal a more granular picture of women’s employment in industry.

A further issue is that industry tends to be conflated with factory. A full analysis of women’s employment in industry requires the industrial sector to be defined more broadly. Power stations, coal mines, quarries, and oil wells are just four examples of important industrial enterprises that do not fit within the core concept of factory in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century economies. Another example is the railway industry, which of course is viewed as a leading, if not the leading, sector in the industrializing tsarist economy during 1856–1914, and which was an employer of women from the mid-nineteenth century. Significantly, by size of workforce, fifteen of the largest twenty employers in the Russian empire (excluding Finland) in 1913 were railway companies, each having at least 23,000 employees. Three of them – the Southwestern, Southern, and Catherine railways – each had over 50,000 staff.⁴

Focusing on women in the railway industry prior to 1914, this article investigates employer attitudes in terms of both state officials and company managers. State officials are relevant because railway policy for hiring women was treated as a state prerogative, and was closely connected with the arrangements for state regulation of the sector as well as company ownership and operational management. The Ministry of Ways of Communications (*Ministerstvo putei soobshcheniia* – MPS) acted as the regulator of the whole network, and thus the minister and senior ministry officials were central to the policy-making process. But because it also fulfilled the overall managerial role for state-owned railway operating companies, the MPS was involved in implementing the policy as well. The majority of railway companies were privately owned until the 1890s, but that changed through nationalization and state investment in new lines; after 1906, though, private investment in new railways grew at a faster rate than state investment, such that by 1913 approximately one third of the route mileage was in private ownership. Subject to caveats that will be explained below, the head or manager of each

company was responsible for most of the operating decisions on his railway, including hiring, and hence is regarded as the employer for present purposes except for jobs at the MPS itself.⁵

As for the employees, all categories of female railway workers are considered. In traditional terms this means mainly white-collar workers, but the key distinction for present purposes is between women who were company staff in any capacity, either with a budgeted role (*shtatnye*) or regular daily pay, and casual daily-paid workers together with women who worked in associated non-railway companies or groups such as the employees of station buffet concessionaires or members of *artels* of manual labour. These latter categories are very hard to trace in railway sources and are not considered here. For reasons that will be elucidated below, railway women with regular pay generally had to be literate, and so if the argument is accepted that literacy was a significant labour skill in late Imperial Russia, then these workers can be considered as skilled to at least that extent. After all, basic literacy and numeracy were needed by, for instance, even the lowliest crossing keepers on the quietest rural branch lines for logging the times of the passing trains.⁶

Several considerations explain and justify this approach. The railways did not systematically record personnel statistics by gender, education and social background prior to 1917, and as will be shown, only low-paid jobs were accessible to women. The railway industry did not have one hiring policy for blue-collar roles and another for white-collar jobs. Moreover, the industry encompassed an extremely diverse range of employment types, for the railway world was a society within society. In addition to the depots, stations, engineering works, offices, and so forth that one would expect, the companies that constituted the public railway network had their own school and tertiary education system, medical service (including hospitals), police department, fire services, telegraph system, ancillary enterprises such as timber processing, and sometimes even food shops. This is not to say that, for example, teachers in railway schools should be regarded as industrial workers in the traditional sense, but these people do merit description as workers in a specific industry, not least because the MPS controlled those schools. Also, worker militancy on the railways in 1905 involved all levels of workers, including white-collar staff, so given the immense political and military importance of keeping the trains moving, this industry might seem especially appropriate for substituting male workers with women in any department. It was, after all, a railway strike that gave rise to the general strike of October 1905.⁷ Finally, this approach has the advantages of including a hitherto neglected social category of female employee, intrinsically important and also relevant for assessments of the impact of the First World War on women's employment in industry.

Based mainly on policy and personnel records from the archives of the MPS and two Moscow-based railway companies, the article reveals a far more complex situation than the pattern familiar for factory industry.⁸ The first three sections of the article provide an overview of policy developments and employer attitudes between the 1860s and 1914. The fourth section looks at obstacles to policy change and, briefly, at worker experiences of obtaining a railway job during the final decade before the outbreak of the First World War. To give more attention to the voices of women themselves is beyond the scope of this article, but could be very illuminating, and is feasible in principle: many personnel files do survive in the archives of three

Moscow-based railway companies, and probably more can be found in at least some of the other surviving company collections.⁹ Unfortunately, the terms of archival access at the time of writing are such that to create a sufficiently large sample would be extremely time-consuming and, for at least this researcher, impracticable. To reiterate, then, the focus of this article is the attitudes of state officials and employers.

First steps, 1864–1875: An unfortunate necessity

Women became an important part of the railway labour force early in Russia's railway age, during the first 'boom' of railway construction in the 1860s and early 1870s. Writing in 1906, the MPS Chief Inspector suggested that, with the exception of cleaners for ladies' lavatories, the phenomenon probably began on the Moscow–Kursk Railway in 1866. His recollection was that in order to improve the service conditions of track guards, their wives were permitted to work as crossing keepers if the guard hut was close to the crossing and the traffic was light, or as assistants to their crossing-keeper husbands if the line was moderately busy.¹⁰ However, Vladimir Serdiuk has clarified that Russia's first line, the Tsarskoe Selo Railway, hired four women as cleaners in the early 1840s, and that several lines hired a few women for office work in the early 1860s. If the cleaners were most likely illiterate, the office staff necessarily had at least basic literacy, and the possibility to pay these women lower wages than men was an attractive incentive for the employers.¹¹

Particularly noteworthy from this period is an 1864 proposal by the MPS to allow the Finnish Railways to hire women as telegraphists – the first time that a state-owned railway in the empire might employ women. In general terms this idea originated from, on the one hand, a lively debate in the society from the late 1850s about 'the woman question' (*zhenskii vopros*), and on the other hand, the emerging reality that industrialization would increasingly require an educated labour force, with some awareness of women's employment in other countries. It also reflected the very specific circumstances of the Grand Duchy of Finland. There as everywhere, railway construction necessitated the creation of railway telegraph offices, but in Finland telegraph operators needed to be fluent in the German, French, and Swedish as well as Russian languages. That combination of language skills implied at least an educated middle-class background, but it proved difficult to recruit enough qualified men because the pay was low, and men with those skills could aspire to better paid work. However, ministry officials calculated that there were enough suitably qualified local women, typically working as poorly paid teachers or governesses, who were accustomed to sedentary (*sidchivyi*) work and for whom the modest wage of a telegraph operator would represent an attractive pay increase. The MPS even argued that a well-educated social background would be useful for the railways: the modest way of living characteristic of well brought up women would guarantee the best order and moral standards at telegraph offices. Accepting this assessment, the Committee of Ministers endorsed a three-year experiment whereby women could be appointed to junior positions if they passed examinations in arithmetic, geography, and the languages. They would take the same service oath as men, but their annual wage would be capped at 300 rubles and promotion to higher grades was prohibited. Agreeing in November 1864, Tsar Alexander II commented that in time it might be possible to extend this measure 'to the Empire'

as well – in principle a far less difficult recruitment challenge because there only the Russian language was used.¹²

This experiment had far-reaching ramifications. Its success inspired a proposal for women to serve in the postal department, which was overseen by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Ministerstvo vnutrennykh del* – MVD).¹³ A broader policy debate ensued about whether to permit women to work in the state bureaucracy, state-owned enterprises and public (*obshchestvennye*) institutions. The fact that the majority of such jobs required literacy and numeracy meant that the discussions focused on the relatively small number of women with at least a basic education; its implication in terms of social background still requires clarification.¹⁴ In December 1870, the Committee of Ministers discussed a report from the head of the Third Department of the Tsar's Chancellery, General P. A. Shuvalov, that identified two core issues – firstly, the impact on home life, the family and the woman herself, and secondly, the extent to which women were actually required for the work itself. The committee's decision, which the tsar duly endorsed on 15 February 1871, would set the main policy parameters for several decades concerning women's employment throughout the state sector, and would continue to influence senior MPS officials until the First World War.

The conclusions were very traditional and cautious, ignoring the tough realities of daily life for the vast majority of women. Shuvalov contended, and the ministers largely agreed, that women's primary function (*priamoe naznachenie*) was work in the home, and that allowing women to have paid work outside the home could cause marital strain and other serious problems. Among other things it would detrimentally affect male employment, and hence men's position as breadwinners and heads of household. It could even encourage the spread of nihilism among young women. In any case, Shuvalov contended, as women were governed more by emotions than reason, women should not be allowed to do jobs that mainly required the use of reason. As for the actual work, he confidently predicted the value of women's employment to be extremely insignificant. His report did consider counter-arguments, including the comparative low cost of female labour and the belief that by nature women worked precisely and accurately. But summing up, Shuvalov concluded – and the ministers agreed – that female employment in state and public institutions should be avoided as far as possible. Women should be allowed to work in only a limited range of skilled jobs in nursing, midwifery, education, telegraph offices, and certain accounting offices. Moreover, the number of women working in any telegraph department should be restricted, with the limit expressed as a percentage of the overall workforce in the given workplace; this thinking was derived from German railway practice and intended to prevent women taking so many telegraphist jobs that there could be a shortage of male telegraphists in the event of war.¹⁵

More research is needed to clarify the impact of that decision, but it would appear that policy for the railway industry was envisaged as more restrictive than for other spheres like education. For instance, during 1871 the Ministry of Education authorized the hiring of women as school teachers and the MVD published rules for employing women in the so-called government telegraph network that it administered.¹⁶ By contrast, Shuvalov proposed an outright ban on the employment of women by privately owned railways in 1872, which at this juncture effectively meant most of the network.¹⁷ The thinking behind this ban is unclear, though again military worries

may well have been important, especially as by now the hiring of women was becoming both widespread and essential for a variety of low-paid but essential railway jobs, notably crossing keepers and telegraphists.¹⁸

That the railways responded with a strong protest is thus unsurprising. In their view, the provision of railway jobs for wives and sisters was crucial for recruiting men to vital but poorly paid jobs at the numerous stations. Railway representatives claimed that it was difficult to find bachelors to do these jobs in remote areas and that in any case family men were better employees. Thus, if the ministry were to prohibit the hiring of women, the managements would have to raise wages to avert an exodus of family men and also find men for the low-paid jobs being done by women. Operating costs would thus increase at a time when the government was demanding significant economies because of railway debts. One official noted that the sacking of his railway's sixty female telegraphists could bring traffic to a halt because probably they would be impossible to replace promptly: there was no surplus of male telegraphists. Moreover, crossing keepers based in remote areas generally needed to be married; sacking the women would mean finding more men and hugely increased costs.¹⁹

Supportive responses predominated when, possibly prompted by a report about Sweden's railwaywomen, the minister asked company managements for their opinion in about 1873.²⁰ Nonetheless, at the insistence of the Third Department the policy eventually announced on 8 February 1875 was more restrictive than the government otherwise allowed for state and public institutions. Based on the MVD's 1871 rules, the new MPS rules applied to all railways. They allowed women to work as railway telegraph operators provided that they were at least 18 years old, unmarried, a widow, or married to a railway worker based at the station where the relevant telegraph office was located. By agreement with the MVD, the number of female telegraphists was to be capped at 15% of the total number of telegraphists on the given railway, and each appointment required prior approval from the head of the local MVD telegraph district.²¹ In correspondence with the minister, the Third Department explained that all other female employment on the railways was banned with the exception of unskilled manual labourers (*chernorabochie*) and daily-paid jobs, clarified as attendants and cleaners for ladies' waiting rooms. That said, women who were already in railway service – for example, in office jobs – need not be dismissed.²²

Policy developments, 1875–1914: Change or continuity?

Although railways did not report staff numbers by gender before the First World War, it is clear that the absolute number of railwaywomen grew considerably by 1914. Some 12,462 were captured by the 1897 census, though as Reichman notes, the definition of railway employment was limited and imprecise.²³ According to Serdiuk's estimates based on pension and savings records, the network total reached some 26,000 by 1900, nearly 34,000 by 1905, and more than 42,000 by 1 November 1913. Reichman cautions that pension records overstate women's participation in the workforce, but the figure of 22,000 women that he cites for the state railways in 1905 is roughly proportionate with Serdiuk's estimate for the whole network. This growth, however, must be contextualized: reflecting the continuing expansion of the network, the overall

workforce expanded at about the same rate, and so women's share of the total remained relatively static at around 8%.²⁴

The possibility for this absolute growth must be explained to some extent by the increasing accessibility of schooling for girls, which expanded the pool of literate potential workers.²⁵ But changes in hiring policy were also relevant. Up to 1903, the MPS gradually relaxed the restrictions, with more permitted jobs and higher quotas. Significantly, however, the idea of widespread women's employment seems never to have been broached. In fact, the ministry reinstated most of the restrictions in 1906 – just as the question of female employment was acquiring greater prominence in the press and the society, and the female factory workforce was growing. Consequently, the idea familiar from manufacturing industry of substituting cheaper women for men in order to reduce costs and the likelihood of strikes simply did not become an issue on the railways.

Announced in a series of MPS circulars, the changes initially concerned mainly the percentage quota and the ban on non-telegraph appointments. The first change, ratified by the tsar on 17 November 1889, was occasioned by the nationalization of several railways because in practice private railways had been able to employ women for certain secondary (*vtorostepennyie*) accounts and clerical duties in headquarters offices. Recognizing the utility of this policy, the Committee of Ministers formally authorized it for headquarters offices of state railways. The same document permitted women to do railway-related jobs in offices of the ministry that audited railway finances, which was known as State Control (*Gosudarstvennyi kontrol'*). Significantly, however, women were denied the rights and advantages of 'state service' (*gosudarstvennaia sluzhba*), which included job security and pension rights. Nor could they occupy permanent budgeted (*shtatnye*) positions. The details of precisely which jobs could be held and in which offices were to be finalized by the two ministers.²⁶

The resultant list of approved jobs was published in an MPS circular of 1 December 1890.²⁷ At a railway's headquarters women could access a variety of junior office jobs in most departments, but the specifics varied from department to department. For example, they could work as a junior ledger clerk (*mladshii schetovod*) only in the accounts, book-keeping, telegraph, and traction (locomotives and rolling stock) departments, even though that role did exist in other departments. The other permitted roles were: doctor's assistant, midwife, crossing keeper, ticket seller at large stations, cleaner in ladies' rooms, and telegraphist. A quota of 20% in any given department was specified for all roles except doctor's assistant and midwife, for which the limit was simply the budgeted number of posts. The fact that more senior roles were not authorized implied, and was interpreted to mean, that promotion was not permitted.

This circular of December 1890 proved to be the first of several relaxations of the railway restrictions. Nominally they were for state railways, but private railways were expected to follow suit. On 2 October 1892, the quota was raised to 30% for statistics offices. The circular noted glowing reports from managers about women's work, but for whatever reason, only the one change was made. Certainly the railway-led industrialization drive of the 1890s did not quickly spur any easing of policy. In fact, in 1895 a rule was introduced whereby married women telegraphists had to be dismissed if their husband left railway service, and the following year, the quota increase of 1892 was rescinded without explanation.²⁸ Ironically, the next expansion in the list

of accessible jobs, announced in a circular dated 11 November 1900, occurred just as the 1900 recession began to curtail investment in railway construction. Subject to a 30% quota, women were permitted to work in the newly created Receipts Department (*Sluzhba sborov*) as junior ledger clerks, controllers, clerks, journal clerks, and copy clerks. Presumably the need to staff these new departments quickly was the decision's rationale. At the same juncture, the private Riazan'-Urals Railway sought permission to appoint women to several traffic and commercial roles as an experiment; on 6 December 1900, the minister authorized ten appointments as stationmaster, assistant stationmaster or freight cashier at ten stations on secondary routes, one person at each.²⁹

Relative success with this experiment helped produce the final significant pre-war relaxation of the restrictions. In 1903 the same railway requested authorization to appoint twenty-five women to 'active traffic duties' at secondary stations on trunk lines as well as stations on minor routes. This request potentially had important ramifications, because the draft text for a new statute about railway white-collar staff proposed to treat all stationmasters as state servants with the rights of state service, whereas railwaywomen had always been denied these rights. The MPS Directorate of Railways (*Upravlenie zheleznykh dorog* – UZhD) noted this situation to the minister but avoided commenting. It balked at the idea of extending the experiment to trunk lines, but supported continuation on secondary lines. It also took the opportunity to recommend 'the expansion of women's employment on the railways' by adding the jobs of passenger ticket cashier, goods cashier and commercial clerk. The minister's approval was announced in an MPS circular of 24/25 November 1903 with a caveat excluding positions that involved *komandirovki* or training for promotion to non-authorized jobs. State service was not mentioned, and as will be shown below, this issue had not been resolved when the war started in 1914.³⁰

In spring 1906 – the very time when factory owners were looking at hiring more women – MPS circulars dated 14 March and 15 April signalled a return to the grudging spirit of 1875, with three major changes.³¹ First, they brought the norms back down to 15% for telegraphists and 10% for all other occupations. Second, they stipulated that preference was to be given to widows and orphans of former railway staff (*sluzhashchie*), and to the daughters of current railway employees. A later report explained that railways implemented these instructions by registering candidates who passed the established aptitude test in a queue (*kandidatskii spisok*) organized by date rather than merit, and contacting the next woman in the queue when a vacancy occurred for which no man was available.³² The third big change was insistence on completion of the secondary school curriculum (*srednee obrazovanie*) as the minimum acceptable qualification. This stipulation evidently meant in practice that women needed a higher standard of educational qualification than men for the same job, for as of 1912 almost all male junior office staff on the network's premier line, the Nicholas Railway, had only primary school qualifications (*nizshii tsenz gorodskikh i nachal'nykh uchilishch*).³³

This retreat is all the more remarkable because it occurred in the context of a sharp increase in vacancies. Appointed in October 1905 on Count Sergei Witte's advice, the Minister of MPS, K. S. Nemeshaev, had a reformist reputation and a strategy to try to balance discipline with efforts to improve the plight of ordinary workers, including a railway labour charter.³⁴ His big problem was that the general strike of October 1905 had escalated from the first national railway strike. Nearly 60,000 railway workers –

white-collar as well as blue-collar – would be dismissed by mid-1907 in response to that strike.³⁵ Moreover, it is a near certainty that some of those vacancies were for jobs previously approved for women. So how are the 1906 circulars to be explained? Their rationale is not certain, but military issues may well have been to the fore. Serdiuk points to the argument that reducing the number of women could facilitate the militarization of the railway system in the event of further revolutionary unrest or a war.³⁶ Indeed, proposals to militarize the network were discussed at the highest level during the next several years to 1909.³⁷ Furthermore, one of their key proponents, Lieutenant-General A. fon Vendrikh, authored a report in October 1906 about women on Sweden's railways in which he made two military points regarding Russia. One was that the rise of socialism and the possibility of more railway strikes required certain measures to guarantee that commercial and military train operations were unaffected, which he believed would be difficult if the network had a large number of female employees. The second was that office staff on Swiss railways were liable for redeployment to operating duties concerning troop traffic, which he stated would be extremely difficult if many women were employed in these offices.³⁸

Asked to comment on Vendrikh's report, the MPS Chief Inspector offered a different view.³⁹ He advocated increased employment of women given the favourable assessments of their work and the cost savings that could be obtained. As for Vendrikh's political concerns, he believed that married women and employed girls were less likely to strike than men, and that women were inclined by nature towards conservatism. He rejected the objection about *komandirovki* as poorly justified, but he did oppose assigning women to lines with significant troop traffic because of recent troop riots on the Siberian route. He did not believe that mobilization would be impeded by employing women for office work at stations, and proposed the abolition of quotas for jobs on minor lines and for office work.

The minister who received these reports was Lieutenant-General N. K. Shaffgauzen-Shenberg-Ek-Shaufus. He had been head of the UZhD at the time of the spring 1906 circulars, and succeeded Nemeshaev as minister when the latter resigned in late spring 1906 having failed to get the support of his fellow ministers and the bureaucracy for his reform proposals. As Reichman observes, Shaufus was regarded as a vigorous hard-liner, a career military officer who could be expected to deal firmly with strikers.⁴⁰ Shaufus was unimpressed by the chief inspector's rebuttal of Vendrikh's conclusions. He queried the inspector's point about *komandirovki* and rejected his assertion about mobilization. Furthermore, when the UZhD conducted a review of policy for women's employment in 1907–08 and recommended some relaxation of the rules, Minister Shaufus refused. One relaxation of the restrictions did occur during his three-year ministerial tenure – cancellation of the requirement for the MPS and MVD to liaise over proposed appointments of women to telegraph jobs. However, that change was effectively forced upon the MPS by the MVD, which no longer wanted to vet every prospective female railway telegraphist.⁴¹ All things considered, it seems very possible that Shaufus was personally responsible for conceiving the 1906 retreat and getting Nemeshaev's approval.

The appointment in January 1909 of the next minister, S. V. Rukhlov, stimulated rumours that the quota would be increased back to 30%.⁴² Instead, Rukhlov reasserted the established procedures.⁴³ Ultimately the only changes actually implemented during his tenure prior to the First World War were minor. Owing to difficulties with

recruiting enough men, he allowed several railways to have a slightly higher quota and wider variety of permitted jobs. Examples include the Tashkent Railway in December 1909, in relation to such jobs as charge assessor (*taksirovshchik*) with a 20% quota, and the Siberian Railway in May 1910, which wanted a higher quota for temporary and permanent staff in its Receipts Department.⁴⁴ In December 1911, Rukhlov agreed to abolish a rule whereby railways had to dismiss any railwaywoman whose railway husband was conscripted to the armed services, although he caveated this concession by requiring railways to secure the ministry's approval for each case.⁴⁵

That said, Rukhlov did authorize much improved terms of service for female staff with a permanent position (*postoiannaia rabota*).⁴⁶ The context was not the recent growth of urban female employment, but the problem that the MPS had been functioning on a temporary legal basis since an organizational reform in 1899. A new statute (*ustav*) was needed to cover, among other things, all aspects of employment in the ministry and its subordinate organizations.⁴⁷ The idea of improved terms of service for women was perhaps an indication of new interest at the MPS in reducing the inequalities between the sexes. However, given Rukhlov's reluctance to change policy as outlined above, a more likely explanation is a decision to match changes being made in other ministries so as not to become uncompetitive in the labour market.

This possibility is suggested by the government's handling of the draft statute that the MPS eventually submitted to the State Duma in 1913. The passing of analogous legislation for other ministries in the interim may well explain why this draft included a clause entitling white-collar female staff (*sluzhashchie*) on the state railways to the benefits of state service, including pension rights. Undoubtedly this proposal was uncontroversial at government level, for in October 1913 the Council of Ministers approved a new statute for State Control that was actually more generous in relation to female personnel. Indeed, ultimately the MPS accepted State Control's principles for its own statute. Thus, with the relevant Duma commission reportedly supportive, this reform was probably on course for inclusion in the new legislation by mid-1914. However, the outbreak of the war halted the deliberations, and in December 1914 the MPS had to seek a further extension of the deadline for finalizing the new statute, which was duly granted.⁴⁸ In the meantime there was no change to women's employment rights.

Official objections to wider female employment, c.1908–14

What, then, were the objections of railway officials to much wider female employment in the early twentieth century, and why was there so little change in policy even after it became clear in 1907 that even the MVD – by reputation a very conservative ministry – was relaxing its own policy? Traditional attitudes towards gender roles certainly still remained prominent at the MPS. When the UZhD conducted its 1908 review, it decided, among other things, that policy should continue to respect the government's opinion in the 1860s–70s that the widespread employment of women on the railways might have harmful effects on family life and the morals of women.⁴⁹ For example, a specific long-standing concern that might help explain the promotion ban was that many junior-level managerial jobs involved essential travel (*komandirovki*) or

secondment for days at a time – a requirement that seemed incompatible with women's domestic responsibilities.⁵⁰

Closely related to this conundrum with *komandirovki* were the military duties of railway officials, which could include long-term reassignment to a war zone. If women held jobs with such responsibilities, and were employed in much larger numbers across the whole industry, would the railways be able to fulfil their military obligations effectively? Ministry officials were not convinced.⁵¹ The railways' strategic and political significance also had a bearing on the rule for dismissing women when their railway-worker husband resigned or was sacked. Here by 1908 the practical concerns were confined to dismissals of men for political and/or 'moral' reasons: to continue employing close relatives of such disgraced men was considered dangerous in an industry so vital for the economy, defence and indeed governance. As noted above, this issue was extremely topical during 1905–07. Thereafter the main potential driving force for dismissals was public concern (including interventions by the press and State Duma deputies) about corruption among junior-level officials such as ticket collectors and freight-handling agents, though the number of prosecutions was small.⁵²

The question of money was extremely important and also multi-faceted. Pay was naturally its core component. That educated women would be willing and even happy to work for relatively low wages was a key justification for employing them as telegraphists in the 1860s. The pay cap and ban on promotion helped to control costs as well as constrain women's expectations. It is likely, too, that when other railway jobs were opened to women from the 1890s, budgetary concerns were part of the rationale for continuing to prohibit promotion to higher grades. Little had changed by the time of the 1908 review: the UZhD no longer wished to specify a pay cap, but it could still control expenditure on women's wages. It could, for example, if the minister approved, curtail the range of railway jobs that women were permitted to do.⁵³

Unease about overt pay discrimination was evidently not the explanation for this stance. Instead, it was the fact that rights of state service proposed under the draft new MPS statute would include the right to a state pension. As yet, eligibility for these rights was restricted to higher pay grades, so any moves to widen pension eligibility and extend this right to women were going to inflate costs at a time when the government was under pressure from the State Duma to bring spiralling railway-related debts under control. In short, ironically, proposals for a seemingly progressive reform for railway personnel encouraged the UZhD to continue restricting female employment.

The pension situation also included a further complication. Back in 1895, the Main Railway Pension Committee had agreed to allow women earning over 1000 rubles per year to join their local pension committee. In 1903, however, it became clear that the deduction of pension contributions from a woman's salary contravened a Senate decision of 1878.⁵⁴ In other words, women's work had a different legal status to men's work.

In these circumstances, it seems unsurprising that the MPS review of 1908 led to a reassertion of the status quo. However much senior officials might have liked to reduce female employment for military or other reasons, they understood that railways with recruitment difficulties could suffer serious consequences. Equally, they realized that any expansion would be hard to reverse if the results were deemed problematic in

any moral, political, military and/or financial way. And although by 1914 the ministry and indeed the government had conceded the principle of extending pension rights to many women in state service, this change had yet to be made law for the railways when the war broke out.

Hiring policy in practice, c.1906–14

How was the ministry's policy reflected at the level of the individual railway, which in most cases was the actual employer, and how was policy experienced by individual women? In practice managers sometimes did display interest in hiring women, and even enthusiasm on occasion, behaving more like the employers that historians have noticed in other industries during the last pre-war decade. However, 'substitution' and 'dilution' of the workforce – the replacement of men by cheaper and less skilled women – were not the aim.

To judge by the surviving records of the Moscow-based Moscow-Kursk, Nizhnii Novgorod and Murom Railway, hiring tended, at least in principle, to follow official policy fairly closely when the railway had little or no difficulty with recruiting sufficient numbers of qualified men and women. Above all, this was the case in the densely populated city of Moscow. The head of the railway issued circulars in August 1911 and March 1912 reminding managers of the rules for hiring daily-paid women and transferring them to budgeted (*shtatnye*) positions.⁵⁵ And when his attention was drawn in December 1913 to a case where a woman had been hired for daily-paid work without having been registered in the relevant employment queue, he ordered an investigation, noting that queue books existed at many stations as well as at the line's headquarters. It transpired that the railway had twenty-seven daily-paid women, of whom eleven had been hired without proper observance of the rules.⁵⁶ In other words, they had been given preference over women already registered in a queue.

Joining the queue for women's employment at the Moscow-Kursk headquarters was a tough challenge, yet by no means did it guarantee employment. Only daughters and relatives of staff were eligible, according to the 1906 circular, though to judge by the case of 22-year-old Mariia Mikhailovna Enodina, daughters of retired staff could also be considered.⁵⁷ She requested employment as an office worker in May 1912. She had a gymnasium education, was in straightened circumstances, and her father had been an assistant station master on the line until forced to retire through ill health in about 1905. How she would benefit from this family connection was another matter: not until March 1915 was she offered a job. In fact, only ten women were hired for jobs at the headquarters during the three years to November 1913, and at that moment the most recently hired candidate had been in the queue for twenty-three months.⁵⁸ With the headquarters opportunities restricted essentially to low-paid clerical work, clearly either desperation or a very strong commitment to railway employment were essential.

For the appointment to be confirmed, there was still a final hurdle to be negotiated, as can be seen from the personnel file of the typist Nadezhda Semenovna Shimanichik. Her case dates from the winter of 1914/15, but the confirmation paperwork follows a long-established routine for all railway staff. When offered a temporary typing position at the main Moscow station of the Alexander Railway, her proposed

appointment was notified to the gendarmes for checking her criminal record and when she started work she had to sign three pro-forma documents. One confirmed her understanding that as a temporary worker she could be let go at any time without right of appeal and there was also a confidentiality statement. The other document concerned discipline and politics. She confirmed 'piously and sacredly' (*sviato i nenarushimo*) that she had read the tsar's proclamation of 2 December 1905 about the punishments for participating in strikes in enterprises of public and state significance, that she would not participate in the activities of unauthorized organizations and in unauthorized meetings on railway property, and that she would obey the management's published and future regulations and instructions.⁵⁹

More commonly, railways had considerable difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified male staff and the resultant vacancies were usually the explanation for efforts to recruit women. This challenge was most acute in sparsely populated districts like Central Asia, yet it did affect even the Nicholas Railway, operator of the Petersburg–Moscow trunk route.⁶⁰ For this reason managers sometimes did ignore the rules for hiring women. For example, the Head of the UZhD Chancellery admitted in January 1914 that the 1906 rules about an aptitude test and a queue were 'not always followed precisely'.⁶¹ In other words, broadly the MPS policy was applied, but lucky individuals might benefit from local non-compliance. For example, female graduates of the Imperial Russian Technical Society's courses were banned from taking railway employment in their specialism, yet at March 1908 there were as many as thirty-three such graduates on the network, all of whom had graduated during 1903–07; the fact that six of these cases were reviewed yet no action was taken may suggest, further, that the ministry's senior bureaucrats had more pressing concerns than rigorous enforcement of these rules, even when prompted by the minister, as in this case.⁶² Likewise, a 1911 audit revealed that the Catherine Railway in the Donbass had 560 female white-collar staff (*sluzhashchie*), equating to some 16.41 percent of the line's total contingent of such employees (3397). Behind that average were some striking anomalies, most notably the very high proportion of women in the Telegraph Department at the line's Headquarters in Ekaterinoslav (40.5%).⁶³

This last example merits further attention because the Catherine Railway was among the empire's very largest industrial enterprises, in a relatively densely populated area and while the audit report does not detail the actual jobs, it does provide a rare insight into patterns of white-collar women's employment at the local level by giving the distribution of these workers among the railway's various departments and sections (Table 1). Overall, this part of the workforce was divided fairly evenly between headquarters and offices out on the lines, but the women were slightly more concentrated at Ekaterinoslav; if the telegraphists are removed from the equation, the vast majority of the remainder were at headquarters. The seven biggest departments all had substantial numbers of women, and only two small departments had none. By far the largest numbers worked for the Telegraph and Receipts departments; the vast majority of the Telegraph women were located away from headquarters and accounted for more than 80% of the women employed out on the lines. At 19.15% the average proportion for headquarters offices was nearly double the 10% quota for all departments except Telegraph and Receipts, the figures for which also exceeded their 15% quota. Telegraphists apart, the vast majority of the women are likely to have been office workers. Significantly, very few women are recorded for the Medical and Schools

Table 1. White-collar staff on the Catherine Railway, 1 May 1911.

Department	Location	Total number	of whom women	
			Number	% of total
1 Track	HQ	98	10	10.2
	Lines	103	1	1
2 Traffic	HQ	233	54	23.2
	lines	428	34	8
3 Traction	HQ	183	30	16.4
	lines	161	4	2.4
4 Receipts	[HQ]	624	127	20.35
5 Telegraph	HQ	42	17	40.5
	lines	953	205	21.51
6 Materials (stores)	HQ	94	15	16
	lines	74	4	5.5
7 Commercial	[HQ]	115	23	20
8 Loans and commission	HQ	17	4	23.5
	lines	65	3	4.55
9 Main Accounting	HQ	77	10	10.39
10 Chancellery	HQ	30	7	23.33
11 Legal section	HQ	20	4	20
12 Mobilization	HQ	12	–	–
13 Medical section #	[HQ?]	8	3	37.5
14 Pensions office	[HQ]	48	4	8.33
15 Typolithography	HQ	8	1	12.5
16 Schools #	HQ	4	–	–
TOTALS		3397, of whom:	560, of whom:	16.41
		HQ – 1613	HQ – 309	HQ – 19.15
		Lines – 1784	Lines – 251	Lines – 14.07

Probably only the administrative staff at headquarters.

Source: Adapted from the chart at RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, l. 284b.

departments: these figures most likely refer to office staff at Ekaterinoslav, and the question of how railway hospital, clinic and school staff were defined and recorded, for a complete lack of women here in 1911 seems very unlikely.

As for the attitudes of provincial railway managers, to some extent they echoed the gender stereotypes voiced elsewhere. They can be seen, for example, in the arguments deployed by the Head of the Northern Railways when seeking permission in February 1914 to hire women with higher education regardless of both quota and queue. The recruitment environment was problematic, he complained: pay was not high compared with other ministries; quick promotion was hampered by the limited number of vacancies; and educated personnel were being lost to other ministries. He wanted to be able to employ women with higher education, especially in law and mathematics, 'as an element with a more modest demand for their work situation thanks to the existing social conditions'. Their efficiency, conscientiousness, and industriousness (*ispolnitel'nost'*, *akkuratnost'*, *staratel'nost'*) were no worse than men's, yet their pay was much lower. So, he suggested, employing highly educated women in a variety of departments ought to create a stable cadre of cultured (*intelligentnye*), efficient and experienced staff devoted to their work and happy with their pay, which would be high by current

standards for women. He did not mention any lesser propensity to strike, but that sense could perhaps be read into his words.⁶⁴ A second example, from discussions conducted on the Nicholas Railway in 1912, is particularly telling: officials noted that a huge benefit of expanding female employment was the complete absence of the alcoholism prevalent among male staff.⁶⁵

Petitions by railway managers for exemptions from the hiring restrictions were submitted routinely to the MPS during 1906–14. Typically, the line managers wanted permission to exceed the quota or relax the education requirements. The Central Asian Railway, for instance, repeatedly sought waivers of the education rules because of the shortage locally of qualified women as well as men.⁶⁶ The head of the Catherine Railway was particularly bold in July 1911 in requesting clearance to hire twenty women above the percentage norm. He cited a staff shortage due to summer holidays and the inability of most male staff to use a typewriter.⁶⁷ Occasionally a special case might be put forward for a person considered especially deserving. For example, in November 1911 the MVD asked Rukhlov to allow the Catherine Railway to employ a certain Evgeniia Meier on temporary work, ignoring the quota. She had been orphaned when her father, a district police officer (*stanovoi pristav*), was killed in revolutionary disturbances in 1905. The railway had sought permission and the provincial governor had reported the case as well.⁶⁸

Sometimes the petitions concerned existing workers for a number of reasons. Particularly irritating for many railways was the requirement to dismiss a worker whose railway husband had resigned, been conscripted or been sacked, or if the employee married a non-railwayman. When, for instance, the head of the Samara–Zlatoust Railway submitted a batch of five such cases for the ministry's attention in 1907, he dared to suggest that the rule simply be cancelled given that the MVD had abandoned its analogous rule back in 1904.⁶⁹ The same railway sent the query noted above about dismissals required because of military conscription, which led to Rukhlov's agreement in 1911 not to impose the rule in such cases. One might add that the restrictions on promotion and pay also generated petitions. For instance, in 1907 the Nicholas Railway sought permission to award 180 rubles to Viktoriia Gorbachevskaiia, a meritorious junior clerk with twenty-eight years' service, because promoting her to senior clerk was prohibited.⁷⁰

Railway managers were by no means always sympathetic to the plight of their workers. In June 1907 a telegraphist at Briansk on the Riga–Orel Railway, Liudmila Velichkina, petitioned minister Shaufus for permission to marry a non-railwayman. She explained that she had asked the railway's Head of Telegraph but that he had refused on the basis of the 1875 circular. Now aged twenty-five, she had joined the railway in July 1904 as an apprentice at ten rubles per month having completed the basic telegraph training at Orel with a high score and by January 1906 she was earning up to 405 rubles per year. She had sixty-seven recorded days of illness, ten days of leave and an exemplary disciplinary record. Nonetheless the railway simply told the ministry that observance of the dismissal rules was desirable in this case.⁷¹

In St Petersburg the reaction of the initial recipient of these petitions – the UZhD – generally depended on the nature and frequency of the applications. Requests for an exemption were usually forwarded to the minister with a favourable recommendation if they concerned the percentage quota or the education requirement, but were more likely to be rejected if they sought to exempt a woman from waiting her turn in the job

queue or if they covered more than one person – though even the Catherine Railway's 1911 application for twenty women was eventually approved.⁷² If a given railway was deemed to be making an excessive number of exemption requests – perhaps half a dozen in the year – the UZhD encouraged the line's chief to desist.⁷³ Occasionally, the ministry bowed to pressure from railways, as eventually occurred to an extent with the requirement for dismissal when the husband resigned or was dismissed. In 1913 minister Rukhlov agreed, if not to cancel this rule, at least to allow the railways themselves to decide whether to dismiss the affected women in cases where there were no criminal or political considerations.⁷⁴

On occasion the UZhD might endorse an application only for the minister to disagree. Sadly for Viktoriia Gorbachevskaia, the Nicholas Railway's proposed bonus payment to her is a case in point. So too is the case noted above of the five wives of dismissed male staff that was presented by the Samara–Zlatoust Railway in 1907. On that occasion the UZhD canvassed the opinion of its departments and found general support for cancelling the dismissal rule except when the husband had been sacked for political or moral reasons. However, minister Shaufus not only reasserted the status quo but also demanded information about the railway's compliance with the rules. When it transpired that, strictly, some of the women should not have been appointed in the first place, the outcome was a firm reminder to comply with all the rules.⁷⁵

Conclusions

By taking a broad definition of worker that includes low-paid white-collar as well as blue-collar workers, and likewise a broad definition of industry, this article reveals a complex situation with women's employment on the late imperial Russian railways that differs considerably from the traditional understanding of the female workforce in manufacturing industry. Whereas factory managers were increasingly inclined to hire women during roughly 1895–1914, the policy for the railway network was grudging tolerance on a very limited basis, and this policy applied to private as well as state railways. Consequently, the number of employed women remained relatively low, dominated by literate women in low-paid jobs for which men were hard to recruit, and the phenomenon evident in other industries of large-scale resistance by male staff never became an issue. A full picture of women's employment, however, requires further research to try to clarify the extent of casual blue-collar employment by railway companies, if surviving records permit, and how railway medical and school staff were recorded.

The architects of the transport ministry's policy – successive ministers and heads of the Directorate of Railways – had various reasons for their stance. Patriarchal attitudes about women's social roles and duties, and physical, intellectual, psychological, and emotional capabilities, remained influential throughout the period, notwithstanding growing public interest in the 'woman question' and equal rights, especially during the last decade before the First World War. Also very important were military concerns, including planning assumptions about redeploying staff to war zones in the event of war. Clearly, too, the notion of equal rights had potentially significant cost implications, including pension rights and payments for back-service, which was a serious difficulty for the MPS after 1900 in the context of strong political and

public pressure to tackle the railway network's large and rising deficit. That said, by the last pre-war decade local shortages of qualified men were increasingly forcing managers of individual railways to seek exemptions to the hiring policy and even to ignore the ministry's restrictions. Such pressures were least acute in the capital and Moscow, and worst in regions like the Donbass, with a fairly high density of railway provision, and Central Asia, where qualified people of both genders were relatively scarce.

One might assume that the government had a major role in shaping the hiring policy for a ministry with crucial military and political as well as economic significance. In fact, apart from its decisive involvement in framing the policy for state bodies in the 1860s and early 1870s, the government appears to have had little direct involvement with the MPS policy until about 1913, when the ministry's new statute was being drafted. Even then, the government seems not to have insisted that policy was uniform across the state sector; that the MPS leadership decided to copy State Control's enhancement of the rights of female staff was apparently neither a requirement of the Council of Ministers nor a foregone conclusion.

We are left with some broader questions about the employment of women across the state sector and in industry on the eve of the First World War. How typical by that time were the MPS as an employing ministry and state-owned railways as industrial employers? Did hiring policy in state-owned industrial enterprises differ significantly from the private industrial sector? What is or should be understood by the term 'skilled worker'? And how important are white-collar workers as a category for analysing women's employment in late tsarist Russia's industrial economy?

Notes

1. For example, Bonnell, *Russian Worker*, 1–34, especially 17–19; McDermid and Hillyar, *Midwives of the Revolution*, 104–6; 'Zhenskii i detskii trud na fabrikakh v XVIII – nachalo XX veka'. For present purposes, the widespread phenomenon of women doing what could be termed self-employed work, particularly on their own small-holding and domestic craft work, is not treated as paid employment. On women's domestic industries, see Pallot, 'Women's Domestic Industries', 163–84.
2. McDermid and Hillyar, *Midwives of the Revolution*, 127–8, 132, citing also A. G. Rashin, *Formirovanie rabochego klassa v Rossii: Istoriko-ekonomicheskie ocherki*. Moscow, 1958. More generally, see also Glickman, *Russian Factory Women*; Engel, *Between the Fields and the City*; and McDermid and Hillyar, *Women and Work in Russia*.
3. Meyer, 'The Impact of World War I on Russian Women's Lives', especially 208–15; McDermid and Hillyar, *Midwives of the Revolution*, especially 127–36.
4. Kulikov, 'The Hundred Largest Employers', 754–5. Excluded categories such as health-care and educational institutions, agriculture and the armed forces are detailed on 743–4.
5. The head (*nachal'nik*) of a state railway answered to the MPS. The manager (*upravliaiushchii*) of a private railway answered to the company's board as well as to the MPS, but effectively had the same powers and responsibilities concerning hiring as the heads in the state sector. Private ownership, it should be added, was sometimes

- nominal, with the state as a large or the largest shareholder, and with the state-trained graduate engineers in effect seconded by the state.
6. The literature about women workers on the Tsarist railways has been limited, but while this article was in preparation, Vladimir A. Serdiuk published a monograph on the subject: *"Zabytyi personal"*. See pp. 21–33 for a very thorough survey of the literature, including references to other countries. The present article has a different approach partly as a result and I am very grateful to Vladimir Aleksandrovich for commenting on drafts of it. For a related discussion about the war years 1914–17 (including longer-term trends to the mid-1920s), see Heywood, 'Women Workers in Wartime Tsarist Russia'.
 7. See Reichman, *Railwaymen and Revolution*.
 8. These records are held at the Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv (hereafter RGIA) and Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Goroda Moskvy (hereafter TsGAM). A citation with a multiple date such as 1/9 April 1914 indicates multiple signatories, not the Julian and Gregorian calendars; all dates are given in the Old Style (Julian calendar). The names of railways are given as translations.
 9. In particular: TsGAM, f. 281 (Pravlenie Aleksandrovskoï zheleznoi dorogi, 1870–1917), op. 2; f. 287 (Upravlenie Severnykh zheleznykh dorog, 1868–1919), op. 12; and f. 414 (Upravlenie Moskovsko-Kurskoï, Nizhegorodskoï i Muromskoï zheleznoi dorogi, g. Moskva, 1847–1920), op. 21–3, 25–7, 32–3. This chapter cites files from f. 281 and f. 414.
 10. MPS Chief Inspector to Minister of Ways of Communication, 23 December 1906; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, ll. 40–6ob (45).
 11. Serdiuk, *"Zabytyi personal"*, 47–54, 74–5, 81, 122–41.
 12. N. Gertsog, Istoricheskaiia spravka: K dokladu Kantseliarii Upravleniia zheleznykh dorog ob ustanovlenii % zhenshchin, dopuskaemogo na sluzhbu zheleznykh dorog po dolzhnostiam ne tekhnicheskim, 11 March 1908; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, ll. 15–27 (15–6). Though ultimately under Russian control, the Finnish Railways were administered separately from the rest of the Russian Empire's railway network and normally were not considered as part of it for reporting purposes. See also Serdiuk, *"Zabytyi personal"*, 79–80.
 13. Serdiuk, *"Zabytyi personal"*, 83.
 14. As late as 1897, only 13.1% of the women in the Russian Empire were literate, according to that year's census: Anfimov and Korelin, *Rossia v 1913 god*, 327.
 15. Gertsog, Istoricheskaiia spravka; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, ll. 16–20ob. See also Serdiuk, *"Zabytyi personal"*, 83–93, for a detailed analysis of the debate, and 232–3, for the text of the resultant Senate decree of 14 January 1871.
 16. Ruane, *Gender, Class, and the Professionalization of Russian City Teachers*, 67–8. Two telegraph networks were developed in nineteenth-century Russia: one operated by the MPS for railway use and one operated by the MVD for all other traffic. The MVD circular is referenced in Gertsog, Istoricheskaiia spravka; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, l. 22ob.
 17. Gertsog, Istoricheskaiia spravka; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, l. 21–21ob.
 18. For detail, see Serdiuk, *"Zabytyi personal"*, 103–5.
 19. Gertsog, Istoricheskaiia spravka; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, l. 21–21ob.
 20. MPS Chief Inspector to Minister of Ways of Communication, 23 December 1906; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, l. 45–45ob.

21. The connection with the MVD circular is confirmed in Head of UZhD to MVD Main Directorate of Post and Telegraph, 3 August 1907 (draft); RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, l. 3. For the text see Serdiuk, "Zabytyi personal", 234.
22. Gertsog, Istoricheskaia spravka; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, ll. 22–3. The term used here for female attendants – *storozhikhi* – was probably intended to include crossing keepers, although normally a fuller description was used, such as *perezdnye storozhikhi* or *storozhikhi pri perezdakh*.
23. Reichman, *Railwaymen and Revolution*, 42.
24. Serdiuk, "Zabytyi personal", 146–9, 157, 159.
25. For instance, municipal primary schooling for girls commenced in Moscow in 1867 and St Petersburg's municipal school system was launched in 1877: Ruane, *Gender, Class, and the Professionalization of Russian City Teachers*, 15–16.
26. Resolution of the Committee of Ministers, ratified by the Tsar on 17 November 1889; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, l. 53; Serdiuk, "Zabytyi personal", 113–16 and (for the text) 235–6.
27. The text is at Serdiuk, "Zabytyi personal", 236–7.
28. MPS Chief Inspector to Minister of Ways of Communication, 23 December 1906; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, l. 45ob; Gertsog, Istoricheskaia spravka; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, l. 25.
29. MPS Chief Inspector to Minister of Ways of Communication, 23 December 1906; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, ll. 40–1, 42ob–43.
30. MPS Chief Inspector to Minister of Ways of Communication, 23 December 1906; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, ll. 43–5; Serdiuk, "Zabytyi personal", 143–50. Gertsog, Istoricheskaia spravka, dates the year of the request as 1902; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, l. 25–25ob.
31. Report by Head of UZhD Chancellery, 12 March 1908; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, ll. 120–21ob. For the April text, see Serdiuk, "Zabytyi personal", 238–9.
32. Draft report by Head of UZhD to Minister, March 1914; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1605, ll. 19ob–20. Entitled 'Kniga dlia zapisi kandidatok zhenshchin', the queue ledger for the Moscow-Kursk Railway's Chancellery for July 1911–May 1916 survives in the railway's archive as TsGAM, f. 414, op. 2, d. 1805.
33. Nicholas Railway, *Obshee prisutstvie*, Zhurnal No.23, 10 July 1912; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1605, ll. 19ob–20.
34. Reichmann, *Railwaymen and Revolution*, 227–8, 300–2.
35. *Russkie vedomosti*, 9 August 1907, cited in Reichman, *Railwaymen and Revolution*, 294. Over 35,000 of these workers did find work on the railways again eventually.
36. Serdiuk, "Zabytyi personal", 151–4.
37. For a brief introduction to militarization on the pre-war railways, see Heywood, 'The Militarization of Civilians', 334–5, 337–9.
38. A. Vendrikh, *Priem zhenshchin na sluzhbu zheleznykh dorog v Shvetsii*, 27 October 1906, and MPS Chief Inspector to Minister of Ways of Communication, 23 December 1906; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, ll. 66–8, 41–42ob, 45ob.
39. MPS Chief Inspector to Minister of Ways of Communication, 23 December 1906; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, ll. 45–46ob.
40. Reichmann, *Railwaymen and Revolution*, 227–8.
41. Assistant Head of MVD Main Directorate for Post and Telegraph to UZhD, 16 November 1907; Report to Minister by UZhD, 30 November/1 December 1907;

- UZhD circular 32572/161/6924 to all heads of railways, 19 December 1907; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, ll. 13, 14, 19.
42. *Peterburgskaia gazeta*, 27 August 1909, and *Birzhevye vedomosti*, 7 September 1909, cited from RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, ll. 185, 186.
 43. Head of UZhD Chancellery to Head of Nicholas Railway, 2 March 1910; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, l. 214.
 44. Head of UZhD to Minister, 21 December 1909; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, ll. 204–5; Report to Minister by UZhD, 17/18 May 1910; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, ll. 225–6.
 45. Report to Minister by UZhD, 16 December 1911; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, ll. 315–16.
 46. The reference here is to jobs that were specified in the given railway's annual budget year on year.
 47. On this reform as it related to railway personnel, see Shapovalova, 'Reforma zheleznodorozhnoi sluzhby', 140–1. This was the context for the draft statute about railway employment that was noted earlier in this section.
 48. Head of UZhD Chancellery to Head of UZhD, 7 January 1914; Report to Council of Ministers by Minister of State Control, 8 October 1913; Report to Head of UZhD, 29 January 1914; *Zhurnal soveshchaniia, obrazovanogo dlia obsuzhdeniia voprosa o predostavlenii litsa, zhenskogo pola prav na zaniatie shtatnykh po UZhD dolzhnostei*, 22 January 1914; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1605, ll. 1–2; 3–7; 11; 12–13.
 49. Report to Head of UZhD by Head of UZhD Chancellery, 12 March 1908; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, ll. 11–12ob.
 50. For example, UZhD circular 29397, 1 December 1890; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, l. 13–13ob.
 51. See also Serdiuk, "Zabytyi personal", 152–4.
 52. Pushkareva, *Zheleznodorozhniki Rossii*, 279–83; Reichman, *Railwaymen and Revolution*, 291–305; Westwood, *A History of Russian Railways*, 165–6.
 53. Report to Minister by UZhD, 27/28 November 1908; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, l. 171.
 54. *Peterburgskaia gazeta*, 27 August 1909, cited from RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, l. 185.
 55. The distinction here is between a temporary and often fixed-term appointment, which was paid by the day and could be terminated no without notice and right of appeal, and an open-ended (permanent) appointment with a budgeted monthly wage and better terms and conditions.
 56. Moscow-Kursk Railway Chancellery circular to heads of department, 11 December 1913; Head of Chancellery to Head of Moscow-Kursk Railway, 28 January 1914; TsGAM, f. 414, op. 2, d. 1936, ll. 1–2, 5.
 57. One of the anonymous reviewers for this article expressed surprise that eligibility was restricted to daughters and relatives of existing staff. This preferential treatment seems to have been introduced as policy by the April 1906 circular (the text is at Serdiuk, 'Zabytyi personal', 238–9). Circular 21806 of 12 August 1913 confirmed that it could encompass widows and daughters of former employees as well: Head of Moscow-Kursk Railway to Head of Moscow Railway Gendarmes, 12 November 1913; TsGAM, f. 414, op. 2, d. 1603, l. 553. It is worth adding that Jeremy Higgins, a doctoral candidate at the University of Aberdeen,

- has found evidence that British railways had similar restrictions during the First World War.
58. Petition, 10 May 1912; Chancellery to M. M. Enodina, 28 May 1912; Head of Moscow-Kursk Railway to Head of Moscow Railway Gendarmes, 12 November 1913; TsGAM, f. 414, op. 2, d. 1603, ll. 128, 135, 553–53ob; Book for noting women candidates, [1911–16]; TsGAM, f. 414, op. 2, d. 1805, ll. 4ob–5.
 59. Alexander Railway, Cover note to gendarmes, 31 December 1914 (covered an identity document); Secrecy statement, 10 January 1915; Signed statement (*podpiska*), [January 1915]; TsGAM, f. 281, op. 2, d. 4506 (Personnel file for N. S. Shimanchik), ll. 7, 6, 8.
 60. See, for example, Head of Nicholas Railway to Head of UZhD, 15 January 1910; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, l. 210. No information has been found as yet about the way that railways publicized such vacancies, which might also cast light on the question of gender in hiring.
 61. Note by Head of UZhD Chancellery, 16 January 1914; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, l. 57ob.
 62. See ‘Studentki na zh. d.’, *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, 8 March 1908, cited from RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, l. 119, and the ensuing UZhD correspondence at RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, ll. 120–21ob, 123–25ob, 129–29ob, 131, 132, 136.
 63. Svedeniia o chisle sluzhashchikh v sluzhbakh, otdelakh i chastiakh Upravleniia dorogi zheshchin na 1-oe maia 1911 goda; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, l. 284b.
 64. Head of Northern Railways to Head of UZhD, 23 February 1914; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1605, ll. 15–16.
 65. General Office (Obshchee prisutstvie) of the Nicholas Railway, Minutes of meeting no.23, 10 July 1912; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 2256, l. 19.
 66. Note by UZhD Chancellery, 17 April 1914; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1377, l. 269.
 67. Report to Minister by UZhD, 10 August 1911; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, l. 281.
 68. Minister of Internal Affairs to Minister of Ways of Communication, 19 November 1911; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, l. 309.
 69. Head of Samara–Zlatoust Railway to UZhD, 9 July 1907; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, l. 2.
 70. Report to Minister by Acting Head of UZhD, 5/6 July 1907; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1127, l. 14–14ob; Report to Minister by UZhD, 27/28 November 1908; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, ll. 170–1.
 71. Head of Riga–Orel Railway to UZhD, 8 August 1907; Velichkina to Minister, 27 June 1907; Note about Velichkina by Head of Telegraph Dept, 1907; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, ll. 4–6.
 72. Report to Minister by UZhD, 23 February 1912; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1377, ll. 15–16.
 73. See for example Note by UZhD Chancellery, 17 April 1914; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1377, l. 269.
 74. Report to Minister by UZhD, 1/9 April 1913; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 1377, ll. 172–3.
 75. Operations Directorate to UZhD Chancellery, 18 December 1907; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, ll. 17–18; UZhD Chancellery to Head of Samara–Zlatoust Railway, 22 March 1908; RGIA, f. 273, op. 1, d. 994, l. 126.

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