

Soviet Industry and the Red Army Under Stalin: A Military–Industrial Complex?

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Abstract

The paper considers some of the views of the Stalin–era relationship between Soviet industry and the Red Army that are current in the literature, and disentangles some confusions of translation. The economic weight of the defence sector in the economic system is summarised in various aspects. The lessons of recent archival research are used as a basis for analysing the army–industry relationship under Stalin as a prisoners’ dilemma in which, despite the potential gains from mutual cooperation, each party faced a strong incentive to cheat on the other. It is concluded that the idea of a Soviet military–industrial complex is not strictly applicable to the Stalin period, but there may be greater justification for the Soviet Union after Stalin.

Acknowledgements

* This is a paper to the seminar on “Serving the State: Administrative Practices in the Soviet Union” sponsored by The Centre for Russian, Soviet and Post–Soviet Studies, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, with the collaboration of the University of Paris 1–Panthéon–Sorbonne, at the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, 14–15 December, 2001. Thanks to the Leverhulme Trust, the British Academy, and the University of Warwick for financial support of my research on “Invention, Imitation, and the Birth of Soviet Aerospace”, and to Peter Law for advice.