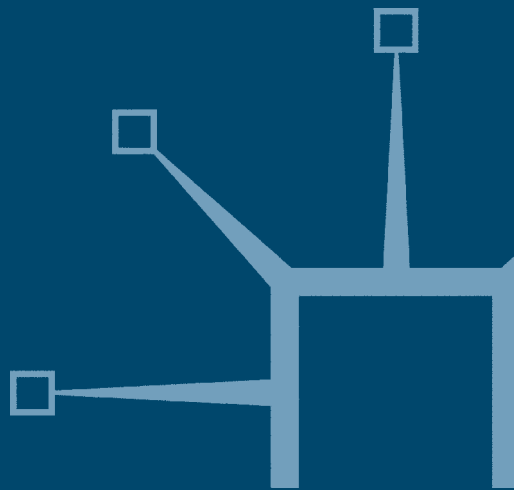


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THE YEARS OF HUNGER

SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931–1933

R.W. Davies and Stephen G. Wheatcroft



THE YEARS OF HUNGER

By R. W. Davies

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1929–1930

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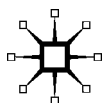
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PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION

Since this book was completed, the Soviet famine of 1931–33 has become an international political issue. Following a number of preliminary declarations and a vigorous campaign among Ukrainians in Canada, in November 2006 a bill approved by the Ukrainian parliament (Verkhovna rada) stated that the famine was ‘an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people’. In the following year a three-day event commemorating the famine in Ukraine was held in its capital, Kiev, and at the same time Yushchenko, the president, called on the Ukrainian parliament to approve ‘a new law criminalising Holodomor denial’ – so far without success.¹ Then on May 28, 2008, the Canadian parliament passed a bill that recognised the Holodomor as a genocide and established a Ukrainian Famine and Genocide (‘Holodomor’) Memorial Day. Later in the year, on October 23, 2008, the European parliament, without committing itself to the view of the Ukrainian and Canadian parliament that the famine was an act of genocide, declared it was ‘cynically and cruelly planned by Stalin’s regime in order to force through the Soviet Union’s policy of collectivization of agriculture’. In the following month, on the 75th anniversary of what it described as ‘the famine-genocide in Ukraine’, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress held a widely publicised National Holodomor Awareness Week.

This campaign is reinforced by extremely high estimates of Ukrainian deaths from famine. On November 7, 2003, a statement to the United Nations General Assembly by 25 member-countries declared that ‘the Great Famine of 1932–1933 in Ukraine (Holodomor) took from 7 million to 10 million innocent lives’. According to Yushchenko, Ukraine ‘lost about ten million people as a direct result of the Holodomor-genocide’. The President of the Ukrainian World Congress insisted in a statement to the United Nations that ‘a seven–ten million estimate appears to present an accurate picture of the number of deaths suffered by the Ukrainian nation from the Great Famine (Holodomor) of 1932–33’.²

¹ ‘Holodomor’ – a Ukrainian word meaning ‘death by hunger’ (in Russian rendered as ‘golodomor’).

² See <http://www.ucc.ca/holodomor/files/IHC-The-Case-for-7-Million> (accessed April 29, 2009).

In contrast, the Russian government has consistently objected to the Ukrainian view. On April 2, 2008, a statement was approved by the Russian State Duma declaring that there was no evidence that the 1933 famine was an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people. The statement condemned the Soviet regime's 'disregard for the lives of people in the attainment of economic and political goals', but also declared that 'there is no historic evidence that the famine was organized on ethnic grounds'. The official view was endorsed by the Russian archives, and by Russian historians. In 2009 the Russian Federal Archive Agency published a large handsome book reproducing photographically 188 documents from the archives, to be followed by several further volumes.³ In the preface the director of the Russian archives, V. P. Kozlov, criticises the 'politicisation' of the famine:

Not even one document has been found confirming the concept of a 'golodomor-genocide' in Ukraine, nor even a hint in the documents of ethnic motives for what happened, in Ukraine and elsewhere. Absolutely the whole mass of documents testify that the main enemy of Soviet power at that time was not an enemy based on ethnicity, but an enemy based on class.⁴

In our own work we, like V. P. Kozlov, have found no evidence that the Soviet authorities undertook a programme of genocide against Ukraine. It is also certain that the statements by Ukrainian politicians and publicists about the deaths from famine in Ukraine are greatly exaggerated. A prominent Ukrainian historian, Stanislas Kul'chitskii, estimated deaths from famine in Ukraine at 3–3.5 million;⁵ and Ukrainian demographers estimate that excess deaths in Ukraine in the whole period 1926–39 (most of them during the famine) amounted to 3½ million.⁶ Nevertheless, Ukrainian organisations continue, with some success, to urge Canadian schools to teach as a fact that excess deaths were 10 million during the 1932–33

³ *Golod v SSSR 1930–1934; Famine in the USSR 1930–1934* (2009), 518 pp.

⁴ *Op. cit.* 7.

⁵ S. Kul'chitskii, *Pochemu ON nas unichtozhil? Stalin i ukraïnskii golodomor* (Kiev, 2007), 120.

⁶ *Demografichna katastrofa v Ukraïni vnaslidok golodomoru 1932–1933 rokiv: skladovi, mashtabi, naslidki, Institut Demografii ta sotsial'nykh doslidzhen', Natsional'na akademiya nauk Ukraïni* (Kiiv, 2008), 76, 82, 84. For our own lower estimate, see pp. 412–17 below.

famine.⁷ This does not mean that Ukraine did not suffer greatly during the famine. It is certainly the case that most of the famine deaths took place in Ukraine, and that the grain collection campaign was associated with the reversal of the previous policy of Ukrainisation.⁸

In this context Russian interpretations of the famine differ greatly. At one extreme doughty supporters of the Stalinist regime claim that the famine was an act of nature for which Stalin and the Soviet government were not responsible. Thus in his recent book on the famine a Russian publicist, a certain Sigizmund Mironin, argued that the very poor harvest of 1932 was the main cause of the famine:

Using the articles of M. Tauger and other English-language sources, I seek to prove: 1) there was a very bad harvest in 1932, which led to the famine; 2) the bad harvest was caused by an unusual combination of causes, among which drought played a minimum role, the main role was played by plant diseases, unusually widespread pests, and the lack of grain connected with the drought of 1931, and rain during the sowing and harvesting; 3) the bad harvest led to a severe famine... 4) the Soviet leadership, and Stalin in particular, did not succeed in receiving information about the scale of the famine; 5) Stalin and the Politburo, as a result of the drought in 1931, did not have grain stocks, but did everything they could to reduce human losses from the famine, and took every measure to prevent famine from recurring.⁹

This view of the famine is emphatically and justifiably rejected by most Russian historians. We show in the following pages that there were two bad harvests in 1931 and 1932, largely but not wholly a result of natural conditions. But the 1932 harvest was not as bad as Mark Tauger has concluded (see pp. xix–xx below). Stalin was certainly fully informed about the scale of the famine. Moreover, Mironin's account neglects the obvious fact that the famine was also to a considerable extent a result of the previous actions of Stalin and the Soviet leadership. Mironin's book is Stalinist apologetics, not history. Unfortunately this approach to the Stalin era is increasingly publicised in contemporary Russia.

⁷ See for example the school syllabus in <http://faminegenocide.com/resources/teachingkuryliw.html> (accessed April 30, 2009).

⁸ See below, pp. 190–1, 413–14.

⁹ S. Mironin, *Golodomor' na Rusi* (2008), 9–10 (a 221 page book, published in 5,000 copies).

The prevailing view among Russian historians, in contrast, is that this was an ‘organised famine’, caused by Stalin and his entourage as part of the war against the peasantry throughout the USSR. The outstanding historian of the Russian peasantry, the late Viktor Danilov, together with his colleague Zelenin, in an article in a major historical journal ‘written on the 70th anniversary of the general tragedy of the peasantry’, put this view forcefully.¹⁰ They claimed that in 1932–33 there was ‘a kind of chain of *mutually connected and mutually dependent Stalin actions* (fully or not fully conscious) to organise the “great famine”’. Thus the law of August 7, 1932, imposing the death penalty for the theft of kolkhoz grain, was followed on November 27 by Stalin’s declaration that those peasants who ‘supported the sabotage of the grain collections’ should be answered with a ‘crushing blow’; then on December 27 internal passports were introduced, designed to prevent peasants moving to the towns, and on January 22, 1933, an infamous directive banned the movement of peasants from Ukraine and the North Caucasus to other areas.¹¹

Western commentators and historians long debated whether the famine was man-made. They differ in their assessments of the extent to which Soviet policy was responsible for the famine and the extent to which Terror was consciously used by the state. In response to the first edition of our book Robert Conquest, the most widely cited advocate of the view that the famine was man-made, has clarified his position on this matter and has clearly stated that although he thinks that the famine was caused by the Bolsheviks, who engaged in criminally terroristic measures, he nevertheless does not think that it was consciously intended (see note 145 on page 441 below).¹²

¹⁰ V. P. Danilov and I. E. Zelenin, ‘Organizovannyi golod’, *OI*, 6, 2004, 97–111, especially p. 108. This view is broadly endorsed by the principal Russian specialist on the famine, Viktor V. Kondrashin – see his *Golod 1932–1933 godov: tragediya Rossiiskoi derevni* (2008), especially p. 376, where he writes (somewhat cautiously) that ‘it may be defined as an “organised famine”’.

¹¹ These measures are described below on pp. 163–8, 187–8, 426–7, and in vol. 4 of this series, pp. 290–1.

¹² It is regrettable that many of the advocates of the genocide thesis continue to claim Conquest to justify their position, despite his clearly expressed views on this matter. See the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute Conference on Holodomor on November 18, 2008, http://www.huri.harvard.edu/na/2008_11_17-18_famine_conf/2008_11_18_werth-graziosi-flier.html (accessed May 18, 2009). At the conference Nicolas Werth was asked by a participant in the conference, who had attended a lecture given by Wheatcroft, whether Conquest accepted the view that the famine was genocide. Werth strangely replied that ‘we all know in scientific circles the very

Danilov and Zelenin concurred that Stalin did not want or anticipate a famine, but they characterised it as an ‘organised famine’, while also describing Stalin’s actions as being ‘fully or not fully conscious’. We think that this is a misleading way of looking at the problem. We do not think it appropriate to describe the unintended consequences of a policy as ‘organised’ by the policy-makers. Russian historians sometimes call the famine ‘rukotvornyi’ – man-made – on the grounds that it was ultimately a result of the forcible collectivisation of agriculture, and that is more defensible. But in our opinion they and Conquest underestimate the role of climate and other natural causes in producing the bad harvests of 1931 and 1932, and are mistaken in believing that the 1932 harvest was an average harvest rather than a poor one. The two successive bad harvests in 1931 and 1932, partly resulting from the previous policies of the Soviet leadership, meant that by the spring of 1932 there was an absolute shortage of grain, which became more severe in the ensuing twelve months. This was a central feature of a general crisis in 1932–33. The Soviet leaders were faced with major problems throughout the economy, which led to another chain of ‘mutually connected and mutually dependent Stalin actions’, parallel with that described by Danilov and Zelenin.

First, the Japanese aggressive policy towards the Soviet Union, culminating in the invasion of Manchuria in September 1931, led to the Soviet decision to increase defence preparation. Secondly, the world economic crisis involved a major turn of the terms of trade against Soviet agricultural and other exports. In 1931 imports greatly exceeded exports, and the foreign debt increased by 50 per cent in that single year. Thirdly, the food shortage in the towns, serious since 1929, grew much worse under the impact of the flood of labour into industry in 1931.

There was no easy way to cope with these developments, and the Politburo had to modify greatly its original aims. The defence plans launched in the autumn of 1931 had to be cut back halfway through 1932, and remained in a reduced form in spite of the advent of Hitler to power in January 1933. Imports for the industrialisation

complicated relations between Conquest and Wheatcroft’; he repeated this several times, but declined to reply to the question. Kul’chitskii more straightforwardly has explained that in June 2006 a Ukrainian delegation of experts on the Holocaust and the Goldodomor met Robert Conquest in Stanford University and enquired about his views, and were told directly by him that he preferred not to use the term genocide (Kul’chitskii (2007), 176).

programme had also to be cut drastically in 1932 and 1933, affecting such major projects as the Chelyabinsk tractor factory. And additional grain for the towns was not available. As early as the spring of 1932 the Soviet authorities planned not to increase the state grain collections from the 1932 harvest, and eventually they were able to procure only 18.5 million tons as compared with the 22.8 million tons obtained from the 1931 harvest. Rations in the towns were drastically cut back, and in the winter and spring of 1932–33 many townspeople were starving. For the first time since the early 1920s, in 1933 the number employed in the non-agriculture sector was reduced, including the number employed in industry and on the railways, and investment was reduced for the first time since the early 1920s. The crisis had forced Stalin and the Politburo to retreat ignominiously. Stalin's clarion call of February 1931 to close the gap between the USSR and the advanced countries within ten years, 'or they will do us in', could not now be honoured. These were desperate and brutal men trying to cope with a crisis, not organisers of a deliberate famine.¹³

However, as we conclude on the last page of our text, 'we do not at all exempt Stalin from responsibility for the famine'. Historians will continue to debate whether dekulakisation and the forcible collectivisation of agriculture were 'necessary'. We ourselves take the view that a policy of rapid industrialisation aimed at establishing modern heavy and defence industries was incompatible with the New Economic Policy of the 1920s, with its mixed economy and the market relationship with the peasantry. It required a move towards much greater central control of the economy in general and of agriculture in particular. But it is also certain that contemporary critics of Stalin's policy such as Syrtsov were justified.¹⁴ The version of rapid industrialisation adopted by Stalin and the Politburo involved the excessive use of force against its real and imagined opponents, particularly in the countryside. It was far too optimistic both about the possible rate of industrial growth, and about the agricultural progress which would immediately follow from collectivisation. It assumed that collective agriculture would thrive even though horses

¹³ For these developments, see vol. 4 of this series: R. W. Davies, *Crisis and Progress in the Soviet Economy, 1931–1933* (1996), pp. 164–76 (defence), 118–21, 155–64 (foreign trade and import cuts), 176–92 (food shortage), 419, 539 (reduction in non-agricultural employment).

¹⁴ For Syrtsov's views, see vol. 3 of this series, *The Soviet Economy in Turmoil, 1929–1930* (1989), especially pp. 400–3, 411–15, and Oleg Khlevniuk's article in *The Lost Politburo Transcripts* (New Haven and London, 2009), especially pp. 86–92.

had not been supplemented by tractors on a major scale. Moreover, it was taken for granted that the grain harvest would increase annually, while in fact natural conditions in the Soviet Union made periodic poor harvests inevitable. The good harvest of 1930 led to the decisions to export substantial amounts of grain in 1931 and 1932. The Soviet leaders also assumed that the wholesale socialisation of livestock farming would lead to the rapid growth of meat and dairy production. These policies failed, and the Soviet leaders attributed the failure not to their own lack of realism but to the machinations of enemies. Peasant resistance was blamed on the kulaks, and the increased use of force on a large scale almost completely replaced attempts at persuasion. Largely through their own fault, the Politburo had led the economy into an impasse. By the time the famine was looming over the country at the end of 1932, only an appeal for foreign assistance through grain imports would have stood any chance of avoiding famine. The Politburo did not even contemplate the public admission of failure which this would entail.

Since our book was published, some of its conclusions have been the subject of strenuous criticism, especially from Mark Tauger and Michael Ellman, writing from very different positions. Ellman concurs that some deaths were caused by 'exogenous non-policy-related factors' such as the drought of 1931, and that others were 'unintended consequences of policies with other objectives' including the 'tribute model of rapid industrialisation'. But he also claims that some deaths were the deliberate result of what he called 'the starvation policy of 1932–33'. Tauger claims on the basis of kolkhoz reports that the harvest of 1932 was as low as 50 million tons with an average yield of 5.2 tsentners per hectare, and that our criticism of his estimate as too low is mistaken. In view of his low estimate of the harvest, Tauger interprets the 1932–33 famine as 'the largest in a series of natural disasters'.¹⁵ In a reply to Tauger, Wheatcroft apologises on our behalf for an error in our calculations of the 1932 yield based on kolkhoz reports, and in the present edition of our book (pp. 444–5) we have replaced our previous estimate of the grain yield based on these reports, 6.2 tsentners per hectare, by a new estimate, 5.8 tsentners.¹⁶

¹⁵ Tauger, *The Carl Beck Papers*, no. 1506 (2001), 46.

¹⁶ For the revised table of grain production by region, see <http://www.soviet-archives-research.co.uk/hunger> and *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 59, 864–6. Some misprints and minor errors elsewhere in our book have also been corrected in the present edition.

This gives grain production in the 1932 harvest derived from kolkhoz reports as in the range 55–7 million tons. We had also made alternative estimates, which fall within the same range. See for example our estimate based on the secret Soviet grain-fodder balances, p. 447 below. Our general conclusion remains that the 1932 was between 55 and 60 million tons, a low harvest, but substantially higher than Tauger's 50 million.

In a further contribution to the discussion, Hiroaki Kuromiya judiciously summarises his provisional conclusions about various strands of these Ukrainian, Russian, and international debates:

Although Stalin intentionally let starving people die, it is unlikely that he intentionally caused the famine to kill millions of people. It is also unlikely that Stalin used famine as a cheap alternative to deportation. True, the famine affected Ukraine severely; true, too, that Stalin distrusted the Ukrainian peasants and Ukrainian nationalists. Yet not enough evidence exists to show that Stalin engineered the famine to punish specifically the ethnic Ukrainians. The famine did not take place in an international political vacuum. The sharp rise in the foreign threat was likely to have been an important aggravating factor.

These debates may be followed in the journal *Europe-Asia Studies*.¹⁷

Since the first publication of this volume, our colleague Viktor Danilov has died. We take this opportunity to express our gratitude for his enormous contribution to peasant studies, and for his staunch friendship over thirty years, in good times and bad.

June 2009

RWD
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¹⁷ Vol. 57 (2005), 823–41 (Ellman), vol. 58 (2006), 625–33 (Davies and Wheatcroft), 973–84 (Tauger), vol. 59 (2007), 663–93 (Ellman), 847–68 (Wheatcroft), vol. 60 (2008), 663–75 (Kuromiya), and vol. 61 (2009), 505–18 (D. R. Marples).

PREFACE TO 2004 EDITION

The first two volumes in this series, *The Socialist Offensive* and *The Soviet Collective Farm*, both published in 1980, dealt with developments in Soviet agriculture up to the end of 1930. When they were written, Soviet archives for this period were completely closed to foreigners. However, the Soviet press was still fairly frank at that time, and foreign journalists and diplomats were able to travel about the country. In the Khrushchev years, Soviet historians were given some access to the party archives for 1929 and 1930, and their publications told us a great deal about decision-making at the top.

For the years 1931–33, covered by the present volume, which culminated in the severe famine of 1933, our knowledge without the archives was far more limited. E. H. Carr wrote in 1969 that the fog obscuring Soviet policy-making ‘in spite of a few piecemeal observations, envelopes all Soviet policy in the nineteen-thirties’.¹ In the famine years the fog descended not only on policy-making but also on what was happening in the villages.

In 1932, foreign correspondents had published accounts of hunger in town and country, but in February 1933 Stalin wrote to Molotov and Kaganovich denouncing American Moscow correspondents who had travelled to the Kuban’ in the North Caucasus and ‘cooked up calumnies’ about the situation. He insisted that their travel about the USSR should be prevented (‘there are already enough spies in the USSR’).² On February 23, the Politburo ruled that foreign correspondents could travel about the USSR and visit particular places only with the permission of the Chief Administration of the civil police (the militia) – Prokof’ev, its head, and a senior OGPU official of long standing, was responsible for carrying out this decision.³ This restriction was not lifted until after the 1933 harvest.

By this time the Soviet media, for both home and foreign consumption, presented an image of the USSR in which the standard of living was growing continuously as a result of the successes of the

¹ Carr and Davies (1969), xii.

² RGASPI, 558/11/741, 3, published in TSD, iii, 644–5.

³ RGASPI, 17/3/916, 25 (decision by poll).

socialist transformation. In 1930 a modest attempt to indicate that real wages had declined was firmly suppressed (see vol. 3, pp. 307–9, 356–7). In this context the press was, of course, banned from making any mention of the famine.

These restrictions did not prevent a considerable amount of information about the famine reaching the outside world. In his classic study, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, published in 1986, Dr Robert Conquest used contemporary émigré memoirs and reports by diplomats, and more recent dissident writings, to present a vivid account of what happened in the Soviet countryside.

Since 1990, the opening of the former Soviet archives has given us access to secret reports about the famine written at the time. At first local officials were inhibited from reporting the famine. As late as April 1, 1933, a doctor in the Central Black-Earth region was reported by the GPU as remarking that ‘we do not write memoranda about death from famine because we are afraid that we doctors may be accused of some kind of wrecking’.⁴ At the height of the famine, however, local GPU and political officials described the famine in great detail in secret reports to the regions and the republics, and these reports were conveyed in summaries to Moscow.⁵ We have made extensive use of these reports in this volume. They modify and supplement Dr Conquest’s presentation of the famine, but do not change it fundamentally.

Access to such secret reports is still not complete. Those held in the archives of the FSB (the Federal Security Service) – the former OGPU archives – are released at the discretion of the FSB, and historians are not allowed to consult their catalogues. Our knowledge of what GPU officials and agents wrote about the famine in Ukraine would be much more limited if the Ukrainian authorities had not published a valuable collection of documents from their archives, *Golod 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990).

We also have access to the decisions of the Politburo in these years, including the top-secret ‘special papers’ (osobyie papki), and to many private letters and telegrams exchanged between members of the Politburo, and between the Politburo and key government departments and regional authorities. Some material still resides in the Presidential Archive, and is very difficult to access, though much has been transferred to the normal archives in recent

⁴ TSD, iii, 661; see also pp. 412–13 below.

⁵ See pp. 421–4; and the selection of documents in TSD, iii, 654–78.

years. Our knowledge of policy-making is also incomplete, because even in the most secret documents the key Soviet leaders, Stalin, Molotov and Kaganovich, had little to say about the reasons for their decisions, or even about the famine itself. Stalin was fully informed about the famine, but he displayed a Victorian reticence about it, even in his private communications to other Politburo members. The only occasion so far uncovered on which Stalin used the term ‘famine’ at this time was in a letter to the Politburo on June 18, 1932. Referring to the results of the 1931 harvest, he claimed that in Ukraine, as a result of the poor organisation of the collections, ‘a number of districts with good harvests were in a state of ruin and famine’.⁶ He apparently failed to use the word ‘famine’ in 1933.

The focus of the present volume is different from Dr Conquest’s. We have devoted particular attention to the economic and social background to the famine; and have also examined in detail the new documents of the Politburo and other central Soviet agencies. While we would criticise Dr Conquest’s description of the famine only in points of emphasis and detail, we find his interpretation of Soviet policies to be one-sided (see pp. 431–41 below).

The opening of the archives has not changed in any major respect the account of collectivisation given in Volumes 1 and 2 of this series, but it has modified it in a number of respects. Two points are particularly worth mentioning. First, access to the OGPU archives has given us a much fuller account of dekulakisation. In particular, it has revealed that in 1930 far more peasants were dekulakised in Category I than was previously believed. Peasants placed in Category I were exiled to remote regions without their families, and in some cases executed. The plan approved at the beginning of 1930 included 60,000 Category I peasants. In fact, 283,717 persons were arrested in Category I between January 1 and October 1, 1930, about half of them after Stalin’s *Dizzy from Success*. And less than half of these were classified as kulaks by the OGPU; the rest were described as church officials, former landowners and factory owners, or simply categorised as ‘other anti-Soviet element’.⁷ Secondly, we now have a more nuanced understanding of the role of the

⁶ SKP, 179.

⁷ This document is published in TSD, ii, 704 (dated November 17, 1930); it is discussed in Viola (2002), 21 and 43, note 82 – this is a very full account of dekulakisation in 1930 based on the recent archival material.

Red Army in collectivisation and dekulakisation.⁸ But we still lack a clear understanding of how the decision to retreat from collectivisation at the end of February 1930 was reached.

We would like to draw the reader's attention to the Technical Note in Volume 1, which explains the conventions used in this series, and outlines the Soviet administrative structure in this period. The most important development in regional administration in 1931–33 was the formation of seven regions (oblasti) in Ukraine. Between 1930 and the beginning of 1932, with the abolition of the okrugs, the Ukrainian republican administration was directly responsible for the Ukrainian districts (raiony), a Herculean and ridiculous task. The Khar'kov, Kiev, Odessa and Vinnitsa regions were established in February 1932; the Donetsk region in July; and the Chernigov region in October 1932. At the USSR level, important changes in agricultural administration included the abolition of the agricultural cooperatives and of Kolkhozstentr USSR and RSFSR and the local kolkhoz unions (see pp. 351–6); these changes resulted in the direct subordination of the kolkhozy to Narkomzem.

Additional tables will be found on the web site for this volume:

<http://www.soviet-archives-research.co.uk/hunger>

Topics covered include: calculation of grain harvest from kolkhoz reports of 1932 and 1933 (see Appendix); the grain collection plans of 1932/33 (additional details) (see Chapter 6); the grain utilisation budgets for 1932/33 (including plan of June 2, 1932) (see Chapter 6); the grain-fodder budgets for 1929/30–1933/34 (see Appendix); registered excess births by regions (see Chapter 13); the 'Lorimer' corrections to the number of excess deaths, as estimated by the present authors (see Chapter 13); weather data by region (see Chapter 13).

We have been fortunate in receiving advice and assistance from many colleagues. Valerii Vasil'ev and Oleg Khlevnyuk, who have been working closely with us for many years, have been indispensable to our work. We have benefited greatly from collaborating with Viktor P. Danilov, Roberta Manning and Lynne Viola on their mammoth series of archival documents, *Tragediya sovetskoi derevni*, four volumes of which have already appeared. The third volume deals with

⁸ See Pons and Romano, eds (2000), 113–19 (Romano). Romano and Tarkova, eds (1996), 262–71, publishes an illuminating correspondence between Gamarnik, head of the political administration of the Red Army, and local commanders, in which he urges them not to engage in socialist emulation about collectivisation because it is distracting the soldiers from their military training.

the period covered by the present book. Davies collaborated with Khlevnyuk, Arfon Rees, Lyudmilla Kosheleva and Larissa Rogovaya on *Stalin–Kaganovich: perepiska, 1931–1936*, which also proved to be a rich source of information. Vol. 2 of *The Tragedy of the Soviet Countryside*, edited by Wheatcroft and Davies, with I. E. Zelenin, will provide key documents from the Russian collection in English translation, and thus enable readers of the present volume who do not know Russian to consult the full version of major documents we have used here. *The Stalin–Kaganovich Correspondence, 1931–1936*, containing the most important items from the Russian edition, has already been published.

Stanislas Kul'chitskii and Olga Movchan provided valuable assistance to Wheatcroft during his research in Ukraine.

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Dr Christopher Joyce prepared the bibliography and provided other research assistance. A. Clark, J. Clarke and N. Melchior assisted the preparation of the indexes.

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Our colleagues in the Centre for Russian and East European Studies of the University of Birmingham, and in the History Department of the University of Melbourne, have, as usual, given us much support; we would particularly like to thank Marea Arries, secretary to the project.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE SECOND COLLECTIVISATION DRIVE, 1931

The precipitate retreat from mass collectivisation in the spring of 1930 temporarily delayed the efforts of the Politburo to incorporate the vast majority of the peasants into collective farms. But this was only a pause in the collectivisation drive. In July 1930, the XVI party congress, while acknowledging the 'errors and distortions' of the spring, insisted that 'the rates of collectivisation foreseen by the central committee decision of January 5' were 'fully confirmed by experience'.¹

Twelve days after the end of the congress, on July 25, 1930, a secret Politburo decision transformed this general policy declaration into the specific statement that in the economic year 1930/31 (that is, by the end of September 1931) the percentage of households collectivised could reach 'up to' 65–70 per cent in the main grain areas, up to 35–40 per cent in other grain areas, and up to 15–20 per cent in grain-deficit areas. The decision described the targets cautiously as a 'possible growth' of collectivisation.² The dates proposed were more modest than those in the decision of January 5, 1930, which declared that the major grain areas should be collectivised 'in the main' by the autumn of 1930 or the spring of 1931, and the remaining grain areas 'in the main' by the autumn of 1931 or the spring of 1932 (see vol. 1, pp. 201–2).

During the autumn of 1930, the collectivisation campaign was pursued with some circumspection, but steadily and consistently: the total number of households collectivised increased from 5.5 to 6.6 million in the last four months of the year, reaching 26 per cent of all households by January 1, 1931 (see vol. 1, Chapter 9 and pp. 441–4).

This cautious pace was temporary. The December 1930 plenum of the central committee approved plans for collectivisation which were even more ambitious than those of July 25, and announced them in the press. During 1931, 80 per cent of households would be collectivised in the main grain areas; that is, the Ukrainian steppe,

¹ *Direktivny*, ii (1957), 201–7; see also vol. 1, pp. 330–5.

² RGASPI, 17/3/790 (item 13); this is part of the resolution on the 1930/31 control figures.

North Caucasus, the Lower Volga, and the Trans-Volga areas of the Central Volga; this was widely referred to as the 'first category'. Fifty per cent of households would be collectivised in the remaining grain areas (known as the second category) – the Central Black-Earth region, Siberia, the Urals, the Forest-Steppe areas of Ukraine, and the grain areas of Kazakhstan. In a third category, 20–25 per cent of households would be collectivised in the grain kolkhozy of the grain-deficit areas; and at least 50 per cent in the cotton and sugar-beet areas. In the first category, the elimination of the kulaks as a class would also be, in the main, completed. The cautious reference in the decision of July 25 to a 'possible growth' of collectivisation was not repeated. Instead the collectivisation of at least 50 per cent of all households was announced boldly as a firm target for 1931. (See vol. 1, pp. 380–1.)

In this spirit, on January 10 the Politburo discussed the experience of collectivisation in the North Caucasus, where a higher percentage of households had been collectivised than in any other region. In its subsequent resolution, which was published in the newspapers, the Politburo claimed that kolkhozy had proved more efficient than individual peasant farming; moreover, the material position of the poor peasants and the batraks (agricultural labourers) who had joined the kolkhozy had improved, as had the incomes of the middle peasants. The Politburo ruled that in the North Caucasus the campaign to sign contracts with the Machine-Tractor Stations (MTS) for the spring sowing should aim at the 'mass inclusion of new poor-peasant and middle-peasant masses in the kolkhozy and the completion of comprehensive collectivisation'.³

Siberia and some of the other regions listed in the resolution of the December plenum were huge areas covering a variety of types of agricultural production and levels of development; yet they were given a comprehensive target covering the whole region. The instructions of Narkomzem and the exhortations in the press interpreted the decision of the plenum literally. On February 26, however, the bureau of the East-Siberian regional committee requested the party central committee to authorise the application of the 50 per cent target only to the main grain districts of Eastern Siberia. The bureau requested that 'national minority districts concerned with livestock, hunting in the north, and gold prospecting', together with other districts outside the main grain areas, should be

³ SZe, January 12, 1931.

placed in the third category.⁴ Stalin replied with a firm rebuff:

Explain to the secretary of the East-Siberian regional committee [Leonov] that the decision of the C[entral] C[ommittee] on the percentage of collectivisation is *a minimum target* and *local party organisations should not only not forbid, on the contrary they should recommend the overfulfilment of the target*, taking into account the features of particular districts.

On March 17, Leonov addressed a further telegram to Stalin which was remarkably, and perhaps deliberately, opaque. He argued that two interpretations of these targets were possible. On the one hand 'we [the regional party] are wrongly guiding the East Siberian organisation' in proposing that some districts should be collectivised 50 per cent but most only 30 per cent. This would be a 'major political mistake'. Alternatively, 'we are acting correctly when we handle different parts of the region with different standards', in which case Narkomzem was 'misleading itself, the CC and the whole party by adopting an undifferentiated approach'. Leonov artfully suggested to Stalin that 'your telegram could be understood as placing our region in the third category' (Stalin's telegram provided no basis for drawing such a conclusion). Stalin thought again, and wrote on the telegram 'Discuss with Yakovlev [the People's Commissar for Agriculture]. Leonov is right. St[alin].'. But he then crossed out this remark! The broad-brush targets remained as they were.

The certainty of the authorities that comprehensive collectivisation would soon triumph was reflected in a remarkable resolution of the collegium of Narkomzem about Kazakhstan approved on February 1, 1931. The whole of southern Kazakhstan, a region dominated by Kazakh nomadic and semi-nomadic sheep farmers, clearly came into the category of regions where collectivisation was expected to proceed at a slower pace. Yet Narkomzem resolved that the land consolidation plan for Kazakhstan in 1931 should assume that this was a period of 'reinforced sovkhoz and kolkhoz construction' which would 'narrow the basis for nomadic and semi-nomadic land utilisation to an increasing extent'. The resolution expressed the pious hope that, if care was taken, the number of animals on the

⁴ Ivnitskii (1994), 154–5. The bureau request was based on a decision of the regional party conference, and was sent to Stalin in a telegram from the regional party secretary, V. G. Leonov, dated March 4.

territory would not fall; and insisted that the land consolidation measures, embracing 55.7 million hectares, would result in substantial progress in the settlement of the population.⁵

During the first five months of 1931, the second collectivisation drive proceeded without hesitation or interruption throughout the USSR. The agricultural newspaper carried ten-daily reports for every region and republic, announcing the number of households joining the kolkhozy; the reports appeared a mere five days after the end of the accounting period. They showed that the number of households newly joining the kolkhozy reached a peak in the last ten days of March and the first ten days of April; in each ten-day period, over 600,000 households joined. This was not the breakneck drive of the first few weeks of 1930, when nearly ten million households were dragged into kolkhozy during January and February. But the pace of collectivisation greatly exceeded that in the last three months of 1929, when about three million households joined the kolkhozy, and was nearly five times as rapid as in the last few months of 1930. Nearly four million households joined the kolkhozy in the first three months of 1931, and a further 2.5 million in April and May. (See Table 26.)

The authorities were careful not to blunt the pressure of the campaign by proclaiming a triumph too soon. They took as their principal criterion of success the 50 per cent collectivisation of all households in the Soviet Union announced as a target by the December 1930 central committee plenum. By May 1, 48.6 per cent of households had been collectivised (see Table 27), and in the agricultural newspaper five days later a banner headline above the regular report for the previous ten days declared, 'We are on the Edge of Fulfilling the Programme of Collectivisation for 1931.'⁶ The following report, referring to the results achieved by May 10, was headed triumphantly: '50.4 per cent Collectivisation: a Decisive Stage in the Foundation of a Socialist Economy. The Directive of the Party has been Achieved Ahead of Time'; 12.5 million households now belonged to kolkhozy. For the moment, collectivisation in Siberia, the subject of Stalin's inconclusive exchange with Leonov, was less precipitate, reaching 40.3 per cent in West Siberia and only 33.8 per cent in East Siberia. But in Kazakhstan as a whole the proportion of households collectivised had reached the USSR average

⁵ RGAE, 7486/19/130, 6-7.

⁶ SZe, May 6, 1931.

of 50 per cent, compared with 24 per cent at the beginning of the year, even though the 50 per cent target was supposed to apply only to its grain areas.⁷

The level of collectivisation in the USSR as a whole had thus returned almost to the peak figure of March 1930. This time, however, in contrast to the previous year, the vast majority of households remained in the kolkhozy. When the plenum of the party central committee assembled in June 1931, Yakovlev vigorously rejected M. Kaganovich's claim that agriculture was lagging behind industry in the fulfilment of the plan, pointing out that the kolkhozy now included 60 per cent of all households.⁸ On June 15, the plenum resolution firmly stated that collectivisation plans were being fulfilled ahead of schedule. More than 80 per cent of households had been collectivised in the main grain areas (the first category), and 50 per cent in the remaining grain areas and the most important cotton and sugar-beet areas (the second category). But it also declared that the campaign must continue, so that collectivisation would be completed in the second-category areas by the end of 1931 or no later than the spring of 1932.⁹

Official pronouncements frequently asserted that all recruitment to the kolkhozy must be strictly voluntary in nature. From time to time the press criticised the local authorities for the use of 'administrative methods'.¹⁰ At one point a mini-campaign in the agricultural newspaper strongly criticised 'Leftists' for their use of compulsion in Ukraine, and reported that the delinquents had been put on trial.¹¹

But the general thrust of the press campaign was to stress the urgent necessity of reaching the targets. On December 29, 1930, Kolkhoztstentr launched a movement of '20,000-ers' – collective farmers who would be transferred permanently to less advanced villages, thus playing an analogous role to the '25,000-ers', the urban workers who descended on the countryside in the course of 1930 (see vol. 1, pp. 208, 210–11); the decision was endorsed by the Politburo.¹² On January 20, a central committee decision insisted

⁷ SZe, May 15, 1931.

⁸ RGASPI, 17/2/479, 74.

⁹ *KPSS v rez.*, ii (1954), 637–8; see also p. 17.

¹⁰ See, for example, SZe, March 29, 1931 (Tatar ASSR).

¹¹ See SZe, April 25, 28; June 15, 1931.

¹² See Oskol'kov (Rostov, 1973), 258. For the Politburo endorsement, see Ivnitiskii (1994), 153. The '20,000-er' initiative was proclaimed a great success. By the

that collectivisation was a crucial part of the spring sowing campaign, and called for the formation of 'initiative groups', which would organise kolkhozy in all grain and industrial crop districts and then themselves be transformed into kolkhozy. At the same time 'brigades of old collective farmers' would help to create new kolkhozy, and would show individual peasants how to organise them.¹³ These devices for cajoling the peasants into the kolkhozy had already featured prominently in the first cautious stages of re-collectivisation during the previous autumn (see vol. 1, p. 379).

The press strongly emphasised the role to be played by established collective farmers, reporting that at village meetings collective farmers held forth to individual peasants about the merits of collectivisation.¹⁴ Collective farmers were calling systematically on reluctant peasants in their homes. The visits occasionally culminated in a symbolic 'red marriage' (*krasnyi svat*), when the individual peasant household eventually signed up.¹⁵ In the Central Volga region, the authorities called for the recruitment of three peasants by each collective farmer.¹⁶ In the Central Black-Earth region collective farmers were organised into 'raid columns', which descended on 'backward' villages, ejecting the kulaks in the course of their activities.¹⁷

But even the press reports acknowledged that the authorities did not rely solely on the activities of the collective farmers themselves. Every region reported that many thousands of industrial workers, party and government officials and others had descended on the villages for shorter or longer periods.¹⁸

middle of February, 21,500 collective farmers had already been recruited (SZe, February 16, 1931). Eventually the number rose to 38,400 (Oskol'kov (Rostov, 1973), 258–9). In September, a proposal was mooted that a further 50,000 collective farmers should be sent to lagging villages in brigades of 3–5 persons, but this time for only one month (SZe, September 5, 1931).

¹³ SZe, January 20, 1931.

¹⁴ SZe, January 18, 1931 (Central Black-Earth region).

¹⁵ SZe, January 18, February 19, April 25, May 1, 1931.

¹⁶ SZe, January 26, 1931.

¹⁷ P, January 21, 1931.

¹⁸ See, for example, Oskol'kov (Rostov, 1973), 260 (North Caucasus – 12,000 before and 30,000 during the spring sowing). In Ukraine at the beginning of the campaign the Politburo resolved to despatch 2,000 students to the countryside from the large towns (GAVO, 51/1/447, 37 (decision of January 13)); SZe, February 27, 1931 reported that in Ukraine large numbers of party workers with literature and leaflets went to the countryside from Krivoi Rog.

The campaign in the Central Black-Earth region was particularly vigorous. This was one of the three regions which Stalin criticised by name for excessive zeal in his 'Answers to Collective-Farm Comrades' of April 3, 1930 (see vol. 1, p. 311). But in the 1931 campaign the region pressed ahead uninhibitedly. It had been placed in the second category ('other grain areas'), and therefore expected to achieve 50 per cent collectivisation in the course of 1931. In fact, the percentage of households collectivised increased from 20 per cent on December 1, 1930, to 55 per cent on June 1; by June 20 it had reached nearly 60 per cent.¹⁹

Vareikis, the regional party secretary, opened the campaign with a firm declaration that collectivisation must not be left to 'spontaneity' (*samotek*).²⁰ The regional committee called for a 'month of collectivisation', so that the main drive would be completed before the spring sowing.²¹ This special month was soon named a 'Lenin enrolment' (*Leninskii prizyv*)²² – the name given to the campaign which recruited a quarter of a million workers at the bench to the Communist Party in the months after Lenin's death in 1924. In the last ten days of January, 57,000 households joined the *kolkhozy*; 2.7 per cent of all households in the region.²³ In mid-February, Vareikis called for further collectivisation, supported by 'revolutionary action' against kulaks and other enemies of the *kolkhozy*.²⁴ In the previous autumn, such impetuosity would have been admonished by the superior authorities, but now *Kolkhoztsentr* sent a telegram praising the growth of collective-farm households in the region.²⁵ At the beginning of March the region announced a further collectivisation recruitment month – this time named after Stalin instead of Lenin.²⁶

Compared with the fairly realistic press reports about the first collectivisation drive in 1930, in 1931 these newspaper accounts were bland and unconvincing. Behind the propaganda, the pressures on individual peasant households to join the *kolkhozy* were compelling, as is clear from reports about collectivisation in Russian

¹⁹ See Table 27 and SZe, June 27, 1931.

²⁰ SZe, December 30, 1930.

²¹ SZe, January 5, 1931.

²² SZe, January 15, 1931.

²³ SZe, January 26, February 2, 1931. For reports of the drive and the announcement of its success, see *ibid.*, January 13, 20; February 7, 1931.

²⁴ SZe, February 17, 1931.

²⁵ SZe, February 19, 1931.

²⁶ SZe, March 5, 1931.

archives. The pressures exercised are discussed here in ascending order of importance.

Taxation and other levies imposed on the countryside were strongly biased against the individual peasant. The legislation about the agricultural tax imposed in the autumn of 1930 offered the kolkhozy substantial exemptions (see vol. 2, pp. 122–3, 125). On November 15, 1930, Sulimov, chair of the Sovnarkom of the RSFSR, demanded that ‘not a single kulak household shall escape from taxation’.²⁷ In Ukraine, on November 22, the Ukrainian Narkomzem despatched a radiotelegram on similar lines.²⁸ Such exhortations were repeated by the regions to the districts. Thus on December 26, 1930, a detailed circular from the Karelian autonomous republic to its districts insisted that at least as many kulaks must be taxed on an individual basis as in 1929/30, and set out extremely broad criteria for classifying a peasant as a kulak.²⁹ A candid tax inspector explained to his superiors that the kulaks subject to taxation had substantially declined: some peasants had been incorrectly classified as kulaks in the previous tax campaign; some had already been expropriated, and others had been arrested.³⁰

All the instructions from the centre insisted that penal taxation on an individual basis should be applied only to kulaks and not to middle peasants. But the attempt to seek substantial revenues from better-off peasants, whose numbers and wealth were rapidly declining, impelled the local authorities to widen the definition of kulak. The Karelian circular of December 26 even stated that a household could be classified as ‘kulak’ if any member of it engaged in ‘concealed trade as an intermediary’, or even if a member of

²⁷ The telegram is reprinted from the archives in *Iz istorii* (Petrozavodsk, 1991), 112–13. In the case of those classified as kulaks, a tax schedule was prepared for each household; for all other peasants, a total sum was fixed for the district or village, and this was then divided up by fairly rough criteria among the separate households.

²⁸ DAVO, P-45/1/94, 195. This was followed on January 4 by a further radio telegram, this time issued by a secretary of the Ukrainian central committee (DAVO, P-43/1/216, 4).

²⁹ *Iz istorii* (Petrozavodsk, 1991), 114–17.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 118–19; report of January 7, 1931, referring to the Olonets district. A later document prepared by the OGPU listed the property held by individual kulak households in the Olonets district on March 1, 1930 and March 15, 1931; the huge decline in their possessions is clearly shown (*ibid.*, 131–3, dated April 15, 1931).

the family kept a village tea-house. Many peasants complained that they had been unjustifiably classified as kulaks. A peasant submitted a petition to Stalin, signed by all nineteen members of his settlement, insisting that he was a working peasant who had to earn his living from fishing and carting goods and firewood, because he had only 0.95 hectares of land. His household had nevertheless been classified as kulak, and the sewing machine, clock, samovar, mirror, divan and two fishing nets had been sold in order to pay the tax. The petition was rejected by the central executive committee of the Karelian republic on the grounds that he had exploited (that is, employed) labour on fishing and agriculture.³¹

While the collection of the agricultural tax was proceeding, a cultural levy was imposed on the peasants, to be paid in full by March 15. The levy followed the usual class principles. Kulaks were to pay a sum equal to the amount levied on them for the 1930/31 agricultural tax. Middle peasants were to pay an amount equal to 65 per cent of the agricultural tax, but a minimum of six rubles per household. Poor peasants who were freed from agricultural tax were to pay five rubles. Collective farmers were to pay only four rubles, and only if they received 'non-socialised income' (that is, income from selling the produce of their household plot, or from *otkhodnichestvo*).³²

The authorities also continued to seek 'voluntary' payments for mass loans. The loans launched in 1930, and collected in the first months of 1931, yielded 488 million rubles in the countryside, compared with the 418 million rubles planned, much more than the amount collected in the economic year 1929/30.³³

How successful were these various fiscal measures in persuading the individual peasants to join the *kolkhoz*? A survey of rural money income and expenditure in the agricultural year 1930/31 showed that obligatory payments per household were 74 per cent higher for individual peasants than for collective farmers.³⁴ On the other hand,

³¹ *Iz istorii* (Petrozavodsk, 1991), 134, 266; the petition was dated April 29, 1931.

³² SZ, 1931, art. 34 (decree of TsIK and Sovnarkom dated January 9, 1931); the levy was officially entitled a 'single levy on for economic and cultural construction in rural districts'.

³³ *Otchet... 1931* (Leningrad, 1932), 166–7.

³⁴ The survey, *Denezhnye dokhody... 1930/31* (1932), was carried out in July 1931, and therefore included agricultural tax and self-taxation imposed in the autumn of 1930 rather than the tax levied in the spring–summer legislation for the autumn of 1931. The survey covered 11,600 households in Ukraine, the North Caucasus, Lower Volga, Central Black-Earth, Urals, West Siberian and Moscow

'voluntary' payments, including the state loans, were substantially higher for collective farmers, who were under strong pressure to behave as model citizens. In all, the two kinds of households paid almost identical amounts in 1930/31. (See Table 32(b).) The survey also showed that individual peasant households earned higher money incomes than collective farmers, especially from 'non-agricultural incomes' from wages, and from the timber and artisan industries.³⁵ (See Table 32(a).) In monetary terms, therefore, fiscal measures as such were an ineffective means of cajoling individual peasants to join the kolkhozy. It was the constant threat of being classified as kulaks, and therefore subjected to crippling taxation, which undoubtedly led many middle peasants to conclude that it would be unwise to remain outside the kolkhozy.

The reduction of the land cultivated by the individual peasants was a far more important means of applying pressure on individual peasants. In 1930, individual peasants cultivated much less land per household than collective farmers, and the grain produced per household was also much less. Their position was worsened by the collections from the 1930 harvest, which left them with even less grain (see vol. 1, p. 440).

These pressures were reinforced by the land consolidation measures before the spring sowing of 1931. A directive of Narkomzem of the RSFSR, dated January 17, ruled both that the kolkhozy must get the best land and that this must not be 'at the expense of the absolute worsening of the land utilised by middle peasant and poor peasant households'.³⁶ This contradiction in terms was almost invariably interpreted to the disadvantage of the individual peasant. A second directive, dated March 19, ruled that land consolidation for individual households could take place only when land was being allocated to sovkhozy and kolkhozy. Middle peasants, except 'weak (malomoshchnye) middle peasants', would be required to pay the cost of the marking-up of their land.³⁷ A third document, dated April 30, appears at first sight to assist the individual peasant.

regions, and in the Belorussian republic; in addition it incorporated data collected by 'expert evaluation' in the Central Volga region. The regions and republics covered by the survey included 78 million rural citizens.

³⁵ The difference was reported to be entirely due to the higher incomes of the remaining kulak households.

³⁶ SZo, 1, 1931, 89, 87.

³⁷ SZo, 4, 1931, 75-7.

It ruled that, contrary to the practice in a number of regions, the amount of land allocated to collective farmers, and to poor and middle individual peasants, should be the same. However, it added that kolkhozy should also receive both the land of any households which had ceased to exist, and the land taken from the kulaks. Moreover, 'if the kolkhozy are able to use additional land, the lands of the land society and of individual households which have been used barbarously (*khishchnicheski*) or not for the direct purpose intended may be transferred to them if the village soviets establish that the use of these categories of land by individual farms is not being carried out in accordance with the main requirements of the land agencies on the conduct of agriculture'.³⁸ These provisions enabled the local authorities to seize the land of individual peasants on flimsy pretexts, resuming the practice of the spring of 1930. Those individual peasants who had failed to join the kolkhozy in the spring of 1931 found that the land available was even less than in the previous year.³⁹

In extreme cases, individual peasants were left without land. In the national regions of the North Caucasus, according to an OGPU report:

In order to stimulate collectivisation in the villages [*auly*], particularly in the recent period, in carrying out land consolidation some organisations did not allocate land to individual peasants.

³⁸ SZo, 5, 1931, 59; this circular was also issued by Narkomzem of the RSFSR.

³⁹ The sown area per household in the USSR as a whole was as follows

	<i>A Kolkhozy + collective farmers</i>	<i>B Individual peasants</i>	<i>B as percentage of A</i>
Spring-sown grain			
1930	3.88	1.94	50.0
1931	3.16	1.54	48.7
All grain			
1930	5.07	3.57	70.4
1931	5.00	2.67	53.4
Sown area for all crops			
1930	6.55	4.30	65.6
1931	6.52	3.45	52.9

Source: Calculated from data on sown areas in *Sots. str.* (1936), 286–9, on basis of data on number of households collectivised and total number of households on June 1, 1930, and June 1, 1931 (approximately 25 million and 24.7 million on the respective dates – see vol. 1, p. 442, and Table 27).

This is most true of districts in which the most significant results in collectivisation were obtained – Adyga, Ossetia and Kabarda.⁴⁰

In the majority of villages some land was allocated to the individual peasants, but it was allocated belatedly, and it was usually land of poor quality. Thus, in Chechnya, even by April 20, when the main sowing period had already begun, in three okrugs 'the land indications for the individual peasants HAVE NOT YET BEEN COMPLETED'. Where they had been completed 'as a rule individual peasants are allocated the worst scrub land'. Disturbances resulted, and in one case individual peasants seized the kolkhoz land and started to plough it themselves.⁴¹

Many other forms of pressure were used against the individual peasants. In districts where collectivisation was well advanced, they were inveigled or forced to hand over their seed grain and their fodder to the local authorities. Thus the Ukrainian Politburo resolved that in districts where more than 75 per cent of households were collectivised, a general meeting of individual peasants could decide 'to socialise the seed material of the individual peasant sector with the object of organised sowing'.⁴² The OGPU reported that peasants feared that 'the state is collecting seed stocks in order to drive the peasants into the kolkhozy'.⁴³ In Kabarda 'the collection of seed stocks and fodder is in most cases carried out by administrative methods, and accordingly distortions occur – the imposition on individual peasants was too large, and they were compelled to buy grain on the private market'.⁴⁴ These measures, together with the high grain collections, meant that individual peasants often lacked seed grain for the spring sowing, received no assistance from the authorities, and were unable to sow their land.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ RGAE, 7486/37/194, 218 (report of secret political department of OGPU dated May 18, 1931, covering information received up to May 8). In these three autonomous regions, by April 14 collectivisation had reached, respectively, 99, 95 and 85 per cent of all households (*ibid.*, 238).

⁴¹ RGAE, 7486/37/194, 243. The situation was similar in Kabarda and Cherkessiya, where hasty and inexpert land allocation resulted in 'a mass of misunderstandings between the kolkhozy and the individual peasants' (*ibid.*, 255–254, 239–238).

⁴² DAVO, P-51/1/447, 14 (decision of January 2).

⁴³ RGAE, 7486/37/193, 98 (OGPU report of February 9, 1931).

⁴⁴ RGAE, 7486/37/194, 266 (OGPU report dated May 18).

⁴⁵ See *ibid.*, 244, 239.

Other measures of compulsion familiar from the first collectivisation drive were repeated in 1931. According to a OGPU report on the North Caucasus:

The recruitment of new households into the kolkhozy, as last year, was accompanied by considerable distortions: the use of compulsion against individual peasants, and of economic boycott (i.e. refusing to allocate land or supply goods, or any kind of help), and threatening them with repression if they refuse to join the kolkhoz.⁴⁶

As in the first few weeks of 1930, the most serious threat which menaced the individual peasant was to be classified as a kulak, with the consequence that, on his own or with his family, he would be despatched to a remote region of the USSR. Every peasant household had acquaintances or relatives who had been summarily treated in the first collectivisation drive. In the Lower Volga and Central Black-Earth regions, the OGPU reported triumphantly that interest in joining the kolkhozy had increased following the expulsion of kulaks in March and April 1931.⁴⁷ (For the second dekulakisation campaign, see Chapter 2.)

OGPU reports nevertheless acknowledged that collectivisation was not entirely a matter of compulsion. On the eve of the spring sowing, some poor peasants, lacking horses or implements of their own, volunteered to join the kolkhozy. The reports also claimed that some middle peasants now wanted to join the kolkhozy in the expectation that the kolkhozy might obtain the use of tractors.⁴⁸ But in spite of the larger amount of land per household allocated to collective farmers, many peasants remained reluctant to join. They believed that as individual peasants they had greater opportunities to work outside agriculture and to take their produce to the market. This even applied to poor peasants. 'We are not kulaks,' they said, 'We don't have to fear dekulakisation – let the kulaks go into the kolkhoz.'⁴⁹

Above all, individual peasants were not impressed by the performance of the kolkhozy. '*The main cause of the anti-kolkhoz sentiments*

⁴⁶ See *ibid.*, 231 (referring to Kabarda region).

⁴⁷ TsAFSB, 2/9/45, 12–18 (dated April 3), and 28–33 (dated April 14) (published in TSD, iii, 103–6, 118–20).

⁴⁸ RGAE, 7486/37/194, 231–230, 226.

⁴⁹ RGAE, 7486/37/193, 105 (report from Lower Volga region, dated February 8).

of the poor peasant,' one report emphasised, '*is the poor example set by existing kolkhozy*.'⁵⁰ According to another report: 'A delay in paying the collective farmers for the previous economic year has occurred in some districts and had an extremely negative influence on the rate of collectivisation.'⁵¹

Large numbers of individual peasants rejected collectivisation simply by abandoning their land and village, and moving to the towns. The 'depeasantisation' of poor and middle peasants in 1931 followed the pattern of the so-called 'self-dekulakisation' widespread among better-off peasants in 1929 and 1930. Peasants were reported as saying:

'It is better to go off for wages, because agriculture is unprofitable.' 'They value labour more highly in production; here the authorities grab taxes and impose agricultural collections.' (Central Black-Earth Region) ... 'We should go before it is too late, or they will put us down as kulaks and exile us.' (North Caucasus).⁵²

In spite of the penalties incurred by disobedience, some peasants actively resisted collectivisation.⁵³ Even in the newspapers an occasional report acknowledged that attempts had been made to break up meetings of poor peasants in order to prevent further collectivisation.⁵⁴ The press also reported that once kolkhozy were formed or expanded they were frequently subject to attack,⁵⁵ and claimed that great efforts were made by their enemies to disrupt them from within.⁵⁶ Alleged 'disrupters' of the kolkhozy were put on trial.⁵⁷ Hostility to the collectivisers was almost universally attributed to the machinations of the kulaks, though occasional references to the negative role of 'unenlightened women' (*temnye baby*)⁵⁸ indicated that hostility was not confined to the better-off peasants.

⁵⁰ RGAE, 7486/37/193, 20–14 (report from Ivanovo Industrial region dated January 15, 1931).

⁵¹ RGAE, 7486/37/193, 105.

⁵² RGAE, 7486/37/193, 99 (referring also to the Ivanovo Industrial region). For other examples see RGAE, 7486/37/194, 245.

⁵³ See, for example, SZe, April 16 (on Central Black-Earth region), May 15 (Central Volga, Ukraine).

⁵⁴ See, for example, SZe, January 12, 1931.

⁵⁵ Oskol'kov (Rostov, 1973), 286 (North Caucasus).

⁵⁶ See (for the Central Black-Earth region), SZe, February 9, March 5 and April 5, 1931.

⁵⁷ SZe, February 24, *Severnyi rabochii*, February 27, 1931.

⁵⁸ SZe, March 21, 1931 (Central Black-Earth region).

Statistics assembled at the time and available in the Russian archives show that 15.8 per cent of all kolkhozy were subjected to 'hostile disturbances' in the first six months of 1931; nearly half of these were subjected to two or more attacks. The term 'disturbance' (*vystuplenie*) is vague. It included the poisoning of animals and damage to machines (22.3 per cent of all disturbances), which may have been a result of simple incompetence, and 'arson' (21.9 per cent), which may have been a dramatic interpretation of the accidental burning-down of wooden cottages and farm buildings which took place frequently in the Russian countryside. But the statistics also showed that 35.1 per cent of all disturbances were 'attacks on activists'.⁵⁹ In the Moscow region alone there were eighty such attacks between the end of 1930 and mid-May 1931, while in the Central Volga Region there were thirty cases of murder between January and March.⁶⁰

The OGPU reports, while usually attributing the disturbances to the machinations of kulaks, claimed that they were widespread, and that they had continued throughout the months of collectivisation. A report from the Ivanovo Industrial region noted thirty-eight 'anti-kolkhoz disturbances' which took place at the moment of carrying out collectivisation, and acknowledged that three of these were by poor peasants.⁶¹ The disturbances in the traditionally anti-Soviet and anti-Russian regions of the North Caucasus were among the fiercest. In Chechnya, 'kulaks and mullahs openly convene meetings of collective farmers (often with more people present than any Soviet official has achieved) and openly engage in anti-kolkhoz agitation'. In consequence, orders had been issued for the arrest of the 'most malicious and active elements disrupting collectivisation'.⁶² The land consolidation measures also aroused great indignation in many areas, and were sometimes brought to an end by peasant resistance.⁶³

The unrest did not cease once mass collectivisation was achieved, although the number of disturbances diminished. An OGPU report surveying the situation at the end of 1931 claimed that the threat of war with Japan had enlivened 'kulak' activities. In the Moscow

⁵⁹ *Dokumenty svidetel'stviuyut* (1989), 491–3.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁶¹ RGAE, 7486/37/193, 19 (dated January 15, 1931).

⁶² RGAE, 7486/37/194, 229 (dated May 18, 1931).

⁶³ See, for example, *ibid.*, 218.

region, for example, the kulaks were alleged to assert that 'the kolkhozy are a second serfdom [barshchina], but we must put up with it for a time, soon Japan will attack Soviet power and we shall free ourselves'. The OGPU report claimed that such feelings were widespread in view of the deprivations suffered by the new collective farmers: 'there are unhealthy tendencies among fairly considerable groups of collective farmers. In places the negative attitudes of the collective farmers are a result of the tense financial and food situation in some kolkhozy (Lower Volga, Bashkiria, Central Volga).'⁶⁴

The instability of the kolkhozy was reflected in the large number of expulsions. Between October 1, 1930 and June 1, 1931, 27 per cent of those kolkhozy which returned reports stated that they had expelled kulak households, and 32 per cent that they had expelled members who were 'violators of the [kolkhoz] Statute or of labour discipline'. Those kolkhozy which had expelled members on average expelled 3.7 households classified as 'kulak' and 3.8 as non-kulak guilty of violations of discipline and other such faults. The percentage of expulsions was much higher among kolkhozy which had existed throughout the period, the so-called 'old' kolkhozy.⁶⁵

Collectivisation in the form it took from the end of 1929 onwards presupposed that the main fields (the *nadely*) of the individual peasants would be socialised; grain and other major crops would be grown in common by the kolkhoz as a whole. The kolkhozy could not be considered to be properly established – even at the crudest level – if the horses and agricultural implements formerly in private possession were not taken over by the kolkhoz. As in 1930, the instructions of Narkomzem and Kolkhozttsentr treated the surrender of this property – and the supply of fodder for the horses and seed

⁶⁴ RGAE, 7486/37/235, 12–10 (Special Report No. 4 on Kolkhoz Construction, dated January 19, 1932).

⁶⁵ *Kolkhozy vesnoi 1931g* (1932), 164–6:

	<i>Old kolkhozy</i>	<i>New kolkhozy</i>	<i>All kolkhozy</i>
Percentage reporting	88.1	80.4	84.0
Percentage expelling kulaks	40.4	13.8	26.8
Percentage expelling violators of labour discipline	46.3	18.4	31.8
Total number of households per kolkhoz, June 1, 1931	169.0	67.2	141.7
Kulak households expelled	4.1	2.3	3.7
Violator households expelled	4.4	2.5	3.8

for the spring sowing – as an imperative requirement for entry.⁶⁶ The press frequently complained that individual peasants had entered the kolkhoz without their horses, seed or fodder.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, a very high proportion of the horses of the individual peasants were transferred to the kolkhozy. The partial survey of kolkhozy in June 1931 reported that the new kolkhozy organised since the autumn of 1930 possessed as many socialised working animals per household as the old kolkhozy, and more working animals per hectare of sown area.⁶⁸ And although many kolkhozy lacked horses when compared with the remaining individual peasants, the substantial supply of tractors in the months before the spring sowing meant that 39 per cent of the kolkhoz land ploughed in the spring for the sowing was ploughed by tractors.⁶⁹

Following the vast expansion in the number of collectivised households in the first six months of 1931, the authorities decided on a period of consolidation. On August 2, 1931, the Politburo approved by poll a resolution 'On the Rates of Further Collectivisation and the Tasks of Strengthening the Kolkhozy'.⁷⁰ Eight months earlier, in December 1930, the central committee plenum had declared that 'the completion of comprehensive collectivisation in the main' required the collectivisation of 'on average not less than 80% of peasant households' in a region (see vol. 1, p. 114n). By August 1931 the term 'comprehensive' was rarely used; and the definition of 'completion of collectivisation in the main' in the Politburo resolution was much weaker than the previous definition of 'comprehensive collectivisation':

The measure of the completion of collectivisation in the main in a particular district or region is not the obligatory inclusion of all 100% of poor and middle-peasant households, but the recruitment for the kolkhozy of at least 68–70% per cent of peasant households and of at least 75–80% of the area sown by peasant households.

⁶⁶ See Nikulikhin in SZe, January 4, 1931.

⁶⁷ SZe, February 15, 16, March 25, 1931.

⁶⁸ *Kolkhozy vesnoi 1931g* (1932), 54–6.

⁶⁹ *Kolkhozy vesnoi 1931g* (1932), 51–3; this includes ploughing both by MTS tractors and by the fairly small number of tractors which remained in the possession of the kolkhozy.

⁷⁰ RGASPI, 17/3/840; the resolution was included in the normal protocols of the Politburo, not the particularly secret special papers (*osoby papki*); it was confirmed at the Politburo session of August 5. It is published in *Kollektivizatsiya* (1957), 398.

On this basis the Politburo announced that collectivisation was complete in the main, not only in the grain regions listed in the first category in the plenum resolution of December 1930 but also in Left-Bank Ukraine, the Crimea, the grain areas of the Urals, and Moldavia. In all these areas the party should concentrate on improving the organisation of the kolkhozy. In the other grain areas in the Central Black-Earth region, West and East Siberia, Kazakhstan, Bashkiria and the Far East, and in the cotton and sugar-beet areas, the aim should be to complete collectivisation in the main (obviously in terms of the new definition) in 1932. It will be noted that the resolution, unlike that of December 1930, now referred only to the grain areas of these regions, and it added that even here 'party organisations must in no circumstances permit the struggle to recruit peasants for the kolkhozy to turn into an unhealthy drive for inflated percentages of collectivisation'. Everywhere else, including the grain-deficit belt, collectivisation should be completed in the main only in the year 1932/33.

This resolution may be seen as a mild version of Stalin's 'Dizzy from Success' article of March 1930. But, unlike Stalin's dramatic intervention, its effect was merely to slow down, and not to reverse, the process of collectivisation. In the remaining months of 1931 the number of households in kolkhozy increased by a further 1,200,000, from 57.7 per cent to 62.5 per cent of all peasant households.⁷¹ The main increases now took place in the second-category grain regions, such as Siberia, the Central Black-Earth region and Kazakhstan, and in Uzbekistan, the cotton-growing republic. Many households were also collectivised in the grain-deficit regions, including Moscow and Ivanovo (see Table 27).

Kolkhoztsetri, in a report prepared at the end of 1931, claimed with pride that 'the overwhelming majority of districts in the Soviet Union have been involved in comprehensive collectivisation, and in a very large proportion of them comprehensive collectivisation may be considered completed in the main'. It asserted optimistically that, as a result of collectivisation and the development of the sovkhozy, 'the grain problem and the problem of the development of industrial crops' had largely been resolved. But it also warned of the dangerous machinations of the kulaks:

The efforts of the kulaks were directed towards counterposing the internal interests of the collective farm to the interests of the state,

⁷¹ See Table 26 and *Ezhegodnik po sel. kh. 1931* (1931), 442–3; we have assumed that the number of peasant households amounted to 24.7 million.

and towards inducing in the mass of collective farmers a thirst for private-economic accumulation. In this way they would secure the disruption of the kolkhoz movement from within. In some places the kulaks succeeded in dragging some kolkhozy along with them – this was assisted to no small extent by the presence of Right-wing opportunist attitudes among part of the local leadership. But we can today already assert that this manoeuvre has in the main been defeated.⁷²

Within a few months this optimism would be swept aside by agricultural crisis. The successful collectivisation drive had not led to a viable agricultural economy.

⁷² *Kolkhoznoe stroitel'stvo* (1931), 4–9.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SECOND PHASE OF DEKULAKISATION, 1931

The Politburo decision on dekulakisation on January 30, 1930, divided the kulaks into three categories. Kulaks in Category I, the ‘counter-revolutionary kulak *aktiv*’, were to be confined in concentration camps; those within this Category who were organisers of terrorist acts, of counter-revolutionary disturbances and of insurrectionary organisations were to be executed. Category II consisted of ‘the remaining elements of the kulak *aktiv*, especially from the richest kulaks and semi-landowners’. Category II households were to be exiled to remote localities in the USSR and remote districts within their own region. The decision stated that 60,000 kulaks were to be exiled in Category I and 150,000 in Category II. A further category, Category III, consisted of kulaks who were to remain within their own district, and were to be resettled on new land areas outside the boundaries of the kolkhozy.

Regional targets for Category I were listed within ranges which added up to between 49,000 and 60,000 persons. The families of Category I kulaks were to be exiled to the northern districts of the USSR, together with the kulaks and their families in Category II. In Category II, regional targets for exile from the main regions were also fixed, amounting to between 129,000 and 154,000 households. All these were to be ready for dispatch from the assembly points by March 1. These actions were to be related to the rate of collectivisation in each region, and to be completed between February and May; at least half the total was to be dealt with by April 15. Nothing was said in the Politburo decision about the number to be included in Category III, or to be executed within Category I.¹

Great confusion followed. On February 2, 1930, the OGPU, in an order signed by Yagoda, instructed its agencies to arrest, and where necessary execute, kulaks in Category I. The OGPU order greatly extended the definition of Category I kulaks compared with the

¹ RGASPI, 17/162/8, 60, 64–69; the decision is printed in *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 4, 1994, 147–52. The term ‘kontslager’ (concentration camp) was still used in official documents at this time; it was later replaced by the blander term ‘labour camp’. The version of this decision in vol. 1, pp. 234–6, was pieced together before the document was available, and has some inaccuracies.

Politburo order issued only two days earlier. It now included active Whiteguards, former bandits, former White officers, emigrants who had returned to the USSR, and 'active members of church councils and of religious and sectarian societies and groups', as well as 'the richest peasants, usurers, speculators and former landowners'. All these sub-categories were classified as 'kulaks'. This order also established a USSR-wide network of *troiki* (triumvirates) to handle the arrests made under Category I and the exiling of Category II households.² Two days later, on February 4, a secret instruction of TsIK and Sovnarkom on dekulakisation failed to provide a timetable or specific figures. It merely stated that 'on average in all districts' approximately 3–5 per cent of households should be exiled or resettled, and that these measures 'should be carried out immediately in districts of comprehensive collectivisation, and in the remaining districts to the extent that genuine mass development of collectivisation takes place'.³

Dekulakisation had two main objectives. First, it sought to remove from the villages those peasants who, from their economic position or their political and social outlook, might be expected to resist collectivisation. The economic definition was extended far beyond the criterion that a kulak was an exploiter of other peasants; any reasonably prosperous peasant might be treated as a kulak. Recalcitrance was also treated as a criterion for defining a kulak, and so 'podkulachniki' (hangers-on of the kulaks) were also subject to

² RGAE, 9414/1/1944, 17–25, published in *Neizvestnaya Rossiya: XX vek*, i (1992), 237–45. On *troiki* see also vol. 1, p. 243. Later OGPU documents distinguished between 'kulaks' as such and the remaining sub-categories (church officials, White officers, etc.), but treated them all as part of Category I. For a careful study of the role of the OGPU in the countryside in 1930, see Viola (2000).

³ The instruction is printed in *Spetspereselentsy... 1930-vesna 1931* (Novosibirsk, 1992), 21–6. The anti-kulak action was ill-prepared. Thus the decision of January 30 appeared to refer to the exile of *persons*, not whole families; it stated that 'members of *families* of kulaks exiled or imprisoned in concentration camps, if they wish it and if the local district executive committees agree, may remain temporarily or permanently in the former district'. The OGPU order of February 2, however, specifically stated that, in Category I, 'families of those arrested, imprisoned in a concentration camp, or sentenced to the supreme measure of punishment [i.e. execution], must be exiled to the northern regions of the USSR, together with kulaks and their families exiled during the mass campaign [i.e. Category II]'. The secret instruction of February 4 took an intermediate position. While including the clause about the rights of members of families, it discussed dekulakisation in terms of households (*khozyaistva*). In practice it was almost always families rather than individual kulaks which were exiled under Category II, including the remaining members of the families of male kulaks imprisoned under Category I.

repression.⁴ In accordance with the order of February 2, the campaign was used extensively to remove from the countryside those looked on as enemies of the regime.

The second objective of dekulakisation was to persuade reluctant peasants to join the kolkhozy, whatever their social category. The urban officials and workers who descended on the countryside were taught that peasants who opposed collectivisation were agents of the class enemy, and that the wrath of the proletariat should be meted out to them; they soon found that the threat of exile was a very effective means of recruitment.

According to a later OGPU memorandum, as many as 140,724 persons were arrested under Category I by April 15, far more than the 60,000 required by the Politburo decision of January 30. Of these, 79,330 were kulaks; the rest were church officials, landowners and 'the anti-Soviet element'.⁵ But the proposal in the Politburo decision of January 30 that some 150,000 households in Category II should be exiled by May proved to be impracticable. By May 20, 67,895 households (332,400 persons) were exiled beyond their own regions, and 32,253 households (163,184 persons) within their own regions.⁶

Following the halting of the collectivisation drive in March, the exiling of Category II families for the time being largely ceased. But large-scale arrests under Category I continued, possibly because of the large number of peasant disturbances at this time. The OGPU memorandum already cited states that between April 15 and October 1 a further 142,993 persons were arrested under Category I, 45,559 of them kulaks as such. Thus the total arrested under Category I by October 1930 was apparently as many as 284,000, and included 125,000 categorised as kulaks.⁷ The total number of death sentences approved by OGPU *troiki* in 1930 was 18,966.⁸

⁴ For a discussion of these issues, see vol. 1, pp. 228–37, 243–52.

⁵ TsAFSB, 2/8/329, 198–212 (dated November 17, 1930), published in TSD, ii (2000), 702–9.

⁶ See n. 5 above. According to Ivnikskii (1994), 131–6, the 66,445 families he gives as having been exiled in Category II by May 1930 include families which were later released. This is evidently generally the case with the figures for the number of exiles given in this chapter.

⁷ See n. 5 above. For anomalies in these Category I figures, see Viola (2000), 20–1, and 43, n. 82.

⁸ TsAFSB, 2/9/539, 224–225 (OGPU memorandum dated July 31, 1931) (published in TSD, ii, 809–10); these figures exclude Central Asia, and the figures for Kazakhstan and Eastern Siberia are incomplete.

Many of the more prosperous peasants who were not dispossessed by the authorities 'self-dekulakised' by migrating to the towns. If they remained in the villages, most or all of them had sold up much of their property to pay taxes, or had distributed their wealth among relatives or friends within the village.⁹ Plenipotentiaries sent to the villages often reported that no kulaks remained, and 'found' the 'lost' kulaks only after pressure from higher authority.¹⁰ OGPU reports complained that kulaks had engaged in 'middle-peasantisation' (podserednyachivanie):

As well as selling up their property and reducing the size of their farm, kulaks and well-to-do peasants engage in the fictitious division of property between members of the family, and hide property 'until better times' with relatives and acquaintances. The tendencies to self-elimination, as a basic method of 'middle-peasantisation', are especially increasing in connection with the current economic and political campaign in the village.¹¹

The OGPU sought to impress on the authorities that kulaks, or former kulaks, remaining in the countryside were a source of great danger to the regime. Thus a memorandum of August 28, 1930, insisted:

more than 200,000 dekulakised households (about 1 million persons) have so far not been exiled anywhere and have not been resettled (ustroeny).

This class enemy, enraged to the utmost extent, is carrying on increasingly active counter-revolutionary work in the countryside, aimed at disrupting all the actions of Soviet power, and at the same time it augments the membership of counter-revolutionary organisations and gangs.

It is therefore high time to raise the question of the most rapid possible removal of all dekulakised kulak households to special settlements, and of establishing them there.¹²

⁹ On the decline in the number of kulaks eligible to pay tax on an individual basis, see p. 8 above.

¹⁰ See, for example, RGAE, 7486/37/193, 74 (report from West Siberia dated January 31, 1931).

¹¹ RGAE, 7486/37/193, 61 (report of the Information Department of the OGPU dated January 30, 1931). For examples of kulaks selling up their property and moving to the towns in 1931, see Fitzpatrick (1994), 84.

¹² TsAFSB, 2/8/329, 138–141, published in TSD, ii, 596.

A further memorandum, dated December 10, 1930, listed by regions the total number of kulak families which had been dekulakised but had not been exiled: the number for the USSR as a whole amounted to 203,681.¹³

In the second dekulakisation drive, 'kulaks' could therefore be found only by making the definition of 'kulak' even less precise. 'Kulak and well-to-do (*zazhitochnye*)' were often treated as a single category, and the 'well-to-do' subjected to the same penalties as kulaks. It was further claimed that peasants should still be classified as kulaks even though they could no longer engage in the exploitative activities of the past. Thus the Karelian regional party committee admitted that 'kulaks' no longer fitted their conventional attributes. The present-day kulaks were said to obtain their incomes primarily from selling and reselling agricultural and craft products, money-lending, and so on. When these peasants were classified as kulaks, the number would be no smaller than in the previous year.¹⁴ The criteria for expropriating and exiling kulak households approved by the Karelian commission for the elimination of the kulaks were very broad:

- (a) those taxed in 1930/31 on an individual basis;
- (b) those who had eliminated themselves during the 1930/31 agricultural campaign; and
- (c) those who at present, or 'in recent years', had earned their living as traders, subcontractors, or large householders, even if not taxed on an individual basis.¹⁵

Moreover, peasants who used to have the characteristics of kulaks, and had now lost them altogether, were frequently still treated as kulaks. Thus the bureau of the party committee of the Western region resolved that a person could be included in the lists of those being exiled not only as a result of his present situation but because in 1928/29, before the drive against the kulaks got seriously under way, he had exploited others, or been taxed as a kulak, or deprived of electoral rights.¹⁶

In 1931, peasants who lacked the economic criteria of a kulak but had counter-revolutionary pasts, or were recalcitrant, were treated as

¹³ TsAFSB, 2/8/329, 274, published in TSD, ii, 745–6.

¹⁴ *Iz istorii* (Petrozavodsk, 1991), 135 (dated May 7, 1931).

¹⁵ *Iz istorii* (Petrozavodsk, 1991), 138–9 (dated June 15, 1931).

¹⁶ *Kollektivizatsiya* (Smolensk, 1968), 358 (decision of March 10, 1931).

kulaks even more frankly than in 1930. Families were exiled as kulaks because the head of the family had participated in counter-revolutionary actions at the end of the civil war.¹⁷ Documents on dekulakisation now referred to 'economic and political kulaks' as distinct categories, and described 'kulaks and unreliable elements' as equally liable to exile.¹⁸ Some attempt was made to allow for poverty and loyalty. 'Economically poor-peasant households' which had been included in a list of those to be exiled were removed because 'the political reasons are not significant'.¹⁹ Some peasants who had been taxed individually or deprived of their electoral rights were not exiled because they had been loyal to Soviet power.²⁰

When collectivisation was resumed in the autumn of 1930, both the central and local authorities took it for granted that dekulakisation was a necessary corollary. On September 24, 1930, the directive letter from the Politburo, 'On Collectivisation', in calling for a 'new powerful development of the kolkhoz movement', complained that 'it is obvious that in a number of places the offensive against the kulak has been weaker'.²¹ During the autumn of 1930, kulaks in every area were harassed by a variety of devices. Thus on September 19, when additional grain collection plans were imposed by Moscow, the Ukrainian Politburo resolved that between 3 per cent and 7 per cent of all households, depending on the extent of collectivisation, should be designated as 'kulak and well-to-do', and had to provide between 6 per cent and 14 per cent, as a minimum, of the additional collections.²² A month later, on October 17, the Ukrainian Narkomzem announced that, if kulaks failed to fulfil the autumn sowing plan, their land, horses and ploughs should be confiscated. Moreover, if other individual peasants 'maliciously' failed to fulfil the sowing plan, their land could also be confiscated. The confiscated

¹⁷ *Iz istorii* (Petrozavodsk, 1991), 140–1 (protocol of troika for elimination of the kulaks, Olonets district, Karelia, June 27, 1931).

¹⁸ *Iz istorii* (Petrozavodsk, 1991), 165 (protocol of a district troika, dated July 23, 1931).

¹⁹ *Iz istorii* (Petrozavodsk, 1991), 171–5 (decision of republican commission on dekulakisation, dated July 29, 1931).

²⁰ *Iz istorii* (Petrozavodsk, 1991), 145, clause 10 (protocol of Kandalaksha district troika, dated July 1, 1931).

²¹ RGASPI, 17/3/798, 28–29.

²² DAVO, P-51/1/352, 39–40; villages with a greater percentage of households collectivised were assumed to have a smaller percentage of 'kulaks and well-to-do' in the village.

land was to be transferred to the kolkhozy.²³ Then, on November 24, a Ukrainian radiotelegram reported that 'with the objective of stimulating the struggle against kulaks who conceal property, we fix the reward to policemen and other citizens at 5 per cent of the value of the property disclosed'.²⁴ Throughout the autumn the anti-kulak campaign was closely associated with the seasonal agricultural campaigns, and offered both threats and blandishments to other peasants.

In the autumn of 1930, the central authorities in Moscow did not issue any formal instructions about the resumption of the deportation of kulaks. But a number of regional party committees decided to remove kulaks from their villages – and duly reported their decisions to the central authorities, who raised no objection to them. They did not attempt to exile kulaks beyond their region. But they frequently went further than the provision in the Politburo decision of January 30, 1930, that 'Category III' kulaks should be deported within their own *district*, and were often deported to remote parts of their *region* – in large remote regions like Siberia and the Urals the distinction between intra-regional and inter-regional deportation was of little benefit to those deported.

The first of these regional deportations was enacted as early as August 1930, when the North Caucasian regional party committee decided to exile a further 15–20,000 families from the Kuban' to Eastern parts of the region. They would be replaced by poor and middle peasants, former partisans and collective farmers from drought-ridden districts of the region. It is not clear what action was taken immediately. On January 7, 1931, the Politburo, in its resolution on collectivisation in the North Caucasus, belatedly approved the regional decision to exile the kulaks, and instructed that it was to be completed by the time of the spring sowing.²⁵ In what seems to have been a separate operation, a further 11,854 households were exiled to various districts within the North Caucasus.²⁶ Meanwhile, on October 19, the Ukrainian Sovnarkom ruled that in districts of comprehensive collectivisation peasant households registered as Category III kulaks should be located in settlements (*vyselki*) of 10–20 households on land outside the area used by sovkhkozy and

²³ DAVO, P-45/1/94, 130; radiotelegram reporting decree of October 15.

²⁴ DAVO, P-45/1/94, 197.

²⁵ See Ivnikskii (1994), 167.

²⁶ Ivnikskii (1994), 219–20, citing GARF, 9414/1/1943, 136–137.

kolkhozy, 'far from railways and economic centres and the least suitable for agricultural use'. The amount of land per household should be fixed at the 'lowest consumption norm'.²⁷ And on December 25, 1930, the West-Siberian region resolved that in its 21 districts with the highest percentage of collectivisation, kulak property should be confiscated and the kulaks should be exiled to uninhabited districts of the region. Within a month, 714 households (2,802 persons) were exiled from nineteen districts.²⁸

In most regions where such legislation was adopted, the authorities decided to locate the exiled kulaks in separate settlements, so they would be isolated from, and unable to exercise influence on, the mass of the peasantry. But in the Central Black-Earth region and elsewhere, exiled kulaks were sent to work in kolkhozy in other districts within the region without being placed in special settlements. The OGPU condemned this practice as failing to 'render them harmless'.²⁹

The results of these piecemeal decisions were chaotic. A typical OGPU report, dated September 12, 1930, complained that no adequate preparation had been made for the exile of Category III peasants in the Lower Volga region. Village soviets often failed to do anything, and moves to exile kulaks often met with mass opposition, particularly from women.³⁰ A further report in December noted that in Ukraine very little provision had been made for housing the exiled kulaks: they were frequently 'taken out into the field and left to their fate'.³¹

Large numbers of Category III kulaks fled from their place of exile. According to an OGPU report, 51,889 Category III kulaks had been exiled in the first wave of dekulakisation.³² But in spite of the

²⁷ TsDAGOU, 1/20/4277, 3-4 (decree of October 19).

²⁸ RGAE, 7486/37/193, 76-69 (OGPU report dated February 4, 1931). The decision of December 25 was adopted by the regional party bureau and the 'fraction' of the regional executive committee. The figures for exiles are for the period to January 18.

²⁹ TsAFSB, 2/8/329, 262-273 (dated December 8, 1930), published in TSD, ii (2000), 738-44.

³⁰ TsAFSB, 2/8/780, 63-70.

³¹ Ivnitskii (1994), 220-1, citing GARF, 9414/1/1943, 144 (dated December 8).

³² Ivnitskii (2000), 153-4, citing GARF, 9414/1/1943, 75. However, another report dated December 10, 1930, noted that 22,319 households had been exiled in Category III in certain regions, and claimed to have no data from the other regions (TsAFSB, 2/8/329, 274, published in TSD, ii, 745-6).

new wave of intra-regional deportations in the autumn of 1930, only 44,990 Category III families remained nominally in exile by February 1931, and of these large numbers had fled, particularly with the onset of the cold weather. This total included, for example, 8,561 Ukrainian families, 4,227 of which had already fled.³³

The treatment of Category III kulaks varied in different regions. In Ukraine, the Volga regions and Siberia they were usually settled on remote lands within their own district, with the intention of employing them in agriculture – sometimes they were simply dumped in camps (*tabory*) in the open air. In the North Caucasus, they were transferred to districts with poor harvests, and the peasants in these districts were offered the opportunity of moving into the kulak homes in the richer districts. Nearly ten thousand kulak households were settled in a single ‘unbroken kulak zone’. In the Central Black-Earth region, they were settled in poor peasant homes outside their own village or district. In the Urals, they were despatched to the northern districts and employed on peat and limestone workings, in quarries, on brick production and on building work. In the Nizhnii-Novgorod region, they were settled in a single remote district to work on timber cutting.

In February 1931 the secret political department of the OGPU proposed ‘the establishment of a unified system of settling Category III kulaks in special settlements’. These would be located so that the exiles could not influence the surrounding peasantry, following the example of the North Caucasus. We have been unable to establish how far the proposed arrangement was introduced.

When the central committee plenum in December 1930 publicly launched the new general drive for collectivisation, it insisted that in the main grain areas, where collectivisation was to reach 80 per cent in 1931, ‘the elimination of the kulak as a class shall in the main be completed’ (see vol. 1, p. 381). In the new year, demands for the repression of kulaks, and reports of dekulakisation, appeared more frequently in the press. On January 6, *Pravda* demanded ‘Sweep the Kulaks out of the Kolkhozy with an Iron Broom’. Two days later, the agricultural newspaper, reporting that the famous Shevchenko district (see vol. 2, pp. 16–19) had achieved 95 per cent collectivisation, noted that in this connection 306 kulaks had been exiled.³⁴

³³ The information in this and the next two paragraphs is taken from an OGPU memorandum in TsAFSB, 2/9/761, 16–30 (dated February 9, 1931).

³⁴ SZe, January 8, 1931.

Later in the month, kulaks in the Lower Volga region were accused of attempting to restrict the sown area of their kolkhozy, and in the Central Volga region attempts to bring them into the kolkhozy were roundly condemned.³⁵ In the following month, Vareikis, party secretary in the Central Black-Earth region, denounced the failure to support dekulakisation as 'right-wing opportunism'.³⁶

The regional and republican authorities sought to enforce dekulakisation together with collectivisation. On January 13, the Ukrainian Politburo complained that 'the offensive against the kulak in a number of districts has not been sufficiently developed'.³⁷ On January 26, in a further resolution calling for 'the doubling of the level of collectivisation in the coming spring', it claimed that 'the kulak, who is not yet defeated, will try to disrupt the fulfilment of the programme of the Bolshevik spring', and uncompromisingly insisted:

the central task of mass work is to organise the landless peasants (batrachestvo), collective farmers and poor and middle individual peasants for a decisive offensive against the remnants of the capitalist elements, and for the struggle to carry out comprehensive collectivisation, and on this basis eliminate the kulaks as a class.³⁸

A week later, on February 2, the Ukrainian Sovnarkom called for greater efforts to impose the agricultural tax on kulaks: kulaks who had joined kolkhozy should be expelled and taxed on an individual basis.³⁹ On the same day the Ukrainian Politburo instructed the head of the republican GPU to issue a directive 'to strengthen the struggle against counter-revolutionary and kulak elements in districts which lag in carrying out the grain collection plan'.⁴⁰

The campaign was launched with great vigour in many districts and villages of Ukraine. Thus, on February 3, a village in Vinnitsa region adopted a naïvely-worded and ferocious resolution against the kulak:

the struggle for collectivisation is primarily against the kulak, the main inveterate enemy of collectivisation, and therefore the

³⁵ SZe, January 29 and 30, 1931.

³⁶ SZe, February 17, 1931.

³⁷ DAVO, 51/1/447, 37 (resolution on spring sowing campaign).

³⁸ DAVO, P-51/1/447, 47.

³⁹ DAVO, P-43/1/216, 49–50 (radiotelegram).

⁴⁰ TsDAGOU, 1/6/35, 8.

merciless offensive against the kulak along the whole front of grain collections, financial measures, the elimination of the kulak in districts of comprehensive collectivisation, the resettlement of the dekulakised outside the boundaries of the village – [these] must become a constituent part of the struggle of the masses of collective farmers and poor and middle peasants to achieve comprehensive collectivisation in conformity with the resolution of the December plenum of the Ukrainian central committee.⁴¹

Kulaks were deprived of their land and property by the collectivisers sent in from the towns, supported by those peasants which could be persuaded to take their side. The central authorities in Moscow were confronted by a process of dekulakisation inspired by their own decisions, but for which they had made no clear provision. On February 11, the Ukrainian Politburo drew Moscow's attention to the problem in remarkably sharp terms:

In a number of districts where comprehensive collectivisation has reached a significant scale (50–70 per cent), dekulakisation is being carried out, and the question of the necessity to exile the kulaks is being raised by local organisations. Bearing this in mind, the central committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) is requested to issue appropriate directives on this question.

In the meantime, the Chief Administration of the Ukrainian police was instructed to record the places in which the evicted dekulakised peasants had been settled, and keep them under constant surveillance.⁴²

The amassing of dekulakised peasants in the villages did not lessen the determination of the Ukrainian Politburo to press ahead with further dekulakisation. On February 18 it insisted that those districts which had still failed to supply their full quota of grain from the 1930 harvest should seek out 'hidden kulak grain', and obtain the support of the village soviets for the immediate expropriation of '3–4 households per village, in order to induce the remainder to surrender grain'. The Politburo – still lacking instructions from Moscow – added

⁴¹ DAVO, P-51/1/452, 3.

⁴² TsDAGOU, 1/6/204, 61. The terms used in the resolution are *vysylka* (exile) and *vyselki* (places of resettlement within the local area).

unhelpfully that 'directives on the application of decisions about exile will be issued later'.⁴³

Similar actions were undertaken elsewhere. On February 11, the Northern regional party committee resolved to exile kulaks from its southern districts to the Far North, and on February 21 the Central Volga regional committee decided that district committees should be sent directives about dekulakisation within two weeks.⁴⁴

It was not until February 20, 1931, that the USSR Politburo, on an item presented to the secretariat by Stalin, Menzhinsky and Yagoda, adopted its first specific decision since the spring of 1930 about dekulakisation on a national scale. The decision, 'On the Kulaks', provided that during the next six months the OGPU should prepare 1,000 kulak settlements, each for 200–300 families (that is, 200,000–300,000 families would be exiled). The settlements were to be under special *komendanty*, and were to be located 'mainly' in Kazakhstan, south of Karaganda. Andreev, in his capacity as a vice-chair of Sovnarkom, was instructed to supervise all questions related to this matter.⁴⁵ This decision meant that in 1931 dekulakisation would be carried out on the vast scale which had been provided for in the original decision of January 30, 1930, but later reduced. If the new decision was put fully into practice, 280,000–380,000 households altogether would have been exiled between the beginning of 1930 and the summer of 1931, plus the large number of male kulaks executed or sent to concentration camps in 1930 under Category I.

Following this vague but dramatic decision, some weeks elapsed before more specific plans were adopted. By the middle of March, the USSR Politburo and OGPU had not yet made practical arrangements for the preparation of settlements in remote areas, or for the transport of the expropriated kulaks to them. The Ukrainian Politburo was forced to reverse, at least in part, the local expropriation of kulaks which had already taken place. On March 12, in response to what its agenda listed as 'Questions of a Number of RPK [district party committees] about the Procedure for Exiling Kulaks,' it resolved: 'Propose to local party organisations not to

⁴³ TsDAGOU, 1/6/204, 74.

⁴⁴ See Ivnitskii (1994), 168.

⁴⁵ RGASPI, 17/162/9, 138; this decision was then reported to the full Politburo meeting on February 25 (the term 'decision' implied that the matter was decided at a sitting of the Politburo at which observers were not present). Molotov would replace Andreev when the latter was absent.

undertake any preparatory measures to exile kulaks to the North until instructions have been received from the [USSR] central committee.⁴⁶ Three days later the Ukrainian Politburo retreated further:

In connection with the fact that a number of districts have carried out arrests of kulaks for exile, it is proposed ... to these districts: kulaks which are under arrest in village soviets and district executive committees shall be released from arrest, and resettled in settlements (vyselki) within the frontiers of the districts.⁴⁷

The confusion added to the suffering of the victims, and upset their neighbours and relatives. The available statistics about rural disturbances (see p. 15) do not distinguish those which were a protest against dekulakisation. But secret OGPU reports described hostility to the expropriations and deportations. A report on West Siberia, while claiming that 'the attitude of collective farmers, poor peasants and most middle peasants to the dekulakisation and exiling of the kulaks is in the main positive', also acknowledged that 'negative' reactions were found among peasants 'connected with the kulaks as relatives or as neighbours on friendly terms, etc.' Some village soviets had voted against or hindered the deportations. In one case a female collective farmer gathered twenty-five signatures to a petition objecting to the exile of a kulak whose wife was a landless peasant. In three districts of West Siberia, mass disturbances took place:

In Petrovka hamlet, Cherkask district, on January 15, when two kulaks were evicted a crowd of 40 women, including many collective farmers, led by relatives of the kulaks, did not allow the plenipotentiary of the district committee to evict the kulaks, and took the kulak children into their own homes.

In another village, when a kulak refused to be evicted, a crowd of women intervened; and a middle peasant struck the chair of the village soviet in the face and shouted 'We will not give up Lyakhov.' On the second attempt a crowd of seventy people assembled, mainly

⁴⁶ TsDAGOU, 1/20/4277, 20; DAVO, P-43/1/202, 80.

⁴⁷ TsDAGOU, 1/20/4277, 24; DAVO, P-43/1/202, 89; this was a directive to urban and district party committees. The item was entitled 'On the Exiling of Kulaks'.

women, and prevented the eviction, while another group collected signatures to a petition. The disturbance was only brought to an end when the regional commission on dekulakisation arrived.⁴⁸

Such examples could be multiplied. But the authorities were better prepared; and the unrest was evidently not on the scale experienced during the previous year (see vol. 1, pp. 255–61).

On March 11, the USSR Politburo at last adopted more specific decisions. It confirmed Andreev's position as the politician responsible for dekulakisation by establishing a three-man commission on the kulaks with Andreev in the chair and Yagoda and Postyshev as members.⁴⁹ The commission met on March 18, and its elaborate protocols were adopted by the Politburo as its own decision on March 20.⁵⁰ Its most far-reaching provision was that 150,000 households should be exiled to Kazakhstan in 1931 (50,000 less than the lower limit in the Politburo decision of February 20). To prepare housing and other facilities for the transfer, at least 10,000 heads of families should be sent in advance on their own by April 15 at the latest. The 150,000 families would work primarily in coal, copper and iron-ore mining, in railway construction and in agriculture. The commission also approved retrospectively an OGPU plan to exile a further 25,000 kulak households outside their own regions, which was already being put into effect.⁵¹ The commission also agreed that 40,000 kulak households should be exiled to the northern districts of West Siberia in the course of May–July (evidently this was to be a transfer within the region); they would be used for agricultural development and for timber cutting and hauling. A similar scheme would be worked out for Eastern Siberia. The commission ruled, however, that resettlement of kulaks within regions must henceforth be undertaken only with the approval of the commission itself. It also proposed that the OGPU should work out, together with Mikoyan (as People's Commissar for Supply) and Zelenskii (head of Tsentrsoyuz), a 'plan for the temporary minimum necessary food supply of kulak

⁴⁸ RGAE, 7486/37/193, 73–71 (dated January 31).

⁴⁹ RGASPI, 17/162/9, 161; decision confirmed by Politburo on March 15.

⁵⁰ RGASPI, 17/162/9, 174, 176–178; decision confirmed by Politburo on March 20; this decision is printed in *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 4, 1994, 152–5. The approval of the minutes of the commission as a Politburo decision and the subsequent confirmation of the decision by a full meeting of the Politburo became a regular (and unusual) practice with this commission.

⁵¹ The text of the OGPU plan has not been traced.

settlements'. Finally, it agreed in principle to a major change in the administration of the kulak settlements. Previously this was the responsibility of the NKVD of the RSFSR, and its local Command (komendantnye) departments; henceforth all servicing and staff would be the responsibility of the OGPU.

The deportations were carried out by the OGPU with the sometimes reluctant cooperation of the district and village authorities, and were preceded by the preparation of local lists of kulak households. The lists were checked and finalised by a plenipotentiary of the district soviet. The plenipotentiary, when descending on a village, was required 'not to inform anyone why he had come', but to behave as if he was making a normal visit in connection with sowing, collectivisation and other campaigns.⁵²

Following the decisions of March 20, many kulaks were dispossessed in the course of March and April. As early as April 3, the OGPU reported that 14,638 households had already been exiled, out of the 25,000 in its plan.⁵³ A further report, dated April 14, showed that the plan had been exceeded in at least four of the seven regions it covered.⁵⁴ The OGPU reports claimed that in most regions the operation had been carried out 'without excesses', and sometimes 'with the active support of the poor peasants and collective farmers'. But they also noted mass protest in three of the regions, and complained that local officials had on occasion claimed that there were 'no kulaks in our district'.

The USSR Politburo and OGPU failed to complete the arrangements for the relocation of large numbers of dispossessed kulaks from the Russian and Ukrainian republics in special settlements in Kazakhstan and elsewhere. This continued to cause great difficulties in Ukraine and in regions of the RSFSR where free land for relocating the kulaks was in short supply. On April 7, the secretary of a district party committee in Vinnitsa region wrote to the Ukrainian central committee asking for prompt instructions on how to resettle the dispossessed kulaks. He pointed out that 'the district does not have enough appropriate (inconvenient) land to settle them', and suggested

⁵² See, for example, the document dated April 1931 reprinted from the local archives in *Vozvrashchenie k pravde* (Tver', 1995), 38–40.

⁵³ TsAFSB, 2/9/45, 12–18 (published in TSD, iii, 105); the regions covered included the North Caucasus, the Far East, and the Central Black-Earth, Western, Nizhnii-Novgorod, Moscow and Lower Volga regions.

⁵⁴ TsAFSB, 2/9/45, 28–33 (published in TSD, iii, 118–20).

that perhaps 'the dekulakised kulaks might be settled in other villages within the district 20–25 versts [15–18 kilometres] from their present residence, but without establishing a settlement'.⁵⁵ This proposal evidently meant that the kulaks of one village would become normal peasants within another village. This was a less inhumane arrangement which hardly accorded with the spirit of current policy towards the kulaks; the Ukrainian authorities failed to endorse it.

By April, the spring sowing was well under way in Ukraine, and its Politburo, conscious of the harm caused by the uncertainty and confusion, established a commission which prepared a lengthy resolution which was duly adopted intact by the Ukrainian Politburo on April 18. It called on district party committees to carry out dekulakisation as a component part of collectivisation, but continued to express anxiety about what should be done with the expropriated kulaks. It requested the Moscow Politburo to 'consider the question of allowing Ukraine to exile 40,000 dekulakised households beyond its borders'. A further clause stated that 'it is considered expedient to carry out the exiling of dekulakised households from Ukraine when the spring sowing is completed (po okonchanii vesennogo seva) – June'. The resolution asked the USSR Politburo to confirm this date, and added that the detailed preparation of arrangements for exile should await confirmation of the numbers to be exiled and the date of exile. The resolution also outlined preparations for the resettlement of Category III kulaks within the district, but added cautiously that resettlement should not proceed until a special decision had been taken by the Ukrainian Politburo.⁵⁶

These Ukrainian decisions all indicated that dekulakisation awaited firmer instructions from Moscow. In Moscow, however, the Andreev commission did not take a further major decision about the resettlement of the kulaks until May 15, nearly two months after its decision of March 18. The new decision was approved by the Politburo on May 20, and drastically modified the previous

⁵⁵ DAVO, P-45/1/119, 2.

⁵⁶ TsDAGOU, 1/6/214, 74–76; resolution adopted by poll. The commission was headed by P. Lyubchenko, a Ukrainian central committee secretary. A revised version of the resolution adopted on April 23 stated somewhat more firmly that the advance of collectivisation in the Steppe and Forest-Steppe meant that 'it is possible to carry out dekulakisation insofar as particular villages have gone over to comprehensive collectivisation' (TsDAGOU, 1/6/205, 33–34; DAVO, P-87/1/96, 130–131),

arrangements. It acknowledged 'the technical impossibility of settling 150,000 kulak families in Kazakhstan districts' (a proposal which was a watered-down version of the Politburo decision of February 20). Instead, during 1931, only 56,000 households should be settled in Kazakhstan and 55,000 in the Urals. In the case of Kazakhstan, as many as 20,000–25,000 heads of families would be transferred in May/June, followed later by their families, and the remaining 35,000 in July and August. (This meant that *all* the heads of households would be sent on first, rather than the one in fifteen allowed for in the decision of March 18.) In the Urals, the 55,000 families were to be sent between May 25 and July 10 to the timber workings in the northern districts. Within Eastern Siberia, 12,000 families were to be transferred from the southern frontier districts to the northern districts, and within the Urals a further 5,000 families were to be transferred to the northern districts in addition to the 7,000 already transferred.⁵⁷

These arrangements meant that the Politburo decision of February 20 to exile 200,000–300,000 households beyond their own region had now been reduced to 110,000, only half of which would be sent to Kazakhstan.

The Andreev commission savagely criticised 'the outrageous utilisation of the labour force of the special settlers and the disorder in their maintenance by the economic agencies', and decided that 'the maintenance, administrative and organisational management of the special settlers, and all the allocations in money and kind, shall be wholly transferred to the OGPU'. Food supply should henceforth be transferred by Narkomsnab to the new Administration of the OGPU concerned with the special settlers, which would distribute the food allocations centrally.⁵⁸

Nearly all previous statements about the kulaks displayed no concern about their future. They were irreconcilable enemies. But the

⁵⁷ The protocol of May 15 appears in RGASPI, 17/120/26, 121–127, with a corrected version on 128–135; the Politburo decision of May 20 is in RGASPI, 17/162/10, 46, 51–54. The decision is published in *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 4, 1994, 155–8.

⁵⁸ RGASPI, 17/162/10, 51–54. The administration of the settlements had already been transferred to the OGPU by the decision of March 20, 1931 (see p. 34 above). Some weeks later, on July 1, 1931, a decree of Sovnarkom provided that the OGPU should manage the special settlers 'both by contracts with industrial and agricultural organisations and by direct organisation of various sites'; the wages paid by the organisations should be equal to those received by other workers, but the OGPU should receive up to 25 per cent of wages, and all additional

decisions of May 15 and 20 for the first time offered a shadowy prospect of their reincorporation into Soviet society – though with no favourable effect on their present treatment. The commission, with the approval of the Politburo, resolved that ‘if a given special settler carries out all the decrees of Sov. power, and conducts himself as an honest worker, after 5 years have expired from the time of resettlement he shall receive the right to vote, and all civil rights’. Moreover, the OGPU was requested to take special care of young people, ‘developing collective methods of work among them and not imposing the strict regime which is imposed on the head of the family’.⁵⁹ The restoration of rights after five years was enacted in a more detailed decree of the presidium of TsIK, promulgated on July 3, which was published in the press; this was the only central decision about the kulaks to be published in the course of 1931.⁶⁰

Following these decisions in Moscow, the Ukrainian Politburo was at last able to adopt a firm decision ‘On the Exiling of Kulaks’:

The directive of the OGPU [USSR] is noted. Districts are to be informed about the exiling of kulaks.⁶¹

Between June 1 and June 29, in the USSR as a whole, a total of 101,184 families were exiled to remote areas; this was probably the highest figure for a single month in the whole dekulakisation campaign. It included 42,581 families sent to the Urals, and 14,070 (plus 20,396 unaccompanied heads of families) exiled to Kazakhstan, a total of 56,651 families (271,056 people). In addition, 44,533 families (201,336 people) plus 9,451 unaccompanied heads of households were exiled within regions, mainly West Siberia.⁶² The West Siberian kulaks

payments (*nachisleniya*), and use these sums for providing schools, land, etc. for the settlers (GARF, 5446/1/461, 81–83 – art. 130ss). In explanation of the decision to centralise food supplies under its own control, the central OGPU told its local agencies there was a danger of excessive food supply through both the OGPU’s and the economic agency’s line of supply, and even complained that as a result ‘in some places’ special settlers had received double the ration of free workers (see *Spetspereseleniye*, ii (1993), 49, 54). There is no confirmation of this OGPU legend, however.

⁵⁹ RGASPI, 17/162/10, 51–54.

⁶⁰ SZ, 1931, art. 298.

⁶¹ TsDAGOU, 1/6/205, 49 (dated May 18).

⁶² RGASPI, 17/120/26, 175 (report as of June 29, 1931).

were exiled to the largely uninhabited and undeveloped Narym territory, the population of which increased in the course of a couple of months from the 120,000 original inhabitants to over 300,000.⁶³ This was a new phase in the dekulakisation campaign, apparently adopted on the initiative of the West Siberian regional authorities: the movement of large masses of people – on the pretext that they were enemies or potential enemies of the system – in order to develop an area where few people would have been willing to move voluntarily. A retrospective report by the Siberian Camps Administration Sibltag referred frankly to these developments as undertaking ‘the colonisation of Narym territory by the kulaks’, a policy which had ‘solved the historic problem’ of the territory: ‘The Narym territory underwent colonisation by the Tsarist government over a period of 350 years, and during that time it received about 40,000 settlers. Now it has doubled the number of inhabitants in 65–70 days.’⁶⁴

There were important features in common between the 1930 and 1931 operations against the kulaks. In both years, some actions against the kulaks, including expulsion from their villages, were undertaken on the initiative of the local authorities. In both years the mass expulsions took place when the collectivisation drive was well under way. And in both years the mass exiling of kulaks to distant areas was a police operation conducted by the OGPU and planned from Moscow. In 1931, as in 1930, large numbers of kulaks and other ‘counter-revolutionaries’ were arrested, and many were exiled.⁶⁵

⁶³ For the initial population of 119,942 persons see *Spetspereseleniye*, ii (1993), 237. The number of exiles increased from 50,687 on June 1, 1931, to 215,261 on September 1 (*ibid.*, 289); 182,237 persons were exiled to Narym between May 10 and June 30, most of them by June 10 (see *ibid.*, 237 and RGASPI, 17/120/26, 175).

⁶⁴ *Spetspereseleniye*, ii (1993), 236–7 (undated report covering May 1931–June 1932, completed not later than August 7, 1932).

⁶⁵ The number sentenced by the security agencies in these years was as follows:

	<i>All sentences</i>	<i>Death sentences</i>	<i>Of which, death sentences by troiki</i>
1926	17,804	990	
1929	56,220	2,109	
1930	208,069	20,201	18,966
1931	180,696	10,651	9,170
1932	141,919	2,728	
1933	239,664	2,154	

For sources, see Wheatcroft, ed. (2002), 118, 125 (article by Wheatcroft).

There were also striking differences between the two operations. In 1930, the OGPU began its preparations for mass exile in January, and on January 30 the Politburo authorised the OGPU to organise the mass exile of kulaks to remote areas; the OGPU rail transport plan was in place by February 6, several weeks before the first collectivisation drive had reached its peak. In contrast, in 1931 no firm practical decisions to exile the kulaks to remote areas were approved by the Politburo, and put into force by the OGPU, until May. But in 1931 the collectivisation drive passed its peak two months earlier, in the second half of March. From the second week in April, the rate of collectivisation slowed down (see Tables 26 and 27). In June, when the expulsions of kulaks reached their peak, recruitment to the kolkhozy had almost ceased. The mass exiling of dispossessed peasants in 1931 was less firmly connected to the collectivisation drive than it had been in 1930, and should rather be seen as an operation designed to stabilise the kolkhozy by cleansing the countryside of enemies and potential enemies. This was brought out clearly by regional legislation, which often provided that kulaks should be exiled not during the collectivisation drive but only when collectivisation was complete.⁶⁶

The other obvious contrast between 1930 and 1931 is the degree of secrecy. In 1930, dekulakisation was carried out semi-publicly: the press frequently reported the positive effects of the actions against the kulaks on the rate of collectivisation. In 1931 the decisions to arrest and expel kulaks were adopted in complete secrecy, and never referred to in the press.

Dekulakisation was not directed solely against peasants who had not yet joined the kolkhozy. Throughout the first six months of 1931, strenuous efforts were made to seek out kulaks who had concealed themselves in the kolkhozy, expel them, and then exile them from their villages together with those kulaks who had remained individual peasants. At the end of January 1931, an OGPU report 'On the

⁶⁶ Thus the Karelian regional party committee ruled that 'kulak households shall be exiled only when comprehensive collectivisation has been completed within a [whole] administrative district'; this was later modified so that kulaks were exiled when comprehensive collectivisation of a *village* was complete. See, for example, *Iz istorii* (Petrozavodsk, 1991), 135, dated May 7, 1931, and 140–1, dated June 17, 1931; the latter was a district decision, presumably authorised at republican level.

Contamination of Kolkhozy with Class-Alien Elements' declared ferociously:

*Among the collective farmers in many cases on closer examination we find big kulaks, landowners, active Whiteguards, factory owners, priests, policemen, members of punitive expeditions, former chiefs (in national areas), double-dealing counter-revolutionaries, etc.*⁶⁷

No doubt in the vast upheaval of collectivisation some peasants regarded as belonging to socially undesirable groups had found their way into the kolkhozy. But frequently peasants who objected to the conditions in the kolkhozy were promptly labelled as 'kulaks', although they had none of the economic characteristics of a kulak, and no anti-revolutionary past. Many alleged kulaks were expelled from the kolkhozy in the second phase of dekulakisation (see p. 16).

The hasty exile of hundreds of thousands of people, including many children, to remote parts of the USSR which lacked any infrastructure had appalling consequences. In June and July reports were submitted to the authorities complaining about the bad conditions in the settlements. Lack of food was the most serious problem. Even officially, family members were allocated a mere 300 grams of flour and 30 grams of groats per day – a starvation ration.⁶⁸ But the official ration was often not forthcoming. A memorandum to Molotov dated July 13 complained that 'reports from the localities (the Urals, Kazakhstan) state that allocations are not available locally to feed the special settlers who are arriving'.⁶⁹ In the Urals the famine conditions among the settlers sometimes led to suicides.⁷⁰ In East Siberia a report complained that 'the overwhelming majority' of unaccompanied heads of families exiled to Siberia had fled, as had women and children whose husbands were exiled to other regions of the USSR. It referred to 'difficult living and food conditions', for which it blamed the economic agencies which had received the exiles. These conditions had given rise to epidemic illnesses and to mortality among

⁶⁷ RGAE, 7486/37/193, 62–61 (report of OGPU Information Department dated January 30, 1931).

⁶⁸ Memorandum of July 9, 1931, signed by Kogan, head of Gulag, published in *Neizvestnaya Rossiya*, i (1992), 230–1; no precise archival reference is given.

⁶⁹ *Neizvestnaya Rossiya*, i (1992), 234 (signed by Fushman, a deputy chair of Vesenkha); no precise archival reference is given.

⁷⁰ TsAFSB, 2/9/45, 45–54 (dated July 20).

children, no record of which was kept. Barracks were filled to overflowing, filthy and louse-ridden.⁷¹ Many cases of typhus and typhoid fever were reported from Kazakhstan.⁷² In the course of the upheaval many children were separated from their families and classified as 'homeless (bezprizornye)', the term in vogue after the civil war; they were sent to children's homes if there was room.⁷³ In the Urals, only 26 of the 4,511 children of school age were attending school.⁷⁴ Further OGPU reports prepared in September 1931 described similar appalling conditions.⁷⁵

On July 20, 1931, the Politburo endorsed a further shift in policy. It adopted a proposal of the Andreev commission which claimed that 'the target of the Politburo for the mass exiling of kulaks has in the main been fulfilled'; hence 'in future the exiling of kulaks from districts of comprehensive collectivisation shall be on an individual basis'. This decision formed part of a general temporary relaxation in repressive policies at this time, involving some restriction of the power of the OGPU.⁷⁶ Regional data indicate that the number of persons arrested and executed fell sharply in the second half of 1931.⁷⁷ The bringing to a halt of mass dekulakisation was also necessary because preparation to receive the exiles in the major regions of resettlement was hopelessly inadequate. The proposal of the Andreev commission adopted by the Politburo described in clear terms the bad conditions in which the exiles were living:

The position in which the special settlers find themselves in regard to their material support creates the threat that it will be impossible to use them during the period of winter work, particularly in timber areas. Cde. Mikoyan in person is instructed to check thoroughly the state of supply for the special settlers and to take all necessary measures to secure the supply. Cde. Ordzhonikidze is

⁷¹ *Neizvestnaya Rossiya*, i (1992), 235–6 (report sent to the central OGPU Camp Administration, dated July 17); no precise archival reference is given.

⁷² TsAFSB, 2/9/45, 34–37 (dated June 21), 42–46 (dated July 10).

⁷³ *Iz istorii* (Petrozavodsk, 1991), 159–60 (instruction of Karelian dekulakisation commission, dated July 16, 1931).

⁷⁴ TsAFSB, 2/9/45, 45–50 (dated July 20).

⁷⁵ TsAFSB, 2/9/45, 100–103 (dated September 16, on conditions in South Kazakhstan), 104–107 (dated September 22, on health conditions generally).

⁷⁶ See vol. 4, pp. 77–9, and Wheatcroft, ed. (2002), 122–3 (Wheatcroft).

⁷⁷ See the monthly data in *ibid.*, 118–19.

instructed to check the economic utilisation of the special settlers and the state of their housing and living conditions.⁷⁸

On July 28, the Politburo adopted a resolution by poll requiring five members of TsIK, each accompanied by an OGPU official, to visit the main regions in which the settlers were located; their remit was to take every possible step to regularise the utilisation of the settlers in the economy, and their conditions (*ustroistvo*).⁷⁹ On August 2, the day on which it resolved to slow down the rate of collectivisation (see p. 17), the Politburo also approved by poll a further series of decisions recommended by the Andreev commission. These strongly criticised the timber, gold and fishing industries for failing to provide the settlers with wages, clothing and permanent housing; Narkomsnab for failing to provide food rations; and Narkomzdrav of the RSFSR for 'not taking any serious measures' to provide medical services. Both Zakovsky, the OGPU plenipotentiary in Siberia, and the West Siberian regional party committee were officially 'reproved' for exiling kulaks to the north without adequate preparation, 'in consequence of which there was a number of serious faults in the process of exile, children died, and there were poor preparations locally'.⁸⁰

The intolerable conditions of the exiles were dramatically emphasised by the outbreak on July 29 of a revolt of special settlers in several districts of the Parbig OGPU Command on Naryn territory. According to official accounts it lasted about a week and involved 1,500–2,000 settlers. The local party bureau claimed that the revolt aimed at 'the overthrow of Soviet power'. But one of the leaders of the detachments organised to repress the revolt convened several 'meetings of kulaks' in settlements which had supported the revolt, and reported that the peasants denied that they aimed at insurrection. They complained of the lack of horses and implements (even of axes and spades), that there had been no salt for a month, that

⁷⁸ RGASPI, 17/162/10, 123, 126, published in *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, no. 4, 1994, 159–60.

⁷⁹ RGASPI, 17/162/10, 132–133. Unlike almost all Politburo decisions about the kulaks at this time, this was not apparently a recommendation of the Andreev commission but a decision taken separately.

⁸⁰ RGASPI, 17/162/10, 141, 144–148, published in *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 4, 1994, 161–4. These decisions were adopted by the Andreev commission on July 28 and 30.

bread rations were inadequate, and that no safe drinking water was available.⁸¹

The Politburo decisions of August 2 outlined a number of positive steps to improve the lot of the special settlers. They should be provided with agricultural implements, animals, land and seed, and with the possibility of undertaking various crafts. In the state industries in which they working, their output norms were to be reduced to the same level as those for free workers. The deduction made from their wages to the OGPU was to be reduced from 25 per cent to 15 per cent. Finally, in the spirit of the former head of the OGPU, Dzerzhinsky, who established OGPU homes for homeless children, the Politburo approved 'measures taken by the OGPU to remove from the settlements, and transfer to children's homes, children who were orphans following the death or flight of their parents'.⁸² On August 10, following a further meeting of the Andreev commission, the Politburo approved a more specific draft decree, which called for the allocation of land and implements to the settlers, and the provision of doctors and Feldshers, and other services. It also agreed to the establishment of sovkhozy in which the settlers were the main labour force, and of 'kolkhozy without Statutes' (*neustavnye arteli*) to which implements and horses would be made available by contract. As a rule, settlers were to be exempt from all taxes and agricultural collections for a period of two years. The responsibility for the special settlers was transferred to the Camp Administration of the OGPU, which was instructed to 'reconstruct all its work' so as to cope with this function.⁸³ The draft decree also announced, as a further measure to encourage young people to take a different path from their parents, that when they reached the age of eighteen their rights could be restored even before a five-year term of exile had expired, 'when they gave a positive impression' (*poyavili sebya s polozhitel'noi*

⁸¹ OGPU and local party memoranda from the Novosibirsk regional and Tomsk archives, published in *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, no. 3, 1994, 128–38.

⁸² RGASPI, 17/162/10, 141, 144–148; these decisions, recommended by meetings of the Andreev commission on July 28 and 30, were endorsed by the Politburo on August 5; they are published in *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, no. 4, 1994, 161–4.

⁸³ RGASPI, 17/162/10, 151, 154–159; the decision was adopted by the Andreev commission on August 7; it is published in *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, no. 4, 1994, 164–9. Its provisions were enacted by the government in a Sovnarkom decree dated August 16, 1931 (GARE, 5446/1/460, 165–174 – art. 174ss).

storony). This clause was included in the final decree approved by Sovnarkom. But on August 30 Stalin wrote critically and almost contemptuously to Kaganovich about this clause from his vacation retreat:

No law of TsIK about the restoration before the due date of the rights of former kulaks is needed. I knew that petty-bourgeois asses and philistines would certainly want to crawl through this tiny chink (myshinuyu shchel').⁸⁴

On September 8 the Politburo rescinded the offending clause, and ruled that release should be permitted only at the end of the five-year period.⁸⁵ Concessions to the kulaks must not go too far.

The Politburo approved a further instruction of the Andreev commission on August 30, which put into effect the decision of July 20 that the further exiling of kulak families was to take place 'in small groups of families ... after strict checking and a preliminary precise determination of the possibility of establishing them in the places in which they are settled'. The instruction added, with the clear implication that some of the expulsions had been unjustified, that in future it was essential that only 'the real kulak element' in the villages was exiled.⁸⁶

These measures resulted in some amelioration of the appalling conditions in the kulak settlements. But shortages of every kind of facility continued, even in the Parbig Command. Many weeks after the suppression of the revolt, the local party, fearing a fresh outbreak, complained to the West Siberian regional party committee that 36,000 kulaks were starving: they received only 100 grams of bread per day per family between September 15 and 19, and in the following days received no bread at all.⁸⁷ And on October 1, addressing a conference at the regional party committee on the general

⁸⁴ SKP, 72.

⁸⁵ RGASPI, 17/162/11, 5; Sovnarkom in turn changed the offending clause on September 10 (*Spetspereseleniye*, ii (1993), 311).

⁸⁶ RGASPI, 17/162/10, 176, 180–181; the instruction was adopted by the commission on August 23 – Andreev was absent, so the only members attending were Postyshev (in the chair) and Yagoda. The instruction is published in *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, no. 4, 1994, 170–2.

⁸⁷ Letter dated September 22, 1931, published in *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, no. 3, 1994, 135.

problem of supplies to the West Siberian special settlements, Eikhe complained bitterly: 'There is no food supply, and as for the supply of footwear and clothing ... the picture is extremely unfortunate. You have received nothing from the centre, and no-one locally will supply anything.' He blamed the central government departments for failing to carry out central instructions: 'What can we do about money locally, if the centre does not supply anything? We can't issue our own rubles.' The position was the same with clothing and food: 'I can take a pair of trousers from each of the [local representatives of central agencies], but I can't tear 10,000 pairs of trousers from them for the special settlers, because they haven't received any.'⁸⁸

The developments in August 1931 followed the pattern familiar from Stalin's 'Dizzy from Success' article of March 2, 1930. Economic agencies, local authorities and to some extent to the OGPU itself were blamed for the inhuman consequences of the Politburo's own decisions. On February 20, the Politburo, with the active support of Stalin, had decided that hundreds of thousands of kulaks and their families should be transferred to remote areas in the course of a few months, but made very little preparation for them to be received in their places of exile. The suffering and chaos which resulted were inevitable. The hypocrisy of the scapegoating of the lower agencies was all the more remarkable in 1931 because both the dekulakisation decisions and their modification were pursued in strict secrecy.

In the remaining months of 1931 no major plans for the exiling of kulaks appear in the minutes of the commission. For dekulakisation, as for collectivisation, the summer and autumn were a period of consolidation, under both Andreev and his successor, Rudzutak, who replaced him in October.⁸⁹ The known numbers exiled in 1931, including those exiled within their region, were stated in an OGPU memorandum to amount to 268,345, of which 160,515 were exiled beyond their own regions (see Table 29). From the available statistics it is not possible to apportion the number of exiles between different months, but it is clear that the process was concentrated into the period from March to September 1931. (See Table 29.)

⁸⁸ Speech of October 1, 1931, published in *Spetspereselentsy*, ii (1993), 157–8.

⁸⁹ On October 5 the Politburo accepted Andreev's request to resign and replaced him by Rudzutak (see *Spetspereselentsy*, ii (1993), 311). At this time Andreev was appointed People's Commissar for Transport and was replaced as head of Rabkrin and the party central control commission (see vol. 4, p. 101) by Rudzutak.

To sum up. In the course of 1930 and 1931, 381,000 households were exiled – 1,803,000 persons. Of these households, 241,000 were exiled beyond their own region. Of the total number exiled, 70 per cent – 268,000 households, including 1,252,000 persons – were exiled during the second dekulakisation drive of 1931, mainly in the months May–July. (See Table 29.) In spite of all the shifts in policy since the Politburo decision of February 20, 1931, the upper limit (300,000 households) had virtually been reached. The expulsions in 1931 were undertaken both from the main grain-surplus regions – in which the percentage of households collectivised was already high – and also from other regions. The three major grain regions of the Russian republic – the two Volga regions and the North Caucasus – were responsible for 21.6 per cent of Category II expulsions in 1930, and 25.3 per cent in 1931. Although expulsions in Ukraine in 1931 declined as a percentage of total expulsions in the USSR, in absolute terms the number of households exiled from Ukraine slightly increased. (See Table 28(a).)

By the summer of 1931, Kazakhstan was suffering from severe famine (see pp. 408–9), and the scheme to exile most kulaks to Kazakhstan was abandoned. Kazakhstan received only 50,929 households in the course of 1930 and 1931 (13 per cent of the total). But places were found for the exiles in the Urals, Siberia and the Northern region, which between them accommodated 292,716 families (77 per cent of the total). In 1930, the Northern region took 41.3 per cent of all exiles, but this fell to a mere 4.3 per cent in 1931. The place of the Northern region was taken in 1931 by the Urals and Siberia: in 1931 they absorbed 65.9 per cent of all exiled households, compared with 51.7 per cent in 1930. (See Table 28(b).)

In 1930–31 about a third of all exiles were transferred within their own regions (see Table 29). But the vast majority of these were transported over vast distances within extensive regions such as West and East Siberia and the Urals. Such ‘intra-regional’ exiling was more decentralised in its management, but similar in its consequences both for the kulaks and for those who remained behind in the villages.

The 1,800,000 people expelled from their lands do not include Category III kulaks. Tens of thousands of Category III families were deported within the regions by February 1931. It is not clear how far this category continued to be used after this date. When in March 1931 the Baskhir regional party committee asked to resettle 5,000 households within the region, the Andreev commission resolved that it

'did not object' to this, but insisted that the OGPU should decide on the places of settlement and should also 'entirely take the operation on itself'.⁹⁰ No doubt many peasants displaced locally in 1930 were caught up in the second wave of dekulakisation in 1931 as Category II kulaks, and sent to remote areas. But a clear understanding of the fate and size of Category III must await regional studies based on local archives.

According to the OGPU files, while 1,803,392 persons were exiled in the course of 1930 and 1931, on January 1, 1932, only 1,317,022 were located in the special settlements.⁹¹ No precise information is available on what happened to the missing people – some 27 per cent of the total. There were three main sources of loss: many peasants escaped; many peasants, especially children, died prematurely; and some, after investigation, were officially released and returned to their villages. On the Narym territory the net decline in the number of special settlers (excluding any new arrivals) in the seven months from June 1, 1931, to January 1, 1932, amounted to 35,464 persons (about 16 per cent of the total number of special settlers). This decline was comprised as follows: net deaths 15,712 (44 per cent); net escapes 12,756 (36 per cent); and 7,146 'returned home' (presumably legally) (20 per cent).⁹² Death rates of those settled in other areas have not been available. They were undoubtedly lower than in the particularly harsh conditions of Narym. But all the evidence indicates that they were very high.

⁹⁰ RGASPI, 17/120/26, 51–52 (dated March 31).

⁹¹ For the latter figure, see GARF, 9479/1/89, 206.

⁹² Births 2,321; deaths 18,033; so net decline 15,712. Escapes 16,434; returnees 3,828; so net escapes 12,606. See data in *Spetspereselentsy*, ii (1993), 289.

CHAPTER THREE

THE 1931 GRAIN HARVEST

(A) THE AUTUMN SOWING, 1930

About 40 per cent of all grain was sown in the autumn: virtually all the rye, about one third of the wheat and a small amount of barley. These grains germinated during the winter and were harvested in the following summer, shortly before the spring-sown grain. The yield per hectare of autumn-sown wheat is generally higher. But wheat is a less hardy crop than rye, and autumn sowing tended to be confined to the warmer regions of Ukraine, North Caucasus and the Central Black-Earth region – as well as the whole of the Transcaucasus and Central Asia. Rye predominated in the northern regions and was responsible for some 70 per cent of autumn sowings. The central authorities were less interested in rye, which was traditionally a peasant subsistence crop, and concentrated their attention on the south, where the more commercially significant winter wheat predominated in the autumn sowings. Autumn-sown wheat was liable to perish if an early thaw was followed by a late frost. These ‘winter killings’ of the autumn-sown wheat were a major problem in Ukraine in the winters of 1927–8 and 1928–9 (see vol. 1, pp. 42, 63, 104).

Preparations for the autumn sowing of 1930 began well in advance. The authorities believed that, with the growth of state planning generally and of collectivisation in particular, their instructions and advice must in large part replace the spontaneous decisions of the peasants about agricultural processes. Moreover, the growth of mechanisation meant that the supply of agricultural machinery by the state must be coordinated with developments in agriculture. The long-established rules of good husbandry had, of course, to be obeyed. Sowing in the autumn must be preceded in the spring by ploughing up as much as possible of the fallow land intended for autumn sowing – the yield was likely to increase substantially if the fallow was ploughed early and to greater depth.¹

The disruption caused by the first wave of collectivisation and dekulakisation in 1930 delayed specific decisions about the autumn

¹ See Pryanishnikov, ii (1965), 249–50 (a reprint of the 1931 edition).

sowing. No one knew which land would be collective and which individual. In the previous year much importance had been attached to the timely signing of the contracts between peasants and the state. But in the winter of 1929–30 legislation providing for the renewed signing of contracts was deferred. It was not until May that the division of land between kolkhozy and individual peasants became – temporarily – more or less stable. Consequently, the initial draft decree on the autumn sowings was not discussed in Narkomzem until May 6.² The Politburo belatedly approved the autumn sowing plan on May 25.³ By this time the ploughing of the fallow was – or should have been – well under way.

The initial draft was relatively modest: it proposed that the autumn grain sowings should amount to 41.5 million hectares, 6 per cent more than in 1929. The Sovnarkom decree increased this to 43 million hectares, a small increase in itself, but this brought the plan to nearly 10 per cent above the 1929 level.⁴ More than half the sowings, 22.5 million hectares, were to be planted on fallow ploughed in the spring, and 9 million hectares of the total were to be planted with improved seed.⁵ Prudently, the Sovnarkom decree did not specify what proportion of the sowing was to be undertaken by the kolkhozy. Kolkhozsentr proposed 36 per cent – a ‘minimum’ of 15.6 million hectares.⁶ This was a reasonable figure in view of the fact that about 25 per cent of peasant households remained in the kolkhozy at this time; kolkhozy occupied more land per household than individual peasants.

On June 16 STO belatedly approved the plan for the autumn sowing contracts with the kolkhozy and the individual peasants;⁷ these were to include 26 million of the total 43 million hectares. This was nearly all the land to which contracts were applicable – they were signed only in the grain-surplus regions, and kolkhozy working with MTS were excluded. Kulaks were also excluded. Instead, they were assigned firm quotas (*tverdye zadaniya*) by the village soviets on an

² For the initial draft, see RGAE, 7486/1/6, 169–170.

³ RGASPI, 17/3/827 (item 21). This led to a Sovnarkom decree on May 28 (SZ, 1930, art. 332).

⁴ The autumn-sown area of 1929 was estimated in May 1930 at 39.24 million hectares (RGAE, 7486/1/106, 109).

⁵ The Narkomzem draft proposed that improved seed should be planted on 11.4 million hectares.

⁶ SKhIB, 12–13, June 1930, 26–32, dated May 21. The final plan was 15.7 million hectares (see n. 20 below).

⁷ SZ, 1930, art. 375.

individual basis. Following a discussion at the Politburo on June 20,⁸ a Sovnarkom decree ruled that, for individual peasants, contracts approved by the majority of poor and middle peasants in a land society were 'obligatory for all members of the society'.⁹

During July, a vigorous campaign secured the signing of the contracts (see vol. 1, pp. 343–4). But the contracts were now almost entirely one-sided. They no longer provided substantial advance payments by the state to the peasants, or the guaranteed supplies of consumer goods which had been a prominent feature of earlier contracts. They were not much more than a legal cover for the imposition of the grain collections with no adequate return.

Strenuous efforts were made by the state to secure the supply of tractors, and of tractor-drawn and horse-drawn implements, for the raising of the fallow in the later spring, and for the autumn sowing.¹⁰ During 1929/30, 33,000 tractors were supplied to Soviet agriculture, over two-thirds of them imported, but owing to the death of many horses the total draught-power available in the autumn of 1930 was less than in the previous autumn (see vol. 1, Tables 20(a) and 20(c)). Government pronouncements at this time frequently insisted that in the USSR tractors would work for twenty hours a day during the sowing season; but this reflected the optimistic desperation of the authorities rather than any practical possibility. With tractors responsible for no more than one-twelfth of all draught-power even by the end of 1930, the raising of the fallow in the later spring, and the autumn sowing itself, had to be conducted by traditional methods. The sowing itself, as distinct from the ploughing, was rarely carried out with the aid of tractors even as late as the mid-1930s.

During the confusion consequent upon the retreat from collectivisation only 12.1 million hectares of fallow were ploughed in preparation for the sowing – just over half the plan.¹¹ This was only half the amount ploughed in 1929 for the 1930 harvest.¹² Seed was in

⁸ RGASPI, 17/3/830 (item 14, dated June 15, 1930).

⁹ SZ, 1930, art. 374 (dated June 28); this decree of Sovnarkom reiterated the provisions of the October 7, 1929, decree (see vol. 1, pp. 342–3). For a supplementary order from Kolkhoztse, see SZe, July 1, 1930.

¹⁰ See, for example, the decrees on the production of agricultural machinery and spare parts, dated June 1 and 16, 1930 (GARF, 5446/1/55, 2, 35–6, 106–7, 109).

¹¹ *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 329.

¹² In 1929, 25.3 million hectares were ploughed, 64 per cent of the autumn sowing in 1929 for 1930. The 12.1 million hectares ploughed in 1930 were only

general available without too much trouble, as the sowing took place when the grain from the 1930 harvest was already available. The land sown with improved seed, 6.7 million hectares, was more than twice as large as in the autumn of 1929, though far less than planned.¹³

The autumn sowing was extended over a much longer period than normal.¹⁴ During August and September, Narkomzem issued a series of impatient and threatening orders. It demanded the dismissal and prosecution of local officials for 'criminal' delay in preparing the sowing plans.¹⁵ It called upon industry to facilitate the repair of tractors. It sent out plenipotentiaries to regions to check performance.¹⁶ In October, a number of local officials were dismissed, including the heads of the agricultural departments in the Nizhnii-Novgorod and Northern regions.¹⁷

Eventually some 40.2 million hectares were sown – 93.3 per cent of the plan; of these 38.8 million survived the winter. This was virtually the same area as in 1929–30.¹⁸ But the delay in sowing, together with the inadequate ploughing, reduced the potential yield. A careful calculation for each region by the émigré research institute in Prague concluded that only 35.36 million hectares were planted before the end of the normal sowing season.¹⁹ This lag was particularly harmful in the Volga regions, where the potential sowing season was shortened by exceptionally cold weather. In Ukraine, the weather was a little warmer than usual, thus extending the season in which satisfactory sowing could be undertaken.

about 30 per cent of the autumn sowings for the 1931 harvest (see RGASPI, 17/2/547, 19–20 – statement by Osinsky at June 1935 central committee plenum).

¹³ *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 368–9.

¹⁴ Comprehensive five-daily returns were not made before 1930, but the data for 1930–4 show that the area sown by September 15 was less in 1930 than in any other year except 1932 (see Table 9).

¹⁵ Resolution of Narkomzem collegium, dated August 23 (SKhIB, 28, September 5, 1930, 9).

¹⁶ Resolutions of Narkomzem collegium, dated August 28 and September 8 (SKhIB, 31, September 16–20, 1930, 5 and 5–6).

¹⁷ Resolutions of Narkomzem collegium, dated October 8 and 9 in SKhIB, 37, October 16–20, 1930, 2–3, and 39, October 26–31, 1930, 4–6.

¹⁸ For total sowings see SKhB, 34, November 1931, 13; for sowings net of winter killings, see *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 249.

¹⁹ BP (Prague), lxxxiv (December 1930), 10–11; this article was written by A. M. Baykov.

The share of the socialised sector in the autumn sowing was remarkably small. While sovkhozy surpassed their plan, this was a very small proportion of the total. The kolkhozy had sown only about one-third of their plan by November 15, when the sowing was almost complete. Sowing by individual peasants, however, exceeded the plan.²⁰

What happened to the autumn sowings by individual peasants who joined the kolkhozy before the 1931 harvest? All peasants joining kolkhozy were supposed to transfer not only their horse and plough but also their individual sowings to the kolkhoz, for amalgamation and joint working with the land already collectivised. Only the *usad'ba* – the personal plot next to the cottage – was exempted. The annual report on the kolkhozy for 1931, based on returns in June of that year, and sent to press early in 1932, noted that 'all kolkhozy without exception showed the autumn sowings as socialised'.²¹ Later Soviet statistical handbooks accordingly show as part of the collectively-sown land the individual sowings by peasants who joined the kolkhozy in 1931.²²

In practice, however, the autumn sowings by peasants who joined the kolkhozy in 1930/31 were a source of much conflict and difficulty. A report from Ukraine in June 1931 noted that 'only a small section' of the new collective farmers had socialised their autumn sowings, which 'consist of *the smallest and most minute wedges of land* (klynushki) and *are scattered in dozens and hundreds of places*'. In a number of villages, general meetings of collective farmers, convened to discuss the socialisation of autumn sowings, had been broken up.²³

²⁰ The division by social sector was as follows (million hectares):

	<i>Plan</i>	<i>Actual by November 15</i>
Sovkhozy	1.45	1.68
Kolkhozy	15.67	9.87
Individual sowing	25.88	27.63
Total	43.00	39.18

Source: BP (Prague), lxxxiv, December 1930, 1–15
(obtained from the five-day returns in SZe).

²¹ *Kolkhozy vesnoi 1931* (1932), 4.

²² Thus *Nar. kh.* (1932), 154, reports that, of the 38.0 million hectares sown by the peasant sector in the autumn (excluding winter killings), as much as 21.2 million was sown by kolkhozy and only 16.8 by individual peasants.

²³ SZe, June 25, 1931 (D. Rud').

(B) THE SPRING SOWING

The spring-sown grains, which comprised two-thirds of all spring sowing, were generally more vulnerable to drought than the autumn-sown grains. Their shorter growing season meant that the timing of the sowing was crucial: yields were normally much higher if the grain was sown within a definite period of two or three weeks, determined by the weather, the region and the type of grain.²⁴ The sowing of early grains normally began as early as March 11–20 in the Crimea, but not until May 1–20 in the Leningrad region, the Urals and the Far East.²⁵ Early sowings in early warm weather would normally allow early ripening of the grain, before the dangerous hot and dry weather came. But the onset of the hot weather was, as we shall see, highly variable.

The spring sowing was preceded by ploughing the area harvested in the previous year. This ploughing took place in the previous autumn, usually between the end of September and the middle of November. The greater the area ploughed in the autumn, the less that needed to be ploughed before sowing in the spring. The Sovnarkom decree of May 28, 1930 (see p. 49) stipulated that as

²⁴ See Pryanishnikov, ii (1931), 272; and the data on the sown area in 1922–26 and 1926–28 in SO, 3, 1928, 16–22 (M. S-skii) and 6, 1928, 15–19 (M. Yurtsevskii). These estimates are summarised in BP (Prague), lxxx, June–July 1930, 5.

²⁵ The average dates in 1922–26 were:

	<i>Start</i>	<i>Completion: early grains</i>	<i>Completion: late grains</i>	<i>Length of campaign (days)</i>
Crimea	March 11–20	April 1–10	–	–
Ukraine: steppe	March 21–31	April 11–20	May 11–20	47
Right Bank	April 1–10	April 21–30	May 21–31	48
Left Bank	April 11–20	April 21–30	May 11–20	36
North Caucasus	March 21–31	April 11–20	May 1–10	43
Lower Volga	April 11–20	May 1–10		25
Central Black-Earth	April 21–30	May 1–10	May 11–20	28
Central Volga	May 1–10	May 11–20	May 21–31	20
Belorussia	May 1–10	May 21–31	May 21–31	20
Siberia	May 1–10	May 21–31	June 1–10	24
Far East	May 1–10	May 21–31	June 1–10	–
North-East	May 11–20	May 21–31	June 1–10	21
Urals	May 11–20	May 21–31	June 1–10	23

much as 60 million hectares should be ploughed in the autumn of 1930. On October 8, with ploughing already under way, the Narkomzem collegium expressed grave concern about its progress; and a few weeks later Kolkhoztsestr stressed that the continued lag behind the plan threatened major problems with the sowing.²⁶ The eventual results were extremely unsatisfactory. Only 24 million hectares were ploughed, a mere 40 per cent of the plan (see Table 9(b)).

Meanwhile, Narkomzem proceeded with the spring sowing plans. On September 23 it issued a decree requiring republican, regional and district agricultural departments, and the local kolkhoz agencies and village soviets, to disaggregate the spring sowing plan by stages through the hierarchy, so that kolkhozy and individual households received their sowing plan by January 1. Plans for the collection of seed were to be prepared in a similar fashion.²⁷ This was one of the many occasions in these years in which bureaucratic arrangements were far ahead of reality, and almost independent of it. No specific figures for the land area to be sown were yet available, apart from a general statement by Kolkhoztsestr that the sown area of kolkhozy should amount to 55 million hectares.²⁸ Narkomzem did not approve a plan disaggregated by republics and regions until the end of December; and sowing plans for specific crops, while approved in December 1930, were not published until towards the end of April 1931.²⁹

These Narkomzem figures, revised and somewhat reduced, formed the basis for the sowing plan approved by TsIK on January 10, 1931, as part of the 1931 national-economic plan.³⁰ Total spring sowing was planned at 100 million hectares, including 67–68 million sown to grain.³¹ The total sown area, including the autumn sowings, was to be 10.5 per cent greater than in 1930, and the area sown to grain

²⁶ SKhIB, 37, October 20, 1930, 2–3; SKhIB, 41–2, November 10–30, 1930, 22–3 (Kolkhoztsestr decree dated October 31).

²⁷ SKhIB, 36, October 15, 1930, 2; SZe, October 4, 1930.

²⁸ SZe, October 7, 1930.

²⁹ SKhB, 1, January 5, 1931, 13–14 (the decree has no date, but was presumably approved on December 24); 13, April 20, 1931, 2–3 (decree dated December 24). These were preceded by an RSFSR plan on December 14 (SKhIB, 51, December 30, 1930, 1–4).

³⁰ *Nar. kh. plan 1931* (1931), 31, 124; the TsIK resolution, which contains the main figures, is reprinted in *Kollektivizatsiya* (1957), 350.

³¹ According to *Nar. kh. plan 1931* (1931), 31, total sowings were planned at 143 million hectares, including 43 million for the autumn sowing (the plan figure; the lower actual sowing does not seem to have been taken into account).

6.5 per cent greater. For kolkhozy, the spring-sown area was planned to be 'at least 50 million hectares', half of all spring sowings.³²

The extent to which the sowing plans had been adopted was published every ten days in the agricultural newspaper, together with the reports on collectivisation. Not surprisingly, kolkhozy received their plans earlier than the individual peasants. On January 1, one-third of all kolkhozy had already received their plans, but only 7 per cent of individual peasants. During the next three months a determined effort was made to incorporate the diminishing number of individual peasants in the plan. By April 1, the last date for which the information appeared, 86 per cent of kolkhozy and 79 per cent of individual peasants had received their plans.³³

While the adoption of the sowing plans was proceeding, a decree of Sovnarkom and the party central committee launched the now almost traditional contracts campaign. The contracts were to cover 51 million hectares of the grain sowing by peasants and kolkhozy, as well as all the sowings of cotton and sugar-beet. The decree provided that 18 million hectares should be sown by the MTS, as compared with only 4 million in 1930.³⁴ Behind the scenes, Narkomzem and the agricultural cooperatives attempted to persuade the Politburo to make the contracts more attractive. They proposed that the state should resume the practice of making advance payments as part of the contracts; but this proposal was rejected.³⁵ After a protracted campaign, the grain contracts eventually covered the full amount planned, 51 million hectares, as much as 77 per cent of the spring grain sowing.³⁶

The grain area harvested was to amount to 108.7 million hectares out of a total 141.5 million (this evidently assumes that winter killings would amount to 1.5 million). 108.7 minus 41.5 = 67.2. The Narkomzem plan of December 24 had proposed a total spring-sown area of 105.5 million hectares.

³² *Kollektivizatsiya* (1957), 350. The area sown to grain by kolkhozy was to be 45 million hectares (*Nar. kh. plan 1931* (1931), 124). As autumn sowings by kolkhozy were assumed at this time to be about 10 million hectares, their spring-sown grain area was planned at about 35 million hectares.

³³ For sources, see Table 27; the reports include regional figures.

³⁴ *Kollektivizatsiya* (1957), 356–61; SZe, January 22, 1931. In the case of the spring sowing (unlike the autumn sowing) kolkhozy served by MTS were also covered by the contracts.

³⁵ Moshkov (1966), 160, citing the archives.

³⁶ Moshkov (1966), 203. The ten-daily reports in the agricultural newspaper showed that most contracts were agreed during April (for sources, see Table 27); on May 1, the last day for which information appeared, 56 million hectares were contracted, 96.3 per cent of the plan, including 47 million hectares sown to grain (SZe, May 6, 1930).

But, as in the autumn of 1930, they carried no specific advantage for the peasants signing them, and remained a device for legalising the transfer of peasant grain to the state at nominal prices.

In the practical preparation for the spring sowing, the authorities and the peasants had to grapple with three major problems: land allocation; the shortage of draught power (horses and tractors) and fodder; and the shortage of seed.

(1) *Land allocation* In January–May 1931, 7.5 million households joined the kolkhozy, and this meant that in most villages the land had to be redivided between the enlarged or newly-established kolkhozy and the remaining individual peasants. On January 17, Narkomzem of the RSFSR instructed land consolidation officials to complete their work two weeks before the spring sowing. As in 1930, they were to use ‘land indications (zemleukazaniya)’ or even ‘simplified land indications’ rather than the more thorough ‘land consolidation (zemleustroistvo)’.³⁷ A week later Kolkhoztentr optimistically instructed all kolkhozy to introduce multi-field crop rotation on an extensive scale, together with other improvements to the land.³⁸

The following weeks and months saw a replay on a larger scale of the practice and paradoxes of land rearrangement in the spring of 1930 (for which see vol. 1, pp. 291–7). Some 15,000 land consolidators, many of them poorly trained, descended on the villages.³⁹ The land agency claimed that the plan for the RSFSR had been considerably exceeded by May 20, and that in most districts kolkhozy had been provided with a continuous land area separate from the land of the individual peasants.⁴⁰ A later report, however, described the process as ‘only a matter of allocation of land to the newly-organised kolkhozy (the old ones, as they grow, allocate the land themselves), with a primitive decision on crop rotation’. The work was often undertaken by people who did not know the kolkhoz or even the district. In the words of the land consolidation journal: ‘He came, he allocated, he prepared a protocol, and he left.’⁴¹

³⁷ SZo, 1, 1931, 89, and the accompanying instruction of Goszemtrest (the State Land Trust), the agency responsible for land consolidation in the RSFSR (p. 87).

³⁸ SKhB, 7, February 15, 1931, 24–5 (circular of January 25). The total sown area, including the autumn sowing, was given as 69.25 million hectares, 39 million of which were to introduce multi-field crop rotation.

³⁹ SZo, 10, 1931, 2.

⁴⁰ SZo, 6, 1931, 13–16, and inside front cover.

⁴¹ SZo, 12, 1931, 30–2.

A Narkomzem commission headed by Markevich frankly concluded that for this simplified task a land specialist was not required. Land arrangements within the kolkhozy could be left to the kolkhozy themselves; and as the kolkhozy were expanding continuously, a more elaborate land allocation, 'essentially unnecessary to anyone, would have to be carried out an infinite number of times'.⁴²

These land arrangements retained strong traces of their past history. Yakovlev admitted:

Our 'comprehensive' land masses so far have little resemblance to 'comprehensive'. They are rather land masses glued together from peasant parcels of land. Go through any kolkhoz field at the moment of the harvest, especially after rain, and you will read the history of each parcel.⁴³

Markevich, after touring MTS in Ukraine, noted that the strips had disappeared, but the former boundaries between strips were indicated by the presence of weeds, and by the type of weed. And as for crop rotation, supposedly introduced in parallel with the rearrangement of the land, it was noticeable by its absence: 'At present the kolkhoz does not know what it will sow in the following year. Often the land and the crop to be sown are a matter of chance (chto popalo i gde popalo)'.⁴⁴

During 1930 and 1931, the boundaries of the kolkhozy underwent many changes during the formation, expansion, contraction and re-expansion of every kolkhoz. Sometimes there were several kolkhozy in one large village; and in other cases one kolkhoz combined several settlements. All this added to the confusion in land allocation. According to a well-informed article in the party journal:

Depersonalisation of the land, and difficulties in managing a cultured economy, have resulted from many cases of the following: land used by kolkhozy has been cut off for use by sovkhozy; boundaries between kolkhozy have been changed arbitrarily by enlarging the kolkhozy or dividing them up; land has been cut

⁴² SZe, June 8, 1931, reporting meeting of Narkomzem collegium on June 7.

⁴³ Yakovlev (1933), 159; report to conference on problems of increasing yields, September 1931.

⁴⁴ SZe, July 2, 1931 (report to board of Traktorotsentr).

off from kolkhozy in connection with the departure of their members; land has been redivided between kolkhozy.⁴⁵

A permanent result of the land allocation in 1931, repeating the experience of 1930, was that individual peasants were deprived of the best land and were allocated much less land than the collective farmers. In the USSR as a whole, the spring-sown area per household was twice as high in kolkhozy as in individual peasant holdings (see note 45 of Chapter 1).

(2) *Draught power and fodder* The total number of work horses in the USSR fell from 20.9 million in July 1930 to 19.5 million in July 1931, having already fallen by about 1.8 million in the previous year, a decline of nearly 15 per cent over two years.⁴⁶ In areas where the shortage was particularly acute, desperate remedies were proposed. Kolkhozsentr proposed that tractors should be transferred from some districts in the North Caucasus to others, and even from the Northern region.⁴⁷ At the end of February it despatched senior officials to the main grain areas to investigate the reasons for the death of horses.⁴⁸ The Central Volga kolkhozsoyuz claimed that it was essential for its kolkhozy to acquire 15,000 horses from the livestock deliveries to the state, and to transfer 16,000 others between districts.⁴⁹

Many of the horses which had survived were in a deplorable state. Fodder was in short supply; in many cases kolkhozy had used up their fodder in the autumn without planning for the spring. And peasants who joined the kolkhozy in the spring frequently sold off their fodder before joining, or used it for their privately-owned animals.⁵⁰ By April, some kolkhozy in the Lower Volga were using the straw roofs of sheds as fodder, poisoning the horses in the process.⁵¹

⁴⁵ B, 22, November 30, 1932, 70 (A. Shteingart).

⁴⁶ See *Sots.str.* (1934), 267, and Table 2(a).

⁴⁷ RGASPI, 631/5/66, 38 (conference on February 1).

⁴⁸ RGASPI, 631/5/66, 41, published in TSD, iii, 93–4.

⁴⁹ RGAE, 7446/2/547, 125 (report to Kolkhozsentr dated March 3).

⁵⁰ See, for example, RGAE, 7446/5/97, 244–242 (report of Kolkhozsentr brigade, end of March 1931, referring to North Caucasus and Ukraine). See also RGAE, 7446/37/193, 126–114 (OGPU report dated February 23), and SZe, March 26, 1931 (report from Melitopol', Ukraine).

⁵¹ RGAE, 7446/5/97, 313–312 (report of group of instructors to Kolkhozsentr dated April 19).

The horses were often badly treated. In the kolkhozy, those transferred to common stables were often looked after by temporary grooms who took little interest in their work.⁵² As a result of the neglect, and the lack of fodder, illnesses were widespread, including ringworm, mange, foot and mouth disease, and glanders; the sick were often not isolated from the healthy.⁵³ Frequently there was no room for the horses in the common stables, and they remained in the stables of their former owners.⁵⁴ These horses may have been better treated; but they were often not available to the kolkhoz, being used by their former owners for their own purposes.⁵⁵

Individual peasants who were determined to remain outside the kolkhoz frequently decided to abandon agriculture, or were forced to do so by the heavy disincentives. They sold up their horses, handed them to the livestock collection agencies as part of their quota, or simply left them behind. In many districts the price of horses was very low in the spring of 1931, but the kolkhozy lacked the financial resources to purchase them. According to one account, possibly apocryphal, in the Mordovian ASSR a horse could be obtained for the price of two packets of *makhorka*.⁵⁶

After the second wave of collectivisation was more or less concluded, the kolkhozy had fewer horses per household than the individual peasants, and far fewer per hectare of sown area.⁵⁷ Some individual peasants had disposed of their horses before they joined the kolkhoz, though this practice was strictly forbidden. Some had

⁵² SZe, March 26, 1931 (report from Melitopol').

⁵³ RGAE, 7486/37/193, 125–122 (OGPU report dated February 23).

⁵⁴ Only 16 per cent of the kolkhozy in the June 1931 survey reported that they had common stables, and in these kolkhozy the capacity available was sufficient only for 69.4 per cent of the socialised work-animals (*Kolkhozy vesnoi 1931* (1932), 64–5). There is no indication of how many of those kolkhozy which did not answer this question had common stables.

⁵⁵ See, for example, RGASPI, 631/5/63, 53 (report from Moscow regional executive committee, dated April 18).

⁵⁶ RGAE, 7446/37/193 (OGPU report from Ukraine and East Siberia, dated February 23); RGAE, 7446/2/547, 105 (speech by delegate from Mordovian ASSR to regional kolkhoz congress, March 1931).

⁵⁷ On July 1, 1931, of the 18.6 million work horses in the peasant sector, 9.3 million, exactly 50 per cent, were owned by the kolkhozy, and the same number by individual peasants and collective-farm households taken together (*Sots. str.* (1935), 367); unfortunately separate figures are not available for the latter two categories. On July 1, 56 per cent of all households belonged to kolkhozy (see Table 27).

not yet transferred their horses to the kolkhoz. And in general, peasants joining the kolkhozy tended to own fewer horses per household than those who remained outside.

The state made great efforts to increase the supply of agricultural machinery. Between January 1 and June 1, 1931, the total stock of tractors in the MTS and the kolkhozy increased from 520,000 to about 800,000 horse-power.⁵⁸ Nearly half the new tractors in 1931 were imported, and Soviet production also increased rapidly.⁵⁹ Agricultural machinery factories switched a considerable part of their capacity from horse-drawn to tractor-drawn ploughs and other implements.⁶⁰ At the end of April 1931 the Fulfilment Commission of Sovnarkom, chaired by Molotov, usually primarily concerned with pointing out deficiencies, noted that the programme for the production of agricultural machinery for the spring sowing was 'fulfilled in the main'.⁶¹

A vigorous campaign sought to ensure that tractors were in good working order. As early as October 20, 1930, Narkomzem launched an extensive programme for the repair of existing tractors.⁶² Later decrees sought to maintain the pace of repair.⁶³ In the same month, Vesenkha placed orders with its factories for the production of spare parts. But at the beginning of 1931 it noted the 'criminal' delay of its factories, pointing out that the production of spare parts in October–December 1930 had been minute.⁶⁴ A crash programme followed during the next few months.

(3) *Seed* After the good harvest of 1930, in many areas the kolkhozy were able to set aside substantial stocks of seed ('Seed Funds'). On January 1, 1931, according to a Narkomzem report, kolkhozy had already collected 1.82 million tons, 46.6 per cent of requirements.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ The number of kolkhoz tractors on January 1 was 13,000, averaging 11.2 horse-power per tractor; and had probably fallen to about 10,000 by June 1.

⁵⁹ The output of Soviet tractors was as follows (units): October–December 1930: 5204; January–March 1931: 5171; April–June 1931: 9594. The previous highest production in a quarter was in April–June 1930: 3220. See vol. 4, Table 7(f).

⁶⁰ See production figures in *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 198, and the decree of the Fulfilment Commission of Sovnarkom in SZ, 1931, art. 141 (dated February 25, 1931).

⁶¹ SZ, 1931, art. 198 (dated April 29).

⁶² SKhIB, 40, November 5, 1930, 6–7.

⁶³ See, for example, I, March 29, 1931 (decree of Sovnarkom of the RSFSR, dated March 21).

⁶⁴ SP VSNKh, 1931, art. 4 (dated January 3); see also the decree of the Fulfilment Commission of Sovnarkom, SZ, 1931, art. 83 (dated January 28).

⁶⁵ For the source of these reports, see Table 27.

But the expansion of the kolkhozy brought its own difficulties. Before they joined, peasants often sold their seed on the market, or fed it to their animals, or consumed it; and failed to provide it for collective use.⁶⁶ Moreover, the accuracy of the reports was questionable. According to one report, some 'collective' seed, like the collective horses, was retained temporarily in charge of the collective-farm household, and was then disposed of before the sowing.⁶⁷

In February, a Narkomzem memorandum reported that, in spite of the good harvest in 1930, bad weather in a number of districts had led to harvest failure and seed shortage. The regions had submitted requests for seed for these districts amounting to 3,645,000 tons; Narkomzem recommended the allocation to them of somewhat more than two million tons. A handwritten note on the memorandum stated that Mikoyan was 'categorically opposed' to the proposal.⁶⁸ On March 5, the Politburo resolved that no substantial seed assistance would be given in 1931 because of the difficult position of the reserve grain stocks (the so-called 'Untouchable Fund' – *Nepfond*). The Politburo allocated a mere five million puds (81,000 tons) to the bad harvest areas as an 'extreme concession'.⁶⁹

Only 67 per cent of the required seed had been collected by the kolkhozy by April 10.⁷⁰ In May, in the course of the spring sowing, the Politburo made up some of the deficiency by providing seed loans on no fewer than five occasions, to eleven different regions.⁷¹ But the amounts supplied were small, amounting in all to 452,000 tons in the agricultural year 1930/31 as compared with 1,263,000 tons in the same period of 1929/30 (see Table 15(a) and vol. 1, p. 432).

In spite of all the earlier worries, and with many exceptions, the availability of seed turned out not to be a major problem. The state had to economise in grain in the months immediately before and

⁶⁶ See, for example, RGAE, 7446/2/547, 124 (report from Central Volga kolkhoz-soyuz to Kolkhoztsestr, dated March 3); RGAE, 7446/5/97, 313–312 (report from Lower Volga by Kolkhoztsestr instructors, dated April 20).

⁶⁷ RGAE, 7446/37/194, 241 (report from Ingushia, North Caucasus, by the secret political department of the OGPU, dated May 18).

⁶⁸ RGAE, 7486/37/269, 6 (memorandum from Odintsev to STO, dated February 19; the note is dated February 23).

⁶⁹ RGASPI, 17/3/815, 7 (item 38); Kuibyshev, Yakovlev and Molotov all reported on this item.

⁷⁰ For source see Table 27; no reports on seed collected appeared after this date.

⁷¹ RGASPI, 17/162/10, 36 (May 8), 44 (May 11 and 12), 61 (May 24), 67 (May 27).

during the 1931 harvest.⁷² But after the good harvest of 1930, peasants still had some grain in store. In the outcome the total stock of grain in state hands (planners' stocks) on July 1, 1931, was nearly 250,000 tons greater than a year previously.⁷³

The efforts over many years to improve the quality of the seed were particularly successful in 1931. The total grain area sown to improved seed doubled, reaching 25.4 million hectares – 24.3 per cent of the total.⁷⁴ This seed was nearly all made available from the grain harvested in the previous year at special seed cooperatives and seed kolkhozy.⁷⁵

The spring sowing was considerably delayed. Virtually no sowing took place in March, and in April it was delayed by nearly three weeks as compared with 1930. On May 1, the total sown area amounted to 13.7 million hectares, the level reached before April 15 in the previous year (see Table 9(c)). Sowing took place earlier than in 1930 only in the Urals and West Siberia.⁷⁶ Sowing accelerated during May, and equalled the 1930 level by May 20.

The delay, at least in Ukraine and the Lower Volga region, was caused primarily by the unusually cold weather.⁷⁷ In other areas, excessive rain also added to the problems and made it difficult to catch up. A report from the Lower Volga noted: 'After a short improvement another rainy spell has begun. Mass sowing in the southern districts of the region is taking place in a struggle with the weather. Literally every hour and every day have to be grabbed for sowing.'⁷⁸ On June 11,

⁷² On June 10, 1931, the Politburo adopted a special grain monthly budget for the period May 1 to August 31 (RGASPI, 17/162/10, 76–77).

⁷³ See SR, liv (1995), 644 (Davies, Tauger and Wheatcroft).

⁷⁴ *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 367–70; 26.3 per cent of the total was autumn-sown rye and wheat.

⁷⁵ The area sown to high-grade seed increased as follows (million hectares):

	1929	1930	1931
Kolkhozy and cooperatives	1.20	2.04	3.27
Sovkhozy	0.27	0.21	0.36
Total	1.46	2.25	3.64

Source: *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 370.

⁷⁶ *Ezhegodnik po sel. kh. 1931* (1933), 388–9.

⁷⁷ See Table 8 and the central committee circular in SZe, April 5, 1931.

⁷⁸ SZe, April 19, 1931.

with the sowing nearly complete, Yakovlev stated that the delay of two–three weeks had been caused by the ‘very difficult meteorological and climatic conditions of the spring’, and claimed that it was the new social forms in agriculture which had enabled these conditions to be overcome: ‘Our country proved strong enough not only to paralyse completely, but also to rebuff, the strong blow which the spring wanted to inflict on us.’⁷⁹

The émigré economic bulletin concurred that the delay resulted from ‘unfavourable meteorological conditions’.⁸⁰ But this was not the whole story. Reports from many areas noted delays caused by the late collection of seed and the shortage of draught power in kolkhozy.⁸¹ Sheboldaev, speaking at the June plenum of the party central committee, explained that the condition of the horses in the North Caucasus had been ‘hopelessly bad’, and ‘the bottleneck in our work’.⁸² Another reason for the delay was the failure of the autumn ploughing: Yurkin pointed out that, for this reason, sowing in the Central Volga region, where autumn ploughing was extensive, had been less subject to delay than in the North Caucasus and Ukraine.⁸³

Individual peasants were furthest behind. By May 1, kolkhozy had sown 10.8 million hectares, but individual peasants, who constituted half of all peasant households, had sown a mere 1.7 million.⁸⁴ The allocation of land to individual peasants was frequently delayed, and the subject of much dispute.⁸⁵ The kolkhozy and the state tended to offer them no help, even in villages where it was traditional to sow in informal work teams (supryagi) which pooled horse, implements and labour.⁸⁶ Even in the Ivanovo region, where 66 per cent of the peasants had not joined the kolkhozy at the time of the spring sowing, the individual peasant had ‘fallen out of the field of vision of our Soviet agencies’.⁸⁷

⁷⁹ Yakovlev (1933), 175–6; RGASPI, 17/2/473, 4. This was his report to the central committee plenum.

⁸⁰ BP (Prague), lxxxix, June–July 1931, 9.

⁸¹ See, for example, the report from Melitopol’, Ukraine, in SZe, March 26, 1931.

⁸² RGASPI, 17/2/473, 23 (speech on June 12).

⁸³ RGASPI, 17/2/473, 26 (speech on June 12).

⁸⁴ See Moshkov (1966), 110, citing the archives.

⁸⁵ See, for example, OGPU report of May 18 in RGAE, 7486/37/194, 243–238; and p. 58 above.

⁸⁶ RGAE, 7486/37/194, 241 (referring to Ingushia).

⁸⁷ *Severnyi rabochii*, June 11, 1931; statement by Kubyak, the recently-appointed head of the regional executive committee, who had been Narkomzem of the RSFSR in 1928.

But the individual peasants, as in 1930, sometimes formed their own supryagi of a few households.⁸⁸

The lag was particularly serious in Ukraine. On June 17, the Politburo despatched a telegram to Ukraine complaining of its 'completely intolerable lag in sowing in most districts, especially the Right bank and the forest areas', and called for the areas which had not been sown to be planted with late grain crops, including millet and buckwheat, as well as potatoes, silage and *makhorka*.⁸⁹ Millet and buckwheat were particularly hardy grains and were relatively less sensitive to the heat and drought.

In spite of the delays and difficulties, the total spring sowing reached 97.5 million hectares, nine million more than in 1930. Of this total, 60.1 per cent were sown by kolkhozy, 9.4 per cent by sovkhozy and only 30.4 per cent by individual peasants.⁹⁰ As many as 18 million hectares (30 per cent) of the kolkhoz sown area was ploughed by MTS, as compared with a mere two million in 1930.⁹¹ For the first time, socialised agriculture dominated the countryside, and tractor ploughing was beginning to replace horses in kolkhozy as well as sovkhozy. Stalin, in an exultant message to Markevich as head of Traktorotsentr, and to all MTS, congratulated them on their success:

This is the path – from the wooden plough (sokha) to the tractor – which the Red economy of our country has followed.

Further expansion during 1931 would 'create the basis for including the overwhelming majority of the kolkhozy' in the MTS in 1932.⁹² The June plenum of the central committee declared that 'the 1931 sowing has provided new models of the high *productivity* of a unified collective economy'.⁹³

Most of the expansion of the sown area was because of the increased sowing of industrial crops, vegetables and fodder grass. Grain sowing increased by less than three million hectares, and was four million hectares less than planned. The whole increase was

⁸⁸ SZe, April 13, 1931 (referring to the North Caucasus).

⁸⁹ RGASPI, 17/3/831, 6 (decision 31/8 dated June 17).

⁹⁰ *Sots. str. 1934* (1935), 180–5.

⁹¹ SZe, May 29, 1930.

⁹² P, May 28, SZe, May 29, 1931. In *Soch.*, xiii, 48–9, Markevich's name is omitted. See also Kalinin in SZe, May 30, 1931.

⁹³ *Kollektivizatsiya* (1957), 385–6 (dated June 12).

a result of the expansion of the sovkhozy. Moreover, the aggregate figures concealed the fact that all the additional sowing took place very late in the season. At the June plenum, this issue led to a clash between Stalin and Markevich:

Stalin. They say that what we sow, we reap. (*Laughter.*)

Markevich. This is not entirely correct. Results are connected not only with what you sow, but when you sow.⁹⁴

The lateness of the sowing meant that it had to be rushed in order to achieve the plan. The authorities even recommended that ploughing preceding the sowing should be accelerated by ploughing shallow rather than deep.⁹⁵ In retrospect, Yakovlev conceded that in both sovkhozy and kolkhozy the quality of the sowing was often unsatisfactory. In sovkhozy, the land at the moment of sowing had often been 'steppe on which wild grass has flourished, and consisted entirely of tussocks and deep ruts'.⁹⁶

(C) THE HARVEST

The 1931 plan, prepared at the end of 1930, estimated that the grain harvest would be 98.59 million tons. In the plan approved by TsIK on January 10, 1931, it was revised downwards slightly to 97 million tons.⁹⁷ This was far larger than the biggest pre-revolutionary harvest, 13 per cent greater than the presumed harvest of 1930, and a couple of million tons higher than the estimate for 1931 in the five-year plan adopted in the spring of 1929.⁹⁸

The planned harvest was obtained simply by multiplying the planned sown area by the planned yield. The 1931 plan proposed that the total area sown to grain should amount to 108.65 million hectares, and estimated that the grain yield in 1931 would be

⁹⁴ RGASPI, 17/2/473, 31ob (speech on June 12).

⁹⁵ See BP (Prague), lxxxix, June–July 1931, 11.

⁹⁶ Yakovlev (1933), 157–8 (report to conference on increasing yield, September 1931).

⁹⁷ *Kollektivizatsiya* (1957), 350.

⁹⁸ We say 'presumed harvest in 1930' because the 1930 harvest was estimated at that time at 87.4 million tons; the published figure was later revised to 83.5 million, but the contemporary figure in the archives was only 77.2 million (see vol. 1, p. 349).

9.1 tsentners (0.91 tons) per hectare, 6 per cent greater than in 1930.⁹⁹ The plan explained that the improved organisation of sovkhozy and kolkhozy in 1931 would be sufficient to overcome the deterioration in the weather; the weather was 'better than average' in 1930, and was expected to be 'average' in 1931.¹⁰⁰ Vol'f, responsible for agriculture in Gosplan, later engagingly admitted that 'everyone who has had to work on determining standard yields when compiling the control figures of the national economy ... knows the disillusioned feeling which results when neither the person setting the targets nor the person who objects to them can suggest any serious data to justify their opinion'.¹⁰¹ The 1931 plan nevertheless treated the expected increase in yield as a firm plan.

Behind the scenes, Nemchinov suggested at a Gosplan commission the somewhat lower figure of 92.7 million tons.¹⁰² But the official plan remained 97 million tons until the eve of the harvesting in June.

Harvesting was a more complex and sensitive process than ploughing, sowing or weeding. It involved up to seven processes:

- (i) reaping (kos'ba);
- (ii) drying and ripening the reaped grain (this could be in the form of bound and stooked sheaves, but it could also be by leaving it in rows and heaps);
- (iii) binding and stacking the crop (skirdovanie) (partly as security from rain, pests and theft, and partly to ease further transportation);
- (iv) transporting the crop to the place of threshing;
- (v) threshing (obmolot'ba);
- (vi) bagging the threshed grain; and
- (vii) storing it.

Following these stages, the grain not retained by the kolkhoz or the peasants was transported to the state or cooperative collection point.

In 1931, for the first time, most grain was produced by the collective lands of the kolkhozy, and by sovkhozy. Harvesting, like sowing, could not

⁹⁹ *Nar. kh. plan 1931* (1931), 124. The plan of 98.59 million is taken from *ibid.*, 125; strictly $108.65 \times 0.91 = 98.87$.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁰¹ *SZe*, June 7, 1931.

¹⁰² *RGAE*, 1562/1/663, 80–83 (first session of commission to determine marketed production of grain, January 23, 1931).

be left to the discretion of peasant households, but was organised by socialised agricultural enterprises. The central authorities sought to compensate for lack of experience in the kolkhozy by bombarding them with instructions about every phase in the campaign. Instructions from Narkomzem and the party were transmitted through regional and district agricultural departments and through the party hierarchy, to village soviets, kolkhozy and party cells. Reports flowed back to the centre not only from the agricultural departments and party officials but also from the local GPUs and their informers.

In the second half of April, in the midst of the spring sowing, quite elaborate decrees on the harvest were issued by the Sovnarkoms of the RSFSR and USSR.¹⁰³ They contained instructions about weeding the fields during the pre-harvest period, and on preventing insects and other pests. Dates were proposed for harvesting and threshing, and great emphasis was placed on stooking and stacking the grain. A further Narkomzem decree gave quite precise instructions on the best practices in these respects, and on the handling of particular grains so as to minimise losses, as well as the sequence of the operations.¹⁰⁴ Narkomzem also proposed a vast short-term training programme for 100,000 kolkhoz officials and as many as 395,000 brigade leaders (200,000 of these for grain harvesting brigades), and called for the provision of short courses for kolkhoz record keepers.¹⁰⁵

As in the sowing campaign, further decrees called for the provision of machinery, and of spare parts for tractors. In Vesenkha, the old arrangements in which orders were placed with 147 factories in different industrial corporations were abandoned in favour of assigning the main responsibility for placing orders to VATO (the Automobile and Tractor Corporation), to which a number of factories were transferred.¹⁰⁶ At this time, the MTS included only a few hundred lorries and a handful of motor cars.¹⁰⁷ On June 5 the Politburo accepted

¹⁰³ SKhB, 15, May 10, 1931, 1–4 (RSFSR decree dated April 19); P, April 28, 1931 (Narkomzem USSR decree, approved by STO on April 26).

¹⁰⁴ SKhB, 20, June 30, 1931, 26–9.

¹⁰⁵ P, April 28, 1931 (decree of April 16); SZe, June 1, 1931 (decree of Narkomzem and Kolkhozttsentr dated May 31).

¹⁰⁶ SZ, 1931, art. 198 (decree of Commission of Fulfilment of Sovnarkom on agricultural machinery dated April 29); RGAE, 3429/1/5246, 23–24 (art. 457 – decree of Vesenkha presidium on spare parts dated July 2).

¹⁰⁷ See *Sots. str.* (1935), 296.

a hopelessly belated report from Molotov which recommended that an additional 2,500–3,000 lorries should be ordered in the USA and Europe for the harvest campaign, in addition to the 4,000 already ordered.¹⁰⁸ Most of the lorries failed to arrive at all during 1931, and those which did arrive were allocated primarily to the sovkhozy.¹⁰⁹

The weeding campaign was launched as early as mid-May, and continued for some weeks. Kolkhoztentr called for the transfer by as early as June 1 of 30,000 kolkhoz shock workers from the old to the newly-established kolkhozy.¹¹⁰ Simultaneously, the harvesting plans were disaggregated by the agricultural departments. But neither of these processes was very successful. A report on the Lower Volga region from a Kolkhoztentr official complained that weeding had been ‘criminally weak’.¹¹¹ A secret OGPU report addressed to Stalin and the principal government and Politburo officials concerned with agriculture complained that ‘by the end of May, in most regions, the plans for the harvest campaigns had been issued only to the districts’; the preparation of machinery and buildings for the harvest was also belated.¹¹²

In the main grain regions it was already clear before the harvesting began that the weather was unfavourable. Russia and parts of Ukraine suffered from fairly regular serious droughts, which significantly reduced crop yields. In 1925–29 the weather was favourable; the only break in the years of fine weather came in 1927. Then the weather in the first year of the new decade was excellent, and confounded those statisticians who argued that a good harvest was improbable. In 1931, however, this run of good luck came to an end. The spring weather was much colder than usual; and June was warmer, and July much hotter than usual (see Table 8). The cold spring and the hot July were a deadly combination. The cold spring delayed the sowing (see p. 62) and hence the whole development of grain. The grain reached its vulnerable flowering stage later than normal, coinciding with the hot July weather. And from June the

¹⁰⁸ RGASPI, 17/162/10, 66, item 2/11.

¹⁰⁹ See *Sots. str.* (1935), 296–7. Between December 31, 1930 and December 31, 1931, the number of lorries in MTS increased from 200 to 1,000, while the number in sovkhozy increased from 2,100 to 3,700.

¹¹⁰ For the weeding campaign, see SZe, May 21, 1931, and subsequent issues.

¹¹¹ RGAE, 7446/2/479, 149–153 (dated July 28).

¹¹² RGAE, 7486/37/194, 273–253, dated June 10. Reports of this kind to Stalin were always marked ‘to Poskrebyshev (for Stalin)’ while Kaganovich, Molotov, Mikoyan and other leaders received their reports direct.

south-east suffered what is known as a *sukhovei* (literally, 'dry wind'). In May–July, the normal weather pattern in the Volga and Black-Earth regions and on the Ukrainian steppe was that the warm, dry, south-easterly winds from Kazakhstan gave way to colder and wetter winds from the north-west. But about once in every ten or twelve years the south-easterlies predominated throughout these months, the winds became scorching, no rain fell and the earth became parched. At these times, grain yields fell significantly and there was a risk of famine, if reserve stocks of grain were not available. The *sukhovei* of 1891 and 1921 brought famine. In 1906 massive government assistance largely alleviated the problem. The effect of the *sukhovei* was so strong that it could easily be identified with relatively primitive meteorological measurements. The drought, which had begun in West Siberia in May, spread to the Volga regions in June and July. A huge deficit in rainfall was accompanied by temperatures much higher than average in these three regions and part of Ukraine. (See Table 8.) North Caucasus and the grain-deficit regions were much less affected.

A further complication was the severe infestation of the crops with insect pests in 1931. On June 30 the Politburo called for further investigation of the infestation, particularly by locusts in the northern region.¹¹³

In spite of these problems, the political leaders remained optimistic. Mikoyan later recalled that, at this time, 'we awaited the season of the grain collections with rainbow perspectives'.¹¹⁴ The drastic steps taken by the authorities in 1930 and 1931 had established an institutional framework from which optimistic assessments of the harvest would emerge. In 1930, the district statisticians and voluntary correspondents of the former Central Statistical Administration were replaced by village plenipotentiaries for statistics, and by district expert commissions (see vol. 1, p. 349). In May 1931 several of the most prominent experts on grain statistics, including Mikhailovskii, Dubenetskii and Obukhov, were accused publicly of having assisted Groman in his 'wrecking' work on harvest evaluations, of opposing the new system of harvest evaluations and supporting the former 'kulak' network of voluntary correspondents.

¹¹³ RGASPI, 17/3/833, 3 (art. 15/43).

¹¹⁴ RGASPI, 17/3/484, 60 (speech to central committee plenum, October 31, 1931).

They were dismissed from Gosplan and expelled from the trade union.¹¹⁵

This public accusation, supported by the veteran communist statistician M. N. Smit, was followed on June 16 by a STO decision appointing an Expert Interdepartmental Council on harvest evaluation. Previous councils had included several statisticians, and representatives of government departments concerned with agriculture predominated. But statisticians were excluded from the new council, and several OGPU officials were appointed to it. It was chaired by Chernov, who was responsible for grain collections and therefore had a vested interest in showing that the harvest had been large.¹¹⁶

The earliest estimates of the grain yield in 1931 were made on May 15 and June 1, before the harvesting began, but after the first effects of the *sukhovei* had become obvious. In spite of the efforts of the political leaders, the yield estimates were quite cautious. The bulletin in which they appeared reported that warm, dry weather had set in from mid-May, and that exceptionally high temperatures were recorded for May 20–31 in many parts of Ukraine, North Caucasus, Lower Volga and Kazakhstan. For the USSR as a whole they were slightly higher than average, but they were slightly lower than the equivalent evaluation for June 1, 1930.¹¹⁷ This did not bode well for a harvest planned to be considerably larger than in 1930, and the harvest estimate was drastically reduced from the planned 97 million tons to 85.2 million.¹¹⁸ This first estimate for 1931 made it clear that hopes for a bumper harvest had been destroyed by the weather.

¹¹⁵ EZh, May 14, 1931. For Mikhailovskii's handwritten statements on these charges, see RGAE, 1562/3/434, 20–23; these are followed in the file by typewritten copies of grain budgets for 1928–30 and several earlier memoranda from Mikhailovskii (ll. 40–49, 53–78). Groman was condemned to imprisonment in the 'Menshevik Trial' of March 1931 (see vol. 4, pp. 38–9).

¹¹⁶ For details of the new council and the previous one, see SZ, 1929, art. 230 and RGAE, 1562/1/672, 6.

¹¹⁷ For details, see *Byulleten'* no. 5, June 1, 1931, of the harvest statistics group of the agricultural sector of Gosplan, located in RGAE, 1562/1/672, 22–27. The estimates were made by the 5-point system, with 3 points being taken as average. The average for the USSR was 3.1 points, compared with 3.2 in 1930; the equivalent figures for the RSFSR were 3.1 and 3.0 (an increase) and for Ukraine 2.9 and 3.6 (a considerable decrease).

¹¹⁸ Reported in RGAE, 1562/1/672, 137 (Nemchinov's memorandum dated August 2, 1931, summarising the series of harvest estimates up to July 25). At this time, the official figure for the 1930 harvest was in process of being reduced from 87.4 to 83.5 million tons, following a downward correction to the Narkomzem estimates for sown area (RGAE, 1562/1/672, 139).

The June 1 estimate, like all the later estimates at the time of the harvest, was secret, and reached only a handful of high officials. In public, the golden prospects for the harvest were loudly proclaimed. Even six weeks later, in mid-July, an editorial in the party journal boldly announced that 'in the current year, on the basis of the growth of the sovkhozy and kolkhozy, we are approaching the final solution of the grain problem', and predicted 'a large *increase in the harvest* in comparison with 1930'.¹¹⁹

By this time harvesting was in progress. In 1931 the authorities adopted for the first time the system of five-daily reports which had been introduced for sowing in 1930. The harvest reporting covered only three of the seven stages (see p. 66): reaping; binding and stacking; and threshing. The first report of grain reaping was dated July 10, 1931, by which time only 2.3 million hectares had been harvested, 2.6 per cent of the plan.¹²⁰ The first reports for threshing and stacking appeared at the end of the month.¹²¹ The reports, published in the daily newspapers, were accompanied by recommendations on how to cope with defects in the work.

At the end of July, a certain O. Ya. Boresyuk complained in a telegram to Stalin that in Ukraine reaped grain which had not been stacked was becoming weedy and was being trampled down by animals.¹²² This situation was widespread. By August 15, 62 million hectares had been reaped but only 31.5 million had been stacked or threshed. On August 18, the Politburo noted that the delay in stacking threatened huge losses in the North Caucasus and the Volga regions, and decided that stacking should be 'the central economic task of the next ten days'.¹²³ Throughout, the harvest reports in the newspapers drew attention to the large amount of unthreshed grain remaining in the fields.

The *sukhovei* continued throughout the early stages of the harvest. Khataevich reported that in the Central Volga it had lasted thirty-five days, and had been worse than in the famine year 1921.¹²⁴ This led to further reductions in the harvest estimate. By July 15 it had been cut to

¹¹⁹ B, 13, July 15, 1931, 1, 8.

¹²⁰ SZe, July 15, 1931.

¹²¹ SZe, July 30, 1931.

¹²² RGAE, 7486/37/151, 78-77; for related material, see *ibid.*, ll. 92-73.

¹²³ RGASPI, 17/3/843, 6 (art. 28/5).

¹²⁴ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 54 (speech to central committee plenum, October 31, 1931).

79.21 million tons, much less than the harvest still presumed for 1930 (see Table 1); the Ukrainian harvest was estimated at 20.4 million tons, compared with 23.17 in 1930.¹²⁵ These estimates were certainly still too high. In his report to the Expert Council, prepared on August 2, Nemchinov stated frankly that 'it is undeniable that harvest evaluations made up to July 15 are always considerably overestimated: in the USSR the critical period in the vegetation of grain crops in the south begins at this time, not to mention the [later] east'. According to Nemchinov, 'the data available on July 15 in the south still did not take the results of the first threshings sufficiently into account', and these results were bringing 'a certain disillusionment, because the grain is often frail and under weight'. Consequently the August 1 estimate, which was not yet available, was likely to be still lower than that for July 15.¹²⁶

In fact, the Expert Council, on the basis of the August 1 data, made only a modest reduction in the estimate, to 77.99 million tons. The estimates by the local agencies at this time were far more pessimistic. In Ukraine, the regional data for August 1 resulted in an estimate of only 17.6 million tons, nearly 2.8 million tons lower than the estimate by the Expert Council in Moscow.¹²⁷ Kosior, on a visit to Moscow, raised the question of the Ukrainian harvest with Kaganovich, who was deputising for Stalin. On August 12, Kaganovich reported to Stalin that Kosior (evidently using the same Ukrainian regional data) had emphasised that there had been a deterioration in the harvest in a number of grain districts, which would reduce the Ukrainian total by 170 million puds [2.78 million tons].¹²⁸ The discussion about the Ukrainian harvest continued in September. On September 9, a representative of Ukrainian Gosplan complained that the Expert Council in Moscow was still using the Ukrainian estimate based on data for July 1, whereas data from 135 Ukrainian districts showed that the harvest was actually about 13 per cent lower (this again implied a harvest of about 17.5 million tons).¹²⁹ The Expert Council in reply called for more detailed information, and stated uncompromisingly that until it received these data it would continue to use the old estimates of yield.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ RGAE, 1562/1/672, 148, 151–150.

¹²⁶ RGAE, 1562/1/672, 137–136, 140.

¹²⁷ Reported in a retrospective memorandum by Aronov in May 1932 (RGAE, 1562/1/712, 562–5).

¹²⁸ SKP, 41.

¹²⁹ RGAE, 1562/1/672, 233–232 (handwritten note).

¹³⁰ RGAE, 1562/1/672, 231.

Meanwhile, further natural calamities had descended on other regions, particularly the Central and Lower Volga. In August, the agricultural newspaper published numerous references to the exceptionally rainy weather which had delayed harvesting and damaged harvested grain which had not been stacked.¹³¹ Khataevich later reported that in the Central Volga the burning of the ripening grain by the hot drought had been followed during the weeks of harvesting by enough rain for three harvests. On the Right bank of the Volga, where there were few railways, large quantities of wet grain had been spoiled:

The rain poured down endlessly, the roads were turned into a sea of mud, potatoes could not be dug, hemp could not be harvested, the hemp and the sunflower seeds were drowned in the fields.¹³²

In spite of such conditions, after August 1 no reduction was made in the harvest estimate during the crucial months when the grain collections were taking place. The Politburo was determined to deprive the republican and regional authorities, and the sovkhozy, of a crucial argument against their grain collection plan. The sovkhozy performed unsatisfactorily in 1931, and provided the Politburo with a test case. On October 15, Adamovich, who was in charge of the organisation responsible for the sugar-beet sovkhozy, Soyuzsakhhar, presented to the Politburo drastically reduced estimates of the grain production of its sovkhozy.¹³³ In response, the Politburo despatched telegrams to the relevant party secretaries in Ukraine, North Caucasus, the Central Black-Earth region and the Moscow region criticising the data supplied by Soyuzsakhhar, and establishing a 'verification commission' headed by Yakovlev, and including representatives of the OGPU. On October 17 it sent out high-level representatives of the central committee to the regions to check the 'real amount' of grain production in sovkhozy more generally, and warned the regional secretaries that the commissions had been given

¹³¹ See, for example, SZe, August 11 and 15, 1931.

¹³² RGASPI, 17/2/484, 53ob. (speech to central committee plenum, October 31, 1931).

¹³³ According to a Politburo resolution of October 25, Soyuzsakhhar had in effect reduced its grain collection plan from 30 million to 8 million puds in the course of September and October (SPR, viii (1934), 716–7; for this resolution see p. 74 below).

‘extraordinary authority and maximum rights to immediately eliminate outrages in the form of underestimating the amount of gross and marketed (tovarnoe) grain, the concealment of stocks and over-estimation of norms of grain expenditure’.¹³⁴

The findings of these commissions were, of course, a foregone conclusion. The next meeting of the Politburo, on October 25, accepted most of the proposals of the Yakovlev commission and replaced Adamovich.¹³⁵ The Politburo resolution, which was published, bluntly declared that the evaluation of the harvest in Soyuzsakhhar had been a ‘malicious underestimation’; the sovkhozy had perpetrated a ‘mass concealment of marketed grain from the state’.¹³⁶

This frontal assault by the Politburo immediately preceded the general discussion of the grain collections at the central committee plenum, which met from October 28–31. The Politburo did not seek to deny that there had been bad weather, and that it had caused trouble with the harvest. Narkomzem convened a conference on the role of drought and how to overcome it, which met between October 26 and 31 (thus continuing while the central committee plenum was in progress).¹³⁷ But the Politburo resisted specific attempts to reduce the harvest estimates, insisted on the widespread presence of deception about them, and emphasised strongly that Bolshevik organisation and determination could overcome the difficulties.

At the plenum, in a departure from normal practice, the discussion which began on the evening of October 30 was not opened with a general report by a senior party figure from Moscow. Instead, it consisted of ‘communications’ from republican and regional party leaders, beginning with Kosior and Sheboldaev. On the previous evening, the members of the Politburo, including Kosior, met in Stalin’s Kremlin office.¹³⁸ Kosior, who in August had favoured the

¹³⁴ RGASPI, 17/3/854, 2 (item 5); 17/3/855, item 27/3 (dated October 17) and appendix telegram (dated October 15).

¹³⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/856, item 30. The Politburo did not accept the proposal of the commission to expel the former head of Soyuzsakhhar from the party, but declared that he was not to hold a responsible post for two years, and would be expelled from the party if any further violations occurred.

¹³⁶ SPR, viii (1934), 716–17.

¹³⁷ See SZe, October 27–November 2, 1931.

¹³⁸ *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 6, 1994, 38. Kosior (with Postyshev) was with Stalin from 22.30 to 23.50; the other Politburo members, and Pyatakov and Yakovlev, entered the office between 21.15 and 21.50, and remained until midnight.

reduction of the harvest estimate for Ukraine, now came to heel. In a long speech, he insisted that the grain sovkhozy had not included in their records either the grain which remained in the fields, or the grain they had concealed; their figures had nothing to do with the real yields. As for the kolkhozy, it at first appeared that the main cause of the trouble with the Ukrainian harvest was the drought, but it was now clear that this had not been particularly significant. The main trouble had been the 'extremely abominable cultivation of the land'. Kosior cited numerous examples of theft and concealment of grain, and claimed that the yield figures returned by the MTS for their kolkhozy, which were considerably lower than the expert evaluations, were gross underestimates. Only a fool would accept them.¹³⁹

At the morning session of the plenum on the following day, October 31, events took an unexpected turn. Khataevich and Ptukha, speaking on behalf of the hard-pressed Volga regions, emphasised strongly that climatic conditions had resulted in a very poor harvest. Ptukha clashed sharply with Stalin and Molotov:

Ptukha. Last year the yield for all grain crops was 6 tsentners, this year, including an addition of 20 per cent to the expert data, it was only 3.8.

Stalin. What precision!

Ptukha. Cde. Stalin, there is no precision, because we added 20 per cent. Of course there is no precision. But, cde. Stalin, we do not know in which direction we have erred.

Molotov. You see, you don't know.

Stalin. How precise you have become recently.

Ptukha. I think there is no basis to be surprised by such a low yield in the Lower Volga, because we remember the zone affected by drought and the *sukhovei*.

Ptukha continued by pointing out that the yield varied from 0.5 of a tsentner to 9 tsentners.

Molotov. Figures ranging from 1/2 to 9 tsentners tell us nothing. They are figures without stating to what areas they relate, and do not give any indication of the result of the harvest.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ RGASPI, 17/2/479, 266–262 (typewritten record with handwritten corrections), 17/2/484, 43–45ob (printed stenographic report).

¹⁴⁰ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 53–55.

The dispute about the size of the harvest was followed by an even more tense dispute about the size of the state grain collections (see pp. 88–91).

At the time of the October plenum, it seemed clear that the conflict between Narkomzem, with its higher estimates of yield and sown area, and Gosplan, with its lower estimates, had been resolved in favour of Narkomzem. But the size of the harvest continued to be debated in secret for some time. In May 1932, local commissions were established on grain evaluation, and a broadly-based Special Conference on grain distribution. Two months later, with the 1932 harvest already under way, and long after the figure had any operational significance, Osinsky announced in the press that the yield in 1931 had been less than 6.8 tsentners per hectare. For those in the know, this implied that the 1931 harvest had been only about 70 million tons.¹⁴¹ Behind the scenes, a report presented to TsUNKhU in the same month showed that both the TsUNKhU and the Narkomzem estimates were well below the official evaluation used for the grain collections in the 1931/32 agricultural year, for both sown area and yield:¹⁴²

	<i>Sown area</i> (million hectares)	<i>Yield</i> per hectare	<i>Grain harvest</i> (million tons)
Narkomzem	104.4	0.67	70.3 ^a
TsUNKhU	102.5	0.67	68.2 ^a

Note: ^a These figures are miscalculated in the source, and should be 69.9 and 68.7.

It is not possible to make a precise estimate of the 1931 harvest (see Appendix). The weather was extremely bad, available horse power declined, and grain cultivation was in disarray under the impact of the second phase of collectivisation. It is certain that the 1931 harvest was 10–15 million tons less than the 1930 harvest, and substantially lower than the 1929 harvest.

Throughout the period of the harvest and after, the authorities were troubled by the relatively poor performance of the socialised

¹⁴¹ SZc, July 5, 1932. For the grain agencies, see SZ, 1932, arts. 192, 199 (May 3 and 7).

¹⁴² RGAE, 1562/1/672, 174–175. The figure of 68.2 million tons, including 17.6 for Ukraine (the amount advocated by Kosior in August 1931), was repeated in the confidential TsUNKhU bulletin, *Osnovnye pokazateli*, August 1932, 72–3 (sent to press on September 23).

sector as measured by yield per hectare. By yield is an uncertain measure of performance. The kolkhozy and sovkhozy had more land per working person than the individual households, but the kolkhozy lacked draught power, and the sovkhozy were short of labour, especially at the key periods in the agricultural season. And yields vary so much according to the type and quality of the soil that a comparison between sectors is meaningful only if the land factor is taken into account. But the communists believed that the socialised sector, with its economies of scale and lack of exploitation, was so superior to private agriculture that it would overcome any disadvantages. The scale of yields would be related to the degree of progress of the form of ownership: sovkhozy at the top, followed by kolkhozy served by MTS and kolkhozy not served by MTS, and with individual peasant agriculture at the bottom.

The yield estimates made for June 1, 1931, before the harvesting began, neatly corresponded to this pattern. But in July, the first returns from the Central Volga, Crimea, Ukraine and the Urals showed that the socialised sector had lower yields. A special commission, chaired by Gegechkori, who was responsible for agricultural records in Narkomzem, concluded that this was simply because sovkhozy and kolkhozy in these regions tended to be located on less favourable land.¹⁴³ But two weeks later Nemchinov reported that in the USSR as a whole the yield per hectare was higher in the individual sector. Regional data indicated that the tendency for the yield to be lower applied to kolkhozy served by MTS as well as to kolkhozy in general, and to the autumn as well as the spring sowing.¹⁴⁴

After the harvest was completed, an extended collegium of Narkomzem met to discuss the improvement of the yield, and was addressed by Yakovlev. He claimed that the yield in kolkhozy was 10–20 per cent higher than in individual peasant economies, and that the yield in sovkhozy was slightly higher than in kolkhozy – and insisted that the difference should have been much greater.¹⁴⁵ If his data deserve any credence, they must have been based on calculations which allowed for the alleged inferiority of kolkhoz and sovkhoz land. The final official results for 1931, which assumed a

¹⁴³ RGAE, 1562/75/19, 6; the commission met on July 20.

¹⁴⁴ RGAE, 1562/1/672, 140, 138 (memorandum dated August 2); in the North Caucasus, however, the yield of the spring sowing in kolkhozy served by MTS was somewhat higher than average.

¹⁴⁵ SZe, October 6, 1931.

harvest of 69.48 million tons, show that the yield was consistently higher in the individual sector. The gap was greater than in Nemchinov's preliminary estimates:¹⁴⁶

	<i>Percentage of total sown area</i>		<i>Percentage of total harvest</i>	
	<i>Nemchinov July 1931</i>	<i>Final published figure</i>	<i>Nemchinov July 1931</i>	<i>Final published figure</i>
Sovkhozy	7.5	7.7	7.4	6.8
Kolkhozy	58.0	58.4	56.4	55.2
Individual peasants	34.5	33.9	36.3	38.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

It is not surprising that the Soviet statistical handbooks left it to their readers to make the calculations which reveal these results. In terms of yield, the superiority of socialised agriculture had not been proved.

¹⁴⁶ Nemchinov's figures appear in RGAE, 1562/1/672, 140. The final figures are in *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 267; the individual sector has to be estimated as a residual.

CHAPTER FOUR

GRAIN COLLECTIONS FROM THE 1931 HARVEST

(A) THE COLLECTION PLAN

On April 13, 1930, Sovnarkom decreed that the 'delivery norms' for kolkhozy would amount to one-quarter to one-third of the harvest in grain areas, and no more than one-eighth of the harvest elsewhere. The remainder would be 'at the full disposal of the kolkhozy' (see vol. 1, p. 343). During the collections from the 1930 harvest these relatively benevolent provisions were almost entirely disregarded. Other, more effective, decrees insisted that all 'marketed production' (tovarnaya produktsiya) of grain should be transferred to the state. In practice, kolkhozy were required to deliver the state grain quota imposed on them, irrespective of the size of their harvest.

For the 1931 harvest, the decree of April 13, 1930, remained in legal force. In February 1931, a directive from Mikoyan declared that these proportions of the harvest must not be departed from (Mikoyan as People's Commissar for Trade was responsible to the Politburo and Sovnarkom for the grain collections).¹ As late as July 16, after harvesting had begun, an order of Kolkhozsentr cited the same norms as applying to all kolkhozy in the grain regions not served by MTS. But it also made two significant qualifications: first, kolkhozy outside the grain areas should supply 'not *less* than' one-eighth of the harvest (emphasis added); second, the amount of grain to be supplied by kolkhozy served by MTS was to be determined in the contract between the MTS and the kolkhoz.² But these provisions had little practical influence. As in the previous year, the collection plans were made operational by disaggregating a total figure for the USSR among republics, regions and districts, with separate quotas for sovkhozy, kolkhozy and individual peasants.

Narkomtorg, which was primarily responsible for the collections, approved the provisional grain collection plan for the 1931 harvest as early as November 13, 1930. It amounted to 29.485 million tons.³

¹ SZe, February 13, 1931.

² RGAE, 7446/1/263, 36-40.

³ See Table 18(a) and RGAE, 5240/9/499, 12; decision of Narkomtorg collegium. The plan was prepared by a group headed by Bagdasarov.

This excluded the milling levy and the state quality-seed fund, and corresponded to a grand total of some 33 million tons.⁴ This was ten million tons more than the collection from the record 1930 harvest, and almost double the amount of marketed grain projected for 1931/32 in the five-year plan adopted in the spring of 1929.⁵ Narkomtorg frankly admitted that as much as 30 per cent of the gross harvest would be transferred to the state, compared to 25 per cent in 1930.

This fantastic plan seemed at all plausible only in the context of the extremely optimistic plan for the 1931 harvest. The harvest was expected to be some 11 million tons larger than in 1930, so agriculture would retain at least as much grain for its own use as in the previous year (see Table 1). Narkomtorg noted that the high level of collections it had proposed depended on the achievement of the sown area, yield and gross output planned by Narkomzem. But in the current spirit of optimism it also insisted that the Narkomzem plans for agricultural expansion 'must be regarded as a minimum'.⁶

By this time, the grain collection plans were based on the assumption that almost all marketed (*tovarnoe*) grain would be taken by the state collection agencies. A memorandum prepared in TsUNKhU in February 1931 estimated sales of grain on the private market in 1930/31 at only 1.187 million tons, and predicted that in 1931/32 this amount would be halved (that is, to about 590,000 tons). The author pointed out that 'the term "marketed production" is taken to mean the state collections plus the grain alienated to the private market, so that it is more accurate to use the term "otchuzhdaemaya" [alienated] production'.⁷ In this volume we often refer to this 'alienated' production as 'off-farm' production.

On December 16, 1930, estimates both of the grain harvest and of off-farm grain were somewhat reduced. In what was described as a 'corrected variant', total collections, including the milling levy,

⁴ A memorandum drawn up in Gosplan by A. Mikhailovskii on November 30, 1930, estimated that collections in the calendar year 1931 (nearly all of which would have corresponded to collections from the 1931 harvest) would amount to 32.4 million tons, including the milling levy (RGAE, 1562/3/133, 15).

⁵ *Pyatiletnii plan*, ii, i (1930), 332.

⁶ RGAE, 5240/1/499, 2.

⁷ RGAE, 1562/1/663, 89, 92; the memorandum was variously dated March 25 and February 21, but the February date seems to be the right one. It was based on data up to January 20.

were planned at 30.69 million tons; in addition, sales on the 'unplanned market' would amount to 1.12 million tons.⁸ The memorandum of February 1931 estimated the 1931 harvest at 97.8 million tons and grain collections including the milling levy at about 30.7 million tons, significantly less than the estimates at the end of 1930.⁹

The next major change in the collections plan resulted from the second collectivisation drive. The amount of grain to be obtained from the kolkhozy was increased, and the amount to be obtained from individual peasants was reduced. The February 1931 estimates of the collections assumed that 57 per cent of the grain from the peasant sector would come from kolkhozy, compared with only 47 per cent in the November 1930 estimates (see Table 18(a)). The pace of collectivisation and its uncertain scope disrupted agricultural planning. In January, Nemchinov, who had prepared estimates of the likely availability of marketed grain, complained that 'unfortunately the size of the kolkhoz population is not fixed (ustavleno), either in the control figures or in the draft preliminary materials'; estimates of the percentage of all peasant households which would be members of kolkhozy by the spring of 1931 varied from thirty-five to fifty. Nemchinov pointed out that the increase in the number of peasants in kolkhozy affected the quota for the grain collections which could be imposed per household. With the increase in the number of collective farmers, the amount of agricultural land per household would decline (on this, see Chapter 1); as there would be more 'eaters' per hectare in the kolkhozy, the marketed grain per hectare would decline.¹⁰

As the time for the harvest drew near, top-level decisions about the collections were remarkably indecisive. By the beginning of June, the harvest estimate had been reduced by some 12 million tons (see p. 70). On June 7, the inter-departmental Central Grain Commission complained that Gosplan had not yet prepared a

⁸ RGAE, 1562/3/133, 1-4.

⁹ See Table 18(a) (including note ^b) and RGAE, 1562/1/663, 93; this was the 'Commission to Determine the Marketed Output of Agriculture in 1931', chaired by Mendel'son. The memorandum, apparently prepared by Loshchenov, stated that 'the milling levy has been included with the collections' (l. 89).

¹⁰ RGAE, 1562/1/663, 81-82 (attached to document dated January 22). In fact, the percentage of households in kolkhozy increased from 35.3 on March 1 to 52.7 on June 1 (see Table 27).

precise grain budget which had been agreed with the relevant government departments.¹¹ On June 2, a preliminary grain utilisation budget had been prepared, but it was never officially approved. On June 10, the Politburo, rather than approving a grain collection plan for 1930/31 as a whole, confined itself to approving monthly collection plans for food grains covering the period to the end of August.¹²

At the June 1931 plenum of the party central committee, the discussion on spring sowing and the harvest, which took place on June 11 and 12, ignored almost completely the forthcoming grain collections (see pp. 63–5). But on the following day, June 13, while the plenum was still proceeding, a conference ‘to review the control figures for the grain collection plan’ was convened in Narkomsnab, the successor body to Narkomtorg. The conference was chaired by Chernov, who, under Mikoyan, had been administratively responsible for the collections since 1928. On June 13 and 15, the conference approved grain collection plans for most regions and republics.¹³ These plans were provisional. Numerous changes were made when, in a document dated June 25, Narkomsnab consolidated the regional plans into a provisional collections plan for the whole USSR. The grand total amounted to 28,079,000 tons (see Table 18).¹⁴ This evidently excluded the milling levy; so the complete total must still have been over 30 million tons, in spite of the reduced harvest expectations.

These provisional plans were not announced in public or approved by the Politburo, but the authorities proceeded as if they were in force. On June 18, a well-publicised All-Union Grain Conference met in Moscow. In an article published on the eve of the conference, Sarkis, a prominent official in Narkomsnab, uncompromisingly reiterated the familiar slogan of 1930:

Not one kilogram of kolkhoz grain and the grain of the collective farmer to the private market for speculation.

This implied that all the off-farm grain of the kolkhozy should be sold to the state at very low prices, and it destroyed their economic incentive to develop grain production. Individual peasants were also

¹¹ RGAE, 8043/1/47, 20.

¹² RGASPI, 17/162/10, 89.

¹³ RGAE, 8043/1/46, 31–32, 34.

¹⁴ RGAE, 8043/1/510, 17.

to be managed with a firm hand. Sarkis insisted that both kulaks and the much vaguer category of 'well-to-do' peasants should be allocated firm personal quotas (on these, see vol. 1, pp. 13–16, 350), and that the quotas for the remaining individual peasants must not be lower than those for the collective farmers.¹⁵ Mikoyan, who delivered the main report to the conference, reiterated Sarkis's prescriptions. In spite of the first warnings of a bad harvest, he was in an optimistic mood. He declared that the success of collectivisation and the good harvest prospects were '*already solving the grain problem, not just in principle, but finally*'.¹⁶

However, soon after Narkomsnab had prepared its collection plan of June 25, the Politburo and Sovnarkom evidently decided that the lower harvest estimates meant that the plan must be reduced significantly. On July 1, the Politburo approved a plan for Ukraine, including the milling levy, which corresponded to the figure in the June 25 plan. But the clear evidence of bad weather and poor yields in crucial areas led to a further reduction of the harvest estimate by six million tons on July 15 (see pp. 71–2). Between July 4 and 25 the Politburo and Sovnarkom approved regional grain collection plans which assumed the total collection would be only 27.6 million tons. This figure included the milling levy, so the reduction amounted to nearly three million tons. No plan for the USSR as a whole was formally approved, but a revised Narkomsnab plan incorporated all the regional plans approved by the Politburo during July (see Table 18(b)). The plans for the four main grain regions (Ukraine, North Caucasus and the two Volga regions) together amounted to 16.3 million tons, more than 60 per cent of the USSR total. The extent of the forthcoming harvest failure in the Volga regions was not yet known, and the quota for the Lower Volga was in fact increased compared with June 25. But the plans for Siberia and the Urals were reduced by a total of well over 1 million tons.

The July collection plan by social sector was also considerably modified as compared with previous estimates. The quota for individual peasants was drastically reduced, in view of the decline in their numbers. The plans for the sovkhozy were also substantially reduced, so that the kolkhozy were now to be responsible for 59 per cent of all collections, compared with only 40 per cent in the original estimate of November 1930 (see Table 18 (a)).

¹⁵ SZe, June 17, 1931.

¹⁶ P, June 20, SZe, June 21, 1931.

These reductions soon proved to be insufficient. In his memorandum of August 2, Nemchinov pointed out that the poor harvest in the Volga steppes, Siberia and Kazakhstan meant that the worst-affected villages in these regions would need additional supplies of grain for seed, fodder and food. He accordingly proposed that, within the plan for the USSR, the grain collected from the so-called 'consumer' (grain-deficit) regions should be increased.¹⁷ The silent implication of the memorandum was that the collection plans for the stricken areas should be reduced.

When the collection plans were sent out to the districts by the republics and regions, they were met with hostility. Kosior described how, after the plans had been distributed in Ukraine in late July and August, 'a general clamour began, that the plan could not be achieved and was unrealistic'. According to Kosior, the main concern of the local Ukrainian authorities was to secure the reduction of the plan for their region.¹⁸

Stalin departed on vacation at the beginning of August, and his correspondence with Kaganovich, who was deputising for him in Moscow, reveals the intensity of the pressures from regional and republican secretaries for a reduction in their quotas. Stalin left an aide-memoire for Kaganovich which included as item 2: 'about 80 million p[uds] (for collections) to Kabakov' (the Urals party secretary), a reduction of 11 per cent.¹⁹ Then in his letter of August 12, Kaganovich summarised his troublesome conversation with Kosior about the harvest (see p. 72), and continued: 'They [the Ukrainians] are not now posing the question of re-examining the plan, but are evidently preparing the foundation for this.' He also reported requests from the Bashkir and Tatar ASSRs for reductions in their plans, and proposed that the Bashkir request should be rejected: 'we are thinking of decisively rejecting Bashkiria and issuing a firm directive. In general we must adopt a firm tone, that we will not re-examine any more plans, otherwise the collections will cool off (poidet razmag-nichivan'e)'.²⁰ The request from Bashkiria was refused, and they were ordered to 'cease any discussion about the grain collection plan and undertake energetic work to fulfil the plan'.²¹

¹⁷ RGAE, 1562/1/672, 129; for other aspects of this memorandum, see p. 72 above.

¹⁸ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 43–45ob.

¹⁹ SKP, 37.

²⁰ SKP, 41.

²¹ RGASPI, 17/3/843, 6 (dated August 18).

Not all requests were refused. In a letter to Stalin dated August 20, Kaganovich reported that 'Eikhe has come and is again raising the question of re-examining the plan'. In spite of Kaganovich's 'strong criticism', Eikhe insisted that the question should be discussed by the Politburo. The Siberian plan had already been reduced in July, but Eikhe wanted the plan to be further reduced from 100 to 63 million puds. In his letter of August 20, Kaganovich reported that the Central Volga region had also sent a telegram requesting a further reduction, and commenting 'they can certainly be refused'.²² On August 22, Stalin, in a telegram, proposed 100 million puds for the Central Volga region and 85 for Western Siberia, and these figures were agreed by the Politburo on August 25.²³

These are striking examples of occasions on which the Politburo yielded to pressure from the regions, albeit with concessions that did not respond adequately to the severity of the harvest failure. Between July 24 and August 25 the Politburo, in response to the overwhelming evidence about the very low harvest in the Volga regions, reduced their collection plans by a total of 1.65 million tons (see Table 19). In reducing the plans, the Politburo on every occasion firmly insisted that its decision was final. Thus each of the three decisions of July 24 were accompanied by the clause:

Any discussions about the grain-fodder budget and the plan of the grain collections is forbidden. The approved plan is to be considered final, and any talk about re-examining the plan is forbidden.²⁴

But these edicts were not cast in stone. For example, the plan for the Urals adopted on July 24 was reduced on August 8.²⁵

These reductions in the grain plan were made at a time when employment in industry and other sectors in which employees received food rations was expanding rapidly. This confronted the Soviet leaders with the need for great caution in the distribution of grain. A crucial issue was the size of grain exports. Grain shortages within the USSR at the end of the 1930/31 agricultural year impelled the authorities to reduce exports. On June 8, the Politburo decided to release 30,000 tons of wheat and rye which had been earmarked for export, and despatch

²² SKP, 56.

²³ SKP, 60; RGASPI, 17/162/10, 170–171.

²⁴ For source, see Table 19.

²⁵ RGASPI, 17/162/10, 128 (item 36/2); 17/162/10, 153.

the grain to the favoured cities, Moscow and Leningrad.²⁶ Two days later the Politburo plan for grain distribution in May–August 1931 envisaged that only 4.3 million puds (60,000 tons) would be exported in this period.²⁷ However, on June 25, the amount to be exported by August 1 was substantially increased, to 246,000 tons.²⁸

By July, the decision about grain exports in the forthcoming 1931/32 agricultural year as a whole could no longer be postponed. By this time the seriousness of the foreign trade deficit was becoming obvious to the Soviet leaders, and the fall in the price of grain and other agricultural products made it even more difficult to cover the deficit. On July 15, the Politburo, in an uneasy compromise, resolved to reduce the amount exported in 1931/32 to 4.5 million tons, compared with the 5.8 million tons exported in the previous year.²⁹ Six weeks later, Stalin indicated some unease about grain exports. He wrote to Kaganovich from Sochi, ‘You are putting on every kind of pressure for the export of grain when they pay pennies for grain’, and suggested that it would be better to increase the export of butter, or of both butter and grain.³⁰ This equivocal comment did not lead to any modification in the grain export plan, and the continued high level of grain exports was a major factor in the grain shortages which led to the food crisis in the spring of 1932.

In spite of the bad harvest, grain collections proceeded successfully at first. Kaganovich wrote to Stalin about the Ukrainians: ‘so far their collections are not going badly, in general the south is not going badly’.³¹ In both July and August, substantially more food grain was collected than required by the Politburo plan of June 10, and considerably more than in the same months of the previous year (thousand tons).³²

	<i>Food grains</i>		<i>All grains</i>	
	<i>1931/32</i>	<i>1931/32</i>	<i>1930/31</i>	<i>1931/32</i>
	<i>Politburo plan,</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Actual</i>
	<i>June 10, 1931</i>			
July	437	901	425	949
August	2860	4655	2915	5233

²⁶ RGASPI, 17/162/10, 80.

²⁷ RGASPI, 17/162/10, 81.

²⁸ RGASPI, 17/162/10, 96.

²⁹ RGASPI, 17/162/10, 119.

³⁰ SKP, 80, dated September 4.

³¹ SKP, 41 (letter of August 12).

³² For Politburo plan, see RGASPI, 17/162/10, 89; for the amounts collected, see sources to Table 14(a).

Nevertheless, Kaganovich reported to Stalin that the results for the first half of August gave rise to 'some anxieties', because of the lag in the Lower Volga and the North Caucasus. But the Politburo had decided to 'let the localities show their own mettle'.³³ This approach seemed at first to have been successful. On September 6, following a discussion at the Politburo on the previous day, Kaganovich reported to Stalin that a total of 374 million puds (6.123 million tons) had been collected by the end of August, 23.7 per cent of the annual plan, and that this was 85 per cent more than on September 1, 1930: 'Inasmuch as the grain collections' business is so far not going badly, we have not taken any special measures.'³⁴ Stalin accepted this judgment: his letters do not mention the grain collections.

Enthused by this success, the authorities decided to collect at least 30 per cent of the annual plan in September, as much as 7.46 million tons.³⁵ In the outcome, although the amount collected was greater than in September 1930, it was only 5.07 million tons; and Kaganovich's letters express increasing disquiet during September. On September 11, he informed Stalin that between September 1 and 5 only 45.5 million puds (737,000 tons) were collected, compared with nearly 80 million (1,310,000 tons) in the last five days of August – he commented that 'our leadership must be strengthened'.³⁶ And on September 16 he also reported an 'alarming reduction' in the collections.³⁷ But at this stage only a few second-level central committee members were sent to the regions, and Stalin apparently continued to be unconcerned. On September 26, Kaganovich again reported that the collections had declined. He told Stalin in this connection that it had been proposed at the Politburo that a conference of regional party secretaries should be convened on September 30, but the Politburo had decided to postpone this until Stalin's return.³⁸ In response, Stalin proposed by telegram that a plenum of the party central committee should be convened by the end of October, and this was duly agreed by the Politburo.³⁹ One of the three items on the

³³ SKP, 45 (letter probably written on August 15).

³⁴ SKP, 83.

³⁵ EZh, October 5, 1931 (editorial), gives the plan as at least 30 per cent of the annual total, and also states that the amount collected (which was 5.07 million tons) was 68 per cent of the plan [$5.07 \div 0.68 = 7.46$].

³⁶ SKP, 96.

³⁷ SKP, 106.

³⁸ SKP, 119.

³⁹ SKP, 121; RGASPI, 17/3/851, item 25.

agenda of the plenum was to consider reports from regional party secretaries on the progress of the grain collections and methods of improving them.

Meanwhile, the regions which had suffered drought imperatively demanded an improvement in their grain plans. Thus the Central Volga region requested a reduction in its grain plan from 120 to 80 million puds, and asked for seed loans.⁴⁰ It also called for the allocation of concentrated fodder for its starving horses, many of which were afflicted with meningitis.⁴¹ The Politburo did not accede to these requests, and on October 2 it rejected Khataevich's request to report to the Politburo on the Central Volga grain plan. It also refused to permit him to use 50 per cent rather than 10 per cent of the milling levy within the region.⁴² A week later, it decided to postpone the question of the grain collections to the plenum, and in the meantime condemned as 'completely impermissible' the 'unauthorised quitting of the regions by some members of regional party committees in order to travel to Moscow'.⁴³

During October, the grain campaign moved from difficulties into crisis. October 1930 had been the peak month of the collections. In October 1931, 1.2 million tons less grain was collected than in the previous month, only three-fifths of the amount in 1930 (see Table 19(c)). The lag met with a flurry of instructions from the centre (see pp. 96–7).

After Stalin resumed his duties in Moscow, the grain collections were one of his main concerns. In preparation for the plenum, on October 20 the Politburo considered the annual grain collection plan, and instructed Narkomsnab to prepare a draft within five days.⁴⁴ On October 25, the Politburo at last adopted the annual plan of 25.8 million tons, which had been in use since the end of August. The plan repeated the reduced quotas which had been agreed for the regions by Politburo meetings in July and August, and made little change in the division by social sectors (see Tables 18 and 19).

At the central committee plenum, which met from October 28 to 31, the only party secretary who unambiguously defended the

⁴⁰ RGASPI, 82/6/660, 113–125, dated September 19.

⁴¹ RGAE, 7486/37/151, 93–96 (memorandum to Narkomsnab and Narkomzem dated August 26).

⁴² RGASPI, 17/3/852, 7–8.

⁴³ RGASPI, 17/3/853, 5 (item 30, sitting of October 10).

⁴⁴ RGASPI, 17/3/855. The draft was to be accepted within two days if no Politburo member objected.

Politburo grain collection plan for his area was Kosior. Kosior opened the debate, and while his report was formally simply a communication from Ukraine, it was obviously intended to set the tone of the discussion. Kosior was a full member of the Politburo, and no doubt felt obliged to defend the Politburo plan for Ukraine in front of the mass of central committee members – with disastrous long-term consequences for Ukraine. In his report, he claimed that ‘significant amounts’ of marketable grain remained in the villages from the previous year: ‘this plan is realistic and can be fulfilled without any such sufferings and sacrifices on the part of the kolkhoz peasantry and our Ukrainian countryside’.⁴⁵

The other speakers from the main grain regions all expressed considerable anxiety, even when they accepted their plan. Sheboldaev, while stating that ‘we shall fulfil our obligations for grain’, nevertheless declared that in providing the outstanding 16 million puds (262,000 tons) of food grain ‘we are engaging directly with the food requirements of the kolkhozy – to take wheat will present us with significant difficulties’.⁴⁶ Khataevich frankly stated that the Central Volga region could not promise to meet its quota of 100 million puds (1.638 million tons). In view of the bad harvest on the Left Bank of the Volga, the Right Bank would have to supply 53 million puds, whereas previously it had not supplied more than 18 million. The maximum which could be supplied was 77–78 million puds, but this would lead to shortages of both food and seed in the spring. He accordingly proposed that the plan should be reduced to only 57–58 million puds. In this case, the Central Volga could be supplied with seed, fodder and food in the spring of 1932 from local resources – but even then the state would have to provide wheat seed for the Left Bank in exchange for rye from the Right Bank. Moreover, the need to set aside grain for the spring sowing meant that, in areas with a bad harvest, ‘undoubtedly the collective farmer himself will not eat his fill’ (*‘sam ne doest’*). This phrase echoed the tsarist Minister Vyshnegradsky’s famous remark ‘we shall not eat our fill but we shall export’ (*‘ne doedim, a vyvozim’*). If the collective

⁴⁵ RGASPI, 17/2/479, 267. This text is taken from the typewritten stenogram. In the printed version, Kosior has altered the wording, particularly by adding ‘unconditionally’: ‘the plan ... is unconditionally realistic and can be fulfilled without any special sacrifices on the part of the kolkhoz peasantry and our Ukrainian countryside’ (RGASPI, 17/2/484, 43).

⁴⁶ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 47ob, 45.

farmers ate more than 6–8 puds per head (100–130 kgs), they would have no seed:

We consciously took the approach: let them to some extent not eat their fill, and give more to the collections, so as to mobilise some resources to enable us to provide seed assistance.⁴⁷

This grim account was followed by Ptukha's equally determined speech. In spite of barracking from Stalin and Molotov (see p. 75), he reported frankly that in the Lower Volga region collections had virtually ceased in October (they amounted to only 120,000 tons, compared with 411,000 tons in the previous month). The grain collections had met with 'considerable opposition' from collective farmers and rural leaders, 'and the opposition is growing':

Like cde. Khataevich, I must declare directly at this plenum that in view of the bad harvest resulting from the drought in the Lower Volga we cannot fulfil the plan issued to us.

He requested that the plan should be reduced from 120 million puds (1.97 million tons) to 85 million, 12 million less than in the previous year.⁴⁸

Following this stand by prominent regional secretaries, Stalin made an unexpected proposal:

Stalin. It will be necessary to call together all the secretaries of the regions collecting grain. We must agree when to meet, three or four?

Voices. At three. At four.

Stalin. We will finish the question in an hour or even less.

Voices. At three.

Stalin. At three. All secretaries of all regions collecting grain.⁴⁹

The printed version of the report softened Stalin's announcement to 'We should call all the secretaries of the regions collecting grain for a talk (beseda).'⁵⁰

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 53, 53ob, 54.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 54, 55, 55ob.

⁴⁹ RGASPI, 17/2/481, 123; this is a typed version.

⁵⁰ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 55ob.

The 'talk' duly took place, and at the evening session Mikoyan reported that the Politburo had listened to all the regional secretaries and had agreed to reduce the plans of some regions by 123 million puds (2,015,000 tons) and increase others by 30 million (491,000 tons).⁵¹ The resolution presented to the plenum showed that, following Kosior's compliant speech, the quota for Ukraine remained the same, but those for the two Volga regions, and for the Urals, Siberia and Kazakhstan had been reduced substantially (see Table 18(b)).⁵² The quotas for the Central Black-Earth region and the traditionally grain-deficit regions were increased; and so was the quota for the North Caucasus, in spite of Sheboldaev's anxious speech.

In his statement, Mikoyan again insisted: 'no further re-examinations, no discussions, every area is obliged to carry out in full the approved plan'.⁵³ But this did not end the rebellion at the plenum. When the new quotas were read out, the secretary for Kazakhstan objected, and was sharply rebuffed by Mikoyan:

Goloshchekin. In any case, I must say that 55 million [900,000 tons] is impossible.

Mikoyan. Cde. Goloshchekin, I have read out to you an official document, a decision of the Politburo, 55 million without rice. This is absolutely precise, and I don't know why you are confusing things.⁵⁴

(B) THE CAMPAIGN

The grain campaign for the 1931 harvest was launched before the Politburo had approved either the total plan for the collections, or the plans for the regions. At the Grain Conference on June 18 (see pp. 82–3), Mikoyan warned the delegates that, in spite of what he believed would be a favourable situation, the grain collections would require a great deal of effort. They would meet kulak opposition to '*the stormy growth of our requirements*' of grain for industrial workers, the timber industry, peasants in the specialised agricultural areas, and other

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁵² The Central Volga asked for 57–8, or at best 77–8, and got 78; the lower Volga asked for 85 and got 88.

⁵³ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 61.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

needs. Nevertheless, he optimistically anticipated that the difficulties of collection would be 'somewhat softened' compared to 1930.⁵⁵

In a further report Chernov stressed the urgent need to prepare specific plans: quotas must reach the regions and the districts within ten days, and the villages and the kolkhozy within a further five days.⁵⁶ Then Sarkis called for the involvement of collective farmers and individual peasants in the campaign, and of 'tens of thousands' of plenipotentiaries seconded from the agencies in charge of the kolkhozy, together with activists sent from the large towns.⁵⁷ This was the familiar combination of coercion and exhortation pursued in the three previous campaigns.

The grain collections of 1931 were administered along roughly the same lines as in the previous year. The agricultural cooperatives collected grain from individual peasants and from kolkhozy which were not served by the MTS.⁵⁸ The MTS were responsible for the collection of grain from the kolkhozy which they served. All this grain was then transferred to Soyuzkhleb, the grain collecting agency of Narkomsnab. Soyuzkhleb was itself responsible for collecting grain from the sovkhozy, and for collecting the milling levy from all agricultural units.⁵⁹

In 1931, the authorities made considerable efforts to tighten up the administrative structure for collecting the grain. On July 15, a widely-publicised resolution of the central committee 'On the Organisation of the Grain Collections in the Campaign of 1931/32', launched the drive for the collections in earnest. The resolution announced an ambitious scheme for the establishment of local responsibility for the enforcement of the collections. Plenipotentiaries from the staff of the grain cooperatives were to be despatched to every village soviet, and were to be supported by village commissions to assist the collections. In addition, in every kolkhoz, a member of the kolkhoz board was to be designated responsible for the collections; in areas served by MTS,

⁵⁵ P, June 20, SZe, June 21, 1931.

⁵⁶ SZe, June 25, 1931.

⁵⁷ P, June 22, 25, 1931.

⁵⁸ Following a Politburo decision of February 15, 1931, the grain and livestock cooperatives were combined into a single organisation, Khlebzhivtsestr (RGASPI, 17/3/813, 6, 25 – item 24).

⁵⁹ See *Spravochnik khlebnogo dela* (1932), 31. As in previous years, some grain in regions where grain was not of major importance was collected by the consumer cooperatives under Tsentosoyuz.

the collections were to be the responsibility of one of the MTS deputy directors.⁶⁰

Behind the scenes, following the Grain Conference in June, the agricultural cooperatives had already embarked on the appointment of rural plenipotentiaries.⁶¹ By the end of July, 21,117 of the 44,116 plenipotentiaries planned for the USSR as a whole had already been appointed. But only 27 per cent of these had been through even a short training course.⁶² In 1931, as in previous years, the collections were enforced by sending into the countryside a vast number of urban officials, often backed by the OGPU. According to incomplete data, 27,000 people were mobilised for the grain collections in the North Caucasus alone.⁶³

The published resolution said nothing about the size of the collections. The district and village authorities, and the peasants themselves, normally remained in utter ignorance about the general framework of the campaign. They knew their own quota, which came down from above as a prescriptive order, but had no idea how it related to the general plan.

To an even greater extent than in the previous campaigns, the peasants lacked an economic incentive to transfer their grain to the state. In 1926/27 peasants obtained on the market an average price of 7r53k for a tsentner of rye, compared with the state collection price of 4r31. This disparity was sufficient to constitute a major factor in peasant reluctance to supply grain in the autumn of 1927. But by 1931 the market price of rye had risen to 61r35, while the state collection price was only 5r50. The disparity was even greater for wheat.⁶⁴

In partial compensation for the extremely low collection prices, Narkomsnab was instructed to supply scarce consumer goods at fixed prices in a definite ratio (usually one-third) to the amount paid by the state for the grain supplied (see vol. 1, p. 353). But in 1931 these provisions proved an even more dismal failure than in the previous year. Before the end of August, Mikoyan had denounced the '*shameful situation*': in the first 20 days of the month supplies of industrial consumer goods to the countryside amounted to only

⁶⁰ SPR, viii (1934), 616-7.

⁶¹ See RGAE, 4109/1/34, 216 (report covering June 1931).

⁶² RGAE, 4109/1/34, 271, 281-282 (report of Khlebozhivotnovodtsentr for July 1931); later figures have not been traced.

⁶³ See Moshkov (1966), 167,

⁶⁴ *Tovarooborot* (1932), 140, 144-5.

37 per cent of the plan.⁶⁵ But no significant improvement followed. Throughout the campaign, newspapers carried reports of the failure of the rural trade plans.⁶⁶ In one case, the only commodity supplied to the villages was eau-de-cologne.⁶⁷ At the end of October, Sheboldaev reported that in the North Caucasus less goods had been supplied in 1931 than in 1930, even though the amount of grain and other products supplied by agriculture to the state had increased by 50 per cent. He commented that 'this greatly increases the difficulties with the grain collections, because the main complaint in the countryside and in the kolkhoz is about industrial goods'.⁶⁸ In Kazakhstan, supplies were planned at only 12 kopeks per ruble of collections, far less than required by the legislation, but only 45 per cent of this had been supplied: in the Kazakh-inhabited areas 'people are naked and barefoot, and we receive nothing'.⁶⁹ In West Siberia no consumer goods at all were allocated for the countryside in July–September, and no supplies were expected until December (when the grain collections would be largely complete).⁷⁰

These accounts corresponded to the returns for the USSR as a whole. Supplies to the countryside of the five groups of industrial consumer goods for which comparable information is available declined from 1,181 million rubles in 1929/30 to 908 million in 1931.⁷¹

In these conditions, the peasants naturally sought to take as much grain as possible to the market. Nevertheless, in July and August, the reaping of the grain went ahead quite rapidly (see Table 8(f)), and the newly-cut and threshed grain was temporarily abundant. It was relatively easy for the state collectors to obtain grain. The agricultural newspaper reported that until September grain was received in a 'spontaneous flow'.⁷² And Mikoyan even declared:

The grain collections in July and August this year were the maximum achieved in any year. They stormed ahead, and it must be said without any great organisational efforts.⁷³

⁶⁵ SZe, September 9, 1931.

⁶⁶ See, for example, SZe, September 15, 17; EZh, June 23 (A. L'vov), 1931.

⁶⁷ EZh, October 5, 1931 (editorial).

⁶⁸ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 46ob, 47.

⁶⁹ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 58 (Goloshchekin).

⁷⁰ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 56ob (Eikhe).

⁷¹ *Tovaroborot* (1932), 16–17 (data in 1926/27 prices); rural sales also declined as a proportion of total sales. Data for the agricultural years 1930/31 and 1931/32 have not been available.

⁷² SZe, October 5, 1931.

⁷³ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 60 (reply to the discussion on the grain collections).

But even in these first two months the campaign was not as trouble-free as Mikoyan had depicted it. When members of the Ukrainian Politburo were sent to the countryside in August, their reports of theft and concealment of grain led the Ukrainian Politburo to summon a meeting of MTS directors, followed at the beginning of September by a conference of secretaries of district party committees designed 'to finish once and for all with opportunist vacillations and attitudes'.⁷⁴ And even in these first two months, large numbers of activists were sent out in every region to enforce the campaign.

During September, with the continuous fall in the amount collected, the regional authorities undertook extensive investigations of the feasibility of the plan for particular districts, kolkhozy and villages. The regional officials complained that the exceptional degree of variability of the harvest within each region meant that some districts and villages had easy plans, while others had impossible plans. In the North Caucasus, after the investigation, the plans for some districts were reduced by a total of 10 million puds, the plans for others increased. According to Sheboldaev, in order to persuade districts and kolkhozy to accept the revised plans, 'we had to wage a stubborn and protracted struggle', which involved the dismissal of a number of district party secretaries.⁷⁵

The amount collected in each five-day period continued to decline in October, so that by October 25 the total amount of grain collected since the beginning of the campaign was only 5 per cent greater than on the same date in 1930.⁷⁶ The danger was obvious that the 1931/32 grain plan, which was four million tons greater than the amount collected in 1930/31, would not be achieved. And the districts, the kolkhozy and the villages continued to object stubbornly to the quotas imposed on them. At the October plenum, Kosior reported that the officials sent to the countryside themselves 'often became prisoners of notions about the absence of grain', and 'literally flooded us with figures, balances and calculations which were supposed to prove that there is no grain and the plan cannot be fulfilled'. 'Even our communists and often the 25,000-ers are not merely prisoners of those who are concealing grain, but themselves stand at their head'. Speaking at the end of October, he admitted

⁷⁴ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 43ob (Kosior).

⁷⁵ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 46. For similar revisions of the plan in Ukraine, see *ibid.*, 45, 45ob.

⁷⁶ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 60 (Mikoyan).

that it 'cannot yet be said that we have completely and finally broken these attitudes'.⁷⁷

The case that the collection plan was too large was frequently justified by reference to the 'grain balance' (the grain budget) for the kolkhoz or the village, and sometimes for the district. The grain budget showed the proposed outlays of grain, calculated on the basis of the standard amount of grain to be consumed in the agricultural year per animal and per human soul, for seed, and for 'insurance' (the emergency stock of grain). In many districts and villages, perhaps in most of them, the total of these different outlays, plus the grain collection quota, was greater than the amount of grain harvested. The grain budget thus demonstrated that if animals or peasants were not to go hungry, the amount of grain supplied to the state would have to be reduced. The practice of preparing such grain budgets, accepted and even encouraged in previous years, was now fiercely denounced in the press. An editorial in the agricultural newspaper thundered that 'the kulak comes forward as a defender of the compilation of "balances", of hiding the grain from the state by deliberately underestimating surpluses'.⁷⁸ The economic newspaper insisted that the grain budgets were in effect treating the needs of the state as a residual.⁷⁹

The authorities took firm action to ensure that the collection plans were afforded absolute priority. On October 18, a decree of Kolkhoztsestr complained that kolkhozy had been reserving grains in notional Funds for livestock, insurance, seed and food rather than giving top priority to the state collections. These practices were 'in effect conniving at kulak wrecking'. The kolkhoz 'Funds' must no longer be treated as especially protected ('iron-clad' – *bronirovannye*). Kolkhoztsestr cancelled the earlier instructions which had encouraged or tolerated them. Priority must be given to the state collections, and the various Funds must be established *in addition* to the state grain plan.⁸⁰ Thus it was the needs of the peasants and the kolkhoz which must be treated as a residual. A further decision recommended that no further grain should be distributed to collective farmers until the grain collection plan for the kolkhoz was completed.⁸¹

⁷⁷ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 43ob, 44ob.

⁷⁸ SZe, October 9, 1931 (editorial).

⁷⁹ EZh, October 23, 1931 (A. L'vov).

⁸⁰ EZh, October 19, 1931; this decree was endorsed by Sovnarkom on October 19 (SZ, 1931, art. 411).

⁸¹ Slin'ko (1961), 289–90.

On October 24, the Fulfilment Commission of Sovnarkom endorsed a report it had received from the OGPU showing that grain data collected locally was often delayed, inaccurate and even 'deliberately false', and proposed measures to improve both the system of data collection and the storing of grain.⁸² This unusual public reference to the role of the OGPU was obviously designed to bring home to local officials the dangers of failing to reveal what grain was available.

From October 18, coincident with the Kolkhozsentr decree, a fierce press campaign was launched to enforce the plan, which continued during and after the party plenum. The responsibility for the lag in the collections was firmly attributed to kulaks and their agents. The economic newspaper insisted that they were 'exercising their full strength' and 'utilising the petty-bourgeois psychology of yesterday's individual peasant, which has not yet died out'.⁸³ The role of the kulak played a major part, not only in the public press campaign but also in the deliberations behind the scenes. An instructive exchange took place at the plenum:

Eikhe. ... the kulak is not yet fully eliminated and even at the present day continues to oppose all our measures.

Stalin. That is correct.

Eikhe. This is what we have met with in some kolkhozy during the grain collections.⁸⁴

The kolkhozy were now responsible for the bulk of the grain, and the authorities insisted increasingly that enough grain would be collected only if kolkhozy were handled firmly, as well as the remaining individual peasants. Vareikis complained to the plenum that all the districts in the Central Black-Earth region which he had visited emphasised the need to squeeze the individual peasants. According to Vareikis, the kolkhozy tended to be idealised, whereas it was essential 'to *overcome* attempts to counterpose the interests of a particular kolkhoz to the interests of the proletarian state'.⁸⁵ Kaganovich characteristically went even further, and roundly condemned 'liberalism towards kolkhozy, which has a special kind of "narodnik"

⁸² SZ, 1931, art. 434.

⁸³ EZh, October 20, 1931 (editorial).

⁸⁴ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 56.

⁸⁵ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 49; see also Vareikis (1932), 119.

character': if kolkhozy were defended against the state, they would turn into their opposite.⁸⁶

In November, the collections were enforced by despatching larger numbers of activists to the countryside and augmenting the repressive measures. Directors of MTS were dismissed.⁸⁷ Kolkhozy were dissolved and their officials prosecuted.⁸⁸ In 146 of the 400 districts of Ukraine, 250 boards of kolkhozy were dissolved and 355 heads of kolkhozy were removed; over 300 of the latter were prosecuted.⁸⁹ In West Siberia alone, 6,000 people were prosecuted on criminal charges for 'deliberately violating' the grain collections.⁹⁰

As a result of this relentless pressure, substantial quantities of grain were obtained by the state in the last three months of 1931 (see Table 14(c)). By this time, the peasants in many areas hit by drought or excessive rain were suffering from an absolute shortage of food. For example, at the end of November, a trade union official, sent as a grain plenipotentiary to kolkhozy served by MTS in the Lower Volga region, reported the grim situation in his district:

In order to fulfil the grain collection plan in full by 75 per cent [*sic*] for the whole Petrovskii district their *seed has been fully taken away*, and their food grain. In some places collective farmers are issued with 400 grams of bread each, and as for their families, they are literally starving.

All the kolkhoz offices were packed every day with collective farmers, especially women, 'who make an uproar, cry out to the point of hysterics, and ask for bread'. He also reported mass flights from the kolkhozy. Whole families had left, locking up their homes, resulting in great overcrowding on the railways. Even the staff of the MTS lacked food for themselves and fodder for their horses.⁹¹

In spite of such conditions, pressure from the state for more grain continued. On December 5, Stalin and Molotov sent a telegram to the regional party committees proposing that if a kolkhoz had not handed over its full grain quota, its outstanding loans should be called in early,

⁸⁶ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 52, 52ob.

⁸⁷ See, for example, SZe, November 4, 1931.

⁸⁸ SZe, December 5, 1931.

⁸⁹ Slin'ko (1961), 290; these figures cover the period up to January 10, 1932.

⁹⁰ Gushchin (1973), 443.

⁹¹ RGASPI, 108/1/3, 66–67, dated November 28 (report sent to the trade union).

the MTS should cease to serve it, and if necessary all its Funds, including the Seed Fund, should be transferred to the state. Individual peasant households should be treated in a similar manner.⁹²

By the end of 1931, 21.13 million tons had been collected, so over three million tons were outstanding. The most serious deficit was in Ukraine, where only 6.7 out of 8.36 million tons had been collected.

The grain not yet collected was desperately needed by the state. On January 1, 1932, the stock of grain was 600,000 tons less than on January 1, 1931, but the demand from the growing urban population and from industry was considerably higher than in the previous year.⁹³ Ukraine was crucial; and the USSR Politburo sent Molotov to Khar'kov to stiffen the Ukrainian resolve. The Ukrainian Politburo promptly passed a resolution declaring that January 1932 was 'a shock month for the completion of the grain collections'.⁹⁴ In his reports to the Ukrainian Politburo and to meetings of officials, Molotov insisted that the Ukrainian lag was wholly a result of poor mobilisation and inadequate organisation. To tighten up the organisation, he announced the establishment of six territorial sectors within Ukraine to manage the collections in its 400 districts.⁹⁵ He emphasised strongly that the Ukrainian collections lagged behind those in the RSFSR, and dismissed Ukrainian claims that the 1931 harvest had been poor: 'There is no district in Ukraine with a bad harvest this year, but the RSFSR had a huge drought'.⁹⁶

Molotov visited kolkhozy in three districts. He castigated the kolkhoz boards and chairs in poorly performing kolkhozy as 'agents of the kulaks' and even as 'kulak swine', arranged for the dismissal of district and kolkhoz officials, and threatened to dissolve the kolkhozy, tax the former members as individual peasants, and (where they existed)

⁹² Oskol'kov (1991), 19.

⁹³ See *Ezhegodnik khlebooborota*, iv-v (1932), and [vi] (1934), 74-5. In October-December 1931, grain supplied in food and fodder for industry and other internal use amounted to 5,248,000 tons as compared with 3,857,000 tons in the same period of 1930, an increase of over 35 per cent.

⁹⁴ RGASPI, 17/26/42, 193-196 (dated December 29, 1931).

⁹⁵ RGASPI, 82/2/137, 30-32. The abolition of the okrugs intermediate between the regions and the districts (see vol. 1, p. 351) was particularly inconvenient in Ukraine, where there were no regional party or state agencies below the republican level. As a result, the Ukrainian party central committee and Sovnarkom had to deal directly with the large number of districts. The new sectors were precursors of the regions into which Ukraine was soon divided (see p. xvi above).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.

withdraw the MTS tractors.⁹⁷ He did not spare the grain plenipotentiaries sent down from Khar'kov, claiming, 'I did not see one decent plenipotentiary'. In a handwritten note he denounced one of them as 'not only not useful, but harmful ... he may be a good philosopher but he is utterly unsuitable as a collection official in 1932'.⁹⁸ Shortly after Molotov's visit, a kolkhoz party secretary was laid low with a heart attack.⁹⁹

As usual, big sticks were accompanied by small carrots. Molotov arranged for the collective farmers in districts lagging behind to be offered substantial supplies of consumer goods in return for the completion of their grain plans.¹⁰⁰

A few days after Molotov's return from Ukraine, Stalin and Molotov despatched a particularly angry telegram to Kosior in Sochi, which condemned as 'absolutely unacceptable and intolerable' a situation in which Ukrainian officials were orienting themselves on falling short of the plan by 70–80 million puds (1,147,000–1,318,000 tons). The total amount still due from Ukraine was only 1,660,000 tons, so the alarm in Moscow was understandable. Stalin and Molotov insisted that Kosior should return to Khar'kov immediately and 'take the whole matter into your own hands'.¹⁰¹

The USSR Politburo also sought to obtain additional grain from those regions which had already supplied their quota. On January 11, it resolved that these regions should continue to collect grain, retaining 40 per cent of the additional grain for their own use.¹⁰²

In January 1932, nearly a million tons of grain were collected, one-third of the total amount needed to complete the annual plan; as much as 40 per cent of this came from Ukraine. But this relative success was not repeated. In February, the amount collected fell to 357,000 tons, and in March it declined even further. (See Table 14(c).) On March 23, 1932, an alarmed Politburo noted that, at the end of February, the shortfall in the annual collections for food grains alone still amounted to 100 million puds (1,638,000 tons), but the state had acquired a commitment not included in the annual grain

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 70–80.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 111–112 (addressed to Stroganov, a republican party secretary, dated December 31, 1931).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 39–40; see also the decision of the Ukrainian Politburo, December 29, 1931: *ibid.*, 2, 6–7.

¹⁰¹ RGASPI, 558/11/42, 105 (dated January 7).

¹⁰² RGASPI, 17/3/1981, 5.

budget: it would need to allocate as much as 44.4 million puds (737,000 tons) to kolkhozy and sovkhozy for seed and food. The Politburo anticipated that only 34 million puds (557,000 tons) of the missing 100 million puds would be collected.¹⁰³ Against this background of forthcoming extreme shortage it decided to reduce the bread rations for the whole of ration Lists 2 and 3 – effectively removing 20 million of the 38 million citizens receiving rations from guaranteed central state supply (see vol. 4, pp. 182–3, 530). It also drastically reduced other grain allocations due in March–June. The same Politburo decision underlined the seriousness of the situation by authorising Komzag to reduce its allocation to the regions by the amount of grain they were due to collect in the form of the milling levy. This meant that food supplies in each region would be dependent on further grain collection within the region.

In spite of these decisions, grain collections did not recover. The largest shortfall continued to be in Ukraine, and Ukraine was at the same time in urgent need of grain to supply its urban population. On April 22, Chernov reported to Molotov that Ukraine needed 410,000 tons of grain to cover its requirements to the end of June, but had collected only a minute amount of grain as milling levy in the first half of April. Chernov recommended that Ukraine should not receive extra grain, but instead should be required to collect in the whole of its milling levy.¹⁰⁴ This firm insistence had little effect: Ukraine collected only 23,000 tons of grain in April–June, and the total amount collected in the whole USSR was only 250,000 tons, half of which was collected in April (see Table 14(c)).

The authorities faced up reluctantly to the necessity of managing with the grain already available. On May 4, the Politburo, on a proposal from Kuibyshev, resolved that until August 1 ‘all stocks of food grain and its products, and of fodder grain, should be transferred to the Committee of Reserves’. While grain would remain physically in the existing supply network, it should henceforth be distributed ‘exclusively on the direct instructions of the Committee of Reserves and its plenipotentiaries – i.e. the plenipotentiaries of the OGPU’.¹⁰⁵ Three weeks later, on May 23, Kuibyshev reported to the Politburo that the

¹⁰³ RGASPI, 17/3/877, 40–42; see also GARF 5446/57/8, 20–16 (Sovnarkom decree of March 26). The estimate of 34 million puds is referred to in RGASPI, 82/2/600, 13 (Chernov’s memorandum of April 22).

¹⁰⁴ RGASPI, 82/2/600, 133.

¹⁰⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/1996, 3, 20 (item no. 12).

Committee of Reserves had now taken an inventory of all grain stocks. On May 10, the total amount of food grain in centralised stocks in the whole USSR was only 129.7 million puds (2,124,000 tons). The plan of March 23 to collect a further 557,000 tons had failed: the amount that could realistically be expected by the end of June was only 254,000 tons. Drastic further cuts in grain allocations to the population and the army were required, and it would be necessary to use groats and barley as well as wheat and rye in the manufacture of bread. Kuibyshev even proposed that the bread ration of the top priority groups – the Special List and List 1 – should be reduced by 100 grams a day. He concluded the memorandum with the dramatic warning:

With every sense of responsibility I want to emphasise that last year we had 88.8 million puds [1,455,000 tons] of food grains on July 1, and this year we will have only 57.7 million [945,000 tons]. What does this mean?

It means that we can cope with the supply of grain only with a major and exceptional degree of organisation.¹⁰⁶

In a draft of this letter the above sentences were added in blue pencil in Kuibyshev's handwriting (the rest of the draft is typed); and the following additional sentence appears, but is crossed out:

I request you to grant the Committee of Reserves dictatorial powers until the new harvest.¹⁰⁷

In its subsequent decision of May 25, the Politburo accepted nearly all of Kuibyshev's proposals. But even at this time of crisis it did not bring itself to reduce the rations of the Special List and List 1, and accordingly estimated that the stocks of food grain on July 1 would be only 54.9 million puds (899,000 tons).¹⁰⁸

On June 20, the Politburo reviewed the situation for the last time in the agricultural year. It concluded that 'the May 25 plan of grain supply, and the food grain budget, are being fulfilled in the main'. But its specific decision belied this optimism. It instructed Molotov and Kaganovich to send a joint telegram to the Volga regions, obliging them to 'carry out unconditionally by July 1 the plan for the

¹⁰⁶ RGASPI, 82/2/241, 27–29.

¹⁰⁷ The draft is in Kuibyshev's personal files: RGASPI, 79/1/375, 1–3.

¹⁰⁸ RGASPI, 17/162/12, 153–154, 164–166 (May 25).

despatch of grain from the region' and set out the grain collection plan for July from the new harvest in terms which indicated the disastrous food situation in Ukraine:

Cdes. Mikoyan and Chernov are requested jointly with the CC of the Ukrainian [party] to work out an operational plan for the utilisation of collections from Ukraine from the new harvest so that, in addition to the supply of the Donbass, Khar'kov and Dnepropetrovsk, special attention is given to the supply of grain to Nikolaev, Odessa, Kiev and the South-Western railways.

Mikoyan and Chernov were also instructed to ensure the uninterrupted supply to Karaganda.¹⁰⁹

In 1931/32 as a whole, the state had collected from the poor harvest some 700,000 tons more grain than from the good harvest of 1930 (see Table 14 (a)), and the state had considerably more grain at its disposal for internal distribution than in the previous agricultural year. The increase in the grain collections was supplemented by a reduction in grain exports by 1,050,000 tons, so that resources available increased by some 1,750,000 tons. But this proved the utterly insufficient to meet the increased demand. As the internal grain market was greatly restricted, the state had to make grain available for special agricultural purposes, particularly for fodder for the expanding sovkhozy. Moreover, the shortage of grain in many agricultural regions compelled the state to issue larger, unplanned quantities of seed and food grain (these issues are discussed on pp. 114–16 and 119). Special allocations also had to be made available for the workers in the expanding gold industry, and for the peat workings and fisheries, which had previously found their own grain. Increased amounts of grain were made available as raw material for industry. During the agricultural year the number of manual and office workers, railwaymen and building workers requiring bread rations from so-called 'General Supply' greatly expanded. But the availability of grain did not keep pace with this expansion, and rations for all but the top-priority categories were drastically cut. In the final quarter of 1931/32, April–June, 'general supply' was reduced by over 200,000 tons. Grain exports and supplies to industry were also drastically reduced: together they amounted to only 157,000 tons,

¹⁰⁹ RGASPI, 17/162/12, 192–193.

one-fifth of the amount allocated to these purposes both in the previous quarter of 1932 and in April–June 1931.¹¹⁰

In spite of all these restrictions, the additional grain supplied in 1931/32 for all internal needs amounted to over 2,500,000 tons, considerably in excess of the 1,750,000 tons additional grain available.¹¹¹ In consequence, the stock of grain held by the state declined by 972,000 tons. On July 1, 1932 the stocks amounted to only 1,362,000 tons, and on August 1 they had fallen to 792,000 tons. This was 600,000 tons below the stocks on August 1 of the previous year.¹¹² This level of stocks was barely sufficient to secure continuity of bread supply even to the top-priority groups in the towns. It had been achieved only by cuts in bread rations which had led to widespread discontent and some unrest in the towns, and to workers quitting their jobs in search of food. (See vol. 4, pp. 184–92.)

The high level of grain collection had stripped the villages in many areas of essential grain. The unrelenting pressure on the peasants had cut into the stocks of grain they carried over to the following year. According to TsUNKhU estimates, they had declined from 7.5 million tons on July 1, 1931 to 6 or 6.5 million tons on July 1, 1932.¹¹³ But this almost certainly underestimates the decline. The grain shortage in the countryside was offset in part by the state seed and food loans and assistance. But only in part. Many imperative requests from the districts and regions to supply additional grain for the countryside were refused. While in some regions workers moved to the countryside in search of food, in others hungry peasants moved to the towns. Peasant hunger, which had already been reported in the previous November, was now much more widespread (see pp. 117–19).

The Soviet Union had escaped catastrophe by a hair's breadth.

¹¹⁰ *Ezhgodnik khlebooborota*, iii–iv (1932), 144, 190–1; [vi] (1934), 66, 74–7.

¹¹¹ The increase in the supply of grain for internal use as compared with 1930/31 may be estimated from Table 15 approximately as follows (thousand tons):

Special agricultural purposes	+225
Seed and food loans	+920
Peat, fisheries	+260
Timber	–120
Gold; distant areas	+200
Industry	+360
General supply	+700
Net increase	approx. +2565

¹¹² *Ezhgodnik khlebooborota*, [vi] (1934), 64.

¹¹³ See TSD, iii, 855–6 (Wheatcroft).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE 1932 GRAIN HARVEST

In 1932 the Soviet Union experienced another poor harvest. The drive to obtain grain – even in reduced amounts – led to widespread deaths from famine in Ukraine, the North Caucasus and the Volga regions, following the crisis in Kazakhstan which began in the previous year. The famine reached its climax in the spring and early summer of 1933.¹ Its demographic, political and economic consequences haunted the Soviet system throughout the 1930s – and long after.

(A) THE AUTUMN SOWING, 1931

Preparations for the autumn sowing began in the spring of 1931 in the midst of the second wave of collectivisation and dekulakisation. The first draft of the plan, presented to Narkomzem on May 18 and 23, 1931, appeared to be relatively modest, with ‘only’ 43 million hectares of autumn sowings, the level that had been planned for the previous year.² But in the autumn of 1930 only 40.2 million hectares were actually sown; of this total, 4.8 million were sown after the end of the normal sowing season and 1.4 million were destroyed by winter killing (see p. 51 above). So, in fact, the plan for 1931 was optimistic.³ The plan proposed a significant change in the balance between different crops and areas. The sowing of wheat was to increase from 12.4 to 15 million hectares, and was to be extended into more northerly areas, where it had not grown before. A special allocation of ‘acclimatised’ grain was to be made available for these areas. The final plan was approved by the Politburo on July 15, and set out the contribution to be made by the different social sectors.⁴

¹ For the grain collections, see Chapter 6; for the famine, see Chapter 13.

² SKhB, 18, 1931, 8.

³ Moreover, the plan did not include sowings in livestock sovkhozy, which were ordered to sow additional winter rye to supplement their fodder budget.

⁴ RGASPI, 17/3/836 (item 14). The plan was published as a Sovnarkom decree on July 19 (SZ, 1931, art. 305). The sowing plan was given as 43.3 million hectares, with 2.9 million by sovkhozy, 26 million by kolkhozy (including 9 million through MTS), and 14.4 million by individual peasants.

While these plans were being drawn up, the spring ploughing of fallow land for the autumn sowing was under way. While the area ploughed was far less than the plan, it amounted to 21.3 million hectares, compared with 12.1 million in the previous year.⁵

The sowing started well. In every five-day period up to September 10, considerably more land was sown than in the previous year (see Table 9(a)). After this, the rate of sowing declined; but until October 10 the total amount sown continued to be greater than in 1930. This achievement was accompanied by the usual fierce and elaborate campaign. On August 20, the Politburo set up a high-level commission under Molotov to prepare recommendations on the course of the sowing;⁶ and heard progress reports on several occasions.⁷ In Ukraine, long-range weather forecasts warned of an early cold spell. Accordingly, the agricultural newspaper insisted that it was necessary 'to decisively force the development of the sowing campaign, otherwise the winter grains in Ukraine will be insufficiently strong when they come in contact with the frost'.⁸ In order to advance the campaign, some sovkhozy and MTS resorted to sowing at night, but with indifferent results. An early cold spell occurred in Ukraine at the end of September and beginning of October, and certainly hindered germination.

By the end of sowing on December 15, only 39.6 million hectares had been sown, in comparison with 40.2 million in 1930 and the plan of 43.3 million (see Table 9(a)). Sovkhozy and kolkhozy both failed to meet their plans, and sowing by individual peasants reached only 60 per cent of the level anticipated by the authorities. The area sown to wheat increased by a mere 0.5 million hectares. The one significant achievement of the campaign was the increase in the proportion of the land sown with improved seeds, which amounted to 24 per cent, compared with 17.3 per cent in the autumn of 1930.⁹ But the quality of the sowings failed to improve. Yakovlev reported in retrospect:

In a number of areas there was a drive to achieve a [maximum] quantity of hectares sown, not taking into account the dates and

⁵ See Table 9(d) and *Sots.str. 1935* (1936), 363. The spring ploughing took place later than the optimum, however, with 86 per cent after June 15.

⁶ RGASPI, 17/3/843 (art. 21/47); the members were Rudzutak, Yakovlev and Mikoyan.

⁷ See, for example, RGASPI, 17/3/848 (item 17, dated September 15).

⁸ SZe, September 15, 1931.

⁹ See *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 367.

quality of the work. This harmed agricultural production, increased the weeds in the fields and struck a blow at the grain yield.¹⁰

Even if there were to be no winter killings in 1931–32, the autumn sowings available to be harvested in 1932 would be slightly smaller in area and of no better quality than in 1931.

(B) THE SPRING SOWING, 1932

The initial plan for the spring sowing was prepared in Narkomzem as early as May 1931. It proposed that 106.7 million hectares should be sown to all crops, and that 45 million hectares of this should be ploughed in the autumn of 1931.¹¹ These figures were a considerable increase on the previous year. Autumn ploughing in 1930 amounted to only 24 million hectares (see Table 9(b)). The final plan for autumn ploughing in 1931, approved by Sovnarkom on July 19, was for 'a minimum of 42 million hectares'.¹²

As usual, the autumn ploughing competed with the harvesting and the autumn sowing. On August 25, Yakovlev raised the matter with the Politburo, which called on the local authorities to concentrate their attention on ploughing.¹³ A few days later, Narkomzem sent out an urgent order that not less than 25 per cent of all horses and 90 per cent of tractors in the Urals, and in the Volga regions, and between 65 per cent and 85 per cent of tractors elsewhere, should be allocated to ploughing. To use them to the full, they should work in two shifts throughout the season.¹⁴ In later decisions, Narkomzem criticised the 'inexcusable' delays in ploughing, and the Politburo again called for the mobilisation of local party and agricultural organisations to carry out the plan.¹⁵

¹⁰ SZe, September 2, 1932.

¹¹ SKhB, 18, 1931, 8.

¹² SKhB, 24, 1931, 3. Of this total, 9 million hectares was to be in sovkhozy, and 31 million in kolkhozy; the decree also indicated that a further six million hectares of virgin land was to be ploughed.

¹³ RGASPI, 17/3/844 (item 10).

¹⁴ SKhB, 26, 1931, 10. Further tractors should be transferred to ploughing as soon as the autumn sowing was complete.

¹⁵ For Narkomzem, see SKhB, 36, 20; for the Politburo, see RGASPI, 17/3/848 (item 17, September 15).

As a result of these efforts, 35 million hectares were ploughed – considerably less than planned, but 46 per cent more than in the previous year (see Table 9(b)). The quality of the ploughing was poor. In retrospect, Khataevich reported: ‘I received many letters from collective farmers which told me that in many places the land was ploughed with ... surface ploughs, they did not plough, but merely scratched the land on the surface.’¹⁶

Confronted with the shortfall in the autumn sowing and ploughing plans, the Politburo considered the spring sowing plan on several occasions. On December 8 it agreed to Goloshchekin’s proposal that the sown area plan for Kazakhstan should be reduced.¹⁷ On the same day it referred the plan for the USSR to STO for ‘preliminary examination’.¹⁸ Controversy evidently continued. On December 23, immediately before the session of TsIK which approved the 1932 national-economic plan, the Politburo established a high-level commission to consider the sowing plan: the commission, chaired by Molotov, included Stalin as well as Yakovlev, Mezhlauk and Chernov.¹⁹ Two days later, on December 25, TsIK approved the plan. Spring sowing was planned at 102 million hectares for all crops, which, together with the 39.2 million hectares sown to grain in the autumn of 1931, made a total of 141.2 million.²⁰ A surprising feature of the published document on the plan was its failure to include an explicit figure for either the spring-sown area for grain or

¹⁶ *Kollektivizatsiya* (Kuibyshev, 1970), 328 (speech of August 16, 1932).

¹⁷ RGASPI, 17/3/864, 13 (art. 65/33).

¹⁸ RGASPI, 17/3/864, 14 (art. 68/36).

¹⁹ RGASPI, 17/3/866 (item 1 on the agenda).

²⁰ SZ, 1931, art. 500. The document stated that 14 million hectares of the spring sowing were to be planted by sovkhozy, and 108 million by kolkhozy (leaving only 19.2 million to be sown by individual peasants, of which 10.6 million had already been sown in the autumn). The plans in force at the time of the spring sowing gave a more prominent role to individual peasants:

July 1, 1932

Sovkhozy	10
Kolkhozy	70
Individual peasants	22
Total	102

Source: SZe, July 14, 1932.

the planned grain harvest. In his report to TsIK, Molotov stated that the total area sown to grain would be 95 per cent of the five-year plan figure for 1932. This implied that the total plan for grain, including the autumn sowing, was about 106 million hectares – less than 2 per cent above the actual sowing in the previous year.²¹ On January 19, 1932, the central sowing bureau of Narkomzem stated that the spring-sown grain area would amount to 67.1 million hectares, a figure compatible with Molotov's statement.²²

Throughout the spring sowing and the subsequent harvesting, five main problems complicated and hindered the achievement of the plan: land; draught power; seeds; labour; and the weather. In at least the first four respects conditions were far less favourable than in the previous year.

(1) *Land* Since 1928, under pressure from the state, the sown area had expanded inexorably. The area sown to crops other than grain increased from 20 million hectares in 1928 to 32 million in 1931.²³ In the same period, the area sown to grain increased from 92 million to 104 million. (See Table 5.) In consequence, much less land was available for fallow, leading to the impoverishment of the soil. Regions where a high proportion of the available land was already cultivated were particularly badly affected. In 1928, Ukraine already had a much higher level of arable sown with crops than all other regions of the USSR, with the exception of the highly commercial Leningrad region. In Ukraine, fallow amounted to only 27.7 per cent of the sown area in the economic year 1927/28,²⁴ while the USSR average was 59.1 per cent. By 1931, sowings in Ukraine had reached a record 28.9 million hectares, while Narkomzem estimated that the total stock of arable land in Ukraine was only 29.5 million hectares.²⁵ Even allowing for some exaggeration in the sown-area figure, the Narkomzem estimate implies that fallow land had been almost totally eliminated.

²¹ I, December 25, 1931. The five-year plan target for the area sown to grain in 1932 was 111.4/112.1 million hectares (multiplied by 0.95 = 105.8/106.4). For the sown area in 1931, see Table 5(a).

²² SKhB, 6, 1932, 31. 67.1 million hectares plus the autumn-sown area, reported in the 1932 plan (SZ, 1931, art. 500) as 39.2 million hectares = 106.3 million.

²³ The official statistics also showed that the area planted to fodder increased from 3.6 to 8.2 million hectares in the same period, but these figures may be misleading.

²⁴ *Pyatiletnii plan* (1929), iii, 556–7.

²⁵ *Ezhegodnik po sel. khoz. 1931* (1933), p. 234. This estimate (29.5 million hectares) was much lower than the estimate previously accepted.

Even more harmful to efficient land arrangements were the chaos and confusion resulting from the two collectivisation drives and the parallel uprooting of kulak and other households. The precipitate and poorly considered combination of individual peasant holdings into kolkhozy in many areas virtually destroyed the established crop rotation (see pp. 56–8, and vol. 1, pp. 291–7). Moreover, the central authorities issued plans for autumn sowing and ploughing, and spring sowing and ploughing, as four separate directives at different times. This inhibited the adoption of systematic local plans for crop rotation.²⁶ An editorial on the spring sowing published in the party journal in March complained that ‘correct crop rotation ... the first and main requirement of agrarian methods ... is developing very slowly in sovkhozy as well as kolkhozy, and in very many cases is completely forgotten’.²⁷

Matters did not improve later. Reports to a conference on the 1932 harvest stated that in the North Caucasus ‘there is no crop rotation in the kolkhozy’; the collective farmers say ‘previously there was at least a three-field system, and now you can only dream about it’.²⁸ In some districts in the Lower Volga region, collective farmers complained that ‘if we do not introduce crop rotation we shall starve’. The Central Volga report to the conference stated: ‘there is no fallow. All the land in these districts has been ploughed up, no pasture remains; the cows have nowhere to go to feed’.²⁹ In August, a *Pravda* editorial complained of ‘the complete ignorance of the rules of crop rotation by district organisations, together with ignorance of the lands and their special features, and unwillingness and inability to make use of the long years of experience of the tillers of the soil’.³⁰

(2) *Draught power* The shortage of draught power for ploughing and reaping was even more acute in 1932 than in the previous year. The number of working horses declined from 19.5 million on July 1, 1931, to 16.2 million on July 1, 1932 (see Table 2(a)), a greater decline than in either of the previous two years. The desperate efforts to replace horses by tractors failed to compensate for this loss.

²⁶ RGAE, 260/1/217, 6ob (report by Nikulikhin).

²⁷ B, 4, February 29, 1932 (sent to press March 15–25).

²⁸ RGAE, 260/1/217, 4 (Tarakanov), 17 (Pluks). The conference took place under the auspices of the Institute of Agricultural Economics (NISI).

²⁹ RGAE, 260/1/217, 6ob (Nikulikhin).

³⁰ P, August 4, 1932.

The 1932 plan proposed that agriculture should be supplied with 'at least 1 million horse-power of tractors produced in the USSR'.³¹ Even if we make a generous estimate of the ratio of tractor horse-power to horses, this tractor power was entirely inadequate to cope with the decline. Moreover, this figure for home production concealed the unfortunate fact that the supply of tractors would not increase in 1932. In 1931, the total supply of tractors to agriculture amounted to 964,000 h.p., 393,000 produced at home, and 578,000 imported. But in 1932, because of the foreign trade crisis, no tractors at all were imported.³²

In fact, in the whole of 1932 only 679,000 tractor horse-power were supplied to agriculture, considerably less than in 1931.³³ Only about half became available in time for the harvest, and even less in time for the spring sowing.³⁴ Moreover, many old tractors went out of use during 1932, and about half the supply of new tractors went to the sovkhozy. The total increase in the stock of tractors in kolkhozy and MTS amounted to a mere 232,000 h.p. between June 1, 1931 and June 1, 1932, and 175,000 between January 1 and June 1, 1932, considerably less than in the previous year.³⁵

Animal draught power deteriorated in quality. Horses were fed and maintained even more inadequately than in the previous year. In a letter to Stalin dated April 26, 1932, Kosior claimed that very few horses were being used in the sowing campaign and their productivity was very low – only half or one-third of normal. In the regions of Ukraine which he had visited, about a quarter of the horses had died, and the rest were very weak – 'just skin and bones'. According to Kosior, both collective farmers and individual peasants fed their livestock only with left-overs. Horses were treated particularly badly when peasants were forced to transport their grain and other crops to collection points and were not paid for this service – the situation was better in timber regions, where transport was paid for and fodder provided.³⁶ In July, Eikhe complained of the 'careless attitude to horses'

³¹ SZ, 1931, art. 500 (dated December 25).

³² For tractors in 1931, see *Sots.str. 1934* (1935), 166. For the foreign trade crisis, see vol. 4, pp. 155–64.

³³ *Sots.str. 1934* (1935), 166. In the year July 1931 to June 1932 these were supplemented by 6,600 combine harvesters (*Osnovnye pokazateli*, 1933, 39).

³⁴ For monthly figures of tractor production, see vol. 4, p. 524.

³⁵ *Sots.str. 1934* (1935), 166; *Osnovnye pokazateli*, May 1932, 49.

³⁶ TsDAGOU, 1/1/2029, 67–71, published in *Golod 1932–1933* (1990), 148–50. Kosior acknowledged that horses in kolkhozy not served by MTS were generally in a better situation than those served by MTS.

in his region: in a number of districts of Siberia 'the kolkhoz horse is distinguished by the fact that it has a sagging spine and shoulders, is dirty and has not been cleaned, and its harness is torn'.³⁷ More generally, an OGPU report claimed that 'in most districts of the USSR, as a result of inadequate fodder and absolutely unsatisfactory treatment, working animals have been reduced to a non-working state'.³⁸

The authorities again made great efforts to ensure that tractors were in a good state of repair and used efficiently.³⁹ But the OGPU report already cited complained that 'in a number of districts lengthy breakdowns of tractors in the first days of sowing have acquired a mass character': up to 15–25 per cent of tractors were damaged, and up to 20 per cent did not work because they lacked spare parts.⁴⁰ In July 1932, Eikhe complained that, in Siberia, in both MTS and sovkhozy, 'the maintenance of tractors is hellishly bad'. The tractor drivers were poorly trained and low in skill, and placed in bad conditions; as a result their attitude to tractors was 'barbarous'. It was impossible to rely on centralised supply for spare parts, and Siberia would have to make far more itself.⁴¹ A confidential report prepared in Gosplan concluded that tractor utilisation was 'considerably worse than last year', as a result of poor organisation, the lack of spare parts, the poor equipment of repair shops and their insufficient number, and the increasing obsolescence of the tractor stock.⁴²

(3) *Seed* The shortage of seed was a worry in the spring of 1931. In the spring of 1932 it was almost a calamity. During the campaign an item about seed appeared on the Politburo agenda on at least fifty occasions.

From the outset the authorities recognised that the areas particularly affected by drought in 1931 could not find all their own seed. On February 16, 1932, a decree of Sovnarkom and the party central committee allocated 53.5 million puds (876,000 tons) for seed and food to the stricken regions. The decree also issued instructions for the collection of 5.74 million tons of seed by kolkhozy from their

³⁷ Eikhe (1932), 5 (report of July 12).

³⁸ RGAE, 7486/37/235, 134 (dated May 5).

³⁹ See, for example, the plan for tractor repairs in the spring of 1932 approved by the collegium of Narkomzem on December 1, 1931 (SKhB, 2, 1932, 15).

⁴⁰ RGAE, 7486/37/235, 135.

⁴¹ Eikhe (1932), 4.

⁴² *Vypolnenie*, June and January–June 1932, Sel'skoe khozyaistvo, p. 10.

own resources in their Seed Funds.⁴³ Three weeks later, in a decision of March 7, 1932, the Politburo acknowledged that 'it has become clear recently that the drought in the East was more serious than could have been predicted', and it ordered two further major allocations of grain for seed, amounting to 22 million puds (360,000 tons).⁴⁴ These allocations again went to the regions which had suffered drought in 1931, particularly the Urals. The decision of March 7 ordered that grain collection should 'temporarily cease', except for the milling levy, in all but four regions of the USSR. The export of food grains should also cease.⁴⁵

Ukraine did not receive a seed loan from these decrees, but it was clear to the Ukrainian authorities that it would be very difficult to find enough grain. On February 17, the day after the first Sovnarkom decree issuing seed loans, the Ukrainian Politburo issued directives to local party committees emphasising that they must not request grain for seed and food, as the stocks were needed for the regions where the harvest had failed.⁴⁶ Behind the scenes, following a meeting of the Ukrainian sowing commission, Petrovsky, a senior member of the Ukrainian Politburo and president of Ukraine, wrote to Kosior recommending that the Ukrainian Politburo should write a 'detailed letter' to the USSR central committee. This should explain that at the sowing commission, in the presence of the regional party secretaries, there were frank and serious discussions about the food and fodder shortages in Ukraine. Petrovsky recommended that grain collections in Ukraine should be curtailed, and there should be a move towards free trade, and he even proposed that the regions affected should be opened up to famine relief operations by the Red Cross and the Friends of the Children.⁴⁷

⁴³ SZ, 1932, art. 63. The grain was allocated to the Volga and Ural regions, the Tatar and Bashkir ASSRs, Siberia and Central Asia; 39 million puds were for kolkhozy, 14.5 for sovkhozy. A preliminary plan to allocate 27.3 million puds was discussed by the Politburo on February 4 (RGASPI, 17/3/872, 17). Various other seed allocations were made to different regions at this time – for example, to the Central Volga (RGASPI, 17/2/162, 193 – art. 38/1, dated February 25) and to the Far East (*Ibid.*, 194 – art. 50/14, dated February 28).

⁴⁴ RGASPI, 17/162/12 (art. 41/9) and 17/3/876, 12 (decisions of March 7 and 14).

⁴⁵ The decision to cease exports of food grains, amounting to 85,000 tons, reversed a decision of January 28 to undertake the supplementary export of 200,000 tons of grain (excluding wheat) (RGASPI, 17/162/11, 159 – item 12).

⁴⁶ See directives, published in *Golod 1932–1933* (1990), 119–20.

⁴⁷ TsDAGOU, 1/101/1107a, 1.

Kosior apparently did not inform the USSR Politburo about this letter. But three weeks later, on March 6, which was the day after the official date set for the completion of Ukrainian preparations for sowing, the Ukrainian Politburo expressed alarm about the failure to collect enough seed in the kolkhozy, which it attributed partly to 'the rumours and fears among collective farmers that grain which is collected for seed is being used for the grain collections'. It ordered several of its own members, including Skrypnyk, Petrovsky and Zatonsky, to travel to the steppe and the Donbass to supervise the collection of seed grain.⁴⁸ They sent back harrowing accounts of the situation in the localities. On March 15, Kosior sent a telegram to the USSR Politburo about the Ukrainian situation. The normal minutes of the USSR Politburo for March 16 recorded that 'the Politburo considers that the position in Ukraine is many times worse than it appears in Kosior's telegram', and accepted all the proposals of the Ukrainian Politburo.⁴⁹ On the following day, the special papers of the USSR Politburo recorded that 'as an exception', in view of Kosior's telegram, Ukraine should receive a seed loan of 110,000 tons.⁵⁰

Part of the loan was intended to come from grain stored in the better-off regions. In March, Kuibyshev sent a telegram to the Nizhnii-Novgorod region complaining that 'in connection with the mobilisation of internal resources of grain for the seed loan to the Urals ... you were obliged to send Urals [in] March sixteen thousand tons[,] you have sent almost nothing'.⁵¹ How much was eventually supplied from regional and republican resources is not known. But most seed loans came from central allocations.

During the sowing the Politburo authorised the issue of further loans in a series of *ad hoc* decisions. The situation in Ukraine remained particularly acute. On April 29, the Politburo decided to release further small seed loans to kolkhozy in Ukraine.⁵² On May 5, Kosior and Chubar' again warned local party committees that progress in the sowing was unsatisfactory.⁵³ But the Ukrainian sowing continued to lag, and on May 25 the USSR Politburo,

⁴⁸ See TsDAGOU, 1/6/235, 112, 118, published in *Golod 1932–1933* (1990), 123.

⁴⁹ RGASPI, 17/3/876, 1. Kosior's telegram has not been available.

⁵⁰ RGASPI, 17/162/12, 30 (art. 38/1).

⁵¹ RGAE, 8040/1/21, 233.

⁵² RGASPI, 17/162/12, 115–116.

⁵³ Similar warnings were sent out by Narkomzem on May 17, when they proposed that the East Siberian and Tatar ASSR sowing plans be reduced.

‘in response to the critical situation’, ordered a high-level commission, headed by Molotov, and including Yakovlev, Mikoyan, Markevich and Odintsev, to leave for Ukraine on the same day, and ‘take all the necessary measures jointly with the Ukrainian central committee’.⁵⁴ On May 26, the day after their departure from Moscow, Molotov, Yakovlev and Mikoyan sent a telegram to the USSR Politburo stating that ‘the position is worse than we supposed ... until recently the authorities did not know the real position in the countryside’, and calling for the issue of further seed, fodder and food loans.⁵⁵ The Politburo urgently authorised the issue of a further seed loan of 41,000 tons, to be made available within three days from the stocks of the Committee of Reserves which were located in Ukraine and Belorussia.⁵⁶ This decision was forthwith carried out with the active participation of the Ukrainian GPU.⁵⁷

The final seed loan to be recorded in the Politburo minutes was dated June 8.⁵⁸ In a situation of general grain shortage, and of disaffection and hunger in the towns, the seed grain actually distributed was less than that provided for in the Politburo allocations. Thus, on May 13, Molotov, on a mission to Chelyabinsk, sent a telegram to Kuibyshev and Yakovlev pointing out that seed grain due to the Urals had not been received; on the same day, Yakovlev replied ‘in view of the late date a further dispatch [of seed grain] is inexpedient’.⁵⁹ Eventually, the total amount provided from central funds was 1,267,000 tons (including 585,000 tons of wheat and rye seed compared with the 727,000 tons anticipated on March 23).⁶⁰ This was nearly three times the amount provided from central funds in the spring of 1931, and slightly larger than the previous record allocation, made during the chaos of the collapse of the first collectivisation

⁵⁴ RGASPI, 17/162/12, 153 (art. 58/1).

⁵⁵ RGASPI, 82/2/138, 124. In a later telegram, from Odessa, Molotov informed Stalin and Kuibyshev that ‘Yakovlev is right that the Ukrainians underestimated the need to supply seeds’ (*ibid.*, 147ob.).

⁵⁶ RGASPI, 17/3/886, 11–12.

⁵⁷ See the memoranda from Redens to Molotov dated May 28 and 29 (RGASPI, 82/2/138, 150–153).

⁵⁸ Loans to Bashkiria, the Central Black-Earth region, the Kiev region of Ukraine and Central Asia: RGASPI, 17/162/12, 176–178.

⁵⁹ GARF, 5446/27/9, 99–98.

⁶⁰ See Table 15(a) and *Ezhegodnik khlebooborota* [vi] (1934), 70–1. A document in the Komzag files dated July 4, 1932, gives the total as 1,328,000 tons (RGAE, 8040/6/2, 30).

drive in the spring of 1930. The bulk of the seed went to the regions which had suffered the drought of 1931. The Ural region alone received 270,000 tons; and Ukraine eventually received a substantial allocation.⁶¹ The Politburo decided that the seed loans could be returned from the 1932 harvest on a 'pud for pud' basis, without additional payment, losses to be borne by the state budget.⁶² This decision was part of the 'neo-Nep' reform (see pp. 137–8). It was taken at a Politburo sitting which also established the commission which approved the reduced grain collections plan for 1932/33.

Confidential reports frankly acknowledged that the seed shortage nevertheless remained a major problem in some areas. Gosplan described the 'extremely tense position in Ukraine in obtaining seeds'.⁶³ TsUNKhU reported that, in Ukraine, the Urals and Siberia, seed was in particularly short supply, adding that 'this group of regions is farthest behind in fulfilling the sowing plan'.⁶⁴

Of the total seed planted for the 1932 harvest, improved (high-quality) seed was used on an area of 27.5 million hectares, two million hectares more than for the 1931 harvest. But this increase was entirely a result of the use of more improved seed in autumn 1931 (see p. 106). In the spring of 1932 the area sown to improved seed declined, after several years of rapid increase.⁶⁵ The official explanation was that some seeds had reached mass levels of production and so

⁶¹ For the allocations in 1930/31 and 1931/32, see Table 15(a); for regional breakdown in 1931/32, see *Ezhegodnik khlebooborota*, [vi] (1934), 78–82; for previous years, see vol. 1, p. 432. In 1931/32, 303,000 tons were allocated to sovkhozy, and 963,000 tons to kolkhozy and individual peasants (*Ezhegodnik khlebooborota*, [vi] (1934), 70).

⁶² RGASPI, 17/3/882, 5 (item 23, dated May 4); SZ 1932, art. 197 (dated May 7). On the original text of this decree in the archives, the Narkomfin representative, R. Levin, has written 'Against' on the form signed by members of Sovnarkom – a very rare occurrence (GARF, 5446/1/68, 309 – art. 906 dated June 5). For the harsher arrangements for grain loans from the 1932 and 1933 harvests, see p. 214.

⁶³ *Vypolnenie*, June and January–June 1932, Sel'skoe khozyaistvo, p. 1.

⁶⁴ *Osnovnye pokazateli*, May 1932, 45.

⁶⁵ The following figures for sowing with improved seed are estimated from the data in *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 367–72 (million hectares):

	1931	1932
<i>Autumn-sown:</i>		
Wheat	5.2	7.1
Rye	1.5	3.3
<i>Spring-sown</i>	(18.7)	(17.1)
Total	25.4	27.5

there was less necessity to produce them on special farms.⁶⁶ But the main reason for the decline seems to be that in 1931 the cooperatives responsible for improved seed were closed down and transferred to the kolkhoz system.⁶⁷ The amount of cleaned seed also declined in 1932.⁶⁸ But the amount of treated seed increased substantially⁶⁹ – a development which protected the seed not only from insects but also from the human beings who might be tempted to consume it.

(4) *Labour* Most collective farmers received very small returns in kind and money for their labour days from the poor harvest in 1931; sometimes they were not remunerated at all. By the spring of 1932, famine threatened some villages; most peasants, like most urban workers, were very short of food. An OGPU report for January–March 1932 noted that in Belorussia many kolkhozy had made no preparations for the sowing, and in Kazakhstan collective farmers often refused to work, and some kolkhoz assemblies resolved ‘to refrain from adopting the sowing plan until the final payments to the collective farmers have been made for 1931’. In the Central Black-Earth region, many individual peasants refused to sow their land. The OGPU responded with large numbers of arrests.⁷⁰ Both collective farmers and individual peasants left their villages without authorisation to work in the towns and on building sites.⁷¹

Food shortages continued to haunt the countryside throughout the spring sowing. The five-daily reports of the grain sowing issued by Narkomzem from the beginning of May in a bulletin ‘for official use only’ gave striking examples. The first bulletin stated that the

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 372.

⁶⁷ See previous note.

⁶⁸ *Osnovnye pokazateli*, May 1932, 45. In the RSFSR it declined from 86 per cent to 74 per cent of the grain in the Seed Funds and Insurance Funds held by the kolkhozy.

⁶⁹ See previous note. It increased in the RSFSR from 1.02 million tons in 1931 to 1.97 in 1932.

⁷⁰ TsAFSB, 2/10/53, 1–64, published in TSD, iii, 318–55, an exceptionally informative report. There were many other reports about the recalcitrance of individual peasants. Thus, on April 25 the OGPU reported that its sample surveys indicated that in Kiev, Dnepropetrovsk and Vinnitsa regions 40,799 individual peasant households had refused to sow land (TsAFSB, 2/11/1449, 144–146, published in TSD, iii, 361–2).

⁷¹ The report published in TSD, iii, 318–54, concludes, from very patchy returns, that at least 698,000 peasants left for ‘unorganised otkhodnichestvo’ between October 1931 and March 1932.

chair of a rural soviet in Dolinskii district, Dnepropetrovsk region, had reported that 150 families were starving in his village, and men refused to work unless they were given grain. Peasants demonstrated and shouted 'Give us bread.' The bulletin naturally claimed that this was caused by 'kulak influence', but left no doubt that the situation was serious. In Korystenskii district in the Kiev region an accountant told the village soviet that he was departing for Leningrad in search of grain and would kill himself if anyone attempted to stop him. His children were starving and his wife was famished, and only those working in the fields were given grain. The report also described widespread theft, and demonstrations demanding grain and seed from the village barns. Starving Ukrainians who migrated to Pavlovskii district, North Caucasus, spread stories that all their grain had been taken and their livestock had died, and were reported to be stealing from the fields, which consequently had to be guarded.⁷² The confidential Narkomzem survey for May 1932 complained that the kulaks and their hangers-on, making use of the food difficulties and poor organisation, had 'sometimes created a straightforward "boycotting" attitude to the sowing'.⁷³

The press acknowledged serious problems with labour discipline: an editorial in *Pravda* frankly admitted that often 'collective farmers have no interest in the sowing'.⁷⁴ But poor labour discipline was generally attributed to poor organisation, and to the machinations of kulaks and counter-revolutionaries. Petrovsky, taking a quite different line in public from his private criticisms of state policy, blamed the difficulties of the spring sowing on 'individualistic, private-property interests of the backward section of the collective farmers', which 'hindered the correct organisation of draught power in the kolkhozy'.⁷⁵ A typical report in the local press castigated more crudely 'the blunting of class vigilance, and the weaker pursuit of the class struggle in the countryside by rural organisations, as a result of which in many village soviets we have kulak activities, wrecking acts and the failure to carry out firm plans'.⁷⁶

⁷² See RGAE, 7486/3/5060, 110–150. The reports were produced on the authority of Ishchenko, deputy People's Commissar for Agriculture, and the sowing conference of Narkomzem.

⁷³ RGAE, 7486/3/5059b, 117.

⁷⁴ P, May 15, 1932.

⁷⁵ P, April 22, 1932; his report was sent from Khar'kov.

⁷⁶ *Severnyi rabochii*, July 22, 1932 (editorial)

Hints about the damaging effects of rural food shortages sometimes appeared in the press. Thus, Molotov, in the published version of his report to the Ukrainian party conference on July 8, acknowledged the harm caused to the sowing by the 'difficult food situation' in a number of Ukrainian districts.⁷⁷

The authorities sought to counter peasant reluctance to work not only by repression, but also by supplying food to the worst-hit districts. Many of the numerous Politburo decisions allocating seed grain also provided much smaller loans of grain for food. The published grain utilisation budget for 1931/32 for the first time included a line 'food aid and loans to the sowers', amounting to a total of 107,000 tons.⁷⁸

(5) *The weather* Some years ago, when only average monthly temperature and rainfall data were available, we estimated that the fine weather conditions of 1930 were sufficient to increase grain yields by 0.84 tsentners per hectare (about 10 per cent), while the drought conditions of 1931 would have tended to reduce them by 1.75 tsentners (about 20 per cent). By contrast, the less severe weather recorded by the monthly data for 1932 would have reduced yields by 0.55 tsentners (about 6 per cent). Daily temperature data are now available, and lead us to conclude that the weather in 1932 was much more unfavourable than we had previously realised.

In Ukraine, the temperature was considerably lower during the whole of March than in the previous year. At the end of May and in early June temperatures were even higher than in 1931. Then there was a sudden further change: high rainfall was experienced in most of the USSR, especially in the Kiev region. Temperatures were less severe than in 1931, but the combination of high temperatures in the initial flowering stage and great humidity during early flowering greatly increased the vulnerability of the crop (see Table 8, and also pp. 128, 130).

⁷⁷ P, July 14, 1932. He attributed these difficulties to errors made during the grain collections. See also B, 9, May 15, 1933, 15 (A. Krinitskii, referring back to the spring sowing of 1932).

⁷⁸ *Ezhegodnik khlebooborota* [vi] (1934), 70–1; a regional breakdown has not been available. A document in the Komzag archives, dated July 4, 1932, states that the total grain given in food aid in 1931/32 amounted to 425,000 tons, including 212,000 tons to the kolkhozy (RGAE, 8040/6/2, 30); we cannot explain the discrepancy.

Throughout the spring sowing, villages, districts, regions and republics continued to object to their sowing plans. Ukraine waged a protracted skirmish, headed by Chubar' and the Ukrainian authorities. On March 15, the plenipotentiary of Komzag in Ukraine reported to Chernov that the Ukrainian government had made cuts in the sowing plan sent down from Moscow, making it impossible to secure all the planned contracts.⁷⁹ Six weeks later, on April 26, Chernov sent an anguished letter to Kuibyshev explaining that Komzag in Moscow had frequently urged its Ukrainian plenipotentiary to increase the plan, and Narkomzem, urged on by Komzag, had instructed Narkomzem of Ukraine not to permit the sowing plan to be reduced. But 'until now our instructions have not produced any positive results'. Chernov therefore asked Kuibyshev, as a deputy chair of Sovnarkom, to instruct Sovnarkom of Ukraine to carry out the full contracts plan.⁸⁰ Kuibyshev evidently did not respond immediately. As late as May 10, the Ukrainian plenipotentiary wrote again to Chernov in Moscow asking him to reduce the plan to the level approved by the Ukrainian government.⁸¹ Kuibyshev at last took action. On the same day, he sent a telegram marked 'very urgent' to Chubar', requesting him 'to review the decision of the Ukrainian government and increase the sowing and contracts plan for spring grains and oil crops to the level set by STO and by the Narkomzem of the USSR'.⁸² The outcome is not known, and this *démarche* was in any case too late to make any practical difference. But the stubbornness of Ukraine during these events reflects the tension in its relations with Moscow.

As a result of the initially warm weather in most regions, the spring sowing got off to a good start. Until April 25, more land was sown in each five-day period than in the previous year. But at the height of the sowing season the rate of sowing began to lag, and by May 5 the lag behind 1931 was already nearly three million hectares.

⁷⁹ RGAE, 8040/6/240, 225–228; this document may also be found in RGAE, 8040/1/21, 165. The USSR plan for the kolkhozy and individual peasants in Ukraine, 11.33 million hectares, was cut by Ukraine to 10.64 million (from Chernov's letter to Kuibyshev – see next footnote).

⁸⁰ RGAE, 8040/6/241, 209. A draft of this letter in Bagdasarov's handwriting, written in Chernov's name, is also in the files.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 54. A document in another file reports the Kuibyshev telegram of May 10 as having been sent in response to Chernov's memorandum of April 26 (RGAE, 8040/1/21, 164).

⁸² *Ibid.*, 122.

During May, the gap was reduced considerably, and at the end of the month amounted to 0.8 million hectares.

Stalin went on vacation at the beginning of June; and Kaganovich's letters and telegrams to him during the month reflected the uncertainty in Moscow. On June 6, he informed Stalin that the main problem was Ukraine: 'if it were not for Ukraine we would be running 3 million hectares ahead of last year'.⁸³ Three days later he was remarkably optimistic, informing Stalin that 'it seems to me that we will get up to the area of last year ... we will not get back what we have lost in wheat and oats, but this area will be occupied by other crops'.⁸⁴ Following the next report from Narkomzem, however, he told Stalin that, on June 10, the spring sowing was 1.9 million hectares less than in 1931.⁸⁵ In his last communication to Stalin about this subject, he reported that 92 million hectares had been sown by June 15. Sowing by kolkhozy served by MTS and by sovkhhozy was complete, though some sowing was continuing in the Urals. He concluded optimistically that 'nevertheless I think we shall reach the sown area of last year', failing to mention that the sown area was still 1.4 million less than on the same date of 1931.⁸⁶

By the end of sowing on July 1, the total spring-sown area amounted to only 96.5 million hectares, against 97.5 million in 1931 and the planned figure of 102.5 million. The individual peasants lagged furthest behind the plan; they sowed 19 million hectares as compared with the planned 22 million.⁸⁷ Reports from the countryside

⁸³ SKP, 145; he also reported that the Urals, the North Caucasus and the Nizhnii-Novgorod region were lagging behind. Kaganovich was repeating a frequent charge against Ukraine which appeared in the press. The text attached to the Narkomzem sowing report published in SZe, May 30, 1932, stated that 'the main cause of the lag in comparison with last year is the sowing in Ukraine, where on May 25, 4 million hectares less than last year had been sown'. It also referred to the lag in the other regions.

⁸⁴ SKP, 155.

⁸⁵ SKP, 168, dated June 14.

⁸⁶ SKP, 181, dated June 19.

⁸⁷ SZe, July 14, 1932. The Stalin-Kaganovich correspondence raised the question of the measurement of the area sown by individual peasants. Kaganovich reminded Stalin that in 1930 and 1931 they had added a 'correction' of 10-15 per cent to their reported sowings. He claimed that the same kind of concealment was continuing in 1932: 'there are even instances in which individual peasants sow at night so that their sowing area should not be counted'. He therefore recommended adding the same percentage in 1932, amounting to two million hectares (SKP, 164, dated June 12). Stalin replied that 'it will be better' not to add corrections, but that

frequently complained that local authorities neglected the individual peasants and underestimated their importance. The land allocation to individual peasants was inadequate, and some kolkhozy had even failed to allocate land to them by the beginning of the sowing. Kolkhozy sometimes took the horses and ploughs of individual peasants to cultivate kolkhoz land.⁸⁸ According to one report, in the North Caucasus 'individual peasants in practice did not sow – they have 0.17, 0.25 hectares'.⁸⁹ Individual peasants continued to abandon their farms and move to the towns and construction sites.

These figures are for the spring sowing of all crops. The area sown to grain decreased by as much as 3.8 million hectares. Moreover, winter killings reduced the autumn sowings of grain by a further 1.7 million hectares. According to Narkomzem, total grain sowings amounted to 99.3 million hectares, 7 million less than the plan drawn up in January, and 4.7 million less than in 1931. With an average yield, the lag behind 1931 corresponded to about 3.5 million tons of grain.⁹⁰

The area sown to the key food grains, wheat and rye, declined even more, by five million hectares for these crops alone, while the area sown to the secondary crops, buckwheat and millet, increased – this was usual in times of crisis.

he would accept a maximum of 5–8 per cent if Molotov and Kaganovich insisted (SKP, 169, dated June 15) – i.e. about one million tons. Kaganovich replied 'we will decide in a couple of days what corrections to apply, when the final results of the sowing are clear' (SKP, 171, dated June 17). In the Narkomzem reports, the sown area of individual peasants increased from 16.8 million hectares on June 20 (SZe, June 26, 1932) to 18.8 million hectares in the 'preliminary final results' for July 1 (SZe, July 14, 1932); this was also the final published figure. It seems likely, therefore, that the published figure, 96.5 million hectares, includes the correction of about 1 million hectares, corresponding to 3 million added in 1931.

⁸⁸ See, for example, RGAE, 7486/3/5059b, 118 (Narkomzem report for May 1932); *ibid.*, 37 (Narkomzem report for July 1932).

⁸⁹ RGAE, 260/1/217, 5ob (Tarakanov).

⁹⁰ These figures were rejected by TsUNKhU, which claimed that only 97 million hectares were sown (*Osnovnye pokazateli*, August 1932, 71). This was partly because TsUNKhU estimated that winter killings amounted to 2.17 million hectares (*ibid.*, 25). Later, as a result of a decision by a commission headed by Molotov, TsUNKhU increased its estimate to 99.7 million hectares. In the summer of 1933, however, it reduced it again to 97.2 million (see Osinsky's memorandum to Molotov dated August 28, 1933 – GARE, 5446/82/22, 210, 208). However, 99.7 million was enshrined as the official figure.

The quality of the sowing was particularly poor. In the absence of horses or tractors, the seed was often scattered by hand.⁹¹ An article in the agricultural newspaper frankly admitted that, as a result of the pressure from the higher authorities to sow a certain amount every day, officials attached to the kolkhozy themselves pressed for sowing so that they could 'show a definite quantity of hectares as sown in their reports irrespective of the quality of the sowing'. In some cases, seed was even scattered on soil which had already been sown.⁹² But the crucial factor was the delay in sowing, which inevitably led to a reduction of the yield.

(C) THE HARVEST

The plan for 1932, unlike previous plans, did not include a specific figure for the grain harvest, but the planned harvest can be calculated at approximately 90 million tons from the planned yield of 8.5 tsentners per hectare and the planned sown area of 106 million hectares.⁹³ Ninety million tons was lower than the annual grain plans for 1930 and 1931; and far lower than the harvests anticipated in the first five-year plan approved in 1929 – an increase from 96.1 million tons in 1931 to 105.8 million in 1932.⁹⁴ The five-year plan had failed, which may explain the concealment. But 90 million tons was considerably higher than the official (but still unpublished) figure accepted at the end of 1931 for the 1931 harvest – 78 million tons.⁹⁵ The proposed yield of 8.5 tsentners was a full tsentner above the presumed yield for 1931 – 7.5 tsentners. The authorities later decided that the 1931 yield had been only 6.7 tsentners (see p. 76) – this meant that the 1932 plan in fact required an increase in yield of as much as 27 per cent.

Throughout the spring sowing, unpublished documents repeated the harvest plan of 90.7 million tons.⁹⁶ But before the end of June

⁹¹ RGAE, 260/1/217, 6ob.

⁹² SZe, March 26, 1932 (referring to the Kuban').

⁹³ For the planned sown area, see p. 109. 106 million hectares \times 8.5 tsentners (0.85 tons) per hectare gives 90.1 million tons. Zaleski (1971), 337, in a rare slip, states that the harvest was planned at 81.5 million tons.

⁹⁴ *Pyatiletnii plan*, ii, i (1929), 328–9, 330–1.

⁹⁵ In his report to TsIK, Kuibyshev stated that the harvest in 1932 would be 12 million tons higher than the 1931 harvest, without giving the 1931 figure (P, December 27, 1931).

⁹⁶ See, for example, RGAE, 8040/6/2, 121, 128, dated June 26, 1932. Following the collectivisation drive of the previous year, as much as 67.2 million tons

the preliminary results of the sowing campaign revealed that the sown area would be lower than in the previous year. The achievement of a good harvest thus depended on a high yield: the final Narkomzem report on the spring sowing insisted that weeding and harvesting must be carried out 'on time and without losses'.⁹⁷

Stalin and the Politburo took great pains with the preparations for the harvest campaign. On June 7, 1932, the Politburo established a high-level commission on the harvesting.⁹⁸ On June 16, Kaganovich reported to Stalin that the draft decree on the campaign, because of its 'great importance', would be dispatched to Stalin before being approved:

The harvest campaign this year [Kaganovich wrote] will be particularly difficult, especially in Ukraine. Unfortunately Ukraine is so far totally unprepared, and we risk there a premature, spontaneous and unorganised harvest, with theft of grain from the fields. We have spoken to Chubar' about this, but it is not of course a matter of Chubar', but of the timely mobilisation of the whole organisation. And Kosior remains silent.⁹⁹

At this point it was decided to arrange a major conference on the 1932 grain collections, which was held on June 28–29 (see pp. 145–6). The approval of the harvesting decree was delayed until the conference. Kaganovich reported to Stalin on June 23 that, in connection with the decree, there had been two sharp disagreements at the Politburo over the advances of grain to be issued to collective farmers during the harvest (a particularly important matter in view of the food shortage). First, should they be distributed at the time of the harvest on a per capita ('per eater') principle, or according to the number of labour days earned? Kaganovich supported the latter arrangement. Secondly, when should distribution take place, and how much should be given out? Part of the advance had necessarily to be given out at the beginning of harvesting, but in Kaganovich's opinion 60 per cent of the advance would be

was planned to come from the kolkhozy, compared with 38.3 million tons in the previous year.

⁹⁷ SZe, July 14, 1932.

⁹⁸ The commission included Molotov (chair), Kaganovich, Kalinin, Ordzhonikidze, Mikoyan, Yakovlev, Mezhlauk and Krinitskii (RGASPI, 17/3/887, 7). For the grain evaluation agencies, see p. 76.

⁹⁹ SKP, 173.

too much.¹⁰⁰ On June 29, Stalin cautiously agreed to 'a small advance of grain to the collective farmers'.¹⁰¹

Two days later, on July 1, Kaganovich sent Stalin, by air, a fourth version of the decree on harvesting, together with the decree on the grain collection campaign (for the latter, see p. 131).¹⁰² On July 3, Stalin sent back the text with his own corrections;¹⁰³ it was published on July 6.¹⁰⁴ Its most important clause provided for the grain advances, which were intended to encourage collective farmers to work in the fields:

It is necessary as early as the threshing process to *issue advances to collective farmers*, from part of the income in kind, of 10–15 per cent of the grain actually threshed; the distribution of this advance and the distribution of the whole income is to be carried out solely according to labour days.

The provision that the advances would be issued when the grain was threshed, and not when it was reaped, was obviously intended to ensure that they were made from the grain actually harvested in 1932. But if it had been enforced, hungry collective farmers would not receive grain until after they had completed their work.

The party leaders firmly emphasised that the harvest prospects were good. On July 1, Stalin told Kaganovich and Molotov by telegram, in connection with the visit of the American businessman Lancaster, to 'instruct Narkomzem or Gosplan to issue an official communiqué or interview to the effect that our harvest prospects are good and the harvest will be better than last year'.¹⁰⁵ In his letter to Stalin on the same day, Kaganovich reported that, at the conference on June 28, 'everyone pointed out that the harvest prospects are satisfactory, and in some districts above average; judging by everything, the harvest will be larger than last year'.¹⁰⁶

By the end of June, however, it was clear that the planned yield of 8.5 tsentners would not be reached. This was the right moment to

¹⁰⁰ SKP, 188 (Kaganovich to Stalin, dated June 23).

¹⁰¹ SKP, 203 (telegram).

¹⁰² SKP, 207.

¹⁰³ SKP, 214.

¹⁰⁴ SZ, 1932, art. 312, dated July 5.

¹⁰⁵ SKP, 205.

¹⁰⁶ SKP, 207–8.

produce a more realistic figure for 1931, and TsUNKhU obliged by suggesting a 1931 yield which was considerably lower than the prevailing Narkomzem estimate of 7.8 tsentners. On July 4, Kaganovich informed Stalin that 'Osinsky considers that last year's harvest was lower than the Narkomzem estimate'. The data for June 20, Kaganovich reported, indicated that the yield in 1932 would be about average, 46 puds (7.53 tsentners), compared with the yield of 41 puds (6.71 tsentners) per hectare in 1931. Accordingly, the 1932 harvest would be 380 million puds (6.22 million tons) greater than in 1931.¹⁰⁷ These figures, given the sown area in 1931, meant that the 1931 harvest was now estimated at only 70 million tons, and the 1932 harvest at about 75 million.

The published TsUNKhU estimates at the end of June were more optimistic. Osinsky, in an interview published on July 5 with Kaganovich's approval, reported that the yield in 1932 was expected to be 7.8 tsentners, 'more than a tsentner higher than in 1931'. Accordingly, the 1932 harvest would be '500 million puds or more' (8.2 million tons) higher than in 1931. Osinsky added that 'This surplus [above 1931] will undoubtedly be [even] larger, as the delayed reports on the sown area have not been taken into account.' The interview continued:

To sum up – comrade Osinsky concluded – the harvest prospects in the middle of the summer of 1932 promise us a considerable increase in the Food and Fodder Fund for 1932 as compared with the results of 1931.¹⁰⁸

At the time of these estimates, the reaping of the grain had begun in the south. During July, official optimism continued. Molotov, addressing the Ukrainian party conference on July 8, declared that the prospects were more favourable than in 1931, citing Osinsky's published forecast.¹⁰⁹ Then, on August 2, Kuibyshev, in a lengthy report on agriculture, again cited the TsUNKhU estimate, with the important proviso that its achievement depended on avoiding

¹⁰⁷ SKP, 217 (telegram marked 'strictly secret'). For the revised 1931 harvest, see p. 76.

¹⁰⁸ I, July 5, 1932; for Kaganovich's approval of this interview see SKP, 217. For the TsUNKhU estimate of the 1931 harvest at 68.2 million tons see p. 76.

¹⁰⁹ Published in P, July 14, 1932. Kosior took the same line at the conference (P, July 9, 1932).

the huge losses of grain which occurred in the previous year.¹¹⁰ The party leaders were almost equally optimistic in private. On July 24 and 25, Stalin, in a telegram and letter to Kaganovich, while acknowledging that certain districts in Ukraine were 'particularly suffering', nevertheless insisted that by the second half of August 'the prospects for the harvest will become clear (they have already become clear!), that they are undoubtedly good for the USSR as a whole'.¹¹¹

At first, shrewd foreign observers also concluded that the harvest would be better than in 1931. Andrew Cairns, the Scottish grain specialist, travelled extensively in the major grain regions in May and July, reported very bad conditions, and dismissed the official (TsUNKhU) estimate that the yield would be 7.8 tsentners as 'absurdly too high'. He nevertheless concluded in a cable: 'do not like to generalise about comparative size this and last years harvest tentatively of opinion this years appreciably larger stop'.¹¹²

During the first stages of the harvesting it soon became abundantly clear that the harvest estimates at the beginning of July were far too high. Reports to the centre from villages, districts and regions, and accounts by Soviet visitors to the countryside, were bleak and alarming. Draught power was in even greater disarray than during the spring sowing. Horses, few in number and lacking fodder, were overworked, and were often not adequately watered.¹¹³ Glanders, a debilitating contagion, was widespread, and cases of meningitis were reported, from which horses suddenly died.¹¹⁴ Tractors often worked at spring sowing and ploughing until a few days before harvesting, leaving no time for

¹¹⁰ Kuibyshev (1932), 14; for the date of this report, see Kuibyshev (1937), 294.

¹¹¹ SKP, 241, 245.

¹¹² Cable to Empire Marketing Board, August 2, published in Carynnyk *et al.* (1988), 100–1. On August 16, William Strang, the well-informed but extremely critical Acting Counsellor in the British Embassy, wrote that the yield might equal or be slightly better than in the poor year 1931, but added that the delayed harvesting, negligence, pilfering and 'resisting mood' of the peasants 'do not promise well' (Woodward and Butler, eds (1958), 243).

¹¹³ RGAE, 260/1/217, 1 (Tarakanov, on North Caucasus), 8ob. (Nikulikhin, from Lower Volga). In the account which follows extensive use has been made of this document, the verbatim report of a conference convened (probably in early August) by the Research Institute for Agricultural Economics (NISI), at which specialists from the institute reported on their observations in the regions.

¹¹⁴ RGAE, 260/1/217, 1 (North Caucasus); RGAE, 7446/20/45, 92–93 (Central Black-Earth region). The latter file, ll. 84–96, is a collection of reports by Narkomzem inspectors, compiled by the grain sector of Narkomzem and dated July 24.

repairs. In the North Caucasus tractors were 'very bad and worn out', and only 20–40 per cent were in order when harvesting began.¹¹⁵

According to some reports from the regions, collective farmers were working normally, and their morale at the beginning of harvesting was high.¹¹⁶ As the harvest proceeded, however, districts and regions reported frequently that the lack of food was disrupting the harvesting. In a district in the North Caucasus 'collective farmers go to work unwillingly and with great delay', and refused to begin work until they received food: 'In all the brigades they complain of lack of bread and groats, not to mention fats. Poor peasants in the kolkhozy particularly suffer.'¹¹⁷ In the Central Black-Earth region, 'the bottleneck in the kolkhozy is the severe lack of bread and the consequent demoralised attitude of the collective farmers'.¹¹⁸ In the Lower Volga region, 'a number of kolkhozy fail to carry out the decision to make [grain] advances to the collective farmers'.¹¹⁹

The poor sowing and failure to weed had calamitous consequences in major grain regions. In a large part of the Volga regions, the drought and hot winds in late June and early July exacerbated the damage.¹²⁰ In the North Caucasus, in two of the three districts studied by the Agricultural Economics Institute, there were so many weeds in the grain that even simple harvesters could not get through the fields, and combine harvesters could not be used at all:

Weed infestation is a tremendous trouble in the North Caucasus, and all other causes of the reduction in yield pale into insignificance.¹²¹

In both the North Caucasus and the Lower Volga regions, sunflowers and wild oats grew up in the wheat; the sunflowers often dwarfed the wheat and choked it.¹²² The German agricultural attaché, Otto Schiller, travelled from Moscow to Simferopol' before July 11 and

¹¹⁵ RGAE, 260/1/217, 1.

¹¹⁶ See reports from North Caucasus: RGAE, 260/1/217, 5ob.-6; RGAE, 7446/20/45, 86.

¹¹⁷ RGAE, 7446/20/45, 86, 89 (Timoshevskii district).

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 89 (Kantemirskii district).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 85 (Mikhailovskii district).

¹²⁰ Carynnyk *et al.* (1988), 190 (Cairns interview with the agricultural scientist Tulaikov).

¹²¹ RGAE, 260/1/217, 2, 2ob. (Tarakanov).

¹²² *Ibid.*, 6–7 (Nikulikhin), 10ob.-11 (Kremer).

‘gained the impression from watching the crops that they were mostly weeds; the area of land recently in crops but now idle was very large’; and in Ukraine there was ‘very little grain and a great deal of weeds in the fields’.¹²³ Soviet specialists acknowledged that most of the late-sown spring grain simply perished.¹²⁴ In Kazakhstan the harvest was particularly poor. On July 27, in a telegram to Kaganovich and Molotov, Goloshchekin estimated out that the dry vegetation period, together with the July rains in Aktyubinsk region, had reduced the yield to a mere 1.5–3 tsentners per hectare.¹²⁵

On July 26, Voroshilov, touring the south, wrote a frank account to Stalin of what he observed:

Dear Koba, Greetings!

(1) I told you of my impressions of what I saw from the window of my rail coach in the wheat fields of North Caucasus region. On the return journey I once again verified the situation, and not just from the window, but directly – at first hand. From Kushchevki I went by car through Uman’, Starominskaya and Staroshcherbinovskaya to Eisk. Throughout the whole 110 kilometres you see a depressing picture of the scandalous infestation of the grain with weeds. There are separate cases, literally oases, with relatively small amounts of weeds, but as a rule North Caucasus is experiencing the greatest of disasters. I have only personal impressions, not figures or reliable documentation, but nevertheless will risk the conclusion that weeds have reduced output by 120–150 million puds, if not by 200.

He added that the Ukrainian fields, as seen from the train, displayed ‘to a somewhat lesser extent, it is true, the same scandalous weediness of the grain’. In the Central Black-Earth region, however:

the picture is somewhat different, better and more appealing. The hay has been collected, there are fallow fields in many places which have been ploughed, and where the grain harvesting has begun (still rarely), the sheaves are tied up and stooked, and in general an economic and rational approach can be observed.¹²⁶

¹²³ Carynnyk *et al.* (1988), 135.

¹²⁴ For example, RGAE, 260/1/217, 6 (Nikulikhin). According to Tulaikov, in the Volga areas ‘all the grain sown after May 15 (which he thought constituted 25 to 30 per cent of the total) was a complete failure’ (Carynnyk *et al.* (1988), 191 – interview with Cairns).

¹²⁵ GARE, 5446/27/13, 124–123 (telegram to Kaganovich and Molotov).

¹²⁶ RGASPI, 74/2/37, 54–9, published in *Sovetskoe rukovodstvo* (1999), 181–4.

Stalin accepted Voroshilov's judgment about the North Caucasus, replying on July 30, 'Concerning weeds and the poor cultivation of the fields in the south (and not only in the south!), you are completely right.' Characteristically, he blamed the failure on 'the bad work of the MTS'.¹²⁷ A few days later, Kuibyshev, in his report on agriculture, frankly acknowledged the considerable infestation of the fields in the North Caucasus and Ukraine, attributing it to poor sowing and ploughing as well as the weather conditions.¹²⁸ On August 4, an editorial in *Pravda* admitted 'the extreme weed infestation in the North Caucasus'.

By this time, the five-daily reports from the regions had demonstrated that harvesting was extremely delayed. By July 15, one million hectares less had been harvested than on the same date in 1931; by August 1, when about one-third of the harvesting was complete, the gap had increased to over 8 million (see Table 9(e)).

In August and September the situation did not improve. In the Volga regions and parts of the North Caucasus incessant rain during the harvesting added to all the other difficulties. On August 1, Ptukha, Lower Volga party secretary, in a telegram to Kaganovich, stated that, in view of the slow progress of the harvest and the endless rains, sufficient horses would not be available for both harvesting and transporting the grain.¹²⁹ In mid-August, Cairns, who had embarked on another tour of the grain areas, observed that in fields near Stalingrad 'there were very few crops of any kind to see, most of the land being uncultivated. What little grain there was had been cut for some time. Some of it was still in the stook and had been very badly discoloured by rains'.¹³⁰ Tulaikov reported to Cairns 'an extremely heavy infestation of stem rust'.¹³¹ In the Lower Volga region, according to a Soviet report, the rye was affected by ergot 'on a threatening scale', and had to be cleansed to prevent poisoning.¹³² Cairns also visited the Black-Earth region in August, and saw 'the usual sight' – cut crops as well as uncut crops were 'apparently full of weeds'.¹³³

In these miserable conditions, harvesting continued to lag. By August 15, the area harvested was 10.6 million hectares less than

¹²⁷ RGASPI, 74/2/38, 76–7, published in *Sovetskoe rukovodstvo* (1999), 186.

¹²⁸ Kuibyshev (1932), 10.

¹²⁹ GARF, 5446/27/13, 148. For other aspects of his telegram, see p. 148.

¹³⁰ Carynnyk *et al.* (1988), 183.

¹³¹ Carynnyk *et al.* (1988), 190.

¹³² RGASPI, 631/5/75, 69 (dated August 20).

¹³³ Carynnyk *et al.* (1988), 174.

in 1931. Even by September 20, the final date for which comparisons are available, the lag was still 7.7 million hectares.

Threshing naturally also lagged: it was consistently 5–7 million hectares behind 1931, a lag of 10–15 days. Reports from the regions complained of low yield and poor work. An observer from the Central Volga region, at a conference held in Narkomzem on October 8, described the threshing as ‘extremely dire’ in both of the districts he visited. The yield was extremely poor, and the threshing was slow because of the shortage of labour. Young people had almost all left for work outside the village; and the women were engaged in collecting ears of grain from the harvested fields, and threshing them at home in exchange for flour.¹³⁴

It was only in the five days October 6–10, well beyond the end of the normal season, that in a heroic leap of nearly 13 million hectares, the area threshed caught up with the previous year. The only harvesting indicator which was significantly better than in 1931 was for the binding and stacking of grain (see Table 9(f)).

During the harvest of 1932, the poor weather, the lack of autumn and spring ploughing, the shortage and poor quality of the seed, the poor cultivation of the crop and the delay in harvesting all combined to increase the incidence of fungal disease. Reports in the Narkomzem archives complain that traditional campaigns to disinfect the fields, the storehouses and the sacks for the harvested grain, were all carried out extremely badly in Ukraine.¹³⁵ Cairns found that in the North Caucasus ‘the winter wheat was extremely weedy and looked as though it was badly rusted’, and ‘all the spring wheat I saw was simply rotten with rust’.¹³⁶

The prevalence of wheat rust was encouraged by the high temperatures and rainfall in early June, and also by the spread of spores from Eastern Europe, where there was an exceptionally severe rust epidemic in 1932. Once the harvest has ripened, rust does not develop further; but ergot and other diseases, and pests, caused additional damage before the grain was harvested.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ RGAE, 7446/8/322, 32 (Parfutin).

¹³⁵ RGAE, 7446/14/178, 10; 7446/20/67, 69; 7486/3/5086, 50.

¹³⁶ Carynnyk *et al.* (1988), 141, 145.

¹³⁷ Mark Tauger has drawn attention to the rust epidemic and its spread from Eastern Europe (see Tauger (2001), 13, 17). In our opinion, however, he exaggerates its importance. He cites Soviet estimates of losses from rust and smut (another significant disease) amounting to 8.9 million tons, but relates these not to the harvest on

Against this sombre background, both Narkomzem and TsUNKhU reduced their harvest estimates during July–September. On the basis of the yield prospects returned by the regions for July 1, Narkomzem, in its confidential bulletin for July, estimated that the yield would be only 7.4 tsentners, and the harvest 73.3 million tons. However, it proposed to add a further 5 per cent to this total, because of the underestimation of the yield in North Caucasus, the Central Black-Earth region and elsewhere – restoring the total to 76.9 million tons.¹³⁸ This was evidently a time of great uncertainty and divided counsels in Narkomzem. A postscript to a revision of this document, dated July 27, and using yield estimates for July 10, suggested that the harvest was likely after all to be only 74.4 million tons. This was followed immediately, however, by a further postscript reporting that ‘yield estimates received at the very last minute’ from the regional commissions for supervising harvest records indicated that yields were higher than had previously been supposed.¹³⁹

Further Narkomzem estimates were doubtless made during August, but they have not been traced. In September, a memorandum sent by the records department of Narkomzem to Yakovlev reduced the yield to only 7.13 tsentners, while leaving the sown area unchanged at 99.7 million hectares. This gave a harvest of only 71.07 million tons, less than any previous Narkomzem estimate.¹⁴⁰ This was slightly above the Narkomzem estimate for 1931, which was now 70.4 million tons.

Meanwhile, TsUNKhU carried out an even more drastic series of revisions, transforming its estimates from mildly optimistic to considerably pessimistic. On August 2, using data for July 10, it reduced the expected 1932 harvest to 70.6 million tons, 3.8 million less than the Narkomzem estimate on the basis of the same data. As the

the root, from which they should be deducted, but to the barn harvest. He also does not pay sufficient attention to the normal losses from rust. According to a Soviet agronomist, more grain was lost to rust in the good harvest year 1933 than in 1932: 15 per cent of spring and autumn-sown wheat were lost in Kursk and Voronezh regions in 1932, and 20 per cent of spring and 26.5 per cent of autumn-sown wheat in 1933 (see Naumov (1939), 5, citing Boevskii's data).

¹³⁸ RGAE, 7446/3/5059b, 55. The sown area is given as 93,699,000 hectares, but this is evidently a typing error; the correct figure, 99,699,000 hectares, appears in the revised document (see next note).

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1–4.

¹⁴⁰ RGAE/37/230, 36–29 (written by Gegechkori).

TsUNKhU estimate for the 1931 harvest, 68.2 million tons, was lower than the Narkomzem estimate, TsUNKhU still concluded that the 1932 harvest was larger than the 1931 harvest, though now by only 2.4 rather than 8.2 million tons.¹⁴¹

Then, on August 20, 1932, using the yield data for August 1, it made a crucial further revision. It put the yield at only 6.9 tsentners, which, with a sown area of 97 million hectares, meant that the harvest was only 67.1 million tons, 1.1 million tons *lower* than the 1931 harvest.¹⁴²

A month later, TsUNKhU rashly printed these estimates for 1931 and 1932 in its monthly confidential bulletin, circulated in 700 copies.¹⁴³ The accompanying commentary was pessimistic in tone:

The harvest campaign is obviously proceeding unsatisfactorily. In most regions the time for grain harvesting is approaching its end. However, a number of regions are still far from completing the reaping and are stacking the grain inadequately. Last year on September 10 half of all regions had already harvested all the autumn and early spring grains, but this year only 3 of the most important regions were reaching the end of harvesting on this date – Central Volga, Central Black-Earth region and Crimea. In spite of the smaller area to be harvested than last year a number of other regions have not yet finished harvesting the autumn and early spring grains, and have harvested a smaller proportion of the total area to be harvested than on the same date of last year.¹⁴⁴

The conclusions of TsUNKhU about the size of the harvest were challenged by both Narkomzem and Zagotserno. The September Narkomzem memorandum to Yakovlev (see p. 132) vigorously rejected the TsUNKhU estimate that the yield was 6.9 tsentners, insisting that it was ‘mechanically derived from the reports of local organisations’:

However, even a fleeting knowledge of the pattern of the reports from the regions and the prospects for the gross harvest reveals

¹⁴¹ RGAE, 1562/1/672, 313 (prepared by Minaev).

¹⁴² RGAE, 1562/1/672, 310, 308, 395 (prepared by Minaev). The Ukrainian harvest was now given as only 14.1 million tons, compared with 17.6 in 1931.

¹⁴³ *Osnovnye pokazateli*, August 1932, 72–4 (printed September 23).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

that from the middle of July, i.e. from the moment when the grain collection plan is allocated, there is a unanimous reduction of the harvest in all the districts.

On September 15 a detailed memorandum from Zagotzerno to Chernov insisted that the yields were consistently higher than those given by TsUNKhU, giving figures for every type of grain and every region. It cited at length a letter from a Zagotzerno official in Bashkiria who reported:

after conversations in the fields with brigade leaders... there is a better impression of the real yield. In conversations with [party] secretaries and chairs of village soviets a definite wish to underestimate the harvest can be noticed.

Many of the plenipotentiaries sent by the district committees have given way to the influence of the secretaries and chairs of village soviets and present an obviously underestimated yield.

In some cases, the yield was two or three times the stated yields, and in general 'the lads insured themselves for all crops to the extent of $\frac{1}{2}$ tsentner per hectare'.¹⁴⁵

The TsUNKhU monthly bulletin was of course sharply at variance with the stance of the Politburo, which was engaged in a fierce struggle to obtain grain. On September 23, the day on which the bulletin was printed, the Politburo, in the name of Sovnarkom and the party central committee, sent a telegram to republican and regional party secretaries insisting that 'the harvest of the present year is satisfactory'.¹⁴⁶ Two weeks later, a sharp Politburo resolution ordered that TsUNKhU and Narkomzem were to cease discussions of the sown area, and were to publish as official the figures in the sown area reports (*posevnye svodki*) of Narkomzem.¹⁴⁷

On November 13, a month after this rebuff to TsUNKhU, the Politburo, after discussing reports by Osinsky and Yakovlev on 'grain production and yields in the regions', issued an angry resolution.

¹⁴⁵ RGAE, 8040/6/2, 1-5.

¹⁴⁶ RGASPI, 17/3/901, 24; the decision was published the following day.

¹⁴⁷ RGASPI, 17/3/902, 6 (item 16), adopted on statements by Yakovlev and Mezhlauk (dated October 8). The resolution added that TsUNKhU and Narkomzem must present verified data on the sown area; if local agencies gave incorrect data, the matter was to be raised with the central committee.

The question was to be handed over to a new commission under Molotov which was 'to define methods and ways to establish yields in general and in particular to determine the yields for the present year'. The first part of the resolution revealed the approach the commission was expected to take. It was ordered 'To work out measures to punish the leaders of TsUNKhU who published yield figures without the knowledge of Sovnarkom, and thus released a bacchanalia of theft and trickery from anti-social elements in the kolkhozy, in certain sovkhozy, and among the individual peasants.'¹⁴⁸ This resolution was followed by the establishment of a State Commission to measure grain output, and by a series of measures designed to reduce the authority of TsUNKhU.¹⁴⁹

The size of the 1932 harvest continued to be discussed behind the scenes. Narkomzem continued to support its September evaluation: on January 2, 1933, Yakovlev, in an elaborate memorandum to the Molotov commission, increased its estimate very slightly, from 71.07 to 71.12 million tons.¹⁵⁰ TsUNKhU, bound by the Politburo decision of October 8 to give up its own sown area figure of 97 million hectares in favour of the Narkomzem figure, also increased its yield figure slightly, and gave a new harvest estimate of 69.87 rather than 67.11 million tons.¹⁵¹

In the course of the spring and summer of 1933 the data were thoroughly checked by the new apparatus of the state grain commission (TsGK). Osinsky, in practical charge of the work under Molotov, was unbowed; and, evidently with Molotov's agreement, checked the sown area as well as the yield data. According to the memorandum from Osinsky, dated August 28, 1933, the checks went

¹⁴⁸ RGASPI, 17/3/906, 6 (item 16, reported on by Osinsky and Yakovlev). The other members of the Molotov commission were Kuibyshev, Yakovlev (representing Narkomzem), Osinsky (TsUNKhU), Chernov (Narkomsnab), Gegechkori (Narkomzem), Minaev (TsUNKhU), S. Odintsov (Narkomzem), Yurkin (Narkomzem) and Nemchinov (TsUNKhU); Gaister (Gosplan) and Krinitskii were added a few weeks later.

¹⁴⁹ For the commission see pp. 243–4; for the measures against TsUNKhU, see vol. 4, pp. 262–3, 339–43.

¹⁵⁰ RGAE, 8040/8/10, 16–29.

¹⁵¹ For the new TsUNKhU estimate, see Osinsky's memorandum of August 1933 (n. 152) and Yakovlev's memorandum of January 3, 1933 (see previous note).

Old estimate: $97.0 \times 6.9 = 67.11$.

New estimate: $99.7 \times 7.0 = 69.79$ [given as 69.87].

through the following stages:¹⁵²

	<i>Sown area</i> (million hectares)	<i>Yield</i> (tsentners per hectare)	<i>Harvest</i> (million tons)
Primary data of inter-district commissions of TsGK	93.86 ^a	6.4	60.02 [60.08]
Regional plenipotentiaries	96.6	6.5	64.16 [62.79]
Re-check by Osinsky	97.16	6.7	[65.10]

Notes: The figures in square brackets are the arithmetical result of multiplying the sown area and yield figures given by Osinsky, who probably worked with more detailed figures.

^a Excludes some sowing by sovkhozy and state establishments.

The most remarkable feature of this table is that the yield estimates of the new grain commissions were almost as low as those returned by the local agencies in the summer of 1932, which were generally taken to be biased downwards. In particular, the inter-regional commissions and the plenipotentiaries put the Ukrainian yield at 6.6 and 6.9 tsentners, compared with the 8.1 tsentners estimated by both Narkomzem and TsUNKhU. Osinsky concluded that the Ukrainian harvest was only 12.1 million tons, compared with the 14.7 million tons previously estimated by both TsUNKhU and Narkomzem.

Osinsky's latest estimate, while something of a compromise, was politically unacceptable. It implied that the 1932 harvest for the USSR as a whole was several million tons lower than the 1931 harvest. On September 23, 1933, exactly one year after the printing of Osinsky's scandalous estimate of 67.11 million tons, the Politburo implicitly rejected all the reworking earlier in the year, and resolved that the 1932 harvest was 69.87 million tons, thus adopting the revised Osinsky estimate made at the end of 1932.¹⁵³ This official figure, together with the slightly lower 1931 harvest of 69.48 million tons, appeared in all subsequent literature. It was accepted by Russian historians without question even in the 1990s, after the fall of communism.¹⁵⁴

In fact, however, there is no doubt that the 1932 harvest was even lower than the poor harvest of 1931, and that both harvests were lower than these official figures (see Appendix, pp. 443–6).

¹⁵² GARE, 5446/82/22, 210–197. Molotov's marks on this document show that he had read it with great care, even noticing an arithmetical error about the sown area in the Moscow region.

¹⁵³ RGASPI, 17/3/931, 21 (art. 107/71); the resolution referred back to the resolution of October 8, 1932.

¹⁵⁴ See, for example, *Sots. str. 1934* (1935), 203. The sown area was always given as 99.7 million hectares, and the yield as 7.0 tsentners.

CHAPTER SIX

GRAIN COLLECTIONS FROM THE 1932 HARVEST

(A) THE GRAIN COLLECTION PLAN FOR 1932/33

The 1932 plan optimistically assumed that the harvest would be about 90 million tons (see p. 123). Simultaneously, Narkomsnab approved a grain collection plan of 29.5 million tons, over five million tons greater than the planned grain collections from the 1931 harvest (see vol. 4, p. 210). In conformity with this, the Politburo agreed in January 1932 that as much as 6.235 million tons of grain should be exported in 1932, including nearly 3 million tons of wheat;¹ this would nearly all come from the 1932 harvest.

These plans continued the relentless state pressure for grain which characterised the previous three years. In January 1932, the Politburo ignored a proposal from Rudzutak that grain collection plans 'should be issued at the beginning of the economic year, so that the kolkhoz should be able to plan to sell part of its output on the market after it had fulfilled the state target'.² And in March, at the time of the drastic cuts in bread rations, it rejected Kosior's proposal that the centre should announce that, in 1932, 'the bigger the harvest obtained by the kolkhoz and the collective farmer, the larger the amount which will be set aside and allocated to personal consumption'.³ But eventually the severity of the grain crisis in the spring of 1932 persuaded the Politburo that it could not hope to obtain ever-increasing quantities of grain at nominal prices. Instead,

¹ RGASPI, 17/162/11, 131–154 (January 16); Eksportkhleb was to earn 168 of the total 1932 export earnings amounting to 738 million rubles.

² Memorandum to Stalin: see Ivnitskii (2000), 252.

³ Kosior's telegram to Stalin, dated March 15, 1932, is cited from APRF in Ivnitskii (1994), 191. On the following day, the USSR Politburo resolved that 'it is inexpedient to publish a decree of the central USSR agencies about the state share of the future harvest, because a statement has already been issued to the effect that from 1/3 to 1/4 of the harvest will be transferred to the state'. It authorised Ukraine to issue 'an appropriate decree', but in the absence of a grain plan for 1932/33 this was a very vague concession, and no statement about the 1932/33 collections seems to have been issued by the Ukrainian authorities at this time. (RGASPI, 17/3/876, 1 – item 1 of session of March 16.)

in May 1932, it launched the far-reaching reforms which became known unofficially as 'Neo-Nep' (see vol. 4, pp. 201–28).

At their heart was the decision to moderate the amount of grain collected from the 1932 harvest. On May 4, 1932, on Stalin's proposal, the Politburo established a high-level commission convened by Molotov to prepare a decree on the grain collections 'in the name of the Politburo, having asked the opinion of regional party secretaries by telegram'. The commission, was, in effect, a meeting of the Politburo expanded by including the principal individuals concerned with the management of agriculture.⁴ The groundwork had been well prepared. As soon as the following day, May 5, the Politburo approved by poll the decree prepared by the commission, and on May 6 it was promulgated by TsIK and Sovnarkom.⁵ It announced that the grain collections from the 'village sector' (kolkhozy and individual peasants) would be reduced from the 1,367 million puds (22.391 million tons) planned from the 1931 harvest to only 1,103 million puds (18.067 million tons) from the 1932 harvest. This reduction by 4.3 million tons would be partly compensated by increasing the collections from sovkhozy by 0.72 million tons. The decline in state collections would be more than compensated by the increase in the amount of grain sold on the market:

As a result of the success in achieving the five-year plan in industry, the prospects... of satisfying the production needs of kolkhozy and the personal needs of rural working people are increasing. In view of the uninterrupted growth of the quantity of industrial goods and of the production of grain the prospects of developing kolkhoz trade are unfolding. Kolkhoz trade is becoming increasingly important as a supplementary source for supplying towns with agricultural produce.

Two weeks later, on May 20, the decree on kolkhoz trade made the famous ruling that it 'is carried out at prices formed on the market' (see vol. 4, p. 213).

⁴ RGASPI, 17/3/882, 3 (item 14). The commission contained 17 members: the members and candidate members of the Politburo except those who worked out of Moscow: Molotov (convenor), Stalin, Kuibyshev, Voroshilov, Ordzhonikidze, Kaganovich, Kalinin, Mikoyan and Andreev; additionally, Rudzutak (head of CCC/Rabkrin), Sulimov (chair of Sovnarkom RSFSR), Yakovlev, Yurkin and Markevich (Narkomzem USSR), Menzhinskii (head of OGPU), Chernov and Sarkis (Komzag).

⁵ For the Politburo decision, see RGASPI, 17/3/883, 9; for the decree, 'On the Plan for Grain Collections from the Harvest of 1932 and the Development of Kolkhoz Trade in Grain', see SZ, 1932, art. 190.

In both 1930 and 1931, the grain collection plans were revealed publicly only after the campaign was over. In contrast, the decree of May 6 was published, and its provision that the collections should be reduced was widely publicised. Contrary to the claims of the decree, however, both the production of grain and the supply of consumer goods had declined in 1931/32, and there was no realistic prospect of an immediate increase. Moreover, the proposed reduction in the grain collections was far smaller than the decree pretended. It compared the plan for 1932/33 not with the actual collections in 1931/32 but with the plan for that year. But actual collections were three million tons less than the plan, as the compilers of the decree were already aware.⁶ The proposed reduction for the peasant sector was in fact not 4.3 but only 1.3 million tons. In the regional distribution of the plan, a substantial reduction was proposed for Ukraine and the North Caucasus. The poor harvest in these key grain regions had led to great difficulties in collecting the planned grain in 1931/32, and their sowings for the 1932 harvest had also been poor. But for four of the remaining major grain regions – the Urals, the Central and Lower Volga regions and Western Siberia – the proposed collection in 1932/33 was in fact higher than in the previous year. (See Table 21.)

The plans for 1932/33 also included two items not mentioned in the decree of May 6: the return of seed loans and the milling levy. These were fixed by a Politburo resolution of July 7.⁷ These substantial items were mainly the responsibility of what was variously known as the village or peasant sector. Taking them into account, the total obligations of the peasant sector to the state declined by only 206,000 tons, compared with the grain actually exacted in 1931/32:⁸

(thousand tons)	1931/32 <i>actual</i>	1932/33 <i>plan</i>
Peasant sector	19373	18067
Return of seed loans, etc.	164	1147
Milling levy	1521	1638
Total of these items	21058	20852

(Continued)

⁶ On March 23, 1932, the grain budget showed that total collections, including those from sovkhozy, would amount to only 22.7 million tons (RGAE, 8040/1/12, 74–82) compared with the original plan of 25.8 million tons.

⁷ RGASPI, 17/3/891, 56–57 (this is the general decision on the grain campaign, approved by poll). The milling levy refers to the 90 per cent of the total to be transferred to the centre.

⁸ Estimated from data in Tables 21 and 22, and from the Politburo decision of July 7.

(thousand tons)	1931/32 actual	1932/33 plan
Sovkhozy	1774	2490
Return of seed loans by sovkhozy		164
Total	22839	23505

The scope of kolkhoz trade in grain was severely restricted. Kolkhozy and peasants gained the legal right to trade in agricultural products other than grain. But the decree of May 6 insisted that they could trade in grain only if they achieved completely both the grain collection plan and the seed collection plan for the spring 1933 harvest. These tasks were not due to be completed until January 15, 1933. Later rulings stressed that the right to trade in grain would be conceded only when the whole region had completed its grain collection and seed plan.⁹ Then, in its resolution of July 7, the Politburo ruled that when the collection plan was disaggregated to districts and kolkhozy, a 4–5 per cent ‘safety margin’ (*strakhovaya nadbavka*) must be added to every plan, so that the regional plan would be met even if some individual units failed. In many districts, the addition of the safety margin meant that their collection plan was as high as in 1931, even though the plan for the region as a whole had been reduced. Moreover, in its decision of July 7, the Politburo declared uncompromisingly, ‘Not a Single Tsentner of Kolkhoz Grain for the Re-seller or the “Speculator”’.¹⁰ This was even more restrictive than the slogan of the 1931 campaign, ‘Not a Tsentner of Grain to the Private Trader’.¹¹

On June 2, Komzag approved an ‘orienting budget’ for grain distribution in 1932/33.¹² Total grain collections would amount to 22.1 million tons compared with the 22.7 million expected in 1931/32 (these figures excluded the return of grain loans). In consequence, supply to those entitled to receive rations on the general Lists

⁹ See, for example, the decision on the Tatar ASSR and Moscow region, dated December 2, 1932 (SPR, viii (1934), 622–3).

¹⁰ RGASPI, 17/3/891, 56–57. The 4–5 per cent margin was proposed by Stalin in his letter of June 18 (see pp. 145–6). The Sovnarkom decree specifying the plan for each region and republic followed on July 18 (GARF, 5446/1/69, 285–287 (art. 1120)).

¹¹ For the 1931 slogan, see *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, 616–7 (central committee resolution dated July 15, 1931).

¹² RGAE, 8040/1/12, 74–82; the comparison was with the revised grain budget for 1931/32 prepared on March 23, 1932, which underestimated grain consumption. The budget of June 2 was not approved by the Politburo or Sovnarkom.

(so-called 'General Supply') would be substantially increased, and the reserve Nepfond and Gosfond, which had been exhausted in the course of the spring of 1932, would be re-established. The additional commitments, amounting to nearly 4 million tons, would be met by substantial reductions in grain exports, in the supply of food grain for sovkhozy and fodder grain for livestock, and – for the first time in three years – in the amount of grain used for the manufacture of vodka and other spirits. And in 1932/33, unlike the previous year, no grain would be supplied for seed from central funds.¹³

The grain export plan included in the June 1932 grain budget – 1.96 million tons – was only one-third of the ambitious plan endorsed by the Politburo in the previous January. During the next few months the amount of grain which could be spared for export in 1932/33 was the subject of considerable controversy. On April 16, the Politburo merely 'noted' a memorandum from Rozengol'ts, the People's Commissar for Foreign Trade, pointing out that he had received no directives on the amount of grain to be exported in the July–September quarter of 1932.¹⁴ In June, the Commissariat proposed to the Politburo that the quarterly plan should amount to 1.8 million tons in all, and exports in the whole of 1932/33 to 4 million tons. Kaganovich reported to Stalin 'the attitudes that there is no need to export, formed on the basis of certain difficulties in the past couple of months' (obviously a reference to the food shortages). While observing that these attitudes 'must be refuted', he also added 'I think that the figure of Vneshtorg [the People's

¹³ The main changes were as follows (million tons):

<i>New commitments</i>	General Supply*	+1.2
	Additions to stocks**	+2.7
	Total	+3.9
<i>Reduced commitments</i>	Export	–2.8
	Other***	–1.4
	Total	–4.2

* Includes increase in General Supply as such (including allocation for transition period July 1–August 15, 1933) (0.5 million tons); increased processing of fodder and other grains into flour and groats (0.5); 'fund to regulate grain market' (0.2).

** Allocation to Nepfond (2.1) + Gosfond (0.8), minus Decline in transitional stocks (0.2).

*** Includes reductions in return of seed loan, food grain for sovkhozy, and grain for alcohol.

¹⁴ RGASPI, 17/162/12, 93 (item 14 on agenda).

Commissariat of Foreign Trade] must be reduced somewhat.’¹⁵ Stalin agreed; he replied to Kaganovich, ‘I propose to reduce substantially Rozengol’ts’ plan (for the third quarter).’¹⁶ The Politburo postponed a decision on two occasions.¹⁷ On July 16, with the July–September quarter already under way, it approved the export of 1 million tons during the quarter, 800,000 tons less than the proposal of the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Trade.¹⁸ At this time the annual export plan was approved at 2.7 million tons – 1.3 million tons lower than the Commissariat’s proposal, but 0.74 million tons higher than in the grain budget of June 2.¹⁹

(B) FIRST STAGE OF THE CAMPAIGN, JULY–NOVEMBER 1932

Preparations began well in advance. Komzag, the powerful Committee for Collections of Agricultural Products (Komzag) attached to the Council of Labour and Defence, was established in February 1932 (see vol. 4, p. 205). It was headed by Kuibyshev, a senior member of the Politburo, a deputy chair of Sovnarkom, and head of Gosplan. Komzag, which appointed plenipotentiaries in the republics and regions, took over responsibility for the grain collections from Narkomsnab. Chernov, who had been administratively responsible under Mikoyan for grain collection ever since 1928, was now appointed deputy to Kuibyshev in Komzag. Major decisions about agricultural collections were made by the Politburo on the basis of proposals from Chernov and Kuibyshev, which were

¹⁵ SKP, 189 (letter dated June 23).

¹⁶ SKP, 197 (letter to Kaganovich and Molotov dated June 26).

¹⁷ RGASPI, 17/162/12, 192 (decision of June 17 reported to Politburo June 23); 17/162/13 (item 27 on agenda of July 10 – Politburo resolved to reduce the proposal in the plan submitted by the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Trade).

¹⁸ RGASPI, 17/162/13, 30 (item 45 on agenda of July 16 – half of this total was to be exported, and the rest set aside for ‘warranting’ and for transitional stocks; all export grain was to come from the top two classes of grain).

¹⁹ The date on which the plan of 2.7 million tons was approved has not been traced; the figure was referred to in a later decision of the Politburo dated October 20, 1932, which reduced the annual plan to 2.46 million tons (RGASPI, 17/162/13, 133, decision by poll). Actual exports in 1932/33 were 1.6 million tons, less than any of the plans.

normally addressed to Stalin, Molotov as chair of Sovnarkom, and Kaganovich as Stalin's deputy in the Politburo.

The establishment of Komzag involved further centralisation of the grain collections. Responsibility had previously been divided between Soyuzkhleb, Khlebzhivtsestr and Tsentrosoyuz (see p. 92). The first two agencies were merged into Zagotzerno, the 'Unified State Organisation for the Collection of Crops of Grains, Beans, Groats, Oil-seeds and Fodder'; the grain cooperatives were abolished. The functions of the consumer cooperatives were much attenuated. For flax and cotton collections, parallel agencies to Zagotzerno were established under Komzag. The grain, cotton and flax agencies all controlled a network of republican, regional and district sub-agencies. Other collection agencies remained under Narkomsnab, including Zagotskot, responsible for animal and meat collections.²⁰ The plenipotentiaries of the grain cooperatives previously responsible for grain collection at the village level were to be replaced by more regular district offices or 'collection points' (zagotpunkty) of Komzag.²¹

The anxiety of the authorities to maximise the grain collections, and to collect the grain as early as possible, was tempered by the knowledge that in many areas some grain from the new harvest must be distributed to the collective farmers, or retained by the individual peasants (see pp. 124–5). The authorities sought to accommodate the peasants by increasing the supply of consumer goods to the countryside. Even before the May 1932 reforms, the Politburo resolved that the supply should be 20 per cent greater than in the 1932 plan (see vol. 4, p. 217). On June 5, Stalin insisted to Kaganovich that 'the fate of the *smychka* [the alliance between town and country]' depended on these supplies.²² Kaganovich informed Stalin that the value of the ten major consumer goods sent to the countryside in April and May had been only 206 million rubles, and a considerable part of these had in fact been made available not to the villages but to the gold, fur, timber, fishing and other industries,

²⁰ SZ, 1932, art. 53 (dated February 13, 1932). See also vol. 4, p. 205 and (on the earlier organisation of the collections) vol. 1, p. 72. A further decree dated April 16, 1932, provided for the transfer of the administrative machinery of the agricultural cooperatives to Komzag, Narkomsnab and other government departments (SZ, 1932, art. 175).

²¹ *Na fronte zagotovok*, 3, 1932, 5.

²² SKP, 141.

which were all nominally classified under 'Village' before June 1. Even the unrevised plan for 1932 was not so far being achieved: 'Tsentrosoyuz is completely cut off from the countryside.'²³

In a further reply, Stalin pointed out that the trade plans were supposed to be monthly, not quarterly, and demanded:

in May, June and July send the maximum amount of mass consumer goods to the grain, sugar (beet) and cotton areas, so that goods will be there as early as July and August. If this is not done, the commission [on consumer goods] deserves to be buried alive.²⁴

The Politburo resolution of July 7 stipulated that, in July–September 1932, consumer goods valued at 690 million rubles should be supplied to the countryside, compared with 335 million rubles in the same months of 1931.²⁵

The towns were denuded of consumer goods during the summer, but the plans for the countryside were not achieved. Retail turnover in the countryside increased by only 19 per cent in the July–September quarter, and in the inflationary conditions of 1932 the goods were bought up immediately.²⁶ In 1932, as in 1931, the state had to rely on exhortation and coercion to obtain the grain.

(i) Resistance

As soon as the campaign began, the Politburo and Komzag in Moscow were confronted by demands from the republics and regions for the postponement and reduction of the collections. The grain stocks in the peasant sector were low;²⁷ and the price for grain on

²³ SKP, 154 (letter dated June 9); Kaganovich explained that precise figures for the despatch of goods to the countryside had become available only in the current month. The change of classification from June 1 explains the anomaly pointed out in vol. 4, p. 180, n. 188.

²⁴ SKP, 162 (letter dated June 12). For the commission see vol. 4, pp. 208–9. Kaganovich and Postyshev were members of the commission, and Stalin told Kaganovich that the blame for failure should lie with them, because they were required to manage Tsentrosoyuz.

²⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/891, 56–57. This referred to 11 particularly scarce 'planned' goods.

²⁶ This campaign and its failure are discussed in vol. 4, pp. 217–22, 233–4.

²⁷ Grain balances compiled in TsUNKhU indicated that stocks held by kolkhozy and individual peasants had fallen from 7.416 million tons on July 1, 1931 to

the market was very high. Confronted with these stubborn facts, the party secretaries in many republics and regions concluded that the grain collection plan sent down from Moscow seemed ridiculously large. On June 10, Chubar' and the veteran old Bolshevik, Petrovsky, chair of the Ukrainian TsIK since 1919, sent letters to the Politburo. Chubar' warned that 100 districts in Ukraine were in need of food assistance. Petrovsky reported from personal observation that in the suffering districts 'a considerable part of the village was seized with famine', and he called for grain help amounting to 33,000 tons, and criticised in retrospect the passive Ukrainian acceptance of the 1931/32 grain plan.²⁸ Kaganovich indignantly described Petrovsky's letter as 'preparing the ground in practice for refusing to collect grain this year, which is completely impermissible'.²⁹

On June 28, the Politburo summoned a conference on the grain collections attended by regional party secretaries and heads of soviet executive committees. The conference was evidently intended to stress the importance of the collections and the inviolability of the collection plans. In Stalin's absence on leave, it was addressed by Molotov, who read out a letter from Stalin which had been endorsed by the Politburo.³⁰ Stalin's letter, dated June 18, did not admit that the 1931 grain harvest was poor and the collections far too large. Instead he attributed the grain crisis to organisational deficiencies. He strongly criticised the grain campaign of 1931/32, on the grounds that the collection plan had been allocated to districts and to individual kolkhozy 'according to the "principle" of equalisation, it was carried out mechanically, without taking into account the position in each particular district and each particular kolkhoz'. According to Stalin, this had very unfavourable results in Ukraine:

In spite of the harvest, which was not bad, a number of districts which had a good harvest were in a state of ruin and famine.

5.997 million tons on July 1, 1932 (RGAE, 1562/3/178, 49, 51, 53). These are the so-called 'invisible stocks', as distinct from the 'visible stocks' of the grain collection agencies, the Committee of Reserves and other organisations, which had also declined in this period (see p. 104).

²⁸ RGASPI, 82/2/139, 144–153, 162–165.

²⁹ SKP, 164 (letter to Stalin dated June 12). For Stalin's hostile reaction to the letters, see SKP, 169 (letter dated June 19).

³⁰ RGASPI, 17/3/890, 8 (decision of June 28). The conference was originally scheduled for June 26 and 27 (see SKP, 179); its proceedings have not been available.

In the forthcoming campaign (Stalin argued) the plan should take into account the special features of every district and every kolkhoz. Local plans should be prepared with an addition of 4–5 per cent (see p. 140), to make sure that the plan was fulfilled at all costs. Regional first party secretaries should be held personally responsible for the successes and failures of the collections.³¹

The conference failed to be a simple device for strengthening the resolve of the local bosses. Letters written by Kaganovich after the conference reveal the sharp clash between the Moscow authorities and the representatives of the localities. On July 1, he reported to Stalin that the central committee representatives had ‘particularly put pressure on the Ukrainians’, insisting that ‘they must decisively abandon their capitulationist attitude to the grain collections and not allow the Ukrainian organisation further deoxidisation (*raskiselivanie*) and marshification (*obolochenie*)’.³²

Stalin viewed the Ukrainian attitude with even greater suspicion. On July 1, he sent a telegram to Kaganovich and Molotov insisting that ‘the main blow must be directed against the Ukrainian demobilisers’.³³ He followed this immediately by a letter to Kaganovich and Molotov in preparation for the III Ukrainian party conference, also convened to discuss the grain collections, which condemned Chubar’ for ‘his degeneration and opportunist nature’ and Kosior for his ‘rotten diplomacy (towards the CC) and criminally light-hearted attitude to his work’, and claimed that they would ‘eventually destroy Ukraine’: ‘I have the impression (and really even the conviction) that both of them should be removed from Ukraine. Perhaps I am mistaken. But you will be able to check this at the conference.’³⁴ Later, he again insisted that in due course Kosior should be replaced by Kaganovich; the decision should be delayed merely because it was ‘inexpedient’ to weaken the secretariat in Moscow.³⁵

The III Ukrainian party conference met in the Khar’kov opera house during July 6–9.³⁶ Kosior condemned those who regarded the

³¹ SKP, 179–80 (letter to Kaganovich and Molotov for members of the Politburo).

³² SKP, 207. For Kaganovich’s handwritten letter to Kuibyshev about the conference, see RGASPI, 79/1/777.

³³ SKP, 205.

³⁴ SKP, 210 (letter of July 2). The III Ukrainian party conference was held on July 6–9, 1932 (see n. 36).

³⁵ SKP, 224 (written July 15 or earlier).

³⁶ A somewhat bowdlerised version of its proceedings was published in Ukrainian as *Tretya konferentsiya KP(b)U, 6–9 liunya 1932 roku: stenograficheskii svit* (1932).

grain collection plans as unrealistic as ‘capitulationist elements’, holding ‘kulak theories’.³⁷ Molotov, speaking on behalf of the USSR central committee, attacked party members who argued that the 1931 collection plans had been too high, and that the 1932 plan should be reduced.³⁸ The conference resolution insisted that the collection plan for the peasant sector, 5.831 million tons, was ‘unconditional’, and could be achieved in spite of ‘insufficient sowing of grain, and a number of other difficulties’.³⁹ The Ukrainian central committee nevertheless complained to the USSR central committee that Komzag had failed to take the characteristics of the various Ukrainian regions into account, and, in a most unusual step, reported that it had sent out its own alternative plan to its regions (evidently without any endorsement from Moscow).⁴⁰ Behind the scenes, the Ukrainian leaders began to agitate against the grain plan. On July 28, a memorandum from Chubar’ to Molotov and Kaganovich claimed that, in view of the failure of Komzag to deliver the grain promised to Ukraine to cover the last weeks before the new harvest, the grain collections planned for July would not leave enough grain to provide the approved rations to consumers in July, and probably also in August.⁴¹

All the main grain regions protested. Sometimes they merely called for a delay. More often they objected to the regional plan as a whole.⁴² On July 27, Goloshchekin, Kazakhstan party secretary, called for a reduction in the collection plan and a delay in the return of the seed loan.⁴³ At about this time Yakovlev, on behalf of Narkomzem, proposed unsuccessfully that the September collection plan for three key grain regions – North Caucasus, Ukraine and the Central Black-Earth region – should be reduced to 50 per cent of

For an account of the conference based on the archives, see Vasil’ev and Shapoval, eds (2001), 152–78 (Shapoval).

³⁷ P, July 9, 1932.

³⁸ P, July 14, 1932 (speech of July 8).

³⁹ P, July 15, 1932.

⁴⁰ *Golod 1932–1933* (1990), 211 (dated July 19, and signed by Lyubchenko and Chubar’).

⁴¹ TsDAGOU, 1/20/5269, 53–55.

⁴² The documents in the archives sometimes do not make it clear whether the complainant is referring to the monthly or the annual collection plan.

⁴³ GARE, 5446/27/13, 124–123 (telegram to Kaganovich and Molotov); he called for a reduction in the basic grain collections of 622,000 tons by 66,000. For this telegram, see also p. 129.

their August plan.⁴⁴ On August 1, Ptukha, Lower Volga party secretary, insisted that the regional collection plan for August (30 million puds – 491,000 tons) was ‘impossible’.⁴⁵ The Central Volga region complained: ‘It is completely incomprehensible to us why the C. Volga has a requirement greater than other regions, even the Central Black-Earth region, although the population there is 5 million greater and the harvest is better.’⁴⁶

On August 14, Sheboldaev, the North Caucasian party secretary, proposed in a letter to Stalin various measures to secure grain from individual peasants; but the main purpose of his letter was to limit the collections. He proposed to cancel the provision that district plans should be increased by the ‘safety margin’ of 4–5 per cent, and requested permission to replace 5 million puds (81,900 tons) of wheat with rye or maize.⁴⁷ Stalin, in a letter to Kaganovich dated August 17, wrote, ‘it seems to me that cde. Sheboldaev is right and his practical proposals should be accepted – the sooner the better’.⁴⁸ The Politburo approved Sheboldaev’s proposals on August 20.⁴⁹ On the same day, however, in another letter to Stalin, Sheboldaev went much further, proposing substantial reduction in the grain collection plan for the region.⁵⁰ Stalin reacted sharply. He wrote to Sheboldaev, ‘I cannot support you in view of the bad work of the region in grain collection ... the regional committee is either giving up in face of difficulties and surrendering its positions to the advocates of spontaneity, or it is behaving like a diplomat and trying to deceive the CC.’⁵¹ Stalin wrote in similar terms to Kaganovich, half-apologising

⁴⁴ GARF, 5446/27/8, 245. Yakovlev’s proposal is discussed in a memorandum to Kuibyshev from Chernov, dated August 2; Chernov strongly opposed the proposal, arguing that it would lead ‘literally to a breakdown’ in the provision of grain for food, export, distilleries, etc.

⁴⁵ GARF, 5446/27/13, 148 (telegram to Kaganovich). For this telegram, see also p. 130.

⁴⁶ GARF, 5446/27/10, 26 (unattributed message sent by direct wire from Samara to Stalin and Molotov; no date, but from its position in the file was sent in summer 1932). The complaint is odd, as the Central Volga plan was in fact lower than that for the Central Black-Earth region.

⁴⁷ The letter has not been available; it is cited in Ivnitskii (2000), 255, and in the Politburo minutes (RGASPI, 17/162/13, art. 54/22, dated August 20).

⁴⁸ SKP, 285.

⁴⁹ RGASPI, 17/162/13 (art. 54/22).

⁵⁰ The full text of his letter has not been available; it is cited in Ivnitskii (2000), 256.

⁵¹ See Ivnitskii (1994), 193 (dated August 22). Ivnitskii wrongly assumes that the Politburo decision of August 20 also referred to the Sheboldaev letter of the same date.

for his earlier support of Sheboldaev.⁵² On August 23, the Politburo resolved ‘to decisively reject all attempts to reduce the plan’ for the North Caucasus, and reproved Sheboldaev for his prediction that the plan might be underfulfilled by 10–15 million puds (164,000–246,000 tons).⁵³ The protests continued throughout the autumn.⁵⁴

The regional authorities also adopted various expedients to guard the peasants and their animals from starvation, and to protect future agricultural operations. For example, they constructed the collections plan so that the peasants were left with a minimum supply of grain. In June, before the harvest began, Ptukha sent a telegram to Lower Volga district party secretaries asking them to arrange the plan so that peasants received 15–18 puds (245–295 kilograms) a head from the harvest, plus seed and fodder, and that grain was set aside for village teachers and other state employees working in the countryside. On September 1, a Politburo resolution declared that these directives were ‘completely incorrect’ and summoned Ptukha to Moscow to report to a commission of Stalin, Postyshev and Kuibyshev. Four days later the Politburo again insisted that the first obligation was to fulfil the collection plan completely, and that Ptukha’s telegram was ‘absolutely incorrect and politically mistaken’.⁵⁵

The grain–fodder budget for a region or a district frequently provided the basis for regional and local claims that the grain collection was excessive. It often showed that the collection plan did not leave enough grain for food, fodder and seed. Thus an OGPU report claimed that a district grain budget in the Lower Volga region underestimated the harvest and overestimated the number of inhabitants and farm animals; in consequence, the region had set the collection plan for the district too low.⁵⁶ The bulletin of Zagotzerno strongly criticised its Kuban’ branch for preparing budgets ‘which “overbudgeted”

⁵² SKP, 294 (dated August 21).

⁵³ RGASPI, 17/3/897, 19, art. 69/37. The resolution made minor concessions to the North Caucasus region.

⁵⁴ For examples, see GARF, 5446/27/9, 108 (telegram from West Siberia to Stalin and Kuibyshev dated November 13); and the rejection by the Politburo of a request from the Lower Volga (RGASPI, 17/162/14, 22, dated November 29).

⁵⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/898 (sitting of September 1, item 24), 17/3/899, 6, 16 (decision of September 5).

⁵⁶ RGAE, 7486/37/237, 368–367 (report dated September 15, including data to August 21). This was the Illovlya district; there were similar reports on two other districts.

to such an extent that a district collection plan which was only two-thirds of that in the previous year was said to be “tense”.⁵⁷

The extent to which peasants and kolkhozy had the right to retain a minimum amount of their grain production was the subject of an argument between Molotov and Khataevich. Khataevich was by this time a party secretary in Ukraine, transferred from the Central Volga in October 1932.⁵⁸ He wrote in a pamphlet that only ‘commodity grain’ (tovarnyi khleb) was available for the agricultural collections, and not grain in general.⁵⁹ Molotov objected. In reply Khataevich conceded that his statement was untimely:

in order to feed the working class and the Red Army now, immediately, we have to take any grain in the kolkhozy, wherever we can, not taking into account whether it is commodity grain or not.

But he still insisted on the general principle that ‘we must collect commodity grain from the kolkhozy, not grain in general’. He argued that ‘we must take care that the main production and consumer needs of the kolkhozy and the collective farmers are satisfied, otherwise they will not sow and increase production’.⁶⁰ Molotov firmly rejected this argument:

Your position is fundamentally incorrect, non-Bolshevik. A Bolshevik must not demote the satisfaction of the needs – *minimum* needs, according to a strict and frequently tested decision of the party – needs of the state – to tenth or even to second priority, to satisfying these needs from kolkhoz and other ‘residuals’ (ozadki).

A Bolshevik who has thought out and checked the scale, and the situation as a whole, must place the satisfaction of the needs of the proletarian state over and above all other priorities.

He added cautiously, however, that the attitude ‘take *any* grain, wherever we can’, was also ‘an opportunist extreme’ and ‘non-Bolshevik’.⁶¹

⁵⁷ *Byulleten’ po khlebnomu delu*, 55, August 15, 1932.

⁵⁸ He was appointed by the USSR Politburo as second secretary to the Ukrainian central committee on October 1 (RGASPI, 17/3/902, 9)

⁵⁹ The pamphlet, marked ‘Only for members of the VKP(b)’ may be found in RGASPI, 82/2/141, 81ff.

⁶⁰ RGASPI, 82/2/141, 75–76 (written before November 23).

⁶¹ RGASPI, 82/2/141, 74 (letter dated November 23).

Subsequently, Khataevich himself proposed at the Ukrainian Politburo that his pamphlet should be withdrawn and 'certain unsatisfactory interpretations (formulirovki) corrected'.⁶²

In November, on Kosior's initiative, the Ukrainian Politburo made a further attempt to limit the severity of the collections. Collective farmers had long since been denied the right to retain a minimum amount of grain for their own consumption. The concern of the Ukrainian Politburo now was to protect from the depredations of Moscow the seed collected by the kolkhozy for the spring sowing of 1933. On November 18, under strong pressure from Moscow to collect more grain, it granted permission to district soviet executive committees to respond to the 'completely unsatisfactory' grain collection by confiscating the Seed Fund of the kolkhoz concerned, and its other Funds held in grain. But, fearing that no seed would be left for the spring, it qualified this severe provision by noting that in relation to Seed Funds it could be enforced 'only with the preliminary agreement of the regional executive committee'.⁶³ On November 29, it expressed this qualification even more emphatically:

To remove all Funds simply and mechanically is completely wrong and impermissible. It is particularly wrong in relation to the Seed Fund.

Hence the local authorities should secretly check the Funds without telling the kolkhoz it was doing so, and should confiscate them only if this would give 'serious results'; seed should be confiscated only in 'particularly exceptional circumstances'.⁶⁴

The USSR Politburo did not catch up with these Ukrainian moves until Kaganovich and Chernov descended on Ukraine towards the end of December. Following telegrams to Stalin from Kaganovich, on December 23 the USSR Politburo brusquely cancelled the Ukrainian Politburo decision of November 18.⁶⁵ The Ukrainian Politburo itself cancelled its decision of November 29, and Kosior

⁶² See RGASPI, 81/2/140, 127; and Ivnikskii (2000), 269.

⁶³ TsDAGOU, 1/6/237, 207–216, published in *Golod 1932–1933* (1990), 250–60.

⁶⁴ TsDAGOU, 1/6/238, 32–36, published in *Golod 1932–1933* (1990), 271–5; another copy is in TsDAGOU, 1/6/269, 120–124.

⁶⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/912, 16 (decision by poll); for Kaganovich's telegrams of December 22 and 23, see RGASPI, 81/3/232, 53–53ob. and 62. Awkwardly, the November 18 decision was apparently approved by Molotov when he was in Ukraine (see Vasil'ev and Shapoval, eds (2001), 127).

sent an apology to its members and candidate members for this document, of which 'I was the main author'. Kosior now conceded that the kulaks were counting on the party agreeing that there was no more grain; if the Seed Funds were not confiscated, all the collections that would be obtained would be a small amount from rethreshing the straw or from disclosing concealed grain pits.⁶⁶

The real feelings of some, perhaps all, of the regional secretaries about the grain plans were revealed in a later letter from Khataevich to Stalin:

I consider it necessary to say that the grain collection plan of 425 million puds (315 after it was reduced) which Ukraine received initially was not appropriate for achieving the mobilisation required for the struggle for grain. Many were convinced that the plan could not be fulfilled and did nothing. If Ukraine had been given a plan of 350 million puds from the outset it would have carried it out better.

Stalin wrote ironically on the letter 'Interesting', and Molotov added – obviously referring to their quarrel about Khataevich's pamphlet – 'cde. Khataevich is entrenching himself in his wrong approach'.⁶⁷

The cautious and partial resistance of the regional and republican party secretaries to the grain collection plans reflected the hostility and resistance of the collective farmers and individual peasants. Even before the 1932/33 collections began, Stalin complained that 'several tens of thousands of Ukrainian collective farmers are still travelling about the whole of the European USSR and are disrupting the kolkhozy with their complaints and whining'.⁶⁸ Throughout the grain campaign, reports from the collection agencies and party members described this resistance, which was expressed even more sharply in the secret OGPU reports which flowed up from local informers and the local OGPU organisations to the regions and to Moscow. Thus, in Ukraine in July, the OGPU reported disturbances among the collective farmers, who were trying to leave the kolkhozy

⁶⁶ Published from TsDAGOU archives in *Golod 1932–1933* (1990), 298–9.

⁶⁷ *Golod 1932–1933* (1990), 56–7 (letter of December 27 cited from APRF). The two variants of the plan, 425 million puds (6.96 million tons) and 315 million (5.16 million tons) evidently include the milling levy.

⁶⁸ SKP, 179 (letter to Kaganovich and Molotov dated June 18; for this letter see p. 145).

and were stealing grain.⁶⁹ In many districts peasants who had left the kolkhozy seized land and horses which they regarded as their own and actively resisted the attempts of the police and the kolkhozy to retain the land.⁷⁰ Sheboldaev, in his letter to Stalin dated August 14, reported that, 'in spite of mass work on the grain collections, in the individual peasant sector there has been great resistance and direct refusal to fulfil the plan'.⁷¹ Then, in his further letter of August 20 (see p. 148), he reported that the collective farmers were 'working this summer better than last year, but display a more intense attitude of caution in relation to the grain collections'; the collective farmers criticised the bad leadership of agriculture and the high-handed attitudes of officials, and almost everywhere they referred openly to the danger of famine.⁷² In September, the OGPU secret reports noted a 'despondent mood' among collective farmers in the Russian districts of the North Caucasus. Under the influence of 'provocative rumours' about forthcoming famine they had boycotted the grain collections, refused to attend meetings, and fled from the countryside. Forty demonstrations had taken place in the previous month against the grain collections, including strikes involving whole brigades and kolkhozy.⁷³ In September, the authorities in the North Caucasus attempted to halt the issue of bread to those working in the fields. This resulted in what Kaganovich later described in a telegram to Stalin as 'a mass failure to appear for work' and a North Caucasus official described more bluntly as 'almost a strike'.⁷⁴ According to the OGPU, 'despondent moods, disorientation and a tendency to flee the district' were also found in Ukraine, the Central Black-Earth region and the Lower Volga region. On occasion, party members refused to impose the collection plan and relinquished their party card.⁷⁵ By September 22, 446 village soviets in Ukraine

⁶⁹ TsDAGOU, 1/20/5480, 71–80 (dated July 24, 1932).

⁷⁰ Special report of the OGPU on the Central Volga region, July 17, 1932 (RGAE, 7486/37/237, 216–215); see also GPU report for August 16 (RGAE, 7486/37/237, 329–328), referring to the Central Black-Earth and Leningrad regions, and the Belorussian republic.

⁷¹ Cited by Ivnitskii (1994), 192.

⁷² Cited by Ivnitskii (1994), 192–3.

⁷³ TsAFSB, 2/10/514, 145–164 (dated September 22, referring to situation as of September 16) (published in TSD, iii, 488–9).

⁷⁴ RGASPI, 81/3/232, 29 (telegram dated November 1), 81/3/214, 1–3 (Dorokhov speech on same date).

⁷⁵ RGAE, 7486/37/237, 410 (dated September 26, data to September 22).

had refused to accept their grain plans and, in July and August, 216 'mass demonstrations' were recorded:

If in July demonstrations mainly took the form of group and mass protests, now they also take the form of strikes in which whole brigades and kolkhozy prevent the transport of grain (North Caucasus, Ukraine).

It should be noted that in Ukraine ... the number of participants in some demonstrations has reached 1000, and the demonstrations involve the beating-up of representatives of the district and village authorities – in Kiev, Vinnitsa and Khar'kov regions.⁷⁶

As in 1930 and 1931, women were often in the forefront. An OGPU report describes how, in the North Caucasus, fifty-six women, summoned from two kilometres away by the hooter of the steam thresher, joined with the threshing brigade to prevent the despatch of grain to the elevator. Elsewhere in the region, 100 women prevented the despatch of grain from their village.⁷⁷ Similar resistance by women was reported from the Central Black-Earth region.⁷⁸

At a conference on the 1932 harvest held in the Kolkhoz Research Institute, a report on the North Caucasus graphically described the impossible situation in one district:

The plan for the grain collections was distributed on the basis of 12,000 hectares [sown area], with a planned yield of 9.5 tsentners per hectare. In fact after the final check in the district the average yield turned out to be 6 tsentners per hectare ... The collections plan allocated to the district, in the conditions which have developed there, is unrealistic, and the question has been raised with the district agencies of the need to revise it.⁷⁹

This situation was widespread.

The scepticism of the district party and state agencies, which were most sensitive to peasant attitudes, about the prospects for grain collections in their district was reinforced by the strong peasant hostility

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 411, 405–404.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 393–392.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 391.

⁷⁹ RGAE, 260/1/217, 11 (report by Krener).

to the collections. Sheboldaev reported in June or July that, taken together, the district grain collection plans in the North Caucasus amounted to only about half the regional target set by the Politburo; he reproved the district authorities for underestimating the yield.⁸⁰ Then, in his letter of August 20, Sheboldaev reported that the district authorities were refusing to impose the plans on individual kolkhozy because they were too large, and would not leave enough grain for fodder or food.⁸¹ In August, Stalin complained bitterly to Kaganovich that ‘they say that in two Ukrainian regions (apparently in Kiev and Dnepropetrovsk regions) about 50 district committees have spoken out against the grain collection plan, describing it as unrealistic: ‘instead of leading the districts, Kosior manoeuvres the whole time between the directives of the CC CPSU(b) and the demands of the districts and so – he has manoeuvred up to his elbows (*dolavirovalsya do ruchki*)’.⁸² In retrospect, Kosior, in a speech published in the press, admitted apologetically that between July and September the Ukrainian central committee had failed to counteract the hostile mood in its districts and regions: ‘When you travelled to a district about the grain collections, they started to pull out of every pocket statements and tables about the low yield; these were entirely prepared by hostile elements.’ These statements were ‘kulak arithmetic’, which ignored the question of the harvest on the root, and would not have given half of the grain needed. ‘Our comrades’ often became ‘kulak advocates who defended these figures’. The party secretary and chair of the district executive committee in the district often participated, and were not contradicted by the plenipotentiaries.⁸³

Ptukha later reported that, in the Lower Volga region, where in 1931 district party secretaries had been afraid to complain about the collection plan, in 1932 there was ‘a stream, a flood, of conversation about the plan’.⁸⁴ In November, the district secretaries, at a conference

⁸⁰ Sheboldaev (Rostov, 1934), 55; it is not clear whether this speech was made between June 13 and 16 or on July 10. As we have seen (p. 148), behind the scenes Sheboldaev himself sought the reduction of the collection plan for his region.

⁸¹ Ivnitskii (1994), 192–3.

⁸² SKP, 273–4 (letter to Kaganovich dated August 11; for other aspects of this letter see pp. 167–8 and 169–70).

⁸³ P, February 15, 1933 (speech at plenum of Ukrainian central committee, February 5, 1933). For a similar report from Ivanovo region, see *Severnii rabochii*, June 30, 1933.

⁸⁴ Speech at plenum of regional party committee, January 1933, cited Kondrashin (1991), 94–5.

in the North Caucasus, all claimed that the yield had been so low that the collections plan would leave them without seed, fodder or food.⁸⁵ Chernov, in reply, insisted that the secretaries were acting as petitioners for the peasants, who were poisoned with kulak attitudes;⁸⁶ in the Kuban' their proposals to reduce the plan would effectively bring the collections to a halt.⁸⁷ Sheboldaev later described the 'frantic resistance and frantic sabotage' which took place during the collections, and described 'the pressure from below against the grain collections, pressure from organisations trying to reduce the grain collections and extend the timetable'. He acknowledged that this pressure continued to influence the regional committee until Stalin and Kaganovich intervened in November.⁸⁸ And in December, at the height of the campaign, an OGPU report, presumably based on evidence from an informer, described graphically the attitude of local officials in a Ukrainian district. Only 39 per cent of the annual collection plan had been completed, but the party secretary complained, 'What can I write about grain when there is no grain, the kolkhozy have no grain.' The chair of the district soviet executive committee pointed out that many kolkhozy lacked seed, and believed that the December plan could not be fulfilled: 'Let them come from the regional party committee, and begin to collect the grain themselves.' And the chair of the district trade union even more bluntly insisted:

The grain collection plan for the district is unrealistic, we will starve this year and the kolkhozy as well; the kolkhozy have given so much grain that they have nothing to mill.⁸⁹

Hardly a hint appeared in the press about the true situation in the countryside, and attempts to draw public attention to it were punished. In October, at a session of the Ukrainian bureau of the Society of Old Bolsheviks, attended by active members of the society, a member of the Moscow branch of the society, who had worked for

⁸⁵ See Oskol'kov (1991), 32.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁸⁷ RGASPI, 81/3/214, 8 (speech of November 2).

⁸⁸ Sheboldaev (1934), 78-9 (speech to regional party committee plenum, January 26, 1933).

⁸⁹ TsDAGOU, 1/20/5481, 71.

fifty-seven days in a brigade of the USSR party central committee in Khar'kov, reported frankly:

I had the opportunity to speak with leading workers in districts and villages and as a result of the discussions with them it became clear that the cause of the situation was the unrealistic grain collection plans which they had received. Moreover, none of them raised the issue of the lack of realism in the plans in a Bolshevik manner with the appropriate people – they were afraid of being expelled from the party. In my opinion the local officials are in large part flatterers, self-seekers and cowards, afraid to lose their jobs and concealing the true situation. We Old Bolsheviks should not behave like that. Not to report that the plans are unrealistic is worse than a Right-wing deviation ... There are strong communists who send in reports of local scandals, but the central committee and the regional committee do not react.

The Bureau responded to his outburst by declaring that it was 'anti-party and impermissible', and reported it to the Ukrainian Politburo.⁹⁰

Collective farmers naturally took it for granted that they were entitled to a minimum amount of kolkhoz grain. According to an OGPU report, a collective farmer in West Siberia complained that they were receiving less grain than before collectivisation:

Every household needs 100 puds [he insisted]; when we were individual peasants, at the very least each household had 100–150 puds and now with this plan we will just have a ration.⁹¹

The same report noted that numerous individual peasants and collective farmers had concluded, obviously referring to the 'neo-Nep' decrees of May 1932, that '*Soviet power had again deceived the peasant with its decrees – the grain collections are being made in the old way*', and that '*this year we will again suffer from hunger*'. And a collective farmer in Achinskii district, West Siberia, commented:

This spring I believed that the government had reduced the grain collections. They said it in spring, and now even before the grain

⁹⁰ TsDAGOU, 1/20/5245, 25–27 (session of October 8–9, reported to Ukrainian Politburo on October 25).

⁹¹ TsAFSB, 1/10/520, 704 (OGPU report from West Siberia dated September 15, 1932, referring to Uglovskii district) (published in TSD, iii, 474).

is harvested they are already beginning to squeeze us, that's the way they make life easier.⁹²

The peasants reacted to the severity of the collections not merely by indignation and demonstrations but also by the now-traditional expedients for maintaining control over their own grain. From the beginning of the harvest, many cases of the theft of grain from the fields were listed in secret reports to the authorities. In the North Caucasus, 'after the grain was raked up masses of collective farmers and individual peasants collected the ears, and there were many thefts of ears from the stooks'.⁹³ According to one report, whole sheaves of grain were stolen from the fields in the North Caucasus, and in one kolkhoz an attempt was made to steal fifty sacks of threshed grain.⁹⁴ On July 25, an OGPU report noted '*the widespread tendency*' in Ukraine, the Central Volga region and Bashkiria to harvest grain prematurely and distribute it on the spot, or to seize it directly 'on the root' in the fields. For example:

On the night of July 9, 5 women were found in the fields cutting the ears of wheat. When an attempt was made to detain the women, they fled in different directions. The guard fired twice from fowling pieces. One of the collective-farm women who fled was severely wounded (she died several hours later), and an individual peasant was slightly wounded. [Report from a village (stanitsa) in Krasnodar district, Central Volga region.]

In the same village there were cases of theft of grain by crowds of 15–40 men and women, who went to the fields with scythes and sickles. On July 9 a group of 5 watchmen (ob"ezdchiki) met a crowd of 15 thieves on horseback, with sacks of stolen grain. *When they tried to detain them the crowd resisted and the watchmen fled.*⁹⁵

In the Lower Volga region the whole village in one district, including party members, engaged in the theft of grain from the fields 'on a huge scale'.⁹⁶ Chernov complained that district party secretaries in

⁹² *Ibid.*, 706–707.

⁹³ RGAE, 7446/20/45, 93 (Timoshevskii district, report dated July 24).

⁹⁴ RGAE, 2601/1/217, 5.

⁹⁵ RGAE, 7486/37/237, 236–233 (referring to situation to July 22).

⁹⁶ RGASPI, 108/1/17, 242 (Malyi Serbinskii district, report dated August 20). A similar report from West Siberia appears in TsAFSB, 2/10/520, 656–663 (dated August 22).

the North Caucasus were presenting balances based on the amount of grain in the barns, ignoring the widespread theft of grain between field and barn.⁹⁷ A report from the North Caucasus pointed out that the straw should have been rethreshed when an appreciable amount of grain remained, but instead peasants picked over the straw for the grain.⁹⁸ Kaganovich referred in a telegram to Stalin to another device for concealing grain – classifying it illegitimately as ‘second-grade’.⁹⁹

Many reports also appeared of the illicit use of grain for barter and of its sale on the black market. In the North Caucasus, a district which had some wheat in store at the beginning of the harvest used it in exchange for spare parts for tractors, and materials.¹⁰⁰ In the Lower Volga region, collective farmers exchanged grain for clothes and a sewing machine.¹⁰¹

The seeping of grain into undesirable channels was frequently reported in the press. In July, Sarkis claimed in *Pravda*:

Speculation in grain in Crimea and Central Asia is already developing now and has not so far met with adequate opposition from the district and regional organisations. This makes the task of grain collection more complicated this year, in a certain sense, than in 1931.¹⁰²

An article in the party journal claimed that the current ‘kulak slogan’ was ‘*first to the market, then to the state*’.¹⁰³ Kirov acknowledged that many collective farmers wanted to sell grain simultaneously with the state collections; they looked with envy on the remaining individual peasants, who found it easier to sell secretly.¹⁰⁴ Kuibyshev claimed even more bluntly:

In a number of places trade in grain is occurring independently of the fulfilment of the grain collection plan, and the market is flooded with repurchasers, who are not only engaged in the

⁹⁷ RGASPI, 81/3/214, 8–9 (speech of November 2).

⁹⁸ RGAE, 260/1/217, 2ob. – 3 (Tarakanov).

⁹⁹ RGASPI, 81/3/232, 29 (dated November 1).

¹⁰⁰ RGAE, 260/1/217, 1ob. (Tarakanov).

¹⁰¹ RGASPI, 108/1/17, 242 (Malyi Serbinskii district, report dated August 20).

¹⁰² P, July 26, 1932.

¹⁰³ B, 14, July 15, 1932, 5 (sent to press August 16–22).

¹⁰⁴ P, August 6, 1932 (speech at conference of rural officials, Leningrad region).

sale of grain on the market but also go out to other markets. A huge quantity of grain has been observed which was brought from the North Caucasus to Ukraine ... Speculation can be observed in Central Asia, Ukraine and Crimea.¹⁰⁵

The unauthorised sale of grain was often noted in internal party reports, and featured prominently in the secret reports of the OGPU. Thus the Penza town party committee in the Central Volga region complained in August that 'a considerable section of the individual peasants are trying to throw grain onto the market'.¹⁰⁶ In a memorandum to Kuibyshev, Chernov complained that 'in spite of a number of measures adopted by the authorities, in all the southern areas bazaar trade in grain has taken place on quite a large scale'. Small traders were travelling round the villages to buy up grain in small amounts in exchange for consumer goods they had acquired in the towns. Chernov demanded that the OGPU should arrest such speculators forthwith.¹⁰⁷

The authorities frequently complained that flour or bread was being distributed too lavishly. In August, the Ukrainian Politburo noted that bread was frequently being issued as part of the meals supplied to collective farmers working in the fields, and that typically they were allocated a kilogram or more per day, when the correct advance in kind was only 200–400 grams. The Politburo ruled that henceforth only tractor drivers should receive bread as part of their meals; other peasants should take their own bread with them from their advance in kind.¹⁰⁸

The persistent drive to repress the free sale of grain undoubtedly limited its scale. In August, quite early in the collection campaign, a report from Bashkiria complained that the struggle against speculation in grain had created an 'extremely difficult position for manual and clerical workers who have ceased to receive rations; we cannot give them bread and they cannot buy it themselves in the bazaars'. According to the report, one of the harmful consequences of this was that workers were leaving work to go to the countryside to get

¹⁰⁵ Kuibyshev (1932), 31–3 (according to Kuibyshev (1937), the speech was delivered to rapporteurs of the Moscow party organisation on August 2). P, August 20, 1932, reported speculation in grain in many Ukrainian districts.

¹⁰⁶ *Kollektivizatsiya* (Kuibyshev, 1970), 323 (dated August 10).

¹⁰⁷ GARE, 5446/27/8, 228 (dated August 11).

¹⁰⁸ TsDAGOU, 1/6/237, 13 (decision of August 22).

bread.¹⁰⁹ But trade in grain revived continuously in spite of the frequent attempts to repress it. In September, an OGPU directive, approved by the Politburo, claimed that ‘the sale of grain and flour from the new harvest is taking place at bazaars and markets almost everywhere’.¹¹⁰ Some weeks later, the Ukrainian OGPU reported with pride that between October 1 and November 15 it had seized 450 tons of grain from 3,920 collective farmers, individual peasants, kulaks and traders (996 of these were collective farmers); 862 persons had been brought to trial, and a further 2,312 re-sellers of grain had been arrested. As a result the flow of grain had been greatly reduced, though flour was still being sold in glasses. The OGPU also claimed to have exposed 47 secret mills and 32 secret bakeries.¹¹¹

Throughout the autumn secret reports continued to complain that peasants were stealing grain and selling it illegally. The practice was widespread even in West Siberia, where the harvest was reasonably good and the grain collection plans were eventually achieved in full. In one district, grain had been sold on the private market in a number of kolkhozy, and carters had stolen part of the grain they transported to the collection agency. In another district, the chair of a kolkhoz had sold a sack of flour belonging to the kolkhoz and got drunk for three days on the proceeds.¹¹²

It has not been possible to estimate either the amount of grain stolen for personal consumption or the extent of illicit grain sales on the market. The illegal market was probably not large. In June, Eikhe reported to Stalin that, in Siberia, ‘there is no grain market’, merely rare sales of grain.¹¹³ In August, as we have seen, the Bashkir regional party secretary, in a telegram to Kaganovich, reported the exceptional degree of scarcity of grain in the bazaars.¹¹⁴ Although Chernov described the trade in his memorandum to Kuibyshev as ‘on quite a large scale’ in terms of those participating, he also conceded that ‘the quantity of grain circulating on the markets is not so large’; his main

¹⁰⁹ RGASPI, 5446/27/13, 144 (report dated August 19 from Bykin to Kaganovich).

¹¹⁰ RGASPI, 17/3/900, 43–45 (directive signed by Akulov, approved by Politburo by poll on September 15).

¹¹¹ TsDAGOU, 1/20/5481, 31–32 (report from Redens).

¹¹² TsAFSB, 2/10/522, 931–935.

¹¹³ GARF, 5446/27/13, 139 (dated June 1).

¹¹⁴ See n. 109.

concern was that trade in grain would have 'a very negative effect on the harvesting and on the grain collections'.¹¹⁵ An estimate of the grain and fodder budget in the archives put grain sales on the 'kolkhoz market' at 810,000 tons. Of these sales, 393,000 tons had taken place during July–December 1932; and of these, 116,000 tons were barley and oats in the form of grain, and 277,000 tons rye and other grains in the form of flour.¹¹⁶

(ii) *Enforcement*

The optimistic spirit in which the grain campaign was launched evaporated soon after the ripening of the harvest in the southern areas of the USSR in July. The USSR grain collection plan for July was 982,000 tons.¹¹⁷ Because of the unprecedented reduction in stocks in the last weeks of the previous agricultural year (see p. 102–4), this grain from the new harvest was urgently needed for towns and industrial sites in Ukraine and elsewhere.¹¹⁸ But only 471,000 tons were, in fact, collected, less than half the amount collected in July 1931 (see Table 14(c)).

Before the end of July, Stalin decided that only a policy of uncompromising harshness would enable the grain collections to succeed. On July 20, in a long letter to Kaganovich and Molotov, he argued strongly that a new law (*zakon*) on thefts of railway freight and cooperative and kolkhoz property should impose drastic sentences on the offenders:

The thefts are mainly organised by kulaks (the dekulakised) and other anti-social elements, attempting to totter our new system.

¹¹⁵ GARF, 5446/27/8, 228 (dated August 11).

¹¹⁶ An alternative estimate put sales on the kolkhoz market at 780,000 tons: RGAE, 1562/3/178, 53; 1562/3/181, 4; 1562/3/238, 7.

¹¹⁷ RGASPI, 17/162/12, 192–193 (decision of June 20); promulgated as Sovnarkom decree on June 25 (GARF, 5446/57/19, 221–222, art. 1008/219s). The sovkhozy were to supply 20.6 million puds (337 thousand tons).

¹¹⁸ On June 20, the Politburo resolved that 'Mikoyan and Chernov shall work out jointly with the central committee of the Ukrainian SSR an operational plan for the utilisation of collections within Ukraine from the new harvest so that, as well as securing Donbass, Khar'kov and Dnepropetrovsk, special attention should be given to securing supply of grain to Nikolaev, Odessa, Kiev and the South-western railway'; they were also to secure the uninterrupted supply of Karaganda (RGASPI, 17/162/12, 192–193).

By the present law these gentlemen are considered to be normal thieves, they get two or three years in prison (formally!) and in practice are amnestied after 6–8 months. This kind of regimen for these gentlemen cannot be considered socialist; it simply rewards their ‘work’, which in essence is truly counter-revolutionary. I propose to issue a law (as an exception to or replacing existing laws) which would

- (a) equate railway freight, kolkhoz property and cooperative property to state property;
- (b) impose for the misappropriation (theft) of property in these cases a minimum sentence of ten years’ confinement, and as a rule – the death penalty;
- (c) abolish the use of amnesty for criminals in these ‘trades’.

Without these (and similar) draconic socialist measures a new social discipline cannot be established, and without such a discipline our new system cannot be defended and strengthened.

I think that the publication of such a law must not be delayed.

In the same letter, Stalin noted that the decree on kolkhoz trade had ‘undoubtedly to a certain extent encouraged kulak elements and speculator–resellers’ and called for ‘a close watch on the countryside and on all those who propagandise actively against the new kolkhoz system, and active supporters of the idea of leaving the kolkhozy – remove them and send them to a concentration camp (on an individual basis)’. Stalin also called for ‘a close watch on bazaars, markets and all speculators and resellers if they are not collective farmers (it would be better for collective farmer–speculators to be handed over to a kolkhoz comrades court) – remove them, confiscate [their property] and send them to a concentration camp’. Without such measures ‘new Soviet trade’ could not be strengthened.¹¹⁹ A few days later, in a further letter to Kaganovich, he set out the provisions of the proposed law on property in more detail, and argued that it was important to provide a legal basis for the actions of the OGPU in these matters:

I think that on all these three points [a reference to the proposed three Sections of the law] it is necessary to act on the basis of law (‘the muzhik loves legality’) and not merely on the basis of OGPU

¹¹⁹ SKP, 235–6.

practice. But of course the role of the OGPU will not merely not be reduced by this, it will be strengthened and ‘ennobled’ (OGPU agencies will operate ‘on a legal basis’ and not ‘arbitrarily’).¹²⁰

Stalin seems to have anticipated that some members of the Politburo would not like this proposal. A letter to Kaganovich and Molotov instructed them how to defend the draft decree in the Politburo:

If there are objections to my proposal about the issuing of a law against misappropriation of cooperative and kolkhoz property and of freight, give the following explanation. Capitalism could not have beaten feudalism, it would not have developed and been strengthened, if it had not declared that the principle of private property was a foundation of capitalist society, if it had not made private property into sacred property, the violation of the interests of which was strictly punished and for the defence of which it created its own state. Socialism could not defeat and bury capitalist elements and individualistic self-seeking tendencies, habits and traditions (which are the basis of theft) ... if it did not declare that social property (cooperative, kolkhoz and state) is sacred and inviolable.¹²¹

Stalin’s anticipation that there would be criticism within the Politburo proved justified. A draft letter to Stalin in Kaganovich’s files, dated August 2, reported that when the decree was considered by an informal meeting (*beseda*) on the previous day, one person (evidently a Politburo member) objected to Section III of the decree (this imposed long sentences of imprisonment for ‘advocating the use of threats and force’ to compel collective farmers to leave the kolkhozy). Another person (or persons? – the Russian is ambiguous) expressed ‘doubts and even objections’ to Section II as well as Section III (Section II imposed the death penalty for the theft of kolkhoz property). Tantalisingly, the names were left blank in Kaganovich’s draft (it may never have been sent to Stalin). The draft explained that, on August 2, the day on which Kaganovich drafted his letter, the first objector was ‘not here; he has gone away’.

¹²⁰ SKP, 286 (letter dated July 26).

¹²¹ SKP, 240–1 (letter written before July 24); the letter was marked ‘in favour – Molotov, Kuibyshev, Voroshilov, Kalinin’. Ordzhonikidze was on leave at the time.

The second objector evidently swallowed his doubts; as Kaganovich put it, 'in the end we agreed to this text in the main'.¹²²

The decree was promulgated by TsIK and Sovnarkom on August 7 (see vol. 4, p. 242). It will be referred to in this volume as 'the decree of August 7'; it became popularly known as the 'Seven-Eight' decree, and was often officially referred to as a 'Law'. The preamble to the decree attributed thefts of socialist property to 'hooligan and generally anti-social elements' and attacked 'kulak elements' for using 'violence and threats' in attempts to force collective farmers to leave the kolkhozy. It declared that 'social property (state, kolkhoz and cooperative) is a foundation of the Soviet system' and that those who sought to plunder it must be looked on as 'enemies of the people'. In its most important and savage clauses (Section II of the decree), kolkhoz property was for the first time classified as of equal status with state property:

1. Property of kolkhozy and cooperatives (harvest in the fields, common stocks, animals, cooperative stores and shops, etc.) shall be deemed equal in its significance to state property and the defence of this property from depredation shall be strengthened in every way.
2. As a measure of legal repression for depredation against (theft of) kolkhoz and cooperative property there shall be applied the highest measure of social defence – execution by shooting, with the confiscation of all property; this shall be replaced in mitigating circumstances by deprivation of freedom for a period not less than 10 years with the confiscation of all property.
3. An amnesty shall not be applied to criminals condemned in cases of depredations against kolkhoz and cooperative property.¹²³

¹²² SKP, 256–7. The Politburo session on July 23 was attended by Molotov, Kuibyshev, Voroshilov, Kalinin and Kirov; no candidate members were present. The next regular meeting on August 1 was attended by the same full members, except Kirov, and by Petrovsky (candidate member); the same persons attended the session on August 8.

¹²³ SZ, 1932, art. 360. The Politburo session of August 8, which confirmed the decision to adopt this decree, was held on the day of its publication, and attended by only five full members of the Politburo: Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Kalinin, Kuibyshev and Molotov. Section I of the decree imposed the same punishments for theft of rail or water freight; Section III imposed '5–10 years deprivation of freedom with confinement in a concentration camp' in 'cases concerned with the protection of kolkhozy and collective farmers from the use of violence and threats from kulaks

On the same day, August 2, on which the Politburo adopted the decree on socialist property it also instructed the OGPU to propose within three days specific measures on 'Speculation and Repurchase of Grain by Private Dealers (chastniki)'.¹²⁴ The decree, entitled 'On the Struggle with Speculation', was promulgated by TsIK and Sovnarkom on August 22, and applied to internal trade in general as well as the grain trade. The decree referred back to the decision of May 20 (see p. 138), which permitted kolkhoz trade at market prices but banned the opening of shops and stalls by private traders. The August 22 decree complained that speculation in consumer goods had occurred, called upon the OGPU, the procuracy and local soviets to take measures to root out speculation, and ruled that 'confinement in a concentration camp for 5–10 years shall be applied to speculators and resellers without right of amnesty'.¹²⁵

Even after the adoption of the decree of August 7 there was unease in high party circles about the public reaction to it. On August 8, it was published inconspicuously in *Pravda* on an inside page; Kaganovich later reported to Stalin that he had strongly reproved *Pravda* for this.¹²⁶ On the following day, August 9, on Kaganovich's instructions, it reappeared in a prominent position on the first page, accompanied by a strongly-worded editorial 'Socialist Property is Sacred and Inviolable'. It soon became apparent that a major function of the decree – perhaps *the* major function – would be to discourage peasants from unauthorised purloining of grain from the kolkhoz fields. On August 21, *Pravda* devoted a whole page to the decree. It reported all kinds of theft in the kolkhozy at length; but it claimed that the main form of theft was to remove 'the completed harvest' at night. An individual peasant who systematically stole kolkhoz grain had been sentenced to death by shooting. On the

and other anti-social elements' (in his letter of July 26 Stalin proposed that the defence of the kolkhozy should be dealt with in the same law as the law on socialist property). It will be noted that the preamble to the decree blamed 'kulak elements' for the use of violence and threats, but Section III imposed the punishment not only on kulaks but also on 'other anti-social elements'.

¹²⁴ RGASPI, 17/162/13, 52; this decision appeared in the 'special papers', while the decree on social property appeared in the normal Politburo protocols.

¹²⁵ SZ, 1932, art. 375. At the Politburo the decree (proposed by Kaganovich) was adopted by poll on August 13 and confirmed by the full meeting on August 16 (RGASPI, 17/3/895, 11).

¹²⁶ SKP, 289 (letter dated August 19).

following day, August 22, a report from Khar'kov region claimed that there were hardly any districts in which kolkhoz grain had not been stolen, usually from the fields. The same issue carried a report from Samara designed to intimidate hungry peasants who were tempted to steal small amounts of grain:

To the Firing Squad – for Stealing Kolkhoz Grain!

Samara, 21 August. (*Our corr.*) In Osinovka village, Samara district, the female kulak Griбанова, who fled from exile, consistently engaged in stealing grain from the fields of the 'Red Builder' kolkhoz. When a search took place some threshed grain was found, and some unthreshed. Stolen kolkhoz grain was also found in the possession of female individual peasants Tereshkina and Kolesnikova, and the artisan Osipov.

Collective farmers at a general meeting demanded severe punishment from the proletarian court for these robbers of kolkhoz property. The court sentenced the kulak Griбанова *to be shot*. Tereshkina and Osipov were sentenced to 10 years and Kolesnikova to 5 years' deprivation of liberty.¹²⁷

The decree of August 7 was not only savage, but impracticably savage. Interpreted literally, it would have required the imposition of the death penalty on tens, or even hundreds, of thousands of minor cases of theft by individuals. Historians, including the present authors, have been puzzled that judges had imposed death sentences as an exception rather than as the rule (see pp. 198 and 202); such bravery was admirable – but how did they get away with it over the months and years in which the decree was enforced?

The Politburo protocols reveal that secret decisions had modified the original decree. On September 1, Stalin, at the first Politburo session after his return from vacation, proposed the establishment of a commission to prepare an instruction on the carrying out of the decree.¹²⁸ The instruction – signed on September 13 by Vinokurov,

¹²⁷ P, August 22, 1932.

¹²⁸ RGASPI, 17/3/898, 1; this was item 2, high up the agenda. The commission consisted of OGPU and legal notables, not politicians: Akulov, Vinokurov, Vyshinskii, Bulat and Krasikov. The following Politburo session, on September 8, approved the draft instruction 'in the main', but also resolved that 'the commission for the final editing of the draft shall include Stalin' (RGASPI, 17/3/899, 2 – item 5). In a letter sent to Kaganovich shortly after the publication of the decree of August 7,

head of the Supreme Court; Krasikov, Procurator; and Akulov, deputy head of the OGPU – was approved by the Politburo three days later.¹²⁹ It was a printed document, circulated to courts down to district level and to GPU plenipotentiaries and heads of ‘operational sectors’. This was certainly a savage instruction, but it specifically exempted small-scale theft of socialist property from the death penalty. It declared that ‘organisations and groupings destroying state, social and cooperative property in an organised way by fires, explosions and mass destruction of property shall be sentenced to execution without weakening (*bez oslableniya*)’, and listed a number of cases in which ‘kulaks, former traders and other socially-alien persons’ should suffer the death penalty. Kulaks, whether members of a kolkhoz or not, who ‘organise or take part in the theft of kolkhoz property and grain’, should also be sentenced to ‘VMN [the supreme measure of social defence – that is, execution] without weakening’. But ‘working individual peasants and collective farmers’ who stole kolkhoz property and grain should be sentenced to ten years; the death penalty should be imposed only for ‘systematic theft of grain, sugar beet, etc. and animals’.

The Politburo certainly still envisaged that a substantial number of the less trivial cases would be subject to the death penalty. On September 16, a further decision about the decree of August 7, which appeared only in the special papers of the Politburo, ruled that ‘as an exception to the general arrangement for VMN’, sentences by republican courts could be confirmed by the republican Supreme Court, rather than the Supreme Court of the USSR, and must be confirmed within 24 hours of receiving the file, and that decisions by the OGPU plenipotentiaries could be confirmed by the OGPU collegium. Reports on court sittings and on sentences should no longer be published, presumably because of the unfavourable public reaction they had aroused.¹³⁰ Reports such as those published in *Pravda* on August 22 no longer appeared.

Stalin proposed that a directive letter should be sent by the CC to party, legal and punishment agencies about the application of the decree, and requested that a draft should be prepared which he would look at when he returned to Moscow. This letter gave no hint that this would involve a certain softening of the original decree. (RGASPI, 81/3/99, 144–152, dated August 11.)

¹²⁹ RGASPI, 17/3/900, 33–34 (this was a Politburo decision confirmed by the full Politburo on the same day).

¹³⁰ RGASPI, 17/162/13, 99–100 (decision dated September 16).

In a similar spirit of feasible repression, an OGPU directive approved by the Politburo on the same day insisted that village assemblies should be told that all trade in grain and flour must cease, and that grain placed on sale should be seized by the police and Zagotzerno; ‘speculators’ should be repressed. But it also ruled that grain seized from peasants should be paid for, and recorded as part of the grain collections due from the kolkhoz or the individual peasant. Moreover, only grain and flour should be seized, not other products, and local GPU agencies should ‘not dilute your efforts on 10 or 20 pounds’ of grain or flour. Round-ups at the markets, and detachments to prevent grain reaching the market (*zagravitel’nye otryady*), and ambushes (*zaslony*), should not be permitted.¹³¹

While these decisions were being taken in the centre, regional authorities in turn took firm measures to bring in the grain. As early as August 4, the Central Volga regional party committee warned kolkhozy that if they failed to deliver the grain, the kolkhoz mills would be closed, kolkhoz trade would cease completely, the supply of industrial consumer goods to the kolkhoz would cease, and ‘in special cases’ all state and cooperative trade in kolkhozy and in whole districts would be brought to an end.¹³² Such measures, known as ‘boycotting’ the kolkhoz or placing it on a ‘black list’, were introduced as early as the grain campaign of the autumn of 1929 (see vol. 1, p. 100). Kolkhozy and districts where a boycott was imposed were no longer supplied with consumer goods; and kolkhozy or villages placed on a ‘black list’ were subject to even more severe penalties (see pp. 177, 178). In August 1932 such drastic action seems to have been rare, but within a few weeks it became almost commonplace (see pp. 175–6, 179).

The August grain collections proceeded with difficulty. In a letter of August 11 Stalin complained bitterly about the state of the grain collections in Ukraine, and about the activities of the Ukrainian party (‘not a party, but a parliament, a caricature of a parliament’), soviets and GPU:

If we do not undertake immediately to expose the position in Ukraine, we may lose Ukraine. Bear in mind that Pilsudskii does

¹³¹ RGASPI, 17/3/900, 11, 43–45 (directive signed by Akulov, approved by poll on September 15 and confirmed by the full Politburo on September 16).

¹³² RGASPI, 17/21/2550, 294ob. Later in the month the Politburo resolved that, in the North Caucasus, peasants who did not fulfil the grain plan should be deprived of industrial goods, and ‘in particular cases’ art. 61 should be applied to them (RGASPI, 17/162/13, art. 54/22 dated August 22).

not sleep, and his agents in Ukraine are many times stronger than Redens or Kosior think ... As soon as things become worse, these elements will immediately open up the front within (and outside) the party, against the party. The worst thing is that the Ukrainian leadership does not see these dangers.

Stalin accordingly again proposed that Kosior should be replaced by Kaganovich, Balitskii should be transferred to Ukraine to manage the OGPU, and in a few months Chubar' should be replaced by someone else, such as Grin'ko.¹³³ Balitskii was later transferred (see p. 175); but no further action was taken on Stalin's other proposals.

On August 16, a Politburo session resolved that the grain collections were 'unsatisfactory, especially in Ukraine, the North Caucasus and the Lower Volga'. It instructed Kaganovich, Kuibyshev and Chernov to despatch a telegram 'stating specific facts and demanding explanations'.¹³⁴ The August collections actually amounted to only 3.19, against the planned 4.67 million tons.¹³⁵

After the slow start in July and August, the grain collection plan in September 1932 was almost achieved.¹³⁶ But only 8.29 million tons had been collected in the July–September quarter as a whole, compared with 11.26 million in the same months of 1931 (see Table 14(c)). Even allowing for the lower total collection planned for 1932/33, this meant that, in the rest of the agricultural year, collections would have to be one million tons greater than in the same period of 1931/32.¹³⁷

September proved to be the only month in which the collections were reasonably successful. Nearly half the annual collections were due in October and November, but less than 60 per cent of the plan

¹³³ SKP, 273–4; for other aspects of this letter, see pp. 155 and 167–8.

¹³⁴ RGASPI, 17/3/986, 7 (item 41).

¹³⁵ See Table 14(c). For the monthly plan, see RGASPI, 17/3/894 (dated August 1), and SKP, 257 (Kaganovich's letter dated August 2).

¹³⁶ The plan adopted by the Politburo on August 28 amounted to 4.75 million tons, including the milling levy (RGASPI, 17/3/898, 9 – decision confirmed by Politburo session of September 1); actual collections were 4.629 million tons (see Table 14(c)).

¹³⁷ At the end of September the revised collection plan amounted to 21.15 million tons, 1.86 million less than the grain actually collected in 1931/32 (see Table 14(c)); grain actually collected in July–September 1932 amounted to 7.96 million tons, 2.88 million less than the 10.85 collected in the same period of 1931 (*Ezhegodnik khlebooborota*, [vi] (1934), 4, 15). All these figures exclude the milling levy.

was achieved:

Monthly grain collection plan and results,
October–November 1932¹³⁸
(thousand tons)

	<i>Plan</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Percentage fulfilment</i>
<i>October</i>			
USSR	5733	3279	57.2
Ukraine	1392	462	33.2
North Caucasus	580	197	34.0
Lower Volga	449	244	54.3
Central Volga	377	281	74.5
<i>November</i>			
USSR	5352	3305	61.7
Ukraine	1542	695	45.1
North Caucasus	490	476	97.1
Lower Volga	299	256	85.6
Central Volga	154	228	148.1
<i>October–November</i>			
USSR	11085	6584	59.4
Ukraine	2934	1157	39.4
North Caucasus	1070	673	62.9
Lower Volga	748	500	66.8
Central Volga	531	501	94.4

¹³⁸ The figures for USSR and for October include the return of seed loan and 90 per cent of the milling levy. The November (Plan) figures for the regions are for the peasant sector only; the Actual figures are for all collections, excluding the milling levy. The November figures therefore somewhat exaggerate the extent of the fulfilment. Note that it is not strictly accurate to compare the joint October and November Plans with the Actual figures, because the November figures were no doubt increased in partial compensation of the underfulfilment in October.

Sources: October plan: RGASPI, 17/3/902, 7, 29–30 (agreed by poll on September 29 and reported to Politburo session of October 8); November plan: RGAE, 8040/6/244, 212 (Komzag draft decree dated October 26); Actual: see Table 14(c) and *Ezhegodnik khlebooborota*, [vi] (1934), 18–19. In the above figures we have deducted 10 per cent of the milling levy from the figures in Table 14(c).

The grain collections were hindered for a time in some regions by the urgent need to collect seed for the autumn sowing. Thus the regional authorities in the North Caucasus were reported to have given 'insufficient attention to the collections, instead concentrating on the sowing'.¹³⁹

Throughout October, republican and regional authorities, themselves badgered by the central committee apparatus in Moscow, expressed their indignation at the failure of their subordinate organisations in increasingly shrill terms. In Ukraine, following the failure of the collections in the five-day period October 1–5, Kosior sent a letter to the regions, and to all the districts in the three regions which were furthest behind, attacking 'Right-wing opportunist attitudes' which threatened both exports and food supplies to the industrial centres.¹⁴⁰ On October 17, a conference summoned by the Ukrainian party central committee reproved the regions for 'shameful' results in the five days, October 11–15.¹⁴¹ Six days later, on October 23, the Ukrainian Politburo sent a further telegram to the regional party committees, complaining that during October 15–20 only 18 per cent of the monthly plan had been fulfilled. Noting that 'there is little time left', the Politburo called for 'a decisive rebuff to kulak opposition to grain collections, and an end to the calm attitude of party and state agencies to the growing pressure of petty-bourgeois spontaneity in the villages'. After careful checks, repressive measures should be carried out against party and soviet officials who failed to carry out their obligations.¹⁴²

In view of the failure of the October campaign, the USSR Politburo decided to take decisive measures. On October 22 it resolved:

In order to strengthen the grain collections, send for a period of twenty days:

- (a) to Ukraine: cde. Molotov with a group consisting of cdes. Kalmanovich, Sarkis, Markevich and Krentsel';
- (b) to North Caucasus: cde. Kaganovich with a group consisting of cdes. Yurkin and Chernov.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ GARE, 7446/20/31, 70–77 (report from Krebs, Kolkhoztsestr USSR, October 1932).

¹⁴⁰ TsDAGOU, 1/6/237, 92.

¹⁴¹ TsDAGOU, 1/6/237, 126. The conference followed a plenum of the Ukrainian central committee held on October 12.

¹⁴² TsDAGOU, 1/6/237, 130.

¹⁴³ RGASPI, 17/3/904, 10–11 (decision by poll).

These were not solely punishment commissions: they included members with considerable agricultural experience. Under instruction from Stalin, they were able to recommend reductions in the collections plan (see p. 184). But their principal task was ‘to struggle with the class enemy who sabotaged the grain collection and the sowing’.¹⁴⁴

The session of the Ukrainian Politburo held on October 29 and 30, and attended by Molotov, resolved that the collections failed not primarily as a result of objective factors but of ‘the almost complete cessation of the struggle for grain in the overwhelming majority of districts of Ukraine’. It emphasised the need to struggle both against ‘kulak opposition’ to the grain collections, and against ‘opportunistic elements in party organisations’. The members of the Ukrainian Politburo were despatched to the regions, accompanied by at least a hundred of the best-qualified officials.¹⁴⁵

A week later, on November 5, the Ukrainian Politburo resolved that 5–10 special court sessions on circuit should be organised in each region to tour the districts and apply ‘severe repression’, accompanied by a propaganda campaign to win public support.¹⁴⁶ As many as 98 court sessions were held in seven Ukrainian regions by November 25.¹⁴⁷ Over 34,000 sentences were imposed for failure to deliver grain and theft of grain. These included 480 death sentences (26 on kolkhoz officials), and 19,535 sentences to forced labour.¹⁴⁸ In the following ten days, from November 25 to December 5, a further 8,000 kulaks and associates, individual peasants and collective farmers were convicted for offences concerned with grain.¹⁴⁹ Convictions were divided roughly equally between ‘failure

¹⁴⁴ Kaganovich’s summary of Stalin’s instructions in *Materialy ob’edinennogo plenuma TsK* (1933), 144; see also *Acta Slavica*, i (1983), 46 (Shimotomai).

¹⁴⁵ TsDAGOU, 1/6/237, 140–144, published in *Golod 1932–1933* (1990), 243–7. Molotov also proposed to send 600 workers to the Ukrainian collections, but Stalin ruled that they were to be sent only from party cells not connected with production (telegrams of November 20: RGASPI, 558/11/45, 39).

¹⁴⁶ TsDAGOU, 1/6/237, 177, published in *Golod 1932–1933* (1990), 247–8.

¹⁴⁷ TsDAGOU, 1/20/5489, 76 (special report of Ukrainian People’s Commissariat of Justice dated November 25).

¹⁴⁸ TsDAGOU, 1/20/5489, 79ff. (special report dated December 4); this report covers the period to November 25. Another report (*loc.cit.* i. 93, dated December 9) confirms that the vast majority of all cases in the 1932 grain campaign took place after November 1.

¹⁴⁹ TsDAGOU, 1/20/5489, 93 (special report dated December 9); this is an estimate in the report for the whole of Ukraine based on figures for 50 per cent of all Ukrainian districts. In a verbal report to the Ukrainian Politburo on December 20,

to deliver grain' and 'theft of grain'. Some 85–90 per cent of the sentences in both categories imposed between two to ten years forced labour.

In a further turn of the screw, the Ukrainian Politburo ruled on November 18 that weighers, storekeepers and record keepers who compiled false data to assist the theft of grain should be prosecuted under the August 7 decree.¹⁵⁰

Individual peasants were treated particularly severely. On November 11, the Ukrainian Politburo ruled that individual peasants who concealed their grain in pits were to be deprived of their lands and exiled from the district or region.¹⁵¹

Further repressive measures were ordered from Moscow. On November 8, Stalin and Molotov insisted in a telegram to Kosior that 'from today the despatch of goods for the villages of all regions of Ukraine shall cease until kolkhozy and individual peasants begin honestly and conscientiously to fulfil their duty to the working class and the Red Army by the delivery of grain'.¹⁵² Then on November 24 the USSR Politburo instructed the Ukrainian OGPU to remove from Ukraine all those who had been sentenced to confinement for three years or more, and despatch them to labour camps.¹⁵³ It also decided to simplify further the procedure for confirming death sentences in Ukraine: for the period of the grain collections, final decisions were entrusted not to the republican Supreme Court but to a special commission attached to the Ukrainian party central committee.¹⁵⁴ In addition to arrests for grain offences, the OGPU arrested 8,881 people during November for counter-revolutionary offences; 1,623 of these were kolkhoz officials and 314 ordinary

Balitskii (on whom, see below) stated that, by November 15, 11,000 were arrested in grain collection cases alone (excluding cases of theft), and a further 16,000 by December 15 (RGASPI, 81/3/215, 1–24).

¹⁵⁰ RGASPI, 17/26/54, 260–269.

¹⁵¹ RGASPI, 17/26/54, 47–49.

¹⁵² RGASPI, 558/11/45, 32. On November 20, Molotov complained in a telegram to Kosior that matches, kerosene and salt were still being sold (RGASPI, 82/2/141, 46).

¹⁵³ RGASPI, 17/162/14, 17 (decision by poll dated November 24).

¹⁵⁴ RGASPI, 17/162/14, 17 (decision by poll dated November 22). The commission consisted of Kosior, Redens, from the Ukrainian OGPU, and Kiselev, from the party central control commission; the Ukrainian central committee was required to report death sentences to the USSR central committee every ten days. For the earlier USSR decision of September 16, see p. 168 above.

collective farmers.¹⁵⁵ The arrests included over 200 party members.¹⁵⁶ On November 24 the USSR Politburo, adopting Stalin's earlier proposal (see p. 170) also resolved that the OGPU should despatch Balitskii to Ukraine for six months as a special OGPU plenipotentiary, to whom Redens and his staff would be subordinate.¹⁵⁷ Balitskii's activities soon became notorious, and he is still remembered for them in Ukraine.

Many other severe measures were adopted in Ukraine to enforce the grain plan. On November 20, its Sovnarkom resolved that kolkhozy which failing to meet the plan must not establish Funds in kind or distribute advances to collective farmers until the plan was fulfilled. The USSR Sovnarkom ruled that district soviet executive committees could seize such Funds from the kolkhozy, and remove from collective farmers advances in kind which had already been distributed.¹⁵⁸ In a particularly severe series of measures, 88 whole Ukrainian districts were 'boycotted' by being deprived of all supplies, out of a total of 385.¹⁵⁹

In the North Caucasus only 34 per cent of the monthly grain plan was collected in October. On October 29, the Politburo decided to enlarge the membership and the scope of the Kaganovich commission, and instructed it in fierce terms to 'work out and carry out measures to break the sabotage of sowing and grain collections, organised by counter-revolutionary elements in the Kuban' (the Kuban', inhabited by Cossacks who had fought in large numbers against the Bolsheviks during the civil war, was the major grain area in the North Caucasus).¹⁶⁰ In the last week of October, Stalin received Sheboldaev in Moscow, but firmly rejected his request that the plan should be reduced, and insisted that all the difficulties were caused by the regional authorities having 'permitted the kulaks to organise sabotage'.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁵ TsAFSB, 2/10/514, 321–323 (report dated December 9); over 2,000 of those arrested were allegedly former supporters of Petlyura or Makhno.

¹⁵⁶ TsAFSB, 2/10/514, 300–303 (report dated December 7, including data to November 27).

¹⁵⁷ RGASPI, 17/3/907, 20 (decision by poll of November 24); Balitskii was to report to the USSR central committee every twenty days. The appointment of Balitskii was justified on the grounds of his 'Ukrainian experience'.

¹⁵⁸ Slin'ko (1961), 297.

¹⁵⁹ See Penner (1998), 43.

¹⁶⁰ RGASPI, 17/3/905, 12 (decision by poll); the commission included Mikoyan, Gamarnik (head of the political department of the Red Army), Shkiriatov (central party control commission), Yagoda (OGPU) and Kosarev (Komsomol).

¹⁶¹ See Oskol'kov (1991), 28, citing Sheboldaev's speech given early in 1934.

Kaganovich and Mikoyan arrived in Rostov-on-Don on November 1, and reported to Stalin that members of the regional party bureau had acknowledged the existence of a lack of faith in the plan and had confirmed that 'a kulak attitude predominates' among a section of the rural communists. The bookkeepers in many kolkhozy were strongly infected by this attitude and were preparing kolkhoz accounts accordingly.¹⁶² On the following day, at a conference of district party secretaries, mainly from the Kuban', Sheboldaev bluntly insisted that opposition to the grain collections must be destroyed, 'beginning with you, the district secretaries, and finishing with the collective farmers':

Repression must be taken to the limit, so that they should not mock us for our impotence.¹⁶³

The Politburo agreed to a substantial reduction of the North Caucasus grain plan (see p. 184). Following this concession, however, Kaganovich pursued with unprecedented ferocity the campaign to achieve the reduced plan. On November 3 and 4 the bureau of the North Caucasus regional committee resolved 'to break the sabotage of the grain collections and the sowings, organised by the kulak counter-revolutionary element, and to smash the opposition of part of the rural communists'. Retail trade was restricted in twenty districts of the Kuban', and three of its *stanitsy* were placed on a 'black list'.¹⁶⁴ Pilyar, the OGPU chief in the region, was recalled to Moscow, and the formidable figure of Evdokimov was transferred from Central Asia to his post.¹⁶⁵ Eleven thousand people were mobilised to take the campaign to the villages, including 1,000 army officers.¹⁶⁶ Before the end of November, 3,240 'counter-revolutionaries' had been arrested in Kuban' alone, and 97 sentenced to death.¹⁶⁷ In the region as a whole, 13,803 people were arrested, and 285 sentenced to death.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶² RGASPI, 81/3/232, 29.

¹⁶³ RGASPI, 81/3/214, 5; and see Oskol'kov (1991), 33–4.

¹⁶⁴ The resolutions were published in *Molot*, November 4 and 5, 1932; see *Kollektivizatsiya* (Krasnodar, 1972), 760 and Oskol'kov (1991), 38–40.

¹⁶⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/906 (session of November 13, item 2 on agenda).

¹⁶⁶ RGASPI, 81/3/214, 13.

¹⁶⁷ TsAFSB, 2/10/514, 285–287 (report of December 7, including data to November 24).

¹⁶⁸ TsAFSB, 2/10/514, 324–327 (report dated December 15, with data to December 9); these figures were said to exclude arrests by the covering troops.

In the *stanitsy* placed on the 'black list' all goods were removed from the shops, the OGPU removed 'counter-revolutionary elements', and Rabkrin purged the kolkhozy, the cooperatives and the state agencies.¹⁶⁹ At this time Stalin wrote on a document, 'Warn the population of the *stanitsy* placed on the black list that they may be exiled.'¹⁷⁰ In the North Caucasus, the population of the ten districts which lagged most in the fulfilment of the plans were told that, if resistance continued, they would be exiled and the land given to others.¹⁷¹ On November 12, Sheboldaev ferociously condemned peasants who stole grain or failed to work for the kolkhoz:

We have explicitly made it public that malicious saboteurs, accomplices of the kulaks, those who do not want to sow will be exiled to the northern regions ... The remnants of the kulaks are trying to organise sabotage and opposing the demands of Soviet power; it would be more just to hand over the rich land of the Kuban' to collective farmers from another region who have poor or barren land ... We must pose the problem of the deportation of an entire village. In these circumstances kolkhozy, collective farmers and really honest individual peasants will have to take responsibility for their neighbours.¹⁷²

Peasants were exiled in substantial numbers. On November 21, the Politburo approved a proposal from Sheboldaev and Kaganovich to 'exile from the Kuban' districts within 20 days 2 thousand kulak-well-off families which maliciously disrupted the sowing'.¹⁷³

An exemplary case in the North Caucasus was given wide publicity. In October a certain N. V. Kotov, a *stanitsa* party secretary, was expelled from the party and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for secretly advancing a kilogram of grain per labour day to collective farmers, in excess of the 491 grams prescribed by the authorities. He claimed that he had done this in order to provide additional incentives. Speaking in the North Caucasus on November 2, Mikoyan called the Kotov affair symptomatic, and characterised it as

¹⁶⁹ RGASPI, 81/3/214, 82 (Kaganovich's speech to the extended Rostov regional committee bureau, November 23).

¹⁷⁰ See Oskol'kov (1991), 53.

¹⁷¹ RGASPI, 81/3/214, 82.

¹⁷² Sheboldaev (1934), 67.

¹⁷³ RGASPI, 17/162/14, 16 (decision by poll).

'a Kronstadt event, a sortie of the adherents of Kronstadt'; and Kaganovich castigated Kotov as a 'provocateur', who caused the peasants to quarrel with Soviet power in the interests of the kulaks.¹⁷⁴ Following this onslaught, the bureau of the regional party committee ruled that such cases brought under the August 7 decree should be re-examined within five days, and specifically stated that the regional court had 'underestimated the counter-revolutionary significance of Kotov's crime'. The bureau ruled that the court should re-examine his case and sentence him to death. The sentence was duly carried out. Later accounts at the time claimed that he was a member of a counter-revolutionary group.¹⁷⁵

On November 4, soon after the Kaganovich commission arrived in the North Caucasus, the Politburo launched an initiative which soon had repercussions throughout the USSR: a purge of party members. It established a commission chaired by Shkiryatov which was instructed to strengthen rural party organisations by ensuring a satisfactory economic structure for the kolkhozy, the fulfilment of the grain plans, and the purging (*chistka*) of rural party organisations, especially in the Kuban':

Purge the party of people alien to the cause of communism, who are carrying out kulak policy, degenerate (*razlozhivshikh*) people, incapable of carrying out the policy of the party in the countryside. Exile those purged as politically dangerous.

The commission should promote new cadres from the collective farmers and shock workers, and unite masses against the kulaks.¹⁷⁶ The party purge which followed in the North Caucasus was very extensive. In the Kuban', 358 out of 716 party secretaries were eventually expelled from the party, as were 43 per cent of the 25,000 party members.¹⁷⁷ Of the 115,000–120,000 rural party members in the North Caucasus, as many as 40 per cent may have been expelled; and in addition many thousands of party members left the region.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ RGASPI, 81/3/214, 10–11.

¹⁷⁵ Oskol'kov (1991), 47–51. For the decision of the regional bureau, see RGASPI, 17/21/3377, 84, 84ob. See also Sheboldaev's speech at the January 1933 central committee plenum (RGASPI, 17/2/514, i, 82), and *Acta Slavica*, i (1983), 47–8 (Shimotomai).

¹⁷⁶ RGASPI, 17/3/906, 10; decision by poll dated November 4.

¹⁷⁷ See *Acta Slavica*, i (1983), 48 (Shimotomai).

¹⁷⁸ See Oskol'kov (1991), 58–9, 62.

On November 22, the Politburo extended the party purge from North Caucasus to Ukraine.¹⁷⁹

The very severe measures adopted in the North Caucasus yielded more satisfactory results than in Ukraine. Kaganovich claimed a 'breakthrough', emphasising that the collections had increased in each five-day period in November, even in the Kuban'.¹⁸⁰ In the month as a whole, they amounted to 476,000 tons, more than double the amount collected in October.

The aim of these severe measures was not simply to obtain the grain due from the North Caucasus, but also to cajole and terrorise party organisations and peasants in other regions. Early in November, Stalin and Molotov sent a telegram to the Lower Volga region threatening that 'if in a very short period of time a decisive breakthrough is not organised in the region [we] will be compelled to resort to measures analogous to the repression in the North Caucasus'.¹⁸¹

Within a few days the Lower Volga regional committee itself imposed an 'economic boycott' on five entire districts, and despatched plenipotentiaries to enforce the collections.¹⁸² Ptukha reported, in a telegram to Stalin and Molotov, that sixteen further district committees had been instructed to warn their backward kolkhozy that the same penalties could apply to them. Moreover, art. 61 of the Criminal Code was being applied to individual peasants who 'maliciously do not fulfil the plan', and they were being warned that they could be deprived of their household plot (*usad'ba*). As in Ukraine, storemen and record keepers in kolkhozy who concealed grain were being put on trial for the theft of grain. All the members of the regional party bureau and the presidium of the control commission had been sent to the countryside to enforce the grain plan.¹⁸³ And at the end of the month the Politburo sent Pilyar to the region as an OGPU plenipotentiary to whom the regional OGPU was

¹⁷⁹ RGASPI, 17/3/907, 18 (proposal of USSR Central Control Commission agreed by poll). The Politburo resolved 'not to oppose the purge in rural cells of those most backward in fulfilling the plan, and where there are facts of bad conduct of communists'.

¹⁸⁰ RGASPI, 81/3/214, 83 (report to the bureau of the North Caucasus regional party committee, November 23, 1932).

¹⁸¹ Cited Kondrashin (1991), 102.

¹⁸² RGASPI, 17/21/3768, 105–105ob. (regional party committee protocol dated November 10); and see Kondrashin (1991), 102–3.

¹⁸³ GARE, 5446/27/13, 194 (dated November 13).

subordinate. His remit was 'to organise the work of the Lower-Volga GPU on new lines, using recent experience in the struggle with counter-revolution and with the sabotage of the grain collections in the North Caucasus'.¹⁸⁴ It also despatched Postyshev to the region as a plenipotentiary.¹⁸⁵

Repressive measures were the norm wherever the grain had not been received in full. Thus, in Kazakhstan, one district reported that the whole party *aktiv* had been sent out to cleanse the kolkhozy of the 'kulak and *bai* element'. The boards of six kolkhozy had been dissolved; opportunists would be expelled from the Party and Komsomol immediately; the head of the district trade union had been expelled from the party because he refused to work on the grain collections. The district also requested the regional party committee to exile from six of its villages individual peasants who had systematically opposed the grain collections.¹⁸⁶

During November, the central authorities also sought other means of accelerating the collections. On November 14, a telegram to all regions from Stalin, Molotov and Kaganovich criticised the Novosibirsk regional party committee for permitting 5 per cent of grain to be used for kolkhoz trade. They reiterated that kolkhoz trade in grain would not be permitted until the grain collection plan of a region had been met in full.¹⁸⁷ On the following day, November 15, the Politburo approved the introduction of internal passports in certain towns (see vol. 4, p. 290). The procedures involved took some weeks to complete, but once completed they made it more difficult for hungry peasants to abandon their villages for work in the towns. On November 25, the Politburo also adopted a decision on 'The Struggle with the Illegal Trade in Grain, Flour and Bread'. This renewed the instruction to the OGPU (see p. 169) to confiscate grain at urban markets when it was brought in by collective farmers or individual peasants in 'large' quantities of 'more than a pud' (16.4 kilograms), and again emphasised that until a region had completed its grain collection quota in full, 'trade in grain, flour and bread in large quantities is unconditionally forbidden and must be

¹⁸⁴ RGASPI, 17/3/907, 20 (decision of November 24 by poll).

¹⁸⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/909, 12 (decision by poll of November 29).

¹⁸⁶ GARF, 5446/27/13, 210–209 (sent from Taldykkurgan, Alma-Ata region, dated November 11). For a similar report from Kokpetov, East Kazakhstan, see GARF, 5446/27/13, 211 (dated November 12).

¹⁸⁷ RGASPI, 558/11/45, 32.

punished as deliberate speculation'.¹⁸⁸ Then on November 29 it issued an exemplary list of party secretaries and chairs of executive committees in fourteen districts in Bashkiria, the Central and Lower Volga and Black-Earth regions, and Kazakhstan, who had failed to carry out urgent grain collection directives during the first half of November.¹⁸⁹ The practice of boycotting was greatly extended.

The efforts to secure a high estimate of the harvest (see pp. 134–5) were, of course, intimately connected with the grain campaign. In the telegram that Stalin and Molotov sent to the Lower Volga region early in November (see p. 179) they insisted that 'reference to figures about the yield as a reason for not carrying out the approved plan cannot be considered, as these figures were underestimated and aimed at deceiving the state'. Then, on November 13, the Politburo resolved to punish the leaders of TsUNKhU who published yield figures without the knowledge of Sovnarkom, and thus encouraged theft in kolkhozy and among individual peasants.¹⁹⁰ At a further session the Politburo expelled the director of the Ukraine–Crimea grain trust from the party for providing falsified data.¹⁹¹

The total amount of grain collected by December 1 from the beginning of the campaign amounted to only 14.9 million tons, compared with 21.2 million tons in the same period of 1931. The desperate drive of October and November had failed.

(iii) Relaxation

Throughout these months, the Politburo impressed on the republics and regions that it was uncompromisingly opposed to any reduction of their plans. On August 23, it resolved to 'decisively reject any attempts to reduce the plan' for the North Caucasus.¹⁹² On September 23, it resolved that 'the harvest is satisfactory' and that 'all proposals for a seed loan (including for the spring sowing) are

¹⁸⁸ RGASPI, 17/3/907, 11 (decision by poll).

¹⁸⁹ RGASPI, 17/3/909, 12–13 (decision by poll).

¹⁹⁰ See p. 135.

¹⁹¹ See p. 345. He was for the moment merely demoted to the directorship of a sovkhos.

¹⁹² RGASPI, 17/3/897, 19.

to be rejected'; this decision was published as a decree of Sovnarkom and the party central committee.¹⁹³

These decisions were taken at normal sessions of the Politburo, the papers of which were available to a large number of people. Statements in the press also invariably took the firm line that the full collections plan must be fulfilled at all costs. But Politburo decisions recorded in the particularly secret 'special files' (osoby papki) modified this bland and ruthless front. Behind the scenes the Politburo reluctantly, belatedly and incompletely came to terms with the grim reality of the situation in the countryside. Stalin first proposed to reduce the collections on July 25, when he wrote to Kaganovich from vacation:

Yesterday I sent you a coded telegram about the partial reduction of the grain collection plan for Ukrainian kolkhozy and individual peasants which have particularly suffered. Perhaps after the speeches at the conference of party secretaries (end of June) and the Ukrainian party conference my proposal seemed strange to you (and Molotov). But there is nothing strange in this. The end of June ... and beginning of July ... were a period in which grain collections were being organised ... To speak about reducing the plan in this period (even by way of exception) in front of everyone and in the presence of the regional secretaries would have finally demoralised the Ukrainians (who are already demoralised anyway) and disorganised the regional secretaries – disrupting the grain collections ... But the middle and end of August are another matter. In this interval of time: first, the harvest prospects are becoming known (are already known!) as definitely good for the USSR; secondly, party and Soviet strengths are already mobilised and designated to carry out the plan; thirdly, a closer knowledge of Ukrainian matters in this period has revealed the necessity of helping Ukrainian kolkhozy by partially reducing the plan; fourthly, the end of August ... is the most suitable moment for assisting the provision of incentives for the autumn sowing and for autumn activities in general.

The Ukrainian plan could be reduced by 30 million puds, or at the most 40 million [490–655,000 tons]. This reduction should not be given to all kolkhozy, and should be less favourable to individual

¹⁹³ RGASPI, 17/3/901, 24 published in P, September 24, 1932.

peasants: the plans for 'suffering kolkhozy' could be reduced by 50 per cent on average, the plans of individual peasants by one-third or a quarter.¹⁹⁴

On August 17, after the delay recommended by Stalin, the Politburo resolved, taking Stalin's upper limit: 'Accept the proposal of cde. Stalin to reduce the grain collections plan in Ukraine by 40 million puds [655,000 tons], as an exception for the districts of Ukraine which especially suffered.' Kosior was summoned to Moscow, and a commission consisting of Kuibyshev, Kosior and Kaganovich decided which districts to include. The familiar proviso was made that no 'equalisation' in the distribution of the reductions should be allowed.¹⁹⁵ On August 28, the Politburo approved the reduction for each region; the sugar-beet areas were treated most favourably. Within each region, the reduction should be concentrated on the districts which had suffered the most; and it should be distributed among kolkhozy after discussion with local representatives, or visiting the kolkhozy. The Politburo resolved specifically that 'the decision to reduce the plan should not be published'.¹⁹⁶ It was evidently anxious not to encourage other districts and regions to press for a reduction. This became a general practice.

On August 17, the date on which it approved the reductions in the Ukrainian grain plan, the Politburo also approved a significant concession to the peasant way of life. It agreed to a proposal from Narkomtrud that in the villages, and in district towns, the five-day week should be abandoned, and Sunday should again become a normal holiday.¹⁹⁷

The Politburo reduced the collection plans for all the main grain regions except the Central Volga in a series of piecemeal decisions. On September 17, a lengthy resolution about Kazakhstan reduced the grain collection plan by 47,000 tons; postponed the return of previous seed and food loans amounting to 98,000 tons by a year; and advanced a further 33,000 tons of food assistance and seed loan in the hope of encouraging settled livestock farming. Altogether, these concessions, while reducing the grain collection as such

¹⁹⁴ SKP, 244–5; see also his telegram sent on the previous day (SKP, 241–2).

¹⁹⁵ RGASPI, 17/162/13, 76 (decision 47/4 of August 17 reported to full Politburo of August 25). On the previous day, August 16, the Politburo resolved on a proposal from Beria to reduce the Trans-Caucasian plan by 1 million puds instead of 0.43 million puds (RGASPI, 17/162/13, 62 – item 50).

¹⁹⁶ RGASPI, 17/162/13, 85 (decision 46/4 reported to full Politburo of September 1).

¹⁹⁷ RGASPI, 17/3/896, 27.

by quite a small quantity, relieved Kazakhstan of obligations of 183,000 tons (over a quarter of its original collection plan).¹⁹⁸

At the end of September it was the turn of the North Caucasus. The Politburo, noting 'extremely unfavourable conditions', reduced the plan by 606,000 tons (21 per cent).¹⁹⁹ But even this reduced plan was quite unattainable. After Kaganovich and Mikoyan arrived in the North Caucasus on November 1 (see p. 176), they reported to Stalin that the regional officials had proposed a further major reduction, amounting to 22 million puds (360,000 tons); they told Stalin that they would take a final decision after a conference with twenty-two district party secretaries from the Kuban' on the following day.²⁰⁰ At the conference, the emissaries from Moscow lambasted the assembled secretaries (see p. 176), but accepted the regional proposals. The reduction by 360,000 tons was approved by the Politburo on November 3.²⁰¹ The new plan was now only two-thirds of the original; the performance of the sovkhozy had been particularly poor, and their new plan was less than half the original.

Meanwhile, the failure to achieve the reduced Ukrainian collection plan culminated in Molotov's protracted visit (see p. 172). Prior to his arrival, both Kosior and Khataevich proposed that the Ukrainian plan should be reduced. On October 29, Molotov reported to Stalin that each of the seven regions had been asked to assess their prospects; their proposals, added together, amounted to a reduction of the collections by 77 million puds and the milling levy by 4.9 million, 81.9 million in all (1.34 million tons). On the same day, Molotov proposed a reduction of 60–70 million puds (0.98–1.15 million tons) to the Ukrainian Politburo.²⁰² On the following day he recommended to the USSR Politburo that the Ukrainian plan should be reduced by 70 million puds (1.15 million tons); and this recommendation was approved.²⁰³ The total collection plan for

¹⁹⁸ RGASPI, 17/162/13, 113–117. For other aspects of this resolution, see p. 324 below.

¹⁹⁹ RGASPI, 17/162/13, 118 (decision by poll dated September 29); for a similar decision about the Crimea on October 2, see *ibid.*, 119.

²⁰⁰ RGASPI, 81/3/232, 29.

²⁰¹ RGASPI, 17/162/14, 2; on the same day the East Siberian plan was reduced (*loc. cit.*).

²⁰² RGASPI, 82/2/241, 6 (telegram to Stalin).

²⁰³ RGASPI, 82/2/241, 7 (telegram to Stalin) and 17/162/13, 140 (decision by poll dated October 30). The reduction was to be 39 million puds for the kolkhozy, 18.9 for individual peasants and 12.1 for the state farms. For the Ukrainian Politburo resolution of October 30, see p. 173.

Ukraine now amounted to 4.561 million tons compared to the original 6.306 million, a reduction of 28 per cent. The sovkhos target was now only 63 per cent of the September plan.

Until the end of November, the Lower Volga region, in spite of Ptukha's efforts, had been refused any easement. On November 29, the Politburo firmly rejected Ptukha's new proposal to reduce the plan by 262,000 tons (18 per cent) as 'completely unacceptable', but now agreed to a reduction of 66,000 tons, and to postpone the return of 33,000 tons of the seed loan. The net reduction was only 7 per cent.²⁰⁴

In the USSR as a whole, by the end of November the initial plan of 20.56 million tons had been reduced to 17.53 million.

(C) THE DESPERATE BATTLE FOR GRAIN, DECEMBER 1932–FEBRUARY 1933

(i) The revised grain distribution plan, December 9, 1932

Drastic cuts were required in the original grain budget for 1932/33, prepared on June 2. Grain collections were far less than planned; and, as Komzag officials pointed out, the allocation for General Supply was under great pressure because various governmental decisions had authorised additional issues of grain.²⁰⁵ On December 9, the revised 'plan for the utilisation of grain crops' was approved by the Politburo.²⁰⁶ Compared with the June budget, General Supply was reduced by nearly 1 million tons. Exports, planned by Komzag in June at 1.96 million tons, and later increased to 2.46 million tons (see p. 142), were now reduced to 1.6 million tons. Other items cut

²⁰⁴ RGASPI, 17/162/14, 22. Kondrashin (1991), 266, suggests that, if Ptukha's request had been accepted, this would have provided enough grain to feed 1.2 million people until the new harvest and 'not a single collective farmer or individual peasant would have died from famine'. On December 8, the collections plan for the Central Black-Earth region was also reduced by about 5 per cent (see RGASPI, 17/162/14, 28 – art. 52/46).

²⁰⁵ RGAE, 8040/6/244, 34 (memorandum from Saakyan and Zykov to Kuibyshev, dated November 20).

²⁰⁶ RGASPI, 17/162/14, 28–38; the revised plan was considered together with a plan for the utilisation of food grain from central funds in January–March 1933 and a plan for the distribution of fodder and concentrated feed in October–December 1932 (items 55/49 and 56/50, both approved by poll and reported to the full Politburo on December 10).

included food and fodder for the timber industry, fodder for horse transport, and even the food and fodder allocations to the Red Army and the OGPU armies. Only three allocations were increased: to the labour camps (primarily fodder grains)²⁰⁷, to the rapidly-growing gold and non-ferrous metal industries, and to industry as raw material for processing. The entire increase in the allocation to industry was for the production of alcohol, primarily vodka. In the initial plan the allocation to alcohol was lower than in the previous year; it was now substantially higher. Sixty years later, Mr Yeltsin followed a Stalinist precedent when he made vodka more widely available to an impoverished population.

By December 9, the grain allocated for July–December in June 1932, the first six months of the agricultural year, had been almost entirely distributed. The burden of the cuts in grain issues therefore had to fall on the second six months, January–June 1933. In the plan for the distribution of food grains in January–March 1933, also adopted by the Politburo on December 9, further swingeing cuts were approved:

Food grain allocation for General Supply²⁰⁸
(thousand tons grain equivalent)

October–December 1931	2358
January–March 1932	1944
October–December 1932	1950
January–March 1933 (plan)	1510

The problems of the second half of 1931/32 recurred, but at a lower level of supply.

So far, one important item in the grain budget has not been discussed: stocks. The desperate effort to achieve a substantial, ‘untouchable’ *Nepfond* and *Gosfond* had failed in 1931/32. The June 1932 grain budget relaunched the ambitious effort to build up stocks (see p. 141, note 13 above). The December 9 grain budget retained nearly the whole of the June plan: stocks on July 1, 1933,

²⁰⁷ Fodder grains allocated to special settlers in June (60,000 tons) do not appear in the December 9 plan, but the allocation of fodder grains to the labour camps was now 66,000 tons, while previously they did not receive an allocation of fodder grain. We do not know why this shift occurred.

²⁰⁸ The January–March 1933 plan is in RGASPI, 17/162/14, 37–8; the other figures are from *Ezhegodnik khlebooborota*, [vi] (1934). The actual allocation in January–March 1933 was 1,528,000 tons.

were to amount to 3,608,000 tons. This hopeful estimate must have been regarded with great scepticism by the few officials who knew the fate of previous attempts to stockpile grain. And the situation was worse than in the previous year: stocks on January 1, 1933 (8,499,000 tons), were over half a million tons less than on January 1, 1932.²⁰⁹ Kuibyshev evidently shared this scepticism. At the beginning of 1933, while insisting on the 'complete untouchability of stocks', he also emphasised the flexibility – perhaps the touchability – of the 'untouchable stocks':

The creation by the Committee of Reserves of grain and fodder Funds and the careful (chetkoe) manoeuvring of them allowed supply to be uninterrupted in the spring and summer of 1932 in circumstances of pressure on grain resources.²¹⁰

Kuibyshev presented as a victory the 'manoeuvring' of grain stocks to the point of eliminating them altogether.

The December 9 grain budget did not admit the full extent of the crisis. It anticipated that total collections by the end of the agricultural year would amount to 19.16 million tons, including the milling levy (see Table 20), so that an additional 4.26 million tons had to be collected in December–June. This proved to be impossible.

(ii) The December collections

On November 27, Stalin made a speech to the Politburo which was published in part a few weeks later. Claiming that the Smirnov–Eismont–Tolmachev group was supported by Tomsy and Rykov, he condemned its alleged belief that 'the policy of the party on questions of industrialisation and collectivisation has failed'. According to Stalin, the grain collections were hindered by two familiar factors. First: 'the penetration of anti-soviet elements into kolkhozy and sovkhozy' to organise 'wrecking and sabotage'. Secondly, the 'non-marxist attitude of a considerable section of our rural communists in

²⁰⁹ See SR, liv (1995), 44 (Davies, Tauger and Wheatcroft).

²¹⁰ RGASPI, 79/1/617; this is the rough draft of a report, probably delivered to Komzag. The word 'some' appears before 'pressure' but is crossed out in red pencil. In a section of his speech concerned with stocks in general, a sentence on the need for a 'flexible approach' is also crossed out in red pencil.

sovkhozy and kolkhozy' – both rural and district communists had idealised the kolkhozy. While the vast majority of collective farmers were on the side of Soviet power, 'certain detachments' supported sabotage of the grain collections:

It would be stupid if communists, on the basis that kolkhozy were a socialist form of economy, failed to respond with a crushing blow to this attack from particular collective farmers and kolkhozy.²¹¹

On November 28, the Politburo adopted the collection plan for December: 3.587 million tons. Over one-third of this was to come from Ukraine; as a concession the Ukrainian plan need not be completed until January 15.²¹² In the battle to wrest the grain needed to get through to the next harvest from an increasingly hungry countryside, the December collections would be decisive, and appeared on every Politburo agenda.

Postyshev, appointed the plenipotentiary for grain collections in the Lower Volga region on November 29 (see p. 180), immediately went into action. On December 2 the regional party bureau dismissed the party secretaries and heads of the soviet executive committees in four districts; the head of one of the executive committees was arrested 'for arbitrarily ceasing grain collections in a number of kolkhozy'.²¹³ On the following day the bureau resolved that, in each of seven districts, including the five where an economic boycott had been imposed (see p. 179), two or three villages were to be put on the black list and their names published in the press. In these villages all debts to the state were to be collected forthwith, the remaining 'anti-Soviet and counter-revolutionary elements' should be removed, and all milling was to be forbidden.²¹⁴ Postyshev attacked the 'liberal' approach of the regional leadership, particularly criticising their decision to advance 1–1.5 kilograms of grain per labour day to the collective farmers. Soon after his arrival, a further nine district party secretaries were dismissed. As elsewhere, the regional court travelled on a circuit. It was given the right to impose ten-year sentences, plus

²¹¹ RGASPI, 17/163/1011, 9ob. – 15, published in part in *Bol'shevik*, 1–2, January 31, 1933, 19, and more recently in TSD, iii, 557–61.

²¹² RGASPI, 17/3/909, 12 (art. 40/12, decision by poll); the revised date also applied to the Far Eastern region.

²¹³ Kondrashin (1991), 108–9.

²¹⁴ RGASPI, 17/21/3768, 115.

confiscation of all property, not only on those who deliberately failed to hand over grain, but also on their 'allies' (posobniki).²¹⁵ On December 17, the Politburo criticised the regional party committee for having 'failed to organise a Bolshevik struggle for grain'. According to the Politburo, the region had been too anxious to ensure that the kolkhozy had enough grain to take part in trade, and had ignored the 'real danger of the non-fulfilment of the state plan of grain collections in conditions in which kolkhoz trade was developing'. The Politburo insisted that the annual collection plan in the region must be completed by January 1.²¹⁶

Following this decision, on December 21 the regional party bureau declared that the collections in the previous five days had been 'shameful', and ordered ten lagging districts to report the amount collected daily by direct wire. It ordered further expulsions and arrests.²¹⁷ On December 23, the Politburo approved a proposal from Ptukha to exile to the Far North from the Lower Volga 300 or 400 families of the 'most malicious saboteurs of the grain deliveries'.²¹⁸ A further session of the party bureau on December 27 condemned the results of the previous five days as 'completely unsatisfactory' and again dismissed a number of officials.²¹⁹ Then, on December 30, a resolution appeared in the press in the name of the central committee which strongly criticised the party leadership in two named Lower Volga districts. In the Nizhne-Chirskii district 'colossal losses' had occurred in the 1932 harvest, and the state had received 'very poor quality grain ... in a criminally small quantity'. In the Kotel'nikovskii district, kolkhozy, village soviets and the district administration had been 'infested with kulak, anti-Soviet and Whiteguard elements', and local officials had engaged in 'hypocritical treacherous conduct in relation to the grain collection plan', agreeing in private not to carry it out. The resolution criticised party and state officials in each district by name.²²⁰ A quarter of the kolkhozy in the Nizhne-Chirskii district were blacklisted.²²¹

The crucial regions in the December plan were Ukraine and the North Caucasus. The Ukrainian Sovnarkom and central committee

²¹⁵ Kondrashin (1991), 108–9.

²¹⁶ RGASPI, 17/3/912, 8, 31–2.

²¹⁷ RGASPI, 17/21/3768, 148–9.

²¹⁸ RGASPI, 17/3/912, 15 (decision by poll).

²¹⁹ RGASPI, 17/21/3768, 158.

²²⁰ SPR, viii (1934), 573–4.

²²¹ See Ivnitiskii (1994), 202.

blacklisted six villages for 'overt disruption of the grain collection plan and malicious sabotage', applying the usual severe penalties.²²² In the Khar'kov region, Terekhov asserted in a confidential report that in the Kobelyaskii district the party leadership had 'directly betrayed the party', and the district secretary had consciously organised the sabotage of the grain collections. Although the amount collected in the district was considerably less than in 1931, the secretary had claimed that the plan was unrealistic, citing grain budgets prepared in the kolkhozy, the villages, the MTS and by the district itself; but these were based on the instruction of the district secretary himself that the yield was only 2 or 3 tsentners per hectare. He was expelled from the party and arrested.²²³

Then, on December 14, the Politburo approved a particularly scathing resolution:

In a considerable number of districts in Ukraine and the North Caucasus counter-revolutionary elements – kulaks, former officers, Petlyurians, supporters of the Kuban' Rada and others – were able to penetrate into the kolkhozy as chairmen or influential members of the board, or as bookkeepers and storekeepers, and as brigade leaders at the threshers, and were able to penetrate into the village soviets, land agencies and cooperatives. They attempt to direct the work of these organisations against the interests of the proletarian state and the policy of the party; they try to organise a counter-revolutionary movement, the sabotage of the grain collections, and the sabotage of the village.

They were to be 'rooted out decisively by means of arrest, imprisonment in a concentration camp for a long period; do not refrain from VMN for the most malicious'. Delinquent party members, characterised as 'saboteurs of the grain collections with a party card in their hands' were to be sentenced to 5–10 years in a concentration camp, and in certain cases to be executed by shooting.

The resolution linked these offences with the policy of 'Ukrainisation', describing it as 'mechanical'. It insisted that there was a very clear connection between this long-established national policy, now condemned by the Politburo for the first time, and the failure of the grain collections. In the North Caucasus, what the

²²² TsDAGOU, 1/6/238, 53–54 (decree dated December 6, 1932).

²²³ TsAFSB, 2/10/362, 3–5 (dated December 16), published in TSD, iii, 588–97.

resolution called 'non-Bolshevik "Ukrainisation"' had been carried out in nearly half the districts, providing a 'legal form for the enemies of Soviet power'. It ordered that all inhabitants of Poltava district were to be exiled to the North except those really devoted to Soviet power; and kolkhoz-Redarmy men were to be settled in their place. Fifteen named party members from five Ukrainian districts were to be sentenced to 5–10 years in a concentration camp. Moreover, all communists expelled from the party for sabotage of the grain collections were to be exiled to northern regions together with the kulaks.²²⁴

The resolution of December 14 outdid previous maledictions in the extent of its fantasy about the influence of the kulaks. In fact, while some peasants were richer than others, and in certain areas had formed a social group which in marxist terms exploited the majority of villagers, the kulaks had never been an easily recognisable socio-economic group or cohesive political class. By the end of 1932 a million families or more of the richer or less obedient peasants had been expelled from their villages or had fled to the towns. The 'kulak' class in the villages no longer existed as a social or political group – though many peasants were disaffected because of the way their 'kulak' relatives and acquaintances had been treated. But party propaganda and action treated them as an influential and sinister force which acted against Soviet interests under various disguises, including that of party member, in every village and kolkhoz. Moreover, failure to comply with the economic demands of the state was regarded as a political action inspired by the kulaks, and as part of a seamless web which incorporated the anti-Soviet nationalism of the non-Russian minorities. The desperate struggle of the state to exploit the peasants to the point of death was depicted as a righteous battle against counter-revolution.

On December 19, five days after this savage resolution, the Politburo called for a 'fundamental breakthrough' in the Dnepr, Odessa and Khar'kov regions of Ukraine in order to fulfil what was described as the 'twice-reduced' grain collection plan (on the two reductions, see pp. 183 and 184). It despatched Kaganovich,

²²⁴ RGASPI, 17/3/911, 42 (this resolution, unlike most Politburo decisions, was printed, and therefore, while not published, obviously intended for wide circulation within the party). See Martin (2001), ch. 7. A decision of the North Caucasus regional party bureau confirming the expulsions from Poltava was published in the regional newspaper, *Molot*, December 17, 1932 (see Oskol'kov (1991), 54).

Postyshev and Chernov to Ukraine, together with other special plenipotentiaries.²²⁵

Kaganovich, Postyshev and Chernov spent December 20–29 in Ukraine. Kaganovich immediately demonstrated that he was inexorably determined to secure the grain. He arrived in Khar'kov at 10 p.m. on December 20, and immediately summoned a Politburo meeting, which continued until 4 a.m., and was resumed the following morning before his departure for Odessa in the afternoon.²²⁶ During the next ten days he travelled extensively in the Odessa region with Chernov, visiting a number of districts, and some sovkhozy and kolkhozy. Postyshev went to Dnepropetrovsk. Each group was accompanied by a senior official of the OGPU.

No reduction in the Ukrainian grain target was conceded, unlike the earlier visits to Ukraine and the North Caucasus. When the plenipotentiary of the USSR party central committee in Chernigov declared that the region would complete 85 per cent of its plan by January 1, Kaganovich interrupted: 'For us the figure 85% does not exist. We need 100%. Workers are fed on grain and not on percentages.'²²⁷

He addressed a conference of district secretaries in Odessa region in even more uncompromising terms:

There is no need to give people a sock in the jaw. But carefully organised searches of collective farmers, communists and workers as well as individual peasants are not going too far. The village must be given a shove, so that the peasants themselves reveal the grain pits ... When our spirit is not as hard as metal the grain collections don't succeed.²²⁸

Behind the scenes, the Ukrainian leaders had previously been attempting to persuade Moscow to moderate its demands. But during Kaganovich's visit, they strongly supported the official line, even at the closed meetings of the Ukrainian Politburo. Kosior, for example, who had tried to protect the seed grain, blandly reported that, in

²²⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/911, 9, 11, 54 (decisions by poll of December 19).

²²⁶ RGASPI, 81/3/215, 1–7. This account is taken from Kaganovich's diary of his visit.

²²⁷ RGASPI, 81/3/215, 1–7 (speech by Stepanskii). Stepanskii replied that the region would fulfil the whole plan by January 15; this was a good point, as the USSR Politburo had agreed that Ukraine need not complete its plan until January 15 (see p. 188).

²²⁸ RGASPI, 81/3/215, 10–12 (speech of December 23).

Dnepropetrovsk, a lot of grain was still available in the badly threshed straw, and in secret stores. And Khataevich, who had argued for a minimum allocation of grain to each household, presented a similarly bland account of the situation in the Odessa region. Terekhov was an exception: in spite of his uncompromising treatment of subordinate officials (see p. 190), he was reproved by Kaganovich for his failure to recognise the seriousness of the position in the Khar'kov region.²²⁹

All the Ukrainian leaders acknowledged the widespread hostility, or at best passivity, towards the collections: 'in the main,' Kosior reported, 'searches are carried out by our own people (*nasha publika*), and the collective farmers stand aside'.²³⁰ And even what Kosior called 'our own people' were unreliable. Kaganovich complained that many communists were of an 'idealist, SR persuasion', idealising the collective farmers and ignoring the class struggle. Many communists behaved like petty clerks; they engaged in 'go slow' or sat about doing nothing. They were 'bashful girls', like the hero in Saltykov-Shchedrin, who said 'I would be pleased not to curse you, but it is my superior's order'.²³¹ And Chubar' criticised plenipotentiaries who 'quickly adapt themselves to the local officials and protect them'.²³² Even the OGPU was not free of the prevailing scepticism: a memorandum from the OGPU plenipotentiary in a major grain sovkhoz claimed that at most 63 per cent of its collection plan could be achieved.²³³

Senior officials, party members and peasants were all subject to the repression initiated during Kaganovich's visit. Within 24 hours of his arrival in Ukraine, four directors of sovkhozy were arrested, and ten plenipotentiaries were removed.²³⁴ Then, towards the end of his visit, the USSR Politburo agreed to exile 500 families from the Odessa region.²³⁵ Kaganovich recorded in his diary that in addition

²²⁹ Terekhov defended the retention of seed grain, citing the Ukrainian decision of November 29 (see p. 151); this was cancelled on the day after Terekhov's speech.

²³⁰ These quotations from the leaders are taken from Kaganovich's notes on the Ukrainian Politburo meeting (RGASPI, 81/3/215, 1-6).

²³¹ RGASPI, 81/3/215, 13 (speech of December 24).

²³² RGASPI, 81/3/215, 1-6.

²³³ RGASPI, 81/3/215, 21.

²³⁴ RGASPI, 81/3/215, 7.

²³⁵ RGASPI, 17/162/14, 43 (decision by poll of December 26). Kaganovich complained in his diary that decisions by the courts suffered from an insufficient political thrust.

500 heads of households were to be exiled without their families; 50 communists were to be expelled from the party and sent to concentration camps; and 500 families were to be deprived of their household plots and their property confiscated. A few show trials would be held and reported in regional newspapers.²³⁶ The term 'concentration camp', which had been dropped in favour of 'labour camp', was now often used, emphasising the harshness of the action. The household plots of 1,000 households in Khar'kov region were also seized, and 500 in Dnepropetrovsk region, and their property confiscated; and 700 households from Dnepropetrovsk were exiled to the Far North.²³⁷

In Ukraine, the regional and local authorities, having failed to obtain enough grain from the barns after the threshing, sought to obtain it elsewhere. During Kaganovich's visit there were many reports that the straw was being systematically rethreshed on the assumption that grain had been left in the straw to be taken away by the peasants. And, in many kolkhozy, collective farmers were required to return some of the grain with which they had already been issued as an advance payment for their labour days. Kaganovich was doubtful about the effectiveness of these measures. Rethreshing was too slow – it would take two to three months. Kaganovich also argued that 'collective farmers will undertake more willingly' the lengthy process of rethreshing the straw for seed rather than for transfer to the state. And the compulsory return of part of their grain advances by collective farmers risked 'creating a united front against us, insulting the shock worker, and undermining the basis of the labour days'. Instead, he advocated an intensive search for stolen grain, particularly that held by the individual peasants; and above all the removal from the barns of grain accumulated as seed, and of other grain Funds: 'it is a mockery to take away half a pud [8 kilograms] of the grain advance from each household and to ignore the accumulated kolkhoz grain Funds'.

Kaganovich defended the seizure of seed on the grounds that it could be assembled again after the grain collection was complete.

²³⁶ RGASPI, 81/3/215, 23 (entry for December 27–28).

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 24. For the Politburo decision on Dnepropetrovsk region see RGASPI, 17/162/14, 44–5 (decision of January 1, no. 49/29); 'up to 50' party members were to be exiled from the region to a concentration camp. The Politburo decision on the Khar'kov region approved the exile of 400 'malicious elements and kulaks' to the Far North (*ibid.*, 45).

The decision was perverse, and was ultimately ineffective. Its consequence was that the central authorities had to issue substantial seed loans to Ukraine during the spring sowing.²³⁸

In the North Caucasus, similar pressure continued. The Politburo approved a proposal from Sheboldaev, following its resolution of December 14, to exile 5,000 families from North Caucasus (including 2,000 from Poltava *stanitsa*).²³⁹

Three further measures were designed to strengthen political control in the countryside. First, on December 10, the Politburo extended the North Caucasus party purge to a general purge to be carried out throughout the party in the course of 1933; in the meantime, all recruitment of party members and candidate members should cease.²⁴⁰ Secondly, it established an agricultural department attached to the party central committee.²⁴¹ This was a return to the rural department of the central committee, abolished in 1930 when Narkomzem of the USSR was established. The new department, headed by Kaganovich, was in practice in charge of Narkomzem and all the other agencies concerned with agriculture. Thirdly, a Politburo commission, established in November and also headed by Kaganovich, began to appoint the senior staff for the new political departments (*politotdely*), which were to be attached to the Machine-Tractor Stations and the *sovkhozy*.²⁴²

In spite of all these measures, the December collections fell short of the plan by a million tons (see Table 14(c)). In Ukraine, only 650,000 tons were collected, compared with the plan of 1,207,000 tons.²⁴³ To meet the December 9 grain budget, in the USSR as a whole a

²³⁸ For these remarks by Kaganovich, see RGASPI, 81/3/215, 10–17 (speeches of December 23 and 24).

²³⁹ RGASPI, 17/162/14, 42 (decisions by poll, dated December 23).

²⁴⁰ See vol. 4, pp. 329, 333–6, and RGASPI, 17/3/910, 2 (item 2). The purge was to be carried out on the basis of the April 1929 decision about the previous mass purge (see vol. 3, pp. 334–5 – this was mainly directed against recalcitrant urban party members). But unlike the 1929–30 purge, which was carried out by Rabkrin, it was placed in charge of a Politburo commission. The members of the commission were Kaganovich, Postyshev, Rudzutak, Antipov, Shkiryatov and Yagoda.

²⁴¹ RGASPI, 17/3/911, 12 (decision by poll dated December 15).

²⁴² See OI, 6, 1992, 43, 59, citing RGAE, 7486/3/207, 17–19, and pp. 358–9. The establishment of the *politotdely* was not formally approved until the January 1933 plenum of the central committee.

²⁴³ *Ezhegodnik khlebooborota*, [vi] (1934), 16, 18; for the December plan, see RGASPI, 17/21/3768, 115 (dated December 3).

further 1.81 million tons had to be collected in the remaining months of the agricultural year.

By the beginning of December the Moscow region and the Tatar Autonomous Republic had completed their annual grain collection plan, and on December 2 free trade in grain at the kolkhoz markets of the region was accordingly authorised. Other regions were assured that they would be granted a similar right when their plan was fulfilled²⁴⁴ (this was a concession; earlier legislation implied that no region could engage in kolkhoz trade in grain before January 15, 1933). The Gor'kii region followed on December 22.²⁴⁵ However, the central authorities, desperately short of grain, immediately treated these regions as prime targets for obtaining extra grain. On December 20 a new campaign was launched for the voluntary sale of grain to the state – so-called ‘purchases’ (*zakupki*). The purchases were to be at the low official collection prices, but, in return for the grain, kolkhozy, collective farmers and individual peasants were entitled to purchase three rubles of industrial consumer goods for every ruble's worth of grain sold to the state.²⁴⁶ State purchases were facilitated by the strict ban on ‘attempts to buy grain on the part of speculators and re-sellers’.²⁴⁷

The scope of state grain purchases was soon extended. Kolkhoz trade in grain was not permitted anywhere in Ukraine or the North Caucasus because the collection plans for the republic or region as a whole had not been completed. But the Politburo authorised Zagotzerno to undertake purchases in those districts in which the grain collection had been completed. This placed Zagotzerno in a strong position, as the kolkhozy and the peasants had no alternative legal means of marketing whatever grain they possessed. The state purchases were supposed to be undertaken only on a voluntary basis. But in North Caucasus the regional authorities, ‘taking into consideration the specific situation’ were allowed to declare that they were ‘obligatory’ in particular districts in which the grain collections were complete.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁴ SPR, viii (1934), 622–3; SZ, 1932, art. 481 (decree of Sovnarkom and the central committee).

²⁴⁵ GARF, 5446/1/70b (art. 1891).

²⁴⁶ GARF, 5446/1/70b (art. 1870, on the Moscow region and Tatar ASSR). The decree of December 22 provided for state purchases in the Gor'kii region, but the decree announcing publicly that the region had completed its grain collection and seed plans was not promulgated until January 12, 1933 (see n. 267 below).

²⁴⁷ GARF, 5446/1/466, 184 (art. 1872/396s).

²⁴⁸ RGASPI, 17/162/14, 40 (decision by poll of December 15).

For the Gor'kii region, the decree went a stage further. It included a specific 'orienting plan' for purchases of 49,000 tons,²⁴⁹ and similar plans were soon introduced for other regions. State purchases provided some consumer goods in return for grain, but were substantially a supplementary plan for compulsory grain collection under a new name.

(iii) The January 1933 collections

The Politburo set the plan for January 1933 at 1.753 million tons, including the milling levy.²⁵⁰ The achievement of this target would have wiped out the backlog almost completely. The campaign was extremely harsh, even by the standards of previous months. Stalin, in his directive about the January plan, threatened that failure to collect the milling levy would mean that 'General Supply will be reduced by a corresponding amount'.²⁵¹

The authorities continued to concentrate their efforts on the major grain regions. The USSR Politburo authorised the exile of more than a thousand recalcitrant peasants from Ukraine.²⁵² Many reports in the Ukrainian party archives indicate the severity of the measures adopted by local authorities. In the Khar'kov region Terekhov required blacklisted kolkhozy to pay both money fines and 'meat fines' (fines in kind levied in meat), and ordered the seizure of animals which had been transferred to them from the expropriated kulaks. 'In no circumstances,' Terekhov instructed the local party committees, 'limit yourselves to half measures when applying repression.'²⁵³ Gorodishche, a large village of Old Believers, was blacklisted, and the rations were cancelled of workers in industry who were members of village families. The party committee proposed to impose a 'meat fine' on the village, and to authorise the seizure of 'surplus' land and the dismissal of 150 workers from local enterprises.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁹ GARF, 5446/1/70b, 240–241 (art. 1891; Sovnarkom decree dated December 22).

²⁵⁰ RGASPI, 17/3/913, 12–13 (decision by poll dated January 1, 1933).

²⁵¹ TsDAGOU, 1/1/2261, 1–2, published in *Golod 1932–33* (1990), 310.

²⁵² RGASPI, 17/162/14, 44–45 (decisions by poll dated January 1 and 4, 1933).

²⁵³ Published from local archives in *Golod 1932–33* (1990), 334–5 (dated January 14).

²⁵⁴ TsDAGOU, 1/1/2264, 38–40 (report of Voroshilov town party committee, dated January 4), published in *Golod 1932–33* (1990), 31–4.

In the North Caucasus, between November 1, 1932 and January 20, 1933, as many as 100,000 people were arrested in connection with the grain collections: 26,000 were deported from the region and 70,000 imprisoned. The prisons were overcrowded, and Sheboldaev proposed to establish a temporary concentration camp for the peasants under arrest. The Politburo rejected this request, but instructed the OGPU to remove to its camps within one month 30,000 of those under sentence. By the middle of February about 50,000 people had been resettled in the region from elsewhere, including 20,000 former soldiers and their families.²⁵⁵

In the Lower Volga region, the regional party bureau imposed supplementary plans on districts which had already completed their plan, as well as on any kolkhozy in the region which had already fulfilled their plan.²⁵⁶ Cases of extreme coercion were frequently reported: on one occasion large numbers of villagers were locked up in a shed while grain was seized from their cottages.²⁵⁷

The decree of August 7 continued to be applied for the theft of grain. According to a report of the head of the Supreme Court, by January 15, 1933 as many as 103,000 people had been sentenced under the provisions of the decree. Of the 79,000 whose sentences were known to the Supreme Court, 4,880 had been sentenced to death, 26,086 to ten years' imprisonment and 48,094 to other sentences. Those sentenced to death were categorised primarily as kulaks; many of those sentenced to ten years were individual peasants who were not kulaks.²⁵⁸

Throughout the USSR Komzag insisted that the grain plan must be fulfilled unconditionally. On January 14, Kuibyshev, in a top-secret telegram to the Lower Volga region, stressed the urgency of the reduced export plan:

Situation fulfilment January foreign-currency plan exceptionally tense involving foreign-currency losses and hold-up of ships in

²⁵⁵ See Oskol'kov (1991), 51, 56, and RGASPI, 17/162/14, 51 (Politburo decision by poll, dated January 29).

²⁵⁶ RGASPI, 17/21/3769, 13 (dated January 2 and 4).

²⁵⁷ Kondrashin (1991), 115.

²⁵⁸ GARF, 5446/71/174, 80–83 (memorandum signed by A. Vinokur, dated March 7, 1933). The memorandum complained that the data supplied by the local judicial agencies were inadequate. Firm data were available on only 2,773 of the death sentences; 1,274 (45 per cent) of these had been confirmed by the Supreme Courts of the republics.

ports Stop I order you as militant task to secure immediate break-through Stop Plan export deliveries must be fulfilled unconditionally by 20th January; high-quality grain only to be sent to ports; also secure twenty-four hour operation elevators and reception points Zagotzerno.²⁵⁹

The Lower Volga triumphantly replied:

January target twenty thousand tons rye export fulfilled Stop Fifteenth Jan inclusive sent 20,213 tons.²⁶⁰

Chernov rejected a proposal from the Urals to include below-standard grain in its collections, informed the region that only the net weight of grain, excluding weeds and water, counted towards the plan, and told Kazakhstan that the grain plan for its Southern region could be reduced only if the total plan for Kazakhstan as a whole remained unchanged.²⁶¹

The continued efforts of the authorities to seize grain when almost no grain was present, together with the brutal methods used, had a devastating effect on the morale of collective farmers and rural party members. In one district in the Dnepropetrovsk region the surrender of seed funds to the state collection agencies resulted in the 'disorientation of a considerable section of the collective farmers, who do not know what will happen to them'. Long-established collective farmers claimed that the spring sowing would simply not take place without help from the centre; others insisted that all their grain had already been taken, including that set aside for teachers.²⁶²

The regional, republican and central authorities were not ignorant of, or entirely indifferent to, the shortage of grain in the major grain regions. Terekhov apparently told Stalin at the end of 1932 that there was large-scale famine in Ukraine. Stalin is said to have replied uncompromisingly:

They have told us, Cde. Terekhov, that you are a good speaker, and it seems that you tell a good tale. You have made up this fable

²⁵⁹ GARF, 5446/27/50, 3; similar telegrams in the file are addressed to Ukraine and North Caucasus.

²⁶⁰ GARF, 5446/27/50, 8 (not dated).

²⁶¹ GARF, 5446/27/29, 112 (dated January 23), 113 (dated January 23), 123 (dated January 26).

²⁶² TsDAGOU, 1/101/1244, 2-5 (report of agitation and propaganda department of Ukrainian central committee dated January 8), published in *Golod 1932-33* (1990), 318-21.

about famine, you thought you would frighten us, but it won't happen! Wouldn't it be better for you to leave your post of regional party secretary and central committee secretary and go and work in the Union of Writers: you will write stories and fools will read them.²⁶³

The Politburo made one major concession. On January 12 it reduced the annual grain plan for Ukraine by 457,000 tons, and agreed to smaller reductions in the plans for other regions.²⁶⁴ In a bizarre application of the principle that any reduction in the grain plan must be kept secret, the Ukrainian Politburo insisted to its regions that 'this reduction in the regional plan ... must not be subdivided among the districts and the districts must not be informed about it; the present district plans shall remain in force'.²⁶⁵ The USSR Politburo, of course, insisted that the new reduced plan should be met in full. On January 24, it criticised Ukrainian organisations for failing to collect 'the thrice-reduced plan, which had in any case already been reduced', and dismissed the secretaries of the Khar'kov, Dnepropetrovsk and Odessa regional party committees and replaced them with Postyshev, Khataevich and Veger (Terekhov lost his Khar'kov post in spite of the firmness towards the peasants which he displayed subsequent to his conversation with Stalin).²⁶⁶ The delphic phrases about the Ukrainian plan were frequently repeated. They referred to the original collection plan for Ukraine of May 6, 1932, which was lower than the 1931/32 plan, and to the subsequent reductions on August 17 and October 30, 1932, and January 12, 1933 (see Table 21).

Eleven republics or regions, including the Central Volga, completed their grain and seed plan during January, and were permitted to resume the sale of grain and flour on the market within the region.²⁶⁷

²⁶³ Reported in P, May 26, 1964. It is not clear whether this story comes from the archives, from memoirs or from hearsay.

²⁶⁴ RGASPI, 17/3/913, 15 (decision by poll).

²⁶⁵ RGAE, 8040/8/20, 25, 25ob. (decision of January 14).

²⁶⁶ RGASPI, 17/3/914, 15, 24 (decision by poll); Razumov was appointed Odessa secretary on January 24, but replaced by Veger on January 31.

²⁶⁷ SZ, 1933, art. 18 (dated January 12); art. 27 (dated January 23). The North Caucasus completed its annual grain collection plan by January 15, but not its seed plan – as in Ukraine, part of the regional seed fund had been surrendered in order to reach the collection target (Oskol'kov (1991), 63–4). On January 12, the Politburo reduced the North Caucasian collection plan by 12,000 tons (RGASPI, 17/3/913, 15).

But on the whole the January collections were again a failure. In the USSR as a whole the total collected amounted to only 41 per cent of the monthly plan (see Table 14(c)). Ukraine surrendered only 244,000 tons, and still needed to find some 300,000 tons during the rest of the agricultural year if it was to reach its 'thrice-reduced already reduced' annual plan. More than a million tons needed to be collected from the USSR as a whole to obtain the amount anticipated in the revised grain budget of December 9. The impossibility of this task was even then not acknowledged by the authorities.

(iv) The grain collections and the January plenum

The plenum of the party central committee met during January 7–12, 1933. It celebrated the achievements of the first five-year plan and looked forward to the second (see vol. 4, pp. 317–30). But the troubles in the countryside must have overshadowed the rejoicing in most delegates' minds. At the plenum, republican and regional party secretaries uncompromisingly supported the grain plans, in spite of their resistance behind the scenes. Kosior praised the doubling of the grain collections compared with the pre-collectivisation level, and attributed difficulties in taking the grain to hostile 'nationalist and counter-revolutionary elements', and to 'parasites and slackers' who were 'devouring the kolkhoz grain'.²⁶⁸ Sheboldaev criticised his own region for failing to notice 'the infestation on a vast scale of party cells, and of the leadership of kolkhozy and state farms, with these Whiteguard bandit elements', and insisted that the seeds 'stolen' by collective farmers and individual peasants must be collected back: 'this will be a vast and lengthy struggle and it must be carried on with a firm hand to the end'. He even criticised Shkiryatov for his estimate that 30 per cent of members should be expelled during the Party purge – it should be 'up to 50% and sometimes more'.²⁶⁹

On January 11, the penultimate day of the plenum, Kaganovich complained in his report on the politotdely (see p. 358) that many local communists believed that 'when we speak about the kulak this is for form's sake, we have eliminated the kulaks and long ago exiled them', whereas in fact some kulaks had not been exiled, well-to-do peasants remained who were close to the kulaks, and some kulaks

²⁶⁸ RGASPI, 17/2/514, i, 34–35.

²⁶⁹ RGASPI, 17/2/514, i, 42–43.

had fled from exile and were hidden with their relatives, or even with party members.²⁷⁰

Krylenko, People's Commissar for Justice of the Russian Republic, complained that the law of August 7 had not been applied adequately. By January 1, 1933, the death sentence had been carried out in 'hardly more than a thousand cases'. Judges were supposed to impose a minimum sentence of ten years' deprivation of liberty for *any* theft; they had been instructed to use art. 51 of the Criminal Code, which gave them the right to vary the law, only as an exception, but they had in fact used it in 40 per cent of cases; the use of art. 51 had therefore been forbidden. The recent increase in theft of kolkhoz property meant that 'repression must be *strengthened*'; People's Judges [the lowest level of judge] must be given the right to impose the death sentence.²⁷¹ Krylenko did not mention the instruction of September 16 which lessened the impact of the August 7 decree (see pp. 167–8). This was an attempt to revert to the severity of the original decision.

Yakovlev presented an extended account of the three main lines of struggle of the 'class enemy'. First, 'production wrecking', very widespread in the Kuban' – stealing seeds, breaking machines and killing horses. Secondly, the theft of kolkhoz property – which had been anticipated by the August 7 decree – 'Cde. Stalin's prediction was the act of a genius'. Thirdly, the inflation of various kolkhoz Funds. Proper records and good labour discipline must be accompanied by repression. Lenin had recommended that acts of repression should be directed against whole enterprises; and this was trebly necessary in kolkhozy, where people were 'tens of times less organised and disciplined'.²⁷²

Several speeches revealed almost inadvertently that rural disaffection was much more widely based than the kulaks. Gryadinskii, party secretary in West Siberia, described theft in kolkhozy and sovkhhozy as 'a widespread phenomenon ... they steal in every possible way'.²⁷³ Postyshev even remarked that in the new kolkhozy 'the muzhiks have remained almost the same as they were'.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ RGASPI, 17/2/514, ii, 3–10.

²⁷¹ RGASPI, 17/2/514, ii, 11–12. Krylenko's figures in his speech for the number sentenced by the end of December (54,645) are much lower than those given by the head of the Supreme Court (see p. 198).

²⁷² RGASPI, 17/2/514, ii, 15–16.

²⁷³ RGASPI, 17/2/514, ii, 11.

²⁷⁴ RGASPI, 17/2/514, ii, 18.

Stalin's lengthy speech which concluded the discussion was published under the title 'On Work in the Countryside'.²⁷⁵ It was moderate in tone, but it conveyed the same message as the rest of the proceedings. He again insisted that 'the gross harvest of grain in 1932 was not worse but better than in 1931', and 'in 1932 there was more grain in our country than in 1931'. The greater difficulties in collecting the grain from the 1932 harvest were therefore caused by faults in their own work.

Stalin outlined five main deficiencies. First, 'our comrades in the provinces' had misinterpreted the new situation resulting from the introduction of kolkhoz trade. With the legalisation of a high market price for grain, peasants concluded 'if I am not an idiot, I must hold back the grain a bit, hand over less to the state'. Kolkhoz trade was essential as a means of expanding urban-rural trade, as a source of increased income for the collective farmer, and as a new incentive. But rural officials should have realised that, in the new environment, the grain campaign should have started earlier; and they should have enforced the government decision that trade in grain should begin only when the plans for the grain and seed collections had been fully achieved. 'The Politburo and Sovnarkom,' Stalin admitted, 'perhaps made a mistake in not emphasising this aspect of the matter with sufficient firmness.' This was the only point on which Stalin referred to a possible fault on the part of the central authorities; following the precedent of his article 'Dizzy from Success' of March 1930, he otherwise heaped the blame on the shoulders of local officials.

Secondly, it had been wrongly assumed that the kolkhozy in the crucial grain areas could be left to themselves to carry out the plan. Instead, the party must take their management firmly in hand.

Thirdly, 'many of our comrades have overestimated the kolkhozy as a new form of economy, and turned them into an icon.' The kolkhozy, while socialist in form, 'provide certain facilities for their temporary use by counter-revolutionaries'. In the North Caucasus, for example, counter-revolutionaries had called for 'kolkhozy without communists', just as Milyukov [the leader in exile of the Constitutional Democratic Party] had called during the Kronstadt rising for 'soviets without communists'.

Fourthly, many local comrades had failed to realise that the class enemy had gone over from a direct attack on the kolkhozy to

²⁷⁵ P, January 17, 1933; *Sochineniya*, xiii, 216-33.

undermining them from within by 'silent disruption' (*tikhaya sapa*), working in the *kolkhozy* as storekeepers, bookkeepers and secretaries.

Finally, the crucial role of communists in the grain campaign had been underestimated: 'The cause of the difficulties in the grain collections must be sought not in the peasants but in our own ranks' – '*we are guilty*'.

The plenum resolution on the *politotdely*, published widely in the press, directed its fire against the 'savage resistance of the anti-Soviet elements in the village':

The kulak economy has been defeated but the kulak has not finally lost his influence. Former White officers, former priests and their sons, former managers for landowners and owners of sugar factories, former policemen and other anti-Soviet elements from the bourgeois-nationalist intelligentsia (including Socialist Revolutionaries and followers of Petlyura), have settled in the village, and seek in every way to disrupt the *kolkhozy*, they try to undermine the measures of the party and the government in agriculture. For these purposes they use the lack of consciousness of a section of the collective farmers against the interests of the social *kolkhoz* economy, against the interests of the *kolkhoz* peasantry.

Penetrating into the *kolkhozy* as bookkeepers, managers, storekeepers, brigade leaders, etc. and not infrequently as leading members of *kolkhoz* boards, the anti-Soviet elements seek to organise wrecking, damage machines, sow badly (*s ogrekhami*), rob *kolkhoz* wealth, disrupt labour discipline, organise the theft of seeds and secret grain-stores, and sabotage the grain collections – and sometimes they succeed in disorganising the *kolkhozy*.²⁷⁶

(D) GRAIN IN THE TIME OF FAMINE, FEBRUARY–JULY 1933

(i) *Famine*

In 1931 and 1932 the centre received intermittent reports of hunger from various rural districts, particularly in the last months before the

²⁷⁶ *Kollektivizatsiya* (1957), 432–3.

1932 harvest. From January 1933, hunger became more acute in the countryside in Ukraine, the Volga regions, North Caucasus and elsewhere. The number of deaths increased rapidly, reaching a peak in June, immediately before the new harvest. (For the course and nature of the famine, see Chapter 13.)

The famine was never reported in the press, apart from rare *post factum* mentions of ‘food difficulties’. Even behind the scenes, the rural and district authorities were at first extremely reluctant to report cases of hunger in the countryside to their superiors – even in top-secret communications. They did not want to be accused of being misled by kulaks and other counter-revolutionaries who were out to sabotage the grain collections. Khataevich later commented:

It was not merely that until the middle of February no-one paid any attention to all these cases and facts of swelling from hunger and deaths from hunger. It was considered anti-party and reprehensible to react to this. I have just personally established that the secretary of the Verkhnetokmak village party cell cde. Zinchenko (Bol’shetokmak district) swelled up from hunger and did not inform the district party committee about this, fearing that he might be accused of opportunism.²⁷⁷

Even in February, district and regional party officials often worded their reports about hunger in the countryside with nervous circum-spection.²⁷⁸ As late as February 23 the Lower Volga regional party bureau still insisted that ‘rumours about famine’ were ‘a new kulak manoeuvre in the struggle against the seed collection’, and demanded that district committees should find the ‘organisers and inspirers’ of these rumours and put them under arrest.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷ TsDAGOU, 1/101/1283, 105–111 (letter to USSR party central committee dated March 3), published in *Golod 1932–1933* (1990), 401–6. See also the comments in a district report to the Dnepropetrovsk regional party committee (TsDAGOU, 1/20/6277, 180 (March 1933)).

²⁷⁸ Thus, on February 18, a district party secretary, in a memorandum to Khataevich about cases of famine, asserted that rumours of famine in his district were exaggerated, and even claimed that a collective farmer who was swollen with hunger possessed adequate stocks of grain. But in the same memorandum he cautiously related an account of peasants swollen or dead from hunger, stating that ‘this communication, although extremely one-sided, nevertheless confirms the information which I received personally’; and he then asked for ‘some food assistance’ (TsDAGOU, 1/620/6277, 56–8).

²⁷⁹ RGASPI, 17/21/3769, 146 (appendix to protocol, dated February 23).

Before the end of January, OGPU reports from Ukraine and the North Caucasus were describing far more frankly cases of famine both in small towns and in the countryside. On many matters OGPU reports were quite unreliable. But we have already seen that, in the difficult months before the 1932 harvest, these reports were quite frank about hunger and starvation. In 1933, these reports, which flowed up to the regions and to Moscow, evidently played a major role in convincing sceptical authorities, including Stalin personally, that they were confronted with genuine famine.

A series of such reports, all preserved within the same file of Ukrainian central committee papers, evidently strongly influenced the Ukrainian Politburo, particularly a striking account of famine from the Kiev GPU received on February 6. On February 8, the Ukrainian Politburo admitted the existence of famine for the first time (albeit in a secret resolution):

In view of the cases of starvation which have taken place in particular small towns and particular families of collective farmers, regional party committees and soviet executive committees are requested not to leave a single such case without immediately taking measures to localise it.

Reports were to be sent to Chubar' within seven days, both about the food resources which had been obtained from within the village, district or region, and about 'additional help required through centralised channels'. The resolution did not fully recognise the extent of the famine. It called cautiously on regional committees to 'devote special attention to checking whether simulation or provocation have occurred in a particular case' and insisted that 'it is forbidden to keep an official record'.²⁸⁰ And on February 9, Kosior circulated a report to the Ukrainian Politburo listing cases where, he claimed, 'malicious withholders of grain have brought their families to real hunger (the children swell up)' even though they possessed several tsentners of grain.²⁸¹ Nevertheless, from February 8, famine was a major feature of the secret proceedings of the Ukrainian authorities.

Stalin and his immediate colleagues were certainly well informed about the progress of the famine. Terekhov spoke to Stalin about the famine; and Kosior and other local leaders sent him detailed

²⁸⁰ TsDAGOU, 1/16/9, 151–156, published in *Golod 1932–1933* (1990), 375.

²⁸¹ TsDAGOU, 1/101/1282, 2, published in *Golod 1932–1933* (1990), 375–6.

messages about it (see pp. 199–200 and p. 216). Reports from the Secret Political Department of the OGPU described famine not only in the main grain areas but also in the Central Black-Earth region, the Urals and the Far East.²⁸²

(ii) *The First All-Union Congress of Kolkhoz Shock Workers*

Between February 15 and 19, the authorities, bombarded in secret with grim reports of famine, offered the Soviet public a grotesque morale-building spectacle: the First All-Union Congress of Kolkhoz Shock Workers. It was presented as an assembly of hard-working peasants of a new type. It was attended by 1,513 collective farmers; 890 of them did not hold any office, and less than half were members of the party or the Komsomol. All of them had earned more than 150 labour days in 1932.²⁸³ The congress was an occasion both for applauding the virtues of collective farming and for warning about faults to be overcome. In his opening report, Kaganovich depicted a capitalist world in crisis, with ‘tens of millions of unemployed dying of hunger’ and ‘tens of millions of poverty-stricken peasant farmers ravaged by the crisis’, and contrasted it with the glorious future offered by the kolkhoz. The kolkhoz system would eliminate the division between haves and have-nots, combine social profit with personal interest, make work easier, promote the talented, and bring electric light, theatres, cinemas, cars, parks, asphalt roads and railway trains to the countryside. He acknowledged, however, that ‘in the kolkhoz movement we are still little Octobrists, not even Pioneers’. To transform the economy would require ‘stubborn struggle and work, from day to day, from hour to hour, on remaking psychology’.²⁸⁴

Yakovlev’s description at the congress of a kolkhoz he had just visited in Odessa region was a bleak contrast to Kaganovich’s vision. The kolkhoz had plenty of good land, and was served by a strong MTS. But in 1932 it had failed to complete its grain collection plan, even though it was only a quarter of the 1930 plan, and ‘a number

²⁸² For examples see TSD, iii, 661–8.

²⁸³ P, February 22, 1933.

²⁸⁴ P, February 18, 1933 (report of February 16). The Octobrists belonged to the organisation of children aged seven and upwards, preparing to enter the Pioneer movement, aged ten to sixteen.

of peasants, including those who had worked a large number of labour days, had little grain'. Only a third of the men worked properly in the field, and two-thirds of the horses had died in the past two years.²⁸⁵

Speakers from the kolkhozy, adhering strictly to conventional wisdom, gave many examples of kulaks and counter-revolutionaries who had sabotaged their farms by putting chunks of iron in the thresher, nails and wire in the fodder, and so on. The chair of a kolkhoz in the Central Volga region described with approval how a father had denounced his twenty-year-old son for hiding grain. The son was sentenced to ten years' deprivation of liberty.²⁸⁶

On February 19, the last day of the congress, Stalin addressed the delegates. He admitted that 'quite a number of people, including collective farmers' were dubious about collective farming, but insisted that this was not at all surprising, as peasants had been living in the old way for hundreds of years. He rejected emphatically 'the third way' advocated by 'some comrades' – individual farming without capitalists and landowners – because it would inevitably give rise to a 'kulak-capitalist regime'. The main thrust of his speech, delivered in the midst of the unacknowledged famine, was that 'the main difficulties are already overcome'; honest work for two or three years would '*make all collective farmers well-to-do*'. This phrase, which became famous, was particularly striking because on many occasions in the past three years 'well-to-do (*zazhitochnye*)' peasants had been coupled with kulaks as an object of suspicion (see, for example, Kaganovich's report to the January 1933 plenum, on p. 201).

Stalin ended his address by praising a letter from collective farmers attached to Bezenchuk MTS, Central Volga region, which set out their problems and achievements in a positive tone, and had been publicised enthusiastically in the daily press. But he permitted himself to correct the Bezenchuk farmers on one point. They were wrong to portray their work as 'modest':

Their 'modest' and 'insignificant' work is in fact great and creative, and is deciding the fate of history.²⁸⁷

In implicit contrast to the upbeat tone of Stalin's speech, the declaration issued by the congress drew attention to the grim reality

²⁸⁵ P, February 19, 1933 (speech of February 16).

²⁸⁶ P, February 18, 19, 20, 1933.

²⁸⁷ P, February 23, 1933, reprinted in *Sochineniya*, xiii, 236–56.

of the spring of 1933. It took a firm stand not only against kulaks and wreckers, but also against ‘backward’ kolkhozy which demanded seed grain from the state, and hence took it away from the best kolkhozy: ‘You want to receive from the state elevators grain which we honestly gave to the state to feed the workers and the Red Army. Why, by what right? How long will this scandal continue?’ Regions which had been subject to drought should be helped by the state, but people must not be allowed to ‘crawl into the pockets of the general public’:

Those kolkhozy which let the kulaks and their hangers-on steal their grain, and did not fulfil their grain collection plan, and have found themselves without seed, have only themselves to blame (pust’ penyayut na sebya).²⁸⁸

(iii) *The grain collections*

At the beginning of February, the drive to collect the remaining grain due to the state continued unabated. In Ukraine on February 4, just four days before the secret decision recognising the existence of famine, a widely-publicised joint plenum of the Khar’kov regional and town party committees, attended by the new regional secretary Postyshev, blamed the shortfall in the grain collections on failures in leadership, which had facilitated ‘the anti-Soviet activity of Petlyuraite and kulak elements’.²⁸⁹ On the following day, the plenum of the Ukrainian party central committee assembled, and Kosior’s report took the same line. He claimed that there were no objective reasons for the failure to achieve the grain collections, because even the figures of the statisticians, which were ‘underestimated’, had shown a grain yield of 7.3 tsentners per hectare from the 1932 harvest, compared with 7 tsentners in 1931. ‘No Bolshevik,’ he brashly insisted, ‘can claim that even the initial plan was unrealistic.’²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ P, February 20, 1933 (declaration of February 19).

²⁸⁹ P, February 6, 1933. The February 4 plenum strongly criticised the Khar’kov plenum held a week earlier on January 28–29 for its failure to discuss adequately the critical USSR Politburo resolution of January 24 (for this resolution see p. 200).

²⁹⁰ TsDAGOU, 1/1/403, reprinted in *Golod 1932–1933* (1990), 350–70; a fairly full version of this report appeared in P, February 15, 1933. The yields quoted were estimated after the harvest on October 1 of each of the two years.

The remarkable claim that the original collection plan had been realistic was repeated in the plenum resolution published in the press.²⁹¹

Even after the central authorities were well aware of the widespread existence of famine, the urgent need for grain impelled them to continue the collections. Now, however, they were concentrated in the regions where there was no famine, or where famine was less acute. Between February and June, only 123,000 tons were collected, and only 30,000 tons of this came from the main famine regions. In addition to the state collections, between February and June, 316,000 tons were collected as milling levy, 68,000 of this from the famine regions. The local authorities were everywhere under extreme pressure to bring in the grain, because part of the bread rations for Lists 2 and 3, particularly in the smaller towns, had to come from the 10 per cent of the milling levy they retained. Nevertheless, the amount collected was far less than planned.²⁹²

The central authorities also kept up the pressure to obtain grain by state 'purchases' at nominal prices (see pp. 196–7). Even in May, Chernov sought eagerly to secure additional purchases in regions where famine was not prevalent. He proposed to Stalin and Molotov that they should call upon six regions to launch a 'broadly-developed campaign' to secure a planned amount from each region. Industrial consumer goods in short supply were to be offered in return for the grain.²⁹³ But by mid-May total purchases amounted to only 229,000 tons, compared with the plan of 554,000 tons, and the total amount collected in 1932/33 was only 258,000 tons.²⁹⁴

Repressive measures continued to be used against the peasants. Between February and April, the Politburo authorised a number of republican and regional authorities to confirm death sentences

²⁹¹ P, February 10, 1933 (resolution of February 7); the text from the archives is published in *Golod 1932–1933* (1990), 371–3.

²⁹² As late as the beginning of March, Chernov estimated that food grains amounting to 377,000–410,000 tons (23–25 million puds) would be collected via the milling levy between February 15 and the end of June (GARF, 5446/27/29, 8); in fact, only 246,000 tons of food grains were collected between the beginning of February and the end of June (estimated from data in *Ezhegodnik khlebooborota*, [vi] 1934, 17).

²⁹³ Memorandum from Chernov to Stalin, Molotov and Kuibyshev dated May 8, 1933; draft telegrams to six regions from Stalin and Molotov dated May 9 (GARF, 5446/27/33, 98–99, 93–98; RGAE, 8040/8/7, 123–124). It is not known whether the telegrams from Stalin and Molotov drafted by Chernov were actually sent.

²⁹⁴ *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 266.

without referring them to the Supreme Court in Moscow.²⁹⁵ In the same period the Politburo also approved the exile of over 15,000 households for refusing to collect in the seed, and to sow, and for much vaguer reasons.²⁹⁶ Other legislation restricted the attempts of peasants to travel outside the famine areas in search of food (see pp. 426–7).

(iv) Relaxation and repression

At the beginning of February, the spring sowing was only a couple of months away, and the collection of grain for seed was an urgent necessity. In those areas where the state grain collections were completed, the seed campaign had already begun in earnest. As early as December 3, 1932, the Lower Volga regional party committee, with Postyshev present, resolved that seed for spring sowing by kolkhozy and individual peasants should be collected by January 1, except in those districts where the grain collections had not been completed.²⁹⁷ On January 19, 1933, the Politburo authorised the North Caucasus, and the Lower and Central Volga regions, where the grain collections had already been completed, or almost completed, to allocate to the seed fund any grain collected in excess of the annual plan.²⁹⁸ On January 23, a published decree of the party central committee and Sovnarkom insisted that seeds must be collected in full in the North Caucasus, ‘if necessary’ using the methods of the grain campaign. The decree warned that ‘kulak sabotage and wrecking may still recur in a number of districts during the seed collection’.²⁹⁹ Sheboldaev, addressing the plenum of the regional party committee,

²⁹⁵ These included North Caucasus (RGASPI, 17/162/14, 52, art. 121/103 dated February 1 – right of confirmation to regional Supreme Court); Belorussia (RGASPI, 17/162/14, 61, art. 52/17 dated February 9 – sentence by republican OGPU triumvirate); Ukraine (RGASPI, 17/162/14, 96, art. 27/4, dated March 10 – cases of ‘insurrection and counter-revolution’ – death sentences by triumvirate); Central Asia and Leningrad (RGASPI, 17/162/14, 122, 123 – arts. 78/54 and 79/55, dated April 16 – as for Ukraine).

²⁹⁶ For details see RGASPI, 17/162/14, 52, 64 – arts. 121/103, 91/56 and 57/39, dated February 2 and 20, and March 15 (referring to Lower Volga region); l. 67 – art. 129/94, dated February 26 (Bashkiriya); l. 101 – art. 78/60, dated March 18 (Kiev sugar-growing districts); ll. 108–109, dated April 1 (North Caucasus).

²⁹⁷ RGASPI, 17/21/3768, 116.

²⁹⁸ RGASPI, 17/162/48 (art. 25/6, approved by poll).

²⁹⁹ SZ, 1933, art. 26.

which met from January 26 to 28, reported that the amount of seed collected had declined in the previous two weeks, and complained that speakers at the plenum were 'calmly philosophising on general themes'; the collection of seed must be the 'second commandment'.³⁰⁰ The absolute shortage of grain was now so great in the hungry countryside that the collection of seed was often physically impossible.

Seed collection was particularly urgent in Ukraine, where some kolkhozy had been denuded of their seed stores in view of their failure to meet their grain targets (see pp. 194–5). On January 27, the USSR Politburo resolved that, in Ukraine, 'the main attention' should now be directed towards the collection of seeds, 'while not ceasing the [normal] collections'.³⁰¹ Then, on February 5, the USSR Politburo ordered that Ukrainian grain collections should cease:

- (a) From February 6 of this year grain collection throughout Ukraine shall be considered to have ceased.
- (b) All regions of Ukraine shall fully transfer all their efforts to the collection of seed for the spring sowing, placing the seed collected at the disposal of the region.
- (c) The collection of the milling levy shall continue on the previous basis.³⁰²

The local authorities sought to assemble seed grain from local resources. They urged the kolkhozy and the rural authorities to continue the practices of previous months (see p. 194): rethresh and rewinnow in search of extra grain, and determinedly seek to recover stolen grain. When these activities proved hopelessly inadequate, collective farmers were often required to return the grain they had been issued in payment for labour days. Thus, in the Volga German republic, an instruction from the regional party bureau, dated January 31, insisted that 'ALL THE SEED WHICH IS LACKING SHALL BE PROVIDED BY THE COLLECTIVE FARMERS' (it did not point out that most of the grain issued would have already been eaten by the hungry peasants). But two weeks later the bureau acknowledged that its instruction had led some canton (district)

³⁰⁰ Sheboldaev (Rostov, 1934), 102–3 (speech of January 28); the grain collections were, of course, the first commandment.

³⁰¹ RGASPI, 17/3/914, 15 (art. 60/42, approved by poll).

³⁰² RGASPI, 17/3/915, 16 (approved by poll).

authorities to demand more grain from the collective farmers than they had earlier received in payment, and condemned the canton authorities for creating 'a united front of saboteurs of the seed collection' and turning honest communists into thieves.³⁰³ In spite of this show of moderation, on February 27 the bureau, itself under pressure from Moscow, accused the leaders of a canton, in which only 48.4 per cent of the required seed grain had been collected, of 'surrendering its position to the class enemy' and taking the false line that 'there is no seed in the canton, and seeds cannot be collected'. The canton party secretary was expelled from the party and arrested.³⁰⁴

In the Lower Volga region, on February 19 the regional party committee instructed party members and the local *aktiv* to set an example by being the first to hand in grain for seed. Households 'maliciously failing to provide seed' would be listed in the press, and the region would petition the government to expel them from the region.³⁰⁵

All these efforts failed to yield enough seed. By mid-February, only half the seed required in the North Caucasus had been collected, and sowing was due to start in March.³⁰⁶ The Politburo was faced with urgent demands for seed grain. Other competing demands for grain were also pressed on its attention. First, and most acute, were the needs of tens of millions of peasants, hungry, starving or on the point of death from hunger in vast areas of the countryside. Secondly, fodder grains were needed by millions of emaciated horses, which were essential for sowing, harvesting and transport. Thirdly – and this was the main concern of the authorities – the grain supplied centrally for the rations of the urban population, the army and others was quite inadequate even before the famine hit the countryside. They had been supplemented by local supplies, but in the areas affected by famine local supplies of all kinds of food attenuated to vanishing point. Industries, local authorities and others responsible for the consumers on ration Lists 2 and 3 vociferously demanded increased grain allocations.

Faced with the desperate situation in the countryside, the Politburo abandoned its earlier firm decision not to issue grain from

³⁰³ RGASPI, 17/21/2131, 63 (dated February 16).

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 107–109.

³⁰⁵ RGASPI, 17/21/3769, 94–95.

³⁰⁶ Oskol'kov (Rostov, 1991), 70.

centralised funds for seed, or for food or fodder aid to the countryside. Between February 11 and March 3, the Politburo authorised the issue of over 800,000 tons of grain as seed to North Caucasus, Ukraine, the Lower-Volga Region, Urals and Kazakhstan; and a further 400,000 tons was issued before the end of the spring sowing (see Table 22). The first Politburo decision, on February 11, stated that 'seed assistance' was to be supplied to 'kolkhozy and sovkhozy in need' in the North Caucasus as a loan; this was to be returned in kind in the autumn of 1933, plus 10 per cent (also in kind) to cover the cost of 'administration and transport'.³⁰⁷ These arrangements for the return of grain set the pattern for all later grain loans. A parallel decision on seed assistance for Ukraine, and a further decision about the North Caucasus, followed on February 18, on the eve of Stalin's address to the kolkhoz congress.³⁰⁸ Stalin did not mention these decisions in his speech, but they were promulgated as an open decree of Sovnarkom and the central committee, published in *Pravda*. The decree explained that steppe Ukraine and the Kuban' districts of the North Caucasus were short of seed because 'unfavourable climatic conditions in a number of districts of Ukraine and North Caucasus led to a loss of part of the harvest'.³⁰⁹ This was the only occasion during the famine months on which the provision of grain to the countryside from central funds was announced openly in the press.

Some seed was also issued to regions where famine conditions were somewhat less acute. Thus, on February 28, Vareikis appealed urgently to Stalin to loan 49,000 tons to the Central Black-Earth region, and, following a positive recommendation from Chernov, the Politburo approved half this amount on March 3.³¹⁰

Grain for food was issued in much smaller quantities. Between February and July no fewer than thirty-five Politburo decisions and Sovnarkom decrees – all secret or top-secret – authorised in total the issue of 320,000 tons of grain for food (see Table 23). The first three decisions, all adopted on February 7, a few days before the first seed

³⁰⁷ RGASPI, 17/162/14, 62–63 – art. 52/17.

³⁰⁸ RGASPI, 17/162/14, 64, 73–74 (arts. 80/45, 81/46). For the Komzag instructions applying the decisions of February 18, see RGAE, 8040/8/180, 26 and 27–28 (both dated February 19 and signed by Chernov).

³⁰⁹ P, February 26, 1933. The decree, dated February 25, was also published in SZ, 1933, art. 80.

³¹⁰ For the memoranda, see RGAE, 8040/8/20, 42–46; for the Politburo decision, see Table 22.

loan, issued rye to the North Caucasus and to the Dnepropetrovsk and Odessa regions of Ukraine.³¹¹ The decisions of February 11 and 18 advancing seed loans to North Caucasus and Ukraine also incorporated food assistance to their sovkhozy and kolkhozy (see Table 23). The published decrees were silent about the food loans. In the North Caucasus, the initial food loan of half a million puds (8,000 tons) made on February 11 was supplemented on February 18 by a further loan of two million puds (32,000 tons), plus 11,000 tons for sovkhoz workers and rural specialists.³¹²

During the next few months regional party secretaries in Ukraine frequently called on the republican leaders to obtain more grain. Thus, on March 17, in a long memorandum to Postyshev about the famine, Chernyavskii, first party secretary in Vinnitsa region, conceded that some famine victims were irresponsible slackers, and even claimed that *'counter-revolutionary kulak agitation counts on creating a famine psychosis in the villages'* on the basis of the poor food conditions. But he also stressed that other famine victims were conscientious collective farmers with many labour days to their credit. He described at length the steps taken locally to relieve the famine, but concluded that the situation could be remedied only if the region was allocated a grain loan and additional rations for starving children, and could also retain all its decentralised grain collections, and all the potatoes collected in the region, including those intended for transfer to the centre.³¹³

Vinnitsa did not receive any immediate assistance from Moscow. A month later, in a letter to Kosior marked 'Strictly Personal', Chernyavskii reported that 'the situation in the region has considerably worsened... particularly because of the incorrect view in Khar'kov that the situation is favourable'. Individual peasant households were the worst affected, and were urgently in need of a state grain loan. Chernyavskii reminded Kosior that Petrovsky, having visited the region, had recommended Chernyavskii to go to Moscow to urge his cause; but Kosior had thought this unwise.³¹⁴

Similar appeals were sent to Kosior by other agencies, including the Ukrainian People's Commissariat of Health and various political sectors of the MTS (see pp. 425, 419).

³¹¹ RGASPI, 17/162/14, 60 – arts. 51/24, 52/25, 53/26.

³¹² RGASPI, 17/162/14, 64, 73.

³¹³ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6275, 45–56.

³¹⁴ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6275, 152–157, dated April 16.

Although Kosior had prevented Chernyavskii from taking his case to Moscow, he himself addressed urgent appeals for help to Stalin. On March 17, Kosior and Postyshev wrote to Stalin stating, '[in view of the information they had received from reliable officials, the GPU and the military] the situation in Kiev region is much worse and more difficult than we thought'; 200,000 people were affected. Kosior and Postyshev warned that 'if emergency measures are not taken, the misfortune may grow to a very dangerous extent', and called for a substantial grain loan.³¹⁵ A few weeks later, in May, Kosior and Chubar' addressed a further urgent request to Stalin:

The particularly serious food situation developing in June will undoubtedly require supplementary food assistance not only to Odessa, Dnepropetrovsk and Donetsk regions but also to Khar'kov, Vinnitsa and Kiev regions. Khar'kov region has about 20 particularly suffering districts which must have help, but there are no resources.³¹⁶

The affected districts were also visited by teams from Moscow which took up their cause. Thus Gaister (Gosplan USSR), Aleksandrov and Odintsev (both from Narkomzem USSR) together travelled to Vinnitsa region, reported the desperate famine conditions, and demanded:

Help from centre needed. Gaister Aleksandrov travelled Moscow intending provide information and raise question immediate help via Molotov Kuibyshev Yakovlev. This connection I sent memorandum Yakovlev.³¹⁷

Some Moscow decisions to issue grain were evidently made in direct response to the requests of regional or republican party secretaries. Thus the initial loan for seed and food to the North Caucasus was increased as a result of an appeal from the regional party committee.³¹⁸ The food loan of May 31 was a response to Kosior's and Chubar's telegram requesting grain urgently. This specified that

³¹⁵ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6377, 87–88; this is a typed draft with many handwritten corrections. The phrases in square brackets above are crossed out, and presumably were not incorporated in the final telegram.

³¹⁶ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6378, 36 (this is a draft of the telegram).

³¹⁷ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6276, 103 (sent by Odintsev, and from internal evidence probably sent in April).

³¹⁸ Oskol'kov (Rostov, 1991), 77.

Khar'kov region needed 200,000 puds; Kiev and Vinnitsa, 150,000 each; and Chernigov, 30,000 – a total of 530,000.³¹⁹ The Politburo decision of May 31 rounded down the total to 500,000 puds (8,200 tons), and granted the regions 200,000, 135,000, 135,000 and 30,000 puds, respectively (see Table 23).³²⁰

The most famous case of a positive response by the Politburo – or rather by Stalin – to a request for grain for food concerned Veshenskii and Upper Don districts in the North Caucasus. On April 6, Sholokhov, who lived in Veshenskii district, wrote at length to Stalin describing the famine conditions and urging him to provide grain. Stalin received the letter on April 15, and on April 16 the Politburo granted 700 tons of grain to the district. Stalin sent a telegram to Sholokhov 'We will do everything required. Inform size of necessary help. State a figure.' Sholokhov replied on the same day, and on April 22, the day on which Stalin received the second letter, the Politburo agreed his claim in full. Stalin wrote to him, 'You should have sent answer not by letter but by telegram. Time was wasted.' In a further letter to Sholokhov, Stalin chided him for his one-sided failure to realise that 'the respected grain-growers of your district (and not only your district) have carried out a "go-slow" (sabotage!), and would have been willing to leave the workers and the Red Army without bread'.³²¹ Nevertheless he sent out a high-level commission to the district, which found that Sholokhov's charges were justified.³²² This was the only occasion on which the Politburo provided a specific amount of grain for a particular district.

None of these events was reported at the time. The press merely published an anodyne telegram from Sholokhov complaining that transport was not available to move grain from Veshenskii to another

³¹⁹ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6378, 36 (a draft telegram).

³²⁰ In the draft of the telegram from Kosior and Chubar' a sentence was crossed out: 'If it is not possible to grant this additional loan we ask to be able to somewhat reallocate the 700,000 puds [11,500 tons] already issued'; this was evidently a reference to the loan already granted on May 29 (see Table 23). The inclusion of this sentence would have seemed like an invitation not to grant a further loan.

³²¹ The Sholokhov–Stalin correspondence is published in *Voprosy istorii*, 3, 1994, 3–25.

³²² On July 4, the Politburo, after hearing a report from Shkiryatov, head of the commission (and one of Stalin's cronies, usually employed to conduct purges of the kind he was now condemning), resolved that 'the completely correct and absolutely necessary policy of pressure on collective farmers sabotaging the grain collections was distorted and compromised in Veshenskii district' (RGASPI, 17/3/926, 6 – art. 20/11).

district, but said nothing about the prevailing hunger.³²³ Stalin's correspondence with Sholokhov was first mentioned in the Soviet press in 1963, and was not published in full until 1994.³²⁴

Other appeals met with a less favourable response. On March 4, Chernov rejected an appeal from Sheboldaev requesting an additional seed loan. At the same time he sent a memorandum to Stalin, Kaganovich, Molotov and Kuibyshev, insisting that no further seed loans should be issued:

Seed assistance has been provided for a number of regions in very large quantities; in my opinion they are entirely adequate to enable the fulfilment of the spring sowing plan. The seed lacking in some regions must be mobilised from the resources of the kolkhozy and sovkhozy. Moreover, the situation with the state grain resources does not permit any further issue of seed whatsoever.

Chernov enclosed a draft Politburo resolution to this effect, proposing that it should be sent to the regions.³²⁵ But Chernov's firm stand was not completely successful. Two weeks later, a small seed loan was issued to the North Caucasus (see Table 22). In the following month, Kosior requested that Ukraine should be allocated a further seed loan of 19,000 tons,³²⁶ with a similar result (see Table 22).

Desperate pleas for grain for food continued to be rejected or cut back. On May 14, the secretary of the Bashkir regional party committee sent a memorandum to Stalin acknowledging that the food help already received 'had enabled us to give grain to kolkhozy really in need for public catering in the field during the sowing', but also making an urgent request for 5,000 tons more grain for food, citing telegrams from district officials.³²⁷ But after two weeks' delay the Politburo acceded to only 1,300 tons (see Table 23).

³²³ P, March 23, 1933.

³²⁴ Khrushchev cited one of Sholokhov's letters and Stalin's critical reply, but he was so anxious to blacken Stalin's reputation that he did not reveal either that Stalin had allocated extra grain in response to Sholokhov, or that a Politburo commission had investigated the charges (P, March 10, 1963).

³²⁵ RGAE, 8040/8/6, 172–170; we have not traced this resolution in the Politburo protocols.

³²⁶ RGAE, 8040/8/22, 378–375 (memorandum to Stalin dated April 16). A handwritten note on Chernov's copy of the memorandum from Dvinskii reads 'This does not disagree with what has been accepted?'

³²⁷ RGAE, 8040/8/22, 399–396.

On March 16, Sulimov, chair of Sovnarkom of the RSFSR, urgently asked Kuibyshev to supply 1,000 tons of grain to feed 67,000 nomad Kazakhs who had fled from Kazakhstan to West Siberia and other neighbouring regions. On behalf of Komzag, Chernov insisted that this grain should be made available from 'General Supply'. Eventually only 600 tons were allocated, for two months – a mere 150 grams per person per day.³²⁸

Most of the grain provided for food was not the main two food grains (rye and wheat) but grains normally used for fodder or for special purposes. Only 35.4 per cent of the food loans consisted of rye, wheat and flour, compared with 83 per cent in the case of the 'General Supply' of grain and flour for rations to the non-agricultural population. Starving peasants had to make do with the secondary grains.³²⁹

Central recommendations, and local practice, about who received the food grain were by no means clear-cut. At first the Politburo decisions sought to allocate grain aid only to the rural proletariat and the politically-conscious. The decisions of February 7 all stated that the grain was 'for the food needs of workers in sovkhozy, MTS and MTM [Machine-Tractor Workshops], and also for the party and non-party *aktiv* of kolkhozy in need'.³³⁰ This distinction was not maintained. Later decisions simply stated that the grain was 'for kolkhozy and sovkhozy in need' (February 11, North Caucasus), and even included individual peasants – thus the decision about Veshenskii district stated that the grain was 'for food help to collective farmers in need and working individual peasants especially in need' (April 19). Great efforts were made to ensure that conscientious collective farmers were afforded priority. Thus a directive of Dnepropetrovsk regional party committee stated that grain should be provided to MTS and sovkhoz workers, and 'to collective farmers who have earned a considerable number of labour days in those kolkhozy in which there have been cases of swelling-up and death from hunger'.³³¹

³²⁸ For Sulimov's memorandum, and Chernov's reply of March 26, see RGAE, 8040/8/10, 130–132; for the allocation made on April 15, see Table 23.

³²⁹ *Ezhegodnik khlebooborota*, [vi] (1934), 120–1. The other grains received as food assistance included maize (24.2 per cent), oats (14.5 per cent), millet (13.0 per cent) and vetch (6.1 per cent).

³³⁰ For the sources of this and other Politburo and Sovnarkom decisions, see Table 23.

³³¹ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6277, 6 (directive to districts dated February 10).

Both central and local authorities used the grain primarily in order to secure the spring sowing. The secret decrees of February 18 stated specifically that grain for food was advanced 'for the period of spring field work'. On other occasions grain was allocated specifically to feed collective farmers during the weeding period (May 5; June 1, Moldavia; June 23, Central Black-Earth region). Grain was also allocated to particular activities, notably to kolkhozy and sovkhozy responsible for sugar beet (April 26, July 4 – both to Ukraine).

During the sowing, bread and other food were frequently provided on a daily basis for collective farmers out in the fields. The Vinnitsa regional party committee instructed the district committees:

This assistance is provided for specific purposes, and is mainly directed to securing the successful achievement of the spring sowing. Therefore, among the collective farmers and individual peasants who are really needy, this assistance must be provided primarily to those who conscientiously participate in the spring sowing campaign.

In issuing this assistance both to collective farmers and individual peasants mainly be guided by how far they carry out their tasks in sowing – and also to households which are not yet actively engaged in sowing, but on receiving this help guarantee to carry out the sowing successfully.³³²

The last sentence refers to the peasants in many villages who were so wasted by hunger that they would be incapable of work unless they received food. A chilling decision of the Ukrainian party central committee on March 31 explained what was to be done with peasants in the Kiev region who had been sent to hospital suffering from hunger:

Divide all those hospitalised into sick and improving, and considerably increase the food of the latter so that they can be released for work as quickly as possible.³³³

A report about Kiev region dated June 3 recommended

organise the differential feeding of different groups, permitting increased feeding of those who need to begin work, and supporting

³³² TsDAGOU, 1/20/6275, 211–215 (decision of bureau of Vinnitsa regional party committee dated April 29, 1933).

³³³ TsDAGOU, 1/6/282, 107–110, published in *Golod 1932–1933* (1990), 471–4.

those who have already started work for a certain time with an increased ration in order to avoid recidivism; assistance should be ceased for those who, after receiving state help, refuse to work.³³⁴

Peasants unable to work in the fields were often left to die. An OGPU report about a district in the Khar'kov region noted that 'food assistance has been provided only for those working; those who give up, swollen with hunger, receive help which is extremely insignificant'.³³⁵

Some attempts were made to relate the amount of grain issued to the quality of the work in the fields. In April, the Volga German regional party committee instructed its cantons that bread should be issued only to collective farmers who fulfilled their work norm (measured in hectares sown). Those who exceeded their norm should receive 50 per cent more than the standard amount, but those who failed to complete it should receive only half the ration, and no bread should be issued to those who fell a long way behind the norm. On rest days, no bread should be issued to anyone.³³⁶ Almost identical arrangements were proposed in the North Caucasus,³³⁷ so these decisions may have been based on a nation-wide instruction. Patchy evidence indicates that, as a rule, bread was simply issued on a standard daily basis to those who turned up for work.

This is not the whole story. Considerable efforts were made to supply grain to hungry children, irrespective of their parents' roles in society.³³⁸ The Vinnitsa decision of April 29, insisting that most grain should be distributed to those who were active in agriculture, also allocated grain specifically to crèches and children's institutions in the badly-hit districts.³³⁹ On May 20, the USSR Politburo issued a grain loan to the Crimea specifically for children in need and aged invalids.³⁴⁰ The report of June 3, which recommended that food should be withdrawn from those who did not work, also argued that 'the People's Commissariat of Education should be obliged to decisively undertake and secure food assistance to the school and

³³⁴ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6276, 8 (addressed to Kosior).

³³⁵ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6276, 31, reporting situation as on June 10 (a further food loan was given to the region on June 13 – see Table 23).

³³⁶ RGASPI, 17/21/3131.

³³⁷ RGASPI, 17/21/3770, 104, 106 (resolution of regional party bureau dated May 3).

³³⁸ For food supplied to children from local resources, see p. 425.

³³⁹ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6275, 211.

³⁴⁰ RGASPI, 17/162/14, 142.

pre-school child population, and immediately establish a sufficient quantity of children's homes for the homeless (*besprizornye*).³⁴¹

In the North Caucasus, the head of the food commission attached to the regional soviet executive committee attempted to systematise the issue of bread and flour. He prepared an eight-page printed pamphlet, marked 'Secret', and entitled *Instruction on the System for Providing Food Help to Kolkhozy in Need*.³⁴² This provided that the monthly allocation of food aid provided for each district should be sub-divided by the district party secretary and the chair of the district soviet executive committee between the MTS, kolkhozy and village soviets of the district 'in accordance with the needs of the collective farmers, the progress of the preparation for sowing and the fulfilment of sowing targets'. For each kolkhoz, a *troika*, consisting of the chair of the soviet, the party secretary and the plenipotentiary who had been sent from the district, should determine which collective farmers needed help, on the basis of a list provided by the board of the kolkhoz; the decision should be checked at a meeting of the *aktiv*. Distribution should take place every five days, and only on the basis of the labour days worked. It should as a rule amount to 300–500 grams of flour per labour day; exceptionally, a five-to-ten days' advance could be issued. No grain should be issued communally (that is, to groups working in the field). Collective farmers who were absent from work without due cause, or who did not work conscientiously, should be deprived of food immediately. In the case of individual peasants, bread should be provided 'only to those especially greatly in need who have conscientiously fulfilled their obligations in respect of the grain and seed collection'. Children at school should be issued with bread as part of their hot meals, and children below school age should also be issued with bread or flour, at a rate of 100–150 grams per child per day.

The author of the pamphlet visited two districts in the North Caucasus and sent Chernov a frank account of the food situation

³⁴¹ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6276, 9–10; it added that in the case of older children, 'children's homes should be decisively transferred to the production principle, involving the children in productive work'.

³⁴² *Instruktsiya o poryadke okazaniya prodovol'stvennoi pomoshchi nuzhdayushchim kolkhozam* (Rostov on Don, 1933). This pamphlet may be found in the Komzag archives (RGAE, 8040/8/25, 37–41). It was issued in late February or early March. A handwritten note from the head of the food commission, Arotsker, dated March 22, reads 'We were compelled to issue the instruction because in the localities they got very muddled.'

and the practice of distributing the grain loans. He explained that hot meals in schools had been organised to save the children, and that ‘the districts with the greatest need (which includes practically all districts in the Kuban)’ were to be provided in March and April with one pud (16 kilograms) per household per month. The kolkhozy he had visited had been able to issue 400–600 grams of bread per labour day, though in practice the poor records meant that bread was issued very frequently simply on the basis of the number of days worked. He further explained that, because collective farmers were dependent on bread held by the state, ‘refusal to work is a very rare occurrence’, and the attitude to work had changed.³⁴³

It has not been possible to estimate the extent to which the food aid prevented starvation. We do not know what amounts were allocated to different districts, and to different kolkhozy within each district. The records do not show what proportion of the food aid was received by children, the sick and the aged, and what proportion was reserved for those working in the fields.

While repressions continued throughout the famine, they were also accompanied by a certain liberalisation. As early as February 1, the Politburo approved a report from Krylenko which, in contrast to his speech at the January 1933 plenum (see p. 202) sought to restrict the application of the decrees of August 7 and 22, 1932. Henceforth, the August 7 decree was to be applied ‘mainly’ in the case of organised groups, repeated thefts by one person, large-scale thefts, cases in which kolkhoz or government officials were involved, and cases involving forgery. ‘Small one-off thefts by working people due to need or lack of consciousness etc.’ were to be handled by republican legislation (which was more lenient). The decree of August 22 against speculators should be applied to those ‘systematically engaged in the sale and resale of grain and other products’, and should not be used against working people engaged in petty trade at kolkhoz markets.³⁴⁴ Then, on March 15, black-listed areas in the North Caucasus were returned to their normal legal status.³⁴⁵

Some of the very large number of peasants arrested during the winter of 1932–33 were exiled immediately, but many were confined to prison awaiting trial. By May 1933, as many as 800,000 people

³⁴³ RGAE, 8040/8/25, 32–35, dated March 22. For other aspects of this report, see n. 342.

³⁴⁴ RGASPI, 17/3/914, 4 – item 13.

³⁴⁵ See *Cahiers du Monde russe*, xxxix (1998), 44, citing local archives (Penner).

were held in prisons, far more than normal.³⁴⁶ Two months previously, on March 8, the Politburo had ruled that more than 150,000 persons in prisons should be sent to camps, colonies or special settlements, and that those held ‘illegally or inexpediently’ should be released. In future, only those accused of counter-revolutionary activities, theft of state and socially-owned property and serious crimes should be held in custody.³⁴⁷ This decision had little result. It was followed on May 8 by the famous instruction signed by Stalin and Molotov which called for the removal of 400,000 persons from the prisons, condemned ‘the saturnalia of arrests’, and rejected mass arrests as ‘outdated forms of work’ in favour of political and organisational work.³⁴⁸ The Politburo also cancelled, except in the Far East, the simplified procedures which entitled republican and regional OGPU triumvirates to impose death sentences.³⁴⁹

(v) *The grain budget*

The grain budget adopted on December 9, 1932, was disrupted by both the failure of the collection plan and the additional grain issues. In consequence, the amounts made available to those receiving rations were reduced compared to the plan for January–June 1933, even though, throughout these months, Komzag, Narkomsnab and the Politburo were inundated with memoranda complaining about food difficulties in the towns (see vol. 4, pp. 368–70). But these

³⁴⁶ See Fainsod (1958), 185–6, citing WKP 178, 134–5; this instruction of May 8 was approved by the Politburo on the previous day (RGASPI, 17/3/922, 16, 58, 58ob. – art. 76/63).

³⁴⁷ RGASPI, 17/162/14, 89–92 – item 22; this item was placed on the agenda by the People’s Commissariat of Justice and was introduced by Krylenko, Yagoda and Mikoyan. A subsequent decision proposed the establishment of labour settlements with a capacity of 500,000 people in both West Siberia and Kazakhstan (RGASPI, 17/162/14, 96 – art. 28/5, dated March 10).

³⁴⁸ See note 346 above. Two months later the Politburo authorised the OGPU to increase the population of its labour settlements in West Siberia and Kazakhstan by 426,000 persons to a total of 550,000 in all (RGASPI, 17/162/15, 2, 14 – art. 37/28; more detailed provisions were adopted by Sovnarkom on August 21 – GARF, 5446/57/25, 161–166 – art. 1796/393ss). In practice, the number of people in the labour settlements did not increase in 1933.

³⁴⁹ RGASPI, 17/3/922, 16 – art. 75/62, dated May 7.

reductions did not close the gap. The officials responsible for grain posed the problem to the higher authorities in a series of increasingly anxious memoranda.

In an undated memorandum including information up to February 5,³⁵⁰ Kleiner pointed out that, in the first six months of the agricultural year, the General Supply of food grains was overspent by 35,000 tons, compared with the December grain budget. Moreover, stocks of food grains in hand on February 1 were apparently 200,000 tons less than anticipated. Kleiner's revised budget planned the issue of food grains at 290,000 tons more than the December figure.³⁵¹ In addition, the expected receipt of grain had declined by 485,000 tons compared with the December budget. The total deficit therefore amounted to 775,000 tons. Kleiner dealt with this crisis by cutting back the planned stocks for July 1, 1933 (food grains in thousand tons):

	<i>Plan on December 9, 1932</i>	<i>Plan in February 1933</i>
Gosfond	295	295
Nepfond	1638	1382
Transitional stocks	519	0 ³⁵²
Total	2452	1677

A few weeks later, on March 3, a memorandum from Chernov painted an even blacker picture. He estimated that the deficit in food grains would amount to between 1,029,000 and 1,103,000 tons. Moreover, the deficit in the main fodder crops would amount to

³⁵⁰ GARF, 5446/27/29, 4–1 (Kleiner to Kuibyshev).

³⁵¹ We have estimated this figure by comparing the December 9, 1932 grain budget in respect of food grains with the table in GARF, 5446/27/29, 1. The main increases (in thousand tons) are: General supply 100; commercial grain 65; Gulags 12; Special settlements 9; gold and platinum 17; export 82; special needs 12; mannaya 21; miscellaneous 30. Supplies to timber were reduced by 8 and to industry by 29.

³⁵² A footnote in pencil commented that transitional stocks would increase by 160,000 to 200,000 tons as a result of purchases, as distinct from collections.

262,000 tons in the case of oats and a similar amount for barley.³⁵³ Another version of this memorandum stated that, by July 1, 1933, total stocks of grains would be only 1,408,000–1,490,000 tons, compared with 3,600,000 tons in the December budget.³⁵⁴

This situation made it imperative to draw on the ‘untouchable’ Nepfond and Gosfond. On April 1, a memorandum to Kuibyshev from the Committee of Reserves estimated that the total stock of food grains would amount to a mere 51.1 million puds (837,000 tons) on July 1, and even this figure would be achieved only if no additional allocations were made for seed or food assistance.³⁵⁵ On April 20, the party authorities authorised the withdrawal of 69 million puds (1,136,000 tons) from the stocks of the Committee of Reserves, leaving 106 million puds (1,736,000 tons).³⁵⁶ This belated decision was already implicit in the previous memoranda. On the same day, April 20, Kuibyshev addressed a memorandum to the Politburo in which he explained that the Nepfond and Gosfond contained 119.5 million puds (1,957,000 tons) on April 15 rather than the 107.5 million puds (1,761,000 tons) to which the Politburo had agreed (these figures obviously assume that the withdrawal of 69 million puds had already been made). Accordingly, he reported, ‘I am using this surplus [236,000 tons] to satisfy *if necessary* the needs of current *supply in the supply plan* approved by the central committee.’ Stalin, faced with this further blow to his long-frustrated enthusiasm for establishing a permanent grain reserve, reacted sharply. He underlined the words in italics and wrote in the margin ‘Why? I. S.’ He also recorded on Kuibyshev’s memorandum a decision ‘to re-examine and reduce the grain supply plans of all regions in order to reduce the number of persons supplied (kontingenty), on the basis of the results of the introduction of internal passports’.³⁵⁷ Two days

³⁵³ GARF, 5446/27/29, 8–5; this memorandum, addressed to Stalin, Kaganovich, Molotov and Kuibyshev, is undated, but a similar memorandum in the same file (ll. 217–213) is dated March 3.

³⁵⁴ RGAE, 8040/8/6, 152–157. This excludes groats and beans, the stocks of which had been planned at 240,000 tons on December 9. It is not known whether either of these versions of the memorandum was sent to the party leaders.

³⁵⁵ RGAE, 8040/8/10, 159–161, signed by E. A. Zibrak; another copy of this memorandum is in GARF, 5446/27/26, 295–292.

³⁵⁶ This decision is referred to with its date in Chernov’s memorandum of April 28 (GARF, 5446/27/33, 73), but has not been traced in the Politburo protocols.

³⁵⁷ RGASPI, 17/163/980, 133. The decision was promulgated as GARF, 5446/1/469, 28 (Sovnarkom decree dated April 23, art. 811/156s).

after Kuibyshev wrote his letter, the Politburo resolved that he should in future concentrate on planning work; and he was replaced by Chernov as head of Komzag.³⁵⁸ Without further evidence, it would be unsafe to conclude that Kuibyshev was removed from Komzag because of this incident. He continued as head of the Committee of Reserves, and all grain questions passed through his hands in his capacity as a deputy chair of Sovnarkom. But the exchange between Stalin and Kuibyshev reflected the general tension in high places about the grain supplies.

On May 17, 1933, with two months still to be got through before the new harvest began to be gathered in, Komzag prepared a budget for May and June which revealed the full extent to which the stocks had evaporated.³⁵⁹ It showed the following total stocks for July 1, 1933, which are compared below with the earlier estimates:³⁶⁰

	<i>Food grains</i>	<i>Fodder grains</i>	<i>Groats, beans</i>	<i>Total</i>
December 9, 1932 plan	2492	915	240	3608
February 1933 (Kleiner)	1677			
May 17, 1933	1045	246	97	1388

These figures include both the two reserve Funds and the transitional stocks at the disposal of Komzag.

The expected decline in stocks of food grains by 632,000 tons between February and May was almost entirely the result of the authorisation of additional supplies. These were roughly as follows: loans of food grains for food and seed (+391,000 tons), 'commercial' grain allocated for sale on the free market at high prices (+131,000), and grain for the increased numbers of special settlers and inhabitants of the Gulag (+68,000). The allocation to general supplies to the towns does not seem to have been increased.³⁶¹

³⁵⁸ RGASPI, 17/3/921, 28 (decision by poll dated April 22). The same decision replaced Kuibyshev by Mezhlauk as head of the Fuel Committee.

³⁵⁹ GARF, 5446/27/33, 125, 130.

³⁶⁰ For February, see GARF, 5446/27/29, 1; for May 17, see GARF, 5446/27/32, 125, 130.

³⁶¹ These figures were estimated from the February plan for January – June and the May plan for May – June on the assumption that actual supplies in January – March corresponded to the February plan and in April to the May plan.

The situation revealed by the new grain budget led Komzag to despatch two agonised memoranda to the Politburo. On May 17, the day on which the revised grain estimate was prepared, Kleiner sent a telegram to Stalin and Kuibyshev in response to one of many urgent appeals for grain from Ukraine. Kleiner pointed out that 'the surpluses in the [allocation from] the Nepfond are now almost completely exhausted', and the shortage of grain at the disposal of Komzag had created 'a tense situation in a number of industrial centres' because of the lack of available grain. Kleiner accordingly proposed that a further 15 million puds (246,000 tons) should be released by the Committee of Reserves from its remaining stocks. Grain from this allocation should be released only with the permission of Kuibyshev on each occasion.³⁶² Two days later, the Politburo accepted this proposal.³⁶³

On June 4, a long memorandum from Chernov to Stalin, Kaganovich, Molotov and Kuibyshev explained in some detail the grain situation as revealed by the May–June grain budget.³⁶⁴ He warned the party leaders at some length that even the 1,300,000 tons of stocks anticipated for July 1, 1933 could be achieved only if great efforts were made by the Moscow, Gor'kii and West Siberian regional party committees (regions where grain was less scarce) to purchase grain supplementary to the collections; moreover, all regional committees would need to transport available grain from remote areas (glubinki) to the main collecting points. Nine days after Chernov's memorandum, a Sovnarkom decree insisted that the

³⁶² GARF, 5446/27/33, 117 (Kuibyshev files); the same memorandum will be found in Narkomsnab files (RGAE, 8040/8s/7, 151).

³⁶³ RGASPI, 17/162/14, 142, art. 62/41. A preliminary version of this proposal may be found in a draft decree of STO dated April 28; this decree proposed that 13 million puds (213,000 tons) should be made available by the Committee of Reserves; an attached memorandum by Chernov sought to justify this allocation on the grounds that the amount remaining in the funds of the Committee of Reserves was 1,949,000 tons instead of the planned 1,736,000 ($1,949,000 - 1,736,000 = 213,000$) – this figure does not seem to be compatible with the 1,638,000 tons on May 10 given for the Committee of Reserves in the Kleiner document of May 17, unless a further 311,000 tons, not referred to in either document, had been removed from the Committee of Reserves between April 28 and May 10.

³⁶⁴ RGAE, 8040/8/7, 213–219, repeated 255–258.

plans for purchases additional to the collections must be carried out in full, to achieve the necessary stocks on July 1.³⁶⁵

During June, further small, unplanned issues of food grain were authorised by the Politburo, amounting to some 28,000 tons (see Table 23); more than half of these were issued to Ukraine. But Komzag apparently succeeded in keeping within the limits estimated by Kleiner and Chernov in their memoranda of May 17 and June 4. On July 4, Chernov reported to the Politburo that on July 1, 1933, total stocks amounted to 1.392 million tons, including 1.045 million tons of food grain.³⁶⁶

In the outcome, the level of grain stocks was greater than Chernov and the other officials had anticipated. When Chernov submitted the grain plans for 1933/34 to Stalin, Kaganovich and Molotov, on July 4, 1933, he stated, as he had a month previously, that the transitional stock on July 1, 1933 would be 1.392 million tons, including 1.045 million tons of food grains.³⁶⁷ But the grain utilisation plan for 1933/34 approved a month later by the Politburo recorded the 'availability' of all grains, including the funds, on July 1, 1933 as 1.825 million tons, including 1.386 million tons of food grains.³⁶⁸ The published figure is 1.997 million tons, including 1.397 million tons of food grains.³⁶⁹ No explanation for this discrepancy has yet been found.

The grain budget of June 2, 1932, was now a distant memory of a far-off era. The grain actually available in 1932/33 was five million tons (or 20 per cent) less than the original plan (see overleaf):³⁷⁰

³⁶⁵ GARF, 5446/57/24, 183–184 (art. 1220/273s, dated June 13).

³⁶⁶ RGAE, 8040/8/7, 306–317; these were the same figures as in his June 4 memorandum. The Politburo decisions about the grain stocks at this time were extremely odd. It resolved to release 15 million puds (246,000 tons) from the Committee of Reserves on no fewer than four further occasions (June 6 and 28, and July 8 and 27) without any reference to the previous decisions. If all these decisions had been carried out, they would have reduced the grain held by the Committee of Reserves from 100 million puds (1,638,000 tons) to a mere 25 million (410,000 tons)!

³⁶⁷ RGAE, 8040/8s/7, 306–317.

³⁶⁸ RGASPI, 17/162/15, 24, 38–40 (decision of August 7, no. 53/39).

³⁶⁹ See Table 15(a) and SR, liv (1995), 644, 654 (Davies, Tauger and Wheatcroft).

³⁷⁰ For the budget, see RGAE, 8040/1/18, 64–82 (June 2, 1932); for the outcome, see Table 15(a) below. We have included the item 'processed into goods and flour' with General Supply.

Comparison of actual grain distribution in 1932/33
with grain budget of June 2, 1932: main items
(million tons)

Reduction in available grain	
Collections	3.2
Seed and food loans	1.9
Total	5.1
Reduction in allocations	
General Supply	1.4
Urban horse transport	0.2
Peat and fishery industries	0.1
Lumber	0.2
Specialised agriculture, and livestock	0.5
Export	0.4
Reserves	2.2
Total	5.1

The missing five million tons were covered by drastic reductions in the allocations. The reduction of General Supply by about 16 per cent compared with the June 1932 budget brought most of the urban population to the edge of famine, and beyond. Major cuts were also made in the planned issue of grain for cotton, sugar beet and other specialised agricultural areas. The export plan was reduced. And it proved impossible to accumulate the reserve *Nepfond* and *Gosfond* for which Stalin had been insistently clamouring behind the scenes since 1929.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE 1933 GRAIN HARVEST

The autumn and the spring sowing for the 1933 harvest took place in most unpropitious circumstances. Nevertheless, the harvest – by all measures – was considerably larger than in the previous two years. This emergence from agricultural crisis, although incomplete, enabled Stalin and the party leadership to consolidate their status in the party and the country.

(A) THE AUTUMN SOWING, 1932

A year before the autumn sowing of 1932, following the bad weather and poor harvest in 1931, Narkomzem had convened two major meetings on the problems of agriculture. The first, an extended session of the collegium of Narkomzem, met in September 1931, and dealt with ‘Questions of Increasing the Harvest’. The second, a well-publicised ‘All-Union Conference (konferentsiya) on the Struggle with Drought’, took place from October 26 to 31, 1931, simultaneously with the central committee plenum. On each of these occasions Yakovlev raised sharply the need for proper crop rotation:

Where did the idea come from that Bolsheviks are against crop rotation? ... *It is nonsense to say that crop rotation contradicts specialisation.*¹
(September)

It is necessary to cease the drive for a maximum number of hectares ... It is necessary, beginning as soon as the spring of 1932, to embark on the introduction of crop rotation throughout the sovkhoz and kolkhoz system.²

(October 31)

He repeated this call in February 1932.³

¹ Yakovlev (1933), 158. See also Rees, ed. (1997), 157–8 (Tauger).

² Yakovlev (1933) 165. The drought conference is extensively reported in SZe, October 27–November 2, 1931.

³ *Ibid.*, 169 (letter to All-Union Komsomol Conference on Mastering Agrotechnology, dated February 9).

But the centre continued to press for increased specialisation, and the planned sown area for the 1932 harvest also increased (see Table 9(c)). Almost nothing was done to introduce crop rotation in the spring of 1932. In July 1932, Moscow was bombarded with alarming reports about the state of the harvest: a communication from Voroshilov to the Politburo complained about the extreme weediness of the sown area in the North Caucasus.⁴ On July 17, Stalin launched a ferocious criticism of Narkomzem. He accused it of wasting resources by failing to devote sufficient attention to raising yields and selecting suitable crops, and ignoring both 'past experience, and science'. Contrary to previous practice, he insisted that 'it is necessary ... to renounce the policy of wholesale extension of the sown area both of kolkhozy and (particularly) of sovkhozy (especially in relation to labour-intensive crops)'.⁵ On August 1, the Politburo belatedly approved the autumn sowing plan.⁶ Kaganovich wrote to Stalin on the following day that 'our starting point was your completely correct viewpoint that the sown area should not be increased'.⁷ The total area to be sown was only slightly greater than in 1931, and less than the 1931 plan (see Table 9(a)).

Meanwhile, the ploughing of fallow in the spring and summer of 1932, in preparation for the autumn sowing, was conspicuously unsuccessful. The regular five-day reports in the agricultural newspaper frankly revealed that, after a brief good start, the number of hectares ploughed was consistently less than in the previous year.⁸ By August 20, when ploughing should have been complete, it was still 2.6 million hectares less than on the same date in 1931. Even after

⁴ Voroshilov visited the North Caucasus military region between July 4 and 15 (see RGASPI, 17/162/13, 6), and wrote two letters about the harvest. The first, which has not been made available, was probably sent about July 16, and was discussed at the Politburo on July 23 (RGASPI, 17/3/893, item 11). For the second, a personal letter to Stalin dated July 26, see p. 129.

⁵ SKP, 232 (letter to Kaganovich dated July 17); for Stalin's views on the cotton-sown area, see p. 296.

⁶ RGASPI, 17/3/894, 16–17 (item 5). In 1931 the plan was approved on July 15 (see p. 105).

⁷ SKP, 257. However, Stalin, in a confused exchange of telegrams, proposed an increase of 0.5 million hectares in the kolkhoz area sown to grain, indicating that he did not want his enthusiasm for restricting the sown area to be taken too far (see SKP, 257, 261, 268 – telegrams dated August 5 and 6).

⁸ See, for example, SZE, July 10, 1932 (reporting results by July 5), July 22, 1932 (by July 15).

the rushed belated ploughing in the last ten days of August it still lagged by 2.1 million hectares (see Table 9(d)).

The autumn sowing was haunted by the troubles then endemic in crop plantation. Early in the campaign, the Ukrainian Politburo noted the harmful effects on the sowing of 'the extreme weediness of the fields, the insects, the late spring sowing and the delay in harvesting'.⁹ Moreover, while normally grain for sowing was easily available immediately after the harvest, in 1932 some districts lacked seed and petitioned for grain loans. A typical report from a district in the North Caucasus complained that many kolkhozy had no seed, and that it could not seek the help of the neighbouring district, because it was in a similar position.¹⁰ On September 23, a joint decree of Sovnarkom and the party central committee, which was published in the press, nevertheless insisted that 'neither sovkhosy nor kolkhozy will receive any seed loan for the autumn or the spring sowing'.¹¹

Like the summer ploughing, the autumn sowing was far later, and far less extensive, than in the previous year. On September 20, the amount sown was 4.8 million hectares (18.6 per cent) less than in 1931. During the next four weeks, the gap was partly closed, but at the end of the season the sown area still lagged behind the previous year by 2.4 million hectares (see Table 9(a)). The delay inevitably carried with it the danger of a reduced yield.

(B) THE SPRING SOWING, 1933

The decision of August 1 on the autumn sowing incorporated a quite ambitious ploughing plan for the spring sowing, amounting to 43 million hectares compared with 36.7 million ploughed in 1931.¹²

A few weeks later, before the ploughing was under way, the Politburo embarked on a strenuous discussion about improving the yield from the 1933 harvest. The question of the yield appeared as an item in the Politburo minutes on five occasions, and was

⁹ TsDAGOU, 1/6/260, 95–99 (dated September 4).

¹⁰ RGAE, 7446/20/39, 70–71 (report to Kolkhoztsentr from Novoaleksandrovskii district, dated October); it added that its kolkhozy lacked money to buy grain elsewhere.

¹¹ P, September 24, 1932 (approved by the Politburo on the previous day – RGASPI, 17/3/901, 24).

¹² RGASPI, 17/3/894, 16–17.

considered by a commission which in its final stages was chaired by Molotov and included Stalin as well as the principal agricultural officials.¹³ On September 29, Sovnarkom and the party central committee published a joint decree 'On Measures to Increase Yields'.¹⁴ The decree announced that 'sown areas have expanded sufficiently'; it was now 'necessary to turn to the struggle for the better cultivation of the soil'. Consequently, the area sown to industrial and inter-tilled crops should not increase in 1933. The total spring-sown area should amount to 97.5 million hectares – one million more than in 1932. The area sown to wheat, oats and barley should increase by 2.5 million hectares, and the area sown to other crops would decrease. The decree called for 'the introduction of crop rotation on all sovkhozy and kolkhozy in the course of 1933', and the increase of the Fund of improved seed to 100 million puds (1.638 million tons). The sown-area plan was later reduced to about 95 million hectares, the same as the actual spring sowing in 1932; the area sown to grain would amount to 63.1 million hectares.¹⁵

In principle, these decisions launched a major shift of agricultural policy in the direction of greater realism. The sown-area plan was adopted three months earlier than in the previous year (see p. 108); and for the first time since the 1920s it acknowledged that continuous expansion of the sown area was incompatible with increased yield, and with the elementary requirements of agronomy. However, when this shift in policy was undertaken, in the main grain areas the regime was entering upon its most bitter struggle with the peasants to collect the grain from the previous harvest. As with the introduction of 'neo-Nep' in the previous May, it could not be put into immediate effect.

The ploughing began late and the area ploughed was consistently smaller than in the previous year (see Table 9(b)). By the end of the campaign the gap had increased to over 10 million hectares, and the total amount ploughed was 28 per cent less than in 1931. The results were far worse in Ukraine.

In Ukraine, an elaborate report issued towards the end of the autumn ploughing noted the deplorable state of the tractor stock.¹⁶

¹³ See RGASPI, 17/3/897 (August 25), 17/3/899 (September 8), 17/3/900 (September 16), 17/3/901 (September 20 and 27).

¹⁴ SZ, 1932, art. 434.

¹⁵ SZ, 1933, art. 43 (decree of Sovnarkom and Central Committee, dated February 1).

¹⁶ TsDAGOU, 1/6/270, 59–69 (dated November 25).

Menzhinsky, reporting from the Central Volga region, attributed the poor results of the ploughing to the decline in the number of horses and the exhaustion of those which survived. He also pointed out that the need to use horses in the spring to plough the land left unploughed in the autumn would pose 'a real threat of failure to achieve the spring sown area'. Moreover, in the conditions of the Central Volga, sowing on land not ploughed until the spring would reduce the yield and make the crop more liable to the effect of drought.¹⁷ A report sent to Kosior at this time noted that the decline in the number of horses meant that the average horse would have to plough 4.65 hectares in the spring, compared with 3.85 in 1932.¹⁸

The republican and regional authorities sought to anticipate crisis by thorough preparation. The Ukrainian Politburo established a 'Commission on the Preparation of the Spring Sowing Campaign', attended by senior representatives of all the agricultural and industrial agencies concerned with the sowing. Its session on November 27 made elaborate arrangements for tractor repair, including the despatch of plenipotentiaries to the factories to arrange the transfer of machine tools to the tractor repair shops. It also decided to send a large number of agricultural specialists from the regional capitals to the kolkhozy 'to assist them to introduce crop rotation and prepare for the spring sowing'.¹⁹ In the following month the Ukrainian Politburo approved a 17-clause decree making equally elaborate arrangements for protecting and grooming the horses. The decree sought to establish a clear line of command for the management of the horses, with one person in every kolkhoz responsible for the stables; Narkomzem and the GPU were to carry out 'a comprehensive check of all persons responsible for horses, removing kulak and unconscientious elements'.²⁰

Such continuous pressure from the authorities, and their more careful attention to the details of agricultural activities, eventually had some positive influence on the attitude and behaviour of kolkhoz officials. But the struggle to cope with the lack of horsepower was protracted and arduous. On February 8, Voroshilov reported to the Politburo on the condition of work animals in Ukraine. He stated that, during his visit to inspect tractor repairs, he

¹⁷ TsAFSB, 2/10/332, 1-7.

¹⁸ TsDAGOU, 1/6/270, 107-116.

¹⁹ TsDAGOU, 1/6/268, 51-59.

²⁰ TsDAGOU, 1/6/271, 182-187.

had become aware of the serious position regarding horse traction power, which 'still remains the main form of traction power in the countryside'. The situation was 'very threatening, if not catastrophic' – 'their treatment is outrageous, the stables are dirty, the horses are neglected and beaten, lice-ridden and suffering from mange and cruel exploitation'.²¹ Two days later the Politburo approved a draft decree proposed by Voroshilov, which was published as a decree of Sovnarkom. All horses were to be classified within ten days (!) as either ready for work or weak. Weak horses were to be freed from work and given improved feed so that they would be ready for the sowing.²²

These measures had some effect. By mid-March, the Ukrainian GPU reported that 'the state of the horse stock has noticeably improved', attributing this both to 'the implementation of the measures set out in the government decree' and to the 'decisive operational blow' by the GPU against the 'kulak and wrecking element'.²³ Nevertheless, the total number of work horses in the USSR in the spring of 1933 was 2 million less than in the previous spring. The additional tractors did not compensate for this (see Table 10(a)). In all kolkhozy, only 22.8 per cent of the spring ploughing and a mere 7.7 per cent of the spring sowing was carried out with the use of tractors.²⁴

The acute shortage of horses led to the notorious decision to employ cows as working animals. On February 23, the Lower Volga party bureau decided to use 200,000 cows for spring field work. The cows were mainly in the personal possession of collective farmers and usually the responsibility of the women. Their use was to be regulated by a contract between collective farmers and their kolkhoz. This would stipulate that 'the kolkhoz is responsible for the integrity and preservation of the cow', and the owners of the cows, or their agents, would 'as a rule' themselves undertake the work themselves. The kolkhoz would pay a small daily sum for the use of the cow, and the collective farmer would be allocated 8–10 labour days for 'the process of training the cow'. Explanatory work on 'the possibility and necessity' of these arrangements would be directed towards women collective farmers, and undertaken by women activists.²⁵

²¹ RGVA, 33987/3/451, 42–48.

²² RGASPI, 17/3/915, 10, 62–64, published in SZ, 1933, art. 50 (dated February 10).

²³ TsAFSB, 2/11/1043, 203–210, published in TSD, iii, 723–6.

²⁴ *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 201.

²⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/3769, 131–133.

The proposal met with resistance, and a month later the bureau called for the convening of special meetings of women collective farmers which would discuss the practical arrangements, and would also expose the 'kulak agitation' which insisted that these measures were a first step towards socialisation. As a concession, the bureau agreed that the owners of the cows could be paid for the daily work in labour days rather than in money.²⁶ In the Central Volga region, 150,000 cows were reported to have been used, involving 'a huge number of women in the production life of the kolkhoz'.²⁷

The acute shortage of seed also threatened to disrupt the spring sowing. By March, frantic efforts to force the kolkhozy to collect seed in spite of widespread hunger had achieved some success. The Ukrainian GPU confirmed that, by March 15, the kolkhozy had collected 89.3 per cent of the seed (including the state seed loan).²⁸ But the collection of the remaining seed proved extremely difficult. Kosior noted that 'the opinion is growing among district officials that, OK, we won't collect any seeds, we ourselves are not getting anything to eat'.²⁹ The kolkhozy received substantial loans from the state (see pp. 214 and 218), and were reported to have more seed at their disposal than in 1932 (see Table 10(b)).³⁰ Individual peasants, however, were reported to have collected far less seed than required.³¹ But it was virtually impossible to keep track of them; apparently, they had set aside more seed grain than the authorities realised.³²

The amount of cleaned and treated seed increased substantially in 1933. On the other hand, the amount of improved seed did not increase (see Table 10(b)). Its quality was also uncertain. Even the

²⁶ RGASPI, 17/3/3770, 18ob – 20 (dated March 30), published in TSD, iii, 734–7.

²⁷ B, 12, June 30, 1933 (Shubrikov).

²⁸ TSD, iii, 723–6; see also letter to Stalin (by Kosior?): TsDAGOU, 1/20/5460, 11. For a similar report from the Central Black-Earth region, see TsAFSB, 2/11/1043, 148–50, published in TSD, iii, 721–2.

²⁹ TsDAGOU, 1/20/5460, 11.

³⁰ In 1932/33, 1,056,000 tons were loaned to kolkhozy and individual peasants, as compared with 964,000 tons in 1931/32.

³¹ According to a report prepared in April, kolkhozy had collected 95.1 per cent of the planned seed, individual peasants only 41.6 per cent (*Osnovnye pokazateli*, January–March 1933, 42–3).

³² Eventually the spring sowing by individual peasants (including the small area sown to grain on the household plots of the collective farmers) amounted to as much as 77 per cent of the plan (compare data in SZ, 1933, art. 43, and *Sots. str.* (1934), 184–5).

seed loans supplied by the state were reported to be weed-infested, and to germinate poorly.³³

The spring sowing saw a dramatic improvement both in the organisation of the kolkhozy and in the behaviour and performance of the kolkhoz labour force. Famine was rampant in the main grain areas, and a large number of collective farmers depended for their survival on the small daily ration of bread or flour issued in the fields (see pp. 220–1). In April, a memorandum sent to Stalin and Molotov from the Dnepropetrovsk region by Feigin reported:

(1) The attitude of collective farmers this year (in the sense of their readiness to struggle for the harvest) is incomparably better not only than last year, but also than in preceding years. The causes of this are a) the understanding that ... bad work in the kolkhoz leads to hunger; b) the law on compulsory deliveries [see p. 250] – they believe in it and don't believe in it, but anyway they have hopes of it; c) better organisation and leadership from party organisations;

(2) Our levers of pressure on the village are immeasurably stronger than last year: the politotdely, the better selection of leading officials both in the kolkhozy and in the districts, the greater mobilisation of the whole party organisation.³⁴

A district party committee in the same region reported that it had issued the grain loan to 'extremely needy collective farmers who are working well', and had succeeded in 'almost ceasing the number of cases of death and swelling up from hunger'; this had led to 'an excellent outlook by the collective farmers of the whole district'.³⁵ In the following month an OGPU report from the Russian districts of the North Caucasus noted that 'the increase in food assistance and particularly the improved method of distribution, the greater efficiency in the organisation of public catering, together with some improvement in mass work (in kolkhozy and MTS in which there are politotdely) and, finally, the good prospects for the harvest

³³ Memorandum by Kabakov, referring to the seed loan to the Urals, dated April 27 (RGAE, 9040/8/22, 391–390).

³⁴ GARF, 5446/82/19, 66–68 (dated April 12).

³⁵ Memorandum from Mezhuskii district, sent to Khataevich with copies to Kosior, Postyshev and Kaganovich, dated April 15 (published in *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev) (1990), 489–90).

have determined the further improvement in the attitude to the work of sowing of the majority of collective farmers'.³⁶

While warmer weather arrived late over a large part of the USSR, in Ukraine and the Lower Volga region the temperature in March and early April was much higher than in the previous two years (see Table 8). Spring sowing proceeded much more rapidly than in 1931 and 1932. It was only after the beginning of June that the rate of sowing declined. By the end of the season the amount sown to grain amounted to 65.4 million hectares, over three million more than in 1932 and two million more than the plan (see Table 5(a)).³⁷

The quality of the sowing improved in 1932, but was still rather poor as compared with normal practice. Feigin's report from the Dnepropetrovsk region noted that 'with all its faults the quality of the sowing this year is incomparably better than last year'. It added, however, that both the autumn and the spring seed had been planted mainly on lightly ploughed stubble which had been insufficiently cleared of weeds. Feigin explained that in view of the shortage and weakness of the work horses, deeper ploughing in the spring would have greatly delayed sowing and presented an even greater threat to the yield.³⁸

(C) THE HARVEST

The 1932 plan was silent about grain production; but the 1933 plan, approved by a session of TsIK, and widely publicised in the press, stated that the harvest would amount to 80.2 million tons.³⁹ This was lower than the official figure for 1930 (83 million tons), and the lowest figure to appear in an annual plan since the launching of collectivisation.

These figures implied that the grain yield would be 7.9 tsentners per hectare.⁴⁰ In view of the poor condition of the land after the

³⁶ TsAFSB, 2/11/904, 466, 477–480 (dated May 17), published in TSD, iii, 750–2.

³⁷ The amount sown to industrial crops potatoes, and especially to sown grasses and other fodder crops, declined, so the total spring sowing was 3 million less than in 1932 (see Table 5).

³⁸ GARF, 5446/82/19, 66–68.

³⁹ SZ, 1933, art. 38 (dated January 26).

⁴⁰ The total area sown to grain implied by the plan was 101.6 million hectares. The plan stated that the autumn sowing was 38.5 million hectares, though the

1932 harvest, the achievement of this yield – even if the weather was favourable – would require a major effort. In his memorandum on the Dnepropetrovsk region, Feigin proposed that both the autumn and the spring sowing of grain should be weeded: ‘this is a somewhat unusual task, because as a rule we do not weed grain crops, but if we do not carry out this task, huge losses in the grain crop are inevitable – in the whole USSR I think it would be hundreds of millions of puds’. Accordingly, he proposed that ‘Sovnarkom and the party central committee should pose this task to all party and Soviet organisations, and to the collective farmers.’⁴¹ A month later, on May 24, a decree of Sovnarkom and the central committee pointed out that a number of good kolkhozy in the North Caucasus, Ukraine and the Central Volga had begun weeding the autumn and spring-sown crops, and supported their initiative, particularly in the case of wheat. The decree revived the earlier proposal that weak horses should receive special treatment, including pasturage round the clock, and even proposed that former cavalymen should be brought in to assist the grooms. It particularly emphasised the importance of speeding up the reaping and the threshing to avoid losses and theft: stacking and threshing should be carried out simultaneously, so that threshing would be completed within 10–15 days.⁴²

The reaping of the grain began slowly, owing to weather conditions, but from the beginning of August it went ahead much more rapidly than in 1932. After a slow start in August, stacking also took place rapidly; and throughout the season threshing was consistently earlier than in 1932. From the beginning of September it exceeded the 1931 level (see Table 9(e)–(g)).

Numerous reports, both published and secret, strongly criticised the deficiencies of the harvesting.⁴³ Many individual peasants had failed to sow or were unable to cultivate their land. In Ukraine, the party central committee decided to transfer the land of individual

five-daily figures made it clear that this area would not be achieved, and the spring sowing was planned at 63.1 million hectares: $80.2/101.6 = 0.79$ tons. The plan stated that the yield would be 13 per cent greater than in 1932, implying that the 1932 yield would be only 7 tsentners, and production only about 70 million tons – a figure which was not published until much later (see p. 136).

⁴¹ GARF, 5446/82/19, 66–68.

⁴² SZ, 1933, art. 190.

⁴³ See, for example, RGAE, 8040/8/22, 425 (memorandum from Veger (Odessa region), dated July 15).

peasants which was not being harvested properly to neighbouring kolkhozy.⁴⁴ Western correspondents reported that the level of harvest losses remained extremely high:⁴⁵ the high rainfall in June led to a rust epidemic greater than in 1932 (see p. 132).

In general the weather was favourable, owing to the combination of a warm spring and a cool summer (see Table 8). In spite of all the deficiencies, it soon became clear that the harvest was remarkably successful, particularly in North Caucasus and Ukraine. Before the end of July, an OGPU report from the Russian districts of the North Caucasus noted 'the considerable breakthrough in the attitudes of the main mass of collective farmers, strengthened by the favourable prospects for the harvest'.⁴⁶ Kleiner, having visited thirteen districts of Ukraine and the Crimea, reported that the land was free of weeds (except in the Crimea), and anticipated a yield of 12 tsentners (!), greater than in 1925, or even than in the record year 1913.⁴⁷ Kosior and Postyshev reported to Stalin 'the exceptionally rich harvest in Ukraine, particularly leaping up in the past two weeks, particularly in the steppe'. Indicating the success of the harvest, they asked to use 90,000 workers on the harvest in Ukraine, paying them in grain from the kolkhoz allocation for internal needs of 15 per cent of the harvest; they were each to receive as much as 81 kilograms of grain for two–three weeks' work.⁴⁸ Substantial numbers of conscripts were sent in to work on the harvest, organised into their units.⁴⁹

Favourable reports on the progress of the harvest continued throughout the season. A memorandum to Stalin, Kaganovich and Kuibyshev concluded that 'the harvest in the Soviet Union this year, in spite of unfavourable conditions for harvesting in the central belt, is adequately high, and in any case higher than all the harvests we have had since the revolution'. It added that the poor harvest in some parts of the Volga regions, the Urals and Kazakhstan 'is explained not by the poor cultivation of the land but solely by weather conditions'.⁵⁰ Most Western correspondents and émigré sources agreed

⁴⁴ RGAE, 8040/8/20, 201 (memorandum from Postyshev to Chernov, dated July 16).

⁴⁵ Both Schiller and Duranty suggested that losses were 30 per cent of the gross harvest (for these reports, see notes 51 and 54 below).

⁴⁶ TsAFSB, 2/11/904, 147–164 (dated July 21).

⁴⁷ GARF, 5446/27/33, 140–136 (dated July 16).

⁴⁸ RGAE, 8040/8/4, 136–137 (dated July 16), published in TSD, iii, 775.

⁴⁹ RGASPI, 17/3/927, 15, 66 (art. 61/47, approved by poll), dated July 27.

⁵⁰ RGAE, 8040/8/8, 92–93; from internal evidence, this document was probably written in September – and probably by Chernov.

that the harvest was favourable. According to Schiller, 'conditions in most districts favour the gathering of a harvest superior to that of last year', though 'not substantially greater'.⁵¹ Chamberlin, a shrewd American correspondent, one of the first journalists admitted to the southern USSR after the famine, reported that the crop in Ukraine as a whole was good, but was poorer in the Kuban'.⁵² The émigré Menshevik journal also reported a good harvest, and its clandestine Moscow correspondent noted enthusiasm about the harvest, and talk of resuming grain exports and abolishing rationing.⁵³ Surprisingly, the American correspondent, Duranty, notorious for his evasiveness about the famine earlier in the year, who also visited the southern regions, was ambiguous about the overall result of the harvest.⁵⁴

Demonstrating that the harvest was in fact substantial, on September 15 the Politburo decided that, in view of the size of the harvest, the use of forty-three previously closed flour mills in the four main grain regions would be resumed.⁵⁵ In many districts, in sharp contrast to the previous year, the harvested fields were raked for remaining ears of grain: in the Central Volga region the party bureau organised a 'ten days of accepting the fields' after the raking.⁵⁶ According to a Lower Volga journal, the harvested fields were raked by hand or by horse-drawn rakes at least once in every kolkhoz, and two or three times in most kolkhozy.⁵⁷

Repressive measures were still used extensively to force through the harvesting. Many reports were published, and still more were circulated in secret, complaining of the waste and theft of grain. While the use of milling equipment in the hands of the authorities was expanded, at the beginning of the campaign Kleiner arranged for

⁵¹ BDFA, IIA, xi, 235 (despatch of Coote to Simon, August 29).

⁵² BDFA, IIA, xi (1986), 291–3 (Strang to Simon, October 14). Chamberlin's journey took place in late September and early October. He estimated the harvest at 75 million tons, compared with 60 million in 1932.

⁵³ SV (Paris), 14–15, August 25, 1933, 10–11; 16–17, September 10, 1933. The Moscow report assesses the harvest at 'nearly twice' the 1932 level (!).

⁵⁴ BDFA, IIA, xi (1986), 270 (Strang to Simon, September 26). The émigré journal edited by Prokopovich did not make a specific assessment of the harvest at this time; it stressed the high losses caused by late harvesting and the lack of traction power (BP (Prague), cvii (October 1933), 1–8).

⁵⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/930, 5, 59 (item 11).

⁵⁶ RGASPI, 17/21/2552, 71–71ob (dated September 21); the ten days were from August 20 to September 1, and achieved 'definite results'.

⁵⁷ *Nizhnee Povol'zhe*, 6, November–December 1933, 6.

the removal of manual mills, and the sealing up of small local mills.⁵⁸ Throughout the season the OGPU sent regular reports to the centre on 'arrests' or 'repressions' imposed for the theft of grain. Special groups of GPU officials and 'former Chekists' (the so-called *osobouchetchiki*) were employed to guard the grain; sudden checks were frequently carried out at night.⁵⁹ In September, Komsomol members and former soldiers were employed as additional guards.⁶⁰ In the North Caucasus many of those stealing grain from the fields were individual peasants who had no sown area of their own, particularly women, men who were unable to work, and children.⁶¹ Many grain officials were dismissed for stealing grain.⁶² The total number arrested by December 20 amounted to 35,711.⁶³

(D) MEASURING THE HARVEST

The 'State Commission on Determining the Yield and the Size of the Gross Harvest of All Grain Crops and Sunflower', attached to Sovnarkom, was established by a Politburo decision on December 16, 1932.⁶⁴ The circumstances of the decision were surprising: this was the same day on which the Politburo approved a series of measures directed against TsUNKhU and Osinsky personally (see vol. 4, pp. 262–3) – yet within a few days Osinsky was appointed chair of the commission.⁶⁵ His deputy was Bryukhanov, a long-standing party member who had been concerned with grain procurements in the early Soviet period, and was People's Commissar of Finance in 1925–30. The other members of the commission were Yakovlev and Yurkin from Narkomzem, Chernov and Kleiner from Komzag, Vermenichev from Rabkrin, and Gaister from Gosplan.⁶⁶ It was soon renamed the Central State Commission, TsGK.

⁵⁸ RGAE, 8040/8/25, 67, 67ob (dated June 15).

⁵⁹ RGAE, 8040/8/21, 95 (report received on September 5), 109–114 (dated September 8).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 129 (dated September 19).

⁶¹ TsAFSB, 2/11/1047, 212–218 (dated July 15), published in TSD, iii, 771–4.

⁶² RGAE, 8040/8/21, 124–125.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 267; 20,216 were arrested by September 10, and 23,343 by September 23 (*Ibid.*, 124–5, 146). For further reports on the struggle against theft, see TSD, iii, 788–9, 797–800.

⁶⁴ RGASPI, 17/3/911, item 9. For the grain agencies of May 1932, see p. 76.

⁶⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/912, art. 28/10 (decision by poll, dated December 19).

⁶⁶ See *Soviet Government Officials* (1989), 96.

The decree establishing the commission placed its work in the hands of 'state inter-district commissions', which were in turn supervised by a plenipotentiary for each region or republic. Sovnarkom appointed the chairs of the commissions; the plenipotentiaries were nominated by TsGK and confirmed by Sovnarkom. Sovnarkom also ruled that the chairs of the commissions were obliged to bring immediately a criminal charge against officials for 'attempts to deceive the Soviet state by presenting false data on yields, sown area or gross production.'⁶⁷

During the first few months of 1933, 282 inter-district commissions were established, roughly one for every ten districts, together with 10,421 'supervisory and observation points', staffed by part-time volunteer activists.⁶⁸

The object of this elaborate organisation, independent of local party and soviet agencies, was obviously to break the normal line of strong territorial control. The more detailed Statute approved on March 3, 1933 ruled that the determination of the sown area as well as the yield and the gross harvest 'belongs exclusively' to TsGK.⁶⁹ Before the completion of the 1933 harvest it would emerge whether the new arrangements would instil realism into the assessment of the harvest, or confirm the importance of political influence.

TsGK estimated the harvest partly by checking the results of the traditional periodic assessments of the 'forecasts of the harvest (*vidy na urozhai*)' submitted by kolkhozy, sovkhozy and the land agencies. Its main activity was to work with the local commissions to estimate the yield by means of sample measurements of the grain harvested. These were undertaken in 20–25 per cent of the kolkhozy, and in sample sovkhozy. They were made by '*metrovki*', square frames with an internal dimension of one metre, which were applied to the standing crop at the moment of maximum ripeness. The ears situated within the *metrovka* were carefully cut, using a sickle, and the grains were separated out by hand and weighed. Several measurements were made in each field, and the yield was calculated per hectare.⁷⁰

The *metrovka* system, if it worked properly, obviously measured the maximum possible harvest (the 'biological harvest' or 'the harvest on the root') rather than the 'barn harvest' – the harvest that remained

⁶⁷ SZ, 1932, art. 521 (dated December 17).

⁶⁸ I, September 21, 1933 (Osinsky); *Urozhai v 1933* (1934), 5.

⁶⁹ SZ, 1933, art. 97.

⁷⁰ I, September 21, 1933.

after losses between field and barn (see Appendix). The losses between biological and barn harvest varied greatly in different years and regions; the barn harvest was normally 20–30 per cent less than the biological harvest. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, however, the barn harvest was increasingly exaggerated by the authorities, especially in 1932 (see pp. 442–4).

Osinsky insisted that the biological harvest was not ‘technically achievable and economically realistic’. The TsGK sought instead to measure the ‘normal economic harvest’ (also referred to as the ‘optimum harvest’), which was ‘the grain standing on the root with the deduction of technically inevitable losses’, usually about 10 per cent. Osinsky also claimed that the *metrovki* in practice in 1933 failed to measure all the grain standing in the field: it was badly cut, and the sacks containing the grain were not kept closed; so, in fact, these measurements approximated to the normal economic harvest, or were even lower than this. He also made the quite remarkable acknowledgment that ‘in past years the determination of the harvest carried out in the autumn undoubtedly followed the line of determining the economic harvest, not the biological or the barn harvest’ – this was news to the Soviet public. He failed to point out, however, that the degree of exaggeration of what was presented as the barn harvest had increased in the course of recent years.⁷¹

Following a series of preliminary meetings, TsGK summoned a conference on June 19–20, the eve of the harvest, attended by regional plenipotentiaries and presided over by Osinsky. On the morning of the second day of the conference, as the delegates to the plenum read their *Pravda* over breakfast, they must have got a shock. Prominently placed on the top left-hand corner of the front page of *Pravda* was the text of a telegram Molotov and Stalin had sent to Veger, secretary of the Odessa regional party committee, and to Pakhomov, chair of the regional soviet executive committee. Such telegrams were rarely, if ever, publicised in this way. The telegram stated:

According to reliable data the leaders of the Odessa Grain Trust have consciously reduced the harvest indicator for its sovkhozy with the object of breaking the state law on the collection of state grain, of deceiving the state and causing a break in the fulfilment of the grain collection plan. Sovnarkom and the CC oblige you to

⁷¹ Osinskii (1934), 8 (this was the revised text of a report to the Agrarian Institute of the Communist Academy on January 17, 1934); see also I, September 21, 1933.

immediately verify this, to exclude from the party and bring to criminal responsibility all those, without exception, who are guilty of deceiving the state and attempting to ruin the grain collection, as thieves and plunderers of state property. Inform us immediately of what measures you have taken.

Since the law of August 7, 1932, theft of state property could result in the death penalty, or, in mitigating circumstances, ten years' imprisonment.

The telegram was obviously intended to influence the whole course of the measurement of the harvest. The Odessa region, in the far south, was the second (after the Crimea) to harvest the grain. The results of this dramatic intervention were immediate and far-reaching. In Odessa, on June 23, three days after the publication of the telegram, a decree signed by Veger and Pakhomov fully approved the Molotov–Stalin telegram, dismissed the director of the Grain Trust and his deputies, and expelled them from the party.⁷² Throughout the country local party activists, the politotdely, and even the inter-district grain commissions swung into action, emphasizing the general significance of the Odessa affair, and it was publicised in several successive issues of *Pravda*.⁷³ Even greater emphasis was now placed on the political reliability of the staff responsible for measuring the harvest. On July 14, a Sovnarkom decree called for a 'decisive rebuff to any localist anti-state attempts to conceal the harvest', and two days later a further decree insisted that the boards of the kolkhozy chosen for measuring the yield should be 'tested people, capable of organising threshing so as not to permit concealment'.⁷⁴ In the 10,000 observation points, 35 per cent of the volunteers were party members and 14 per cent members of the Komsomol; 45 per cent were demobilised soldiers (only 2.4 per cent were women).⁷⁵

In this atmosphere, local preliminary harvest forecasts were suddenly increased by 20–30 per cent. The official report on the 1933 harvest stated that the initial forecasts displayed 'a tendency to show the situation in the fields as worse than it really was', but the Molotov–Stalin telegram and the subsequent decrees led to an 'especially sharp breakthrough'. The report presented a table showing

⁷² GARF, 7589/1/1, 23. This material was reproduced in the *Byulleten'* of TsGK, no. 5, July 1933, under the heading 'Greater Vigilance: Mercilessly Punish Plunderers and Deceivers of the Proletarian State.'

⁷³ June 23, 25, 28, 1933.

⁷⁴ SZ, 1933, arts. 262, 279.

⁷⁵ *Urozhai 1933* (1934), 5.

that the estimates of the yield had increased in different regions in the 'second period' of the estimates (that is, after the telegram) by between 20 per cent and 50 per cent.⁷⁶

When TsGK convened on July 7, Osinsky argued that the date by which the harvest could be estimated accurately would be at least a month after threshing; earlier estimates would be 'highly subjective'. However, Chernov, representing Komzag, insisted that 'one of the main aims in establishing the commission was to determine the level of the yield for each area right at the beginning of the collection campaign, in such a way that no organisation could quarrel with it'. Osinsky was voted down by three votes to one.⁷⁷ He raised the dispute with the Politburo,⁷⁸ and on July 14 the Politburo, in a compromise decision, ruled that the final estimate of the yield should be made between August 5 and September 10, depending on the region.⁷⁹ But these dates were not achieved; and on September 10 Stalin commented in a telegram, casually but effectively, 'we do not need to hurry with a final decision on these questions'.⁸⁰

Meanwhile TsGK, using preliminary materials relating to the end of July and the beginning of August, estimated that the yield was 9.9 tsentners, so the harvest amounted to about 100 million tons.⁸¹ This estimate still prevailed at the end of August.⁸² However, Stalin's telegram of September 10 also instructed Kaganovich and Kuibyshev: 'inform me by letter the proposals of Gosplan, Narkomzem and TsUNKhU about the yield per hectare in the south and in the USSR [as a whole], and the gross harvest in the USSR'.⁸³ On September 12, Gosplan, Narkomzem and TsGK promptly sent in their memoranda to Kaganovich and Kuibyshev. Surprisingly, Narkomzem and Gosplan claimed that the TsGK estimate of 100 million tons, which they assumed was the biological harvest, was too high, arguing that TsGK had wrongly increased the yields obtained from the *metrovki* on the grounds that they were

⁷⁶ *Urozhai 1933* (1934), 13–14.

⁷⁷ RGAE, 7589/1/11a, 21–22.

⁷⁸ See Chernov's reply to Osinsky, dated July 11 (RGAE, 8040/8/4, 125–126).

⁷⁹ RGASPI, 17/3/926, 18, 67–68 (art. 83/74).

⁸⁰ SKP, 335 (telegram to Kaganovich and Kuibyshev).

⁸¹ See RGAE, 8040/8/5, 357–359 (memorandum from Bryukhanov dated September 12, reporting this earlier estimate). The harvest was variously given as 6 milliard puds, 99.8 and 100.6 million tons.

⁸² SKP, 321 (Kaganovich letter to Stalin dated August 30).

⁸³ SKP, 335. It is interesting to note that Stalin and others treated TsGK as part of TsUNKhU.

underestimates.⁸⁴ On October 28, Sovnarkom at last approved yield figures for every region and crop, except for a few distant regions where the harvest came in late.⁸⁵ Sovnarkom did not approve a total figure for the USSR harvest at this time. But these yields are the same as those in the elaborate final report by TsGK on the 1933 harvest, in which the total harvest was given as 89.65 million tons.⁸⁶ The same figure was given by Osinsky in his public report of January 17, 1934, with the delicate modification that the inclusion of *sorgo* and *dzhugari* would increase the harvest to 89.8 million tons.⁸⁷ Without specifying whether it was based on biological, normal economic or barn harvest, 89.8 million tons remained the official figure until after the dramatic revisions launched by Khrushchev in 1956.⁸⁸ It appeared in the same row as the official figure for 1932 – 69.9 million tons.

In sum, the alternative estimates were as follows:

(a) Gross harvest (million tons)

	<i>Biological</i>	<i>Normal economic</i>	<i>Barn</i>
TsGK, August	(110)	99.8/100.6	
Narkomzem, Sept 12	(88)		
Gosplan, Sept 12	93		
TsGK, Sept 12	106	96.5	86.5
Official, final		89.8 ^a	
Kolkhoz reports ^b			68 ^c

Notes

^a Whether the harvest was biological, normal economic or barn was not stated.

^b RGAE, 1562/77/70, 39–41. For 12 regions of RSFSR, Belorussia and Ukraine. These reports, based on a 7.5 per cent sample, were issued in 1934, and roughly equalled the higher kolkhoz ‘forecasts of the harvest’ in July 1933 (see *Urozhai 1933* (1934), 13).

^c The regions in 1933, unlike in 1932, were representative; we have assumed that the yield in other sectors was slightly higher than kolkhoz yield (given as 6.59 tsentners). See <http://www.soviet-archives-research.co.uk/hunger/> for details.

⁸⁴ RGAE, 8040/8/5, 352–352ob (Yakovlev), 353–356 (Gaister), 357–359 (Bryukhanov). These memoranda are published in TSD, iii, 789–94.

⁸⁵ GARF, 5446/1/472, 36 (art. 2355).

⁸⁶ *Urozhai 1933* (1934), 20.

⁸⁷ Osinskii (1934), 16–25. This report was sent to the press on April 13 and signed for the press on May 15, 1934).

⁸⁸ See, for example, *Sots. str. (1933–1938)* (1939), 98.

(b) Yield in certain regions (tsentners per hectare)

	<i>Kolkhoz reports</i> ^a	<i>TsGK: August</i> ^e	<i>Narkomzem: September</i> ^f	<i>Gosplan: September</i> ^f	<i>Sovnarkom: final (October 28)</i>
Central Black-Earth	6.49	11.1	9–9.5	10.6	9.3
Central Volga	5.16		6.5		6.9
Lower Volga	3.38 ^b	6.8	5.8	6.9	5.6
North Caucasus	6.19 ^c	11.6	9.7	10.6	9.1
Ukraine	8.07	12.7	11.5	11.8	11.2
USSR	6.59 ^d	9.9	8.8–8.9	9.2	8.8

Notes^a Barn harvest: prepared at end of year.^b Stalingrad region.^c Azov–Black Sea region.^d For 12 regions of RSFSR, Belorussia and Ukraine – kolkhoz yield only.^e Normal economic harvest.^f Biological harvest.

The official figure for the 1933 harvest was certainly far too high. But there is no doubt that the harvest was much larger than in 1932. The data available for the distribution of grain indicate that the 1933 harvest may have been as much as 10–15 million tons larger than in 1932 (see Appendix). The agricultural crisis was not over; but the end was in sight.

CHAPTER EIGHT

GRAIN COLLECTIONS FROM THE 1933 HARVEST

(A) THE LAW ON COMPULSORY DELIVERIES

In October 1932, in the midst of the grain crisis, the Soviet authorities embarked on a major effort to reconstruct the grain collection system in time for the harvest of 1933. The change in policy was announced at a conference on the 1932 grain collections held at the time of the central committee plenum of September 28–October 2, 1932. The conference was attended by regional party secretaries and chairs of regional soviet executive committees.¹ In a later memorandum, Chernov, deputy head of Komzag, wrote that ‘during the period of the previous plenum of the C[entral] C[ommittee], at a conference, and then in the commission chaired by cde. Molotov, it was already recognised as necessary to replace the existing system of grain collections by a grain tax’.² The new system was adopted in a joint decree of Sovnarkom and the party central committee dated January 19, 1933, which was given wide publicity.³ The decree was somewhat unprepossessingly entitled ‘On the Compulsory Delivery of Grain to the State by Kolkhozy and Individual Households’. Peasants learning about the reform could have been forgiven for assuming that the move from ‘zagotovka’ (collection) to ‘obyazatel’naya postavka’ (compulsory delivery) was a distinction without a difference. But the text of the decree made it clear that the new arrangements ‘have the force of a tax’, and strongly emphasised that ‘all surpluses of grain after the fulfilment of the obligations to relinquish grain to the state shall remain at the complete disposal of the kolkhozy, collective farmers and individual peasants themselves’.

¹ For other aspects of the plenum see n. 2 below.

² RGAE, 8040/8/6, 214–224; this draft memorandum to Stalin, Molotov and Kuibyshev is not dated or signed, but another version of it in GARF, 5446/27/29, 59–55, is signed by Chernov and dated January 5, 1933. For other aspects of the plenum, see p. 279 and references indexed in vol. 4.

³ SZ, 1933, art. 25.

It added that 'local authorities and collection agencies are unconditionally forbidden to allow counter-plans or to impose on kolkhozy and individual households grain obligations which exceed the norms per hectare fixed by the present law'.

Many articles published at this time stressed that the new system meant that the kolkhozy and the individual peasants would know their obligations to the state before the spring sowing. They would therefore have an incentive to extend the sown area and increase the yield.⁴ The session of TsIK which met at the end of January stressed that the new arrangements 'will ensure the further increase of the incentives to kolkhozy and collective farmers to increase yields'.⁵

Kuibyshev, in an address to grain plenipotentiaries, contrasted the old and new systems of obtaining grain. Under the old system, the amount collected was a percentage of the harvest, and neither the kolkhoz nor the individual peasant knew how much they would be required to hand over until after the harvest. Under the new system, the peasants would know the amount before the spring sowing:⁶ if they worked better, they would retain more for their own needs. Kuibyshev described the new legislation as '*a direct continuation*' of the decision to legalise kolkhoz trade. But, as in the spring of 1932, the Soviet leaders tried to guard themselves against the accusation that they were returning to NEP. Kuibyshev condemned 'people who will begin to compare the transition to compulsory deliveries of grain with the transition to the tax in kind (prodnalog) in 1921 ... who think there is some kind of "retreat" here'. He repeated the familiar argument that the new legislation did not represent a return to the 1920s, because it was strengthening socialist rather than private agriculture.⁷

The way in which the grain to be delivered by the peasants should be assessed was fiercely debated behind the scenes. Rival versions of the new law were prepared by Narkomzem and Komzag; following this, each region was asked to prepare 'zoned scales within the region', which allowed for the intra-regional variation between agricultural districts. In October and November 1932, the regions

⁴ See, for example, P, January 21, 1933 (A. Gaister).

⁵ SZ, 1933, art. 41 (dated January 30, 1933).

⁶ Elsewhere in his speech he commented more cautiously that they would know the amount 'in the process of sowing and if possible before the beginning of sowing' (p. 14).

⁷ Kuibyshev (1933), 9–12 (speech of March 23, 1933).

undertook this work, in many cases with the assistance of Komzag staff sent in from Moscow; and the results were sent back to Moscow.⁸

The Narkomzem and the Komzag variants had two major principles in common. First, the centre fixed an amount of grain to be collected from each region in terms of *tsentners* per hectare of sown area. In the final decree of January 19, the amount varied by region from 0.5 to 3.3 *tsentners* per hectare.⁹ A leading Komzag official estimated the collections in the previous three years in terms of the new norms. He showed that they were greater than those for the 1930 harvest, much greater than those for 1932, and somewhat lower than those for 1931.¹⁰ Secondly, both variants assumed that the area sown to grain should be calculated by adding the *actual* area already sown in the autumn of 1932 to the *planned* spring sown area. The planned spring sowings were taken as the basis of the grain deliveries so that districts and *kolkhozy* were not tempted to reduce the area sown to grain in the hope of reducing the deliveries.

Where the variants differed was in the way in which the obligations were assessed within each region. The Narkomzem variant proposed that, within the region, the scale should vary according to the amount of sown area per head of population and the actual yield, thus allowing for the objective circumstances of each *kolkhoz*. Both *kolkhozy* with more land per collective farmer and *kolkhozy* with higher yields would pay more tax per hectare. The scale would be arranged so that the average amount of grain delivered per hectare of sown area in the region equalled the planned amount per hectare fixed by the centre for the region as a whole.¹¹

⁸ See the account by Chernov in RGAE, 8040/8/6, 214–215.

⁹ SZ, 1933, art. 25.

¹⁰ RGAE, 8040/8/23, 17 (Bagdasarov).

¹¹ For the Narkomzem variant, see GARF, 5446/27/29, 26. Thus, for example, a regional scale might be constructed on the following lines (we cite the extremes of the scale):

<i>Sown area per head (hectares)</i>	<i>Grain to be delivered per hectare (in tsentners)</i>	
	<i>Yield per hectare in tsentners</i>	<i>Yield per hectare in tsentners</i>
	5–5.49	9.5+
Up to 0.49	0.82	1.4
2.5+	2.97	3.55

The Narkomzem variant was strongly opposed by Komzag. In his memorandum of January 5, Chernov argued that the evidence from the regions, and his own experience in visiting North Caucasus and Ukraine, had convinced him that this variant carried the 'very great danger' that the fulfilment of the grain collection plan could not be guaranteed. Because of the provision that the tax was reduced for kolkhozy with a larger number of 'eaters' per hectare, kolkhozy had already begun to include in their membership people who had no relation to the kolkhoz, and a great effort would be needed to remove these 'dead souls'. Komzag also argued that, while it might seem that the formation of the state commissions on yield (see p. 244) meant that the yields could be determined accurately, 'it is not possible to be sure that we can exclude the danger that deception of the state and mistakes by the commissions will result in an underestimation of the yield'.¹² In a memorandum to Chernov, a senior Komzag official also argued that, even when no natural disasters occurred, the yield of a region could vary 'very considerably from year to year – sometimes as much as twofold', so that it was not possible to be certain of a typical yield.¹³

Instead, Komzag prepared its own scheme, which envisaged that the district norms adopted by the regions should also simply show the amount of grain to be delivered by the district per hectare of planned sown area. The district norms could vary, but on average should be at least equal to the norm for the region fixed by the centre. Chernov conceded that this simpler arrangement had its disadvantages. It did not take into account variations in sown area per head within each district, and it could lead to difficulties for a region when bad weather resulted in a poor harvest. But these disadvantages were outweighed by the certainty that the state would receive the stipulated amount of grain, and by the incentives provided for the kolkhoz. Chernov assured Stalin, Molotov and Kuibyshev:

[The Komzag variant] will give a clear and simple idea to every kolkhoz of the size of its obligations to relinquish grain to the state and the decree will thus invoke greater confidence from the peasants than a decree which involves extremely complicated scales and estimates.

¹² RGAE, 8040/8/6, 214–216; GARF, 5446/27/29, 59–56.

¹³ RGAE, 8040/8/23, 12–14 (memorandum from Bagdasarov dated January 3, 1933); he also described the Narkomzem variant as 'very dangerous'.

... It will switch over the attention of the kolkhozy from disputes about the size of the grain harvest in the kolkhozy, and from the concealment of grain from the state, to focus instead on a genuine struggle to increase yields and extend sown areas.¹⁴

It is hardly surprising that Stalin and his associates, warned that the Narkomzem variant would not guarantee a sure supply of grain, adopted the Komzag proposal with minor changes.¹⁵

Four further important issues were covered by the Komzag proposals and the Sovnarkom decisions. First, the grain due from individual peasant households was also fixed as an amount per hectare of sown area. But the amount was determined not for the district as a whole but for each separate household; the village soviet was responsible for fixing the amount. Chernov's draft proposed that the amount per hectare delivered by the individual peasant should be 'no lower than the norm for the kolkhozy in the same district'; the final decree stipulated that it should be '5–10% higher'.¹⁶

Secondly, the central authorities decided that the norms should be fixed so that in every region they included a reserve of grain in excess of the quantity due to be received by the state – the so-called 'insurance' (*strakhovka*), which was already a feature of the 1932 grain plans. This would enable the region to reduce the obligations of districts in which weather conditions were particularly bad. The *strakhovka* was not mentioned in the published decree of January 19 or in the published instructions which followed it, but, as we shall see, it played an important part throughout the grain campaign.

Thirdly, the new system assumed that in future kolkhozy serviced by MTS should not pay for the MTS services in money but in grain – a commodity much more valuable to the state than money. This payment in kind (*naturoplata*), unlike the compulsory deliveries, was not related to sown area; instead, it was to be fixed as a proportion of the gross harvest obtained by the kolkhoz.¹⁷ This arrangement was designed to encourage the MTS to obtain a maximum harvest, and to discourage them from rushing through their work in terms of hectares ploughed, sown or reaped.

¹⁴ RGAE, 8040/8/6, 217 (memorandum of January [5]).

¹⁵ Compare Chernov's version in RGAE, 8040/8/6, 219–224, with the published decree of January 19.

¹⁶ Clause 3 of the Chernov draft; clause 7 of the final decree.

¹⁷ RGAE, 8040/8/6, 217.

Fourthly, all the grain obligations, except the milling levy, should be completed soon after the harvest: after the 1932 harvest this long-standing demand or hope of the authorities had been undermined by the scarcity of grain and the resistance of the peasants. The decree of January 19 laid down a schedule which required all the obligations to be completed by the end of December.

Thus kolkhozy serviced by MTS made two grain payments to the state – the compulsory deliveries and the MTS payment in kind, while kolkhozy not serviced by MTS paid only the compulsory deliveries. So that the MTS-kolkhozy did not have to hand over a disproportionate amount of grain, the decree of January 19 fixed regional norms for deliveries per hectare by MTS-kolkhozy which were appreciably lower than those from non-MTS kolkhozy.¹⁸

Komzag and Narkomzem also differed in the arrangements they proposed for payment for the work of the MTS. On behalf of Narkomzem, Yakovlev and Markevich (founder of the MTS system and former head of Traktorotsentr) proposed in a memorandum of January 13 that the MTS-kolkhozy should pay a percentage of their harvest for each separate operation (ploughing, sowing, harvesting and threshing). The charge for all operations would be between 25 per cent and 35 per cent of the gross harvest.¹⁹ At the end of January, ten days after the promulgation of the decree on compulsory deliveries, Chernov informed Stalin, Molotov and Kuibyshev:

jointly with cde. KLEINER I have again thought over the question of the system for calculating the payment in kind by kolkhozy for the work of MTS and we have come to the conclusion that the system proposed by cdes. Yakovlev and Markevich is fraught with great dangers in relation to the amount of the payment in kind, and also threatens the receipt of grain from the compulsory deliveries.

According to Chernov, the main problem was that most kolkhozy would use the MTS only for certain of the operations, so that insufficient grain would be received to cover the gap between the amounts paid by MTS-kolkhozy and the amounts paid by

¹⁸ Thus the regional norms were, for example, Leningrad region: MTS-kolkhozy 0.6 tsentners per hectare, others 0.8; North Caucasus 2.1 and 2.5; Ukraine 2.5 and 3.1.

¹⁹ RGAE, 8040/8/4, 22–26 (memorandum signed by Yakovlev to Stalin, Molotov and Kuibyshev).

other kolkhozy. He envisaged that kolkhozy would sign up for MTS services and would then deliberately restrict their use of the MTS so that they would have to relinquish less grain in total than the equivalent non-MTS kolkhoz. He proposed a drastic solution:

it is necessary to concentrate all complex threshers and traction engines in the MTS [hitherto many were owned by their kolkhozy] and make it obligatory that the grain of kolkhozy serviced by MTS shall be threshed by the MTS threshers, and paid for at the rate of 9% of the harvest.

This compulsory payment would be enough to cover the gap between the delivery norms for MTS-kolkhozy and the others even if the MTS did not carry out other agricultural operations.²⁰

Narkomzem and Traktorotsentr disapproved of the proposed transfer or sale of threshing equipment from the kolkhozy to the MTS.²¹ But, again faced with an alleged threat to the grain deliveries, the Politburo endorsed the Komzag scheme. On February 5, Sovnarkom approved a 'Model Contract of a Machine-Tractor Station with a Kolkhoz', which provided that MTS 'shall buy from the kolkhoz all complex threshers and traction engines'. The payment in kind for threshing was fixed at 8 per cent of the harvest. When the MTS provided machinery for the four main agricultural operations, the total payment was fixed at 20 per cent. The size of the harvest in each kolkhoz was to be determined on the basis of the yield as estimated by the inter-district state yield commission.²²

Following the decree of January 19, the authorities ruled that grain sown by kolkhoz households on their household plot should be added to the sown area of the kolkhoz, and bear obligatory deliveries accordingly. Moreover, grain retained by the household would be deducted from the earnings of its members from labour days.²³

²⁰ Copies of this memorandum, dated January 29, may be found in RGAE, 8040/8/4, 19–22, and GARF, 5446/27/29, 147–144.

²¹ In a later memorandum to Stalin, Molotov and Kuibyshev, Chernov noted that 'Narkomzem and Traktorotsentr objected to our proposal to concentrate kolkhoz threshers in the hands of the MTS' (RGAE, 8040/8/7, 108, dated May 8, 1933).

²² SZ 1933, art. 47. Similar arrangements were approved for sunflowers, cotton, potatoes and flax.

²³ See, for example, the decision of the Ukrainian Politburo dated April 26: RGAE, 8040/8/20, 118–22.

If this regulation was successfully enforced, it would make it uneconomic for the household to sow grain on its plot.

Important changes were also made in the administration of the grain collections. In a further memorandum to Stalin, Molotov and Kuibyshev, Chernov argued that the responsibility for implementing as well as preparing the grain plan should be placed more firmly with Komzag. It should acquire an administrative apparatus which operated at district as well as regional level, and was 'strictly centralised', so that 'all the decisions of Komzag are obligatory both for its own local agencies and for the local agencies of government'.²⁴ Accordingly, on February 12, 1933, a decree of Sovnarkom transferred Komzag from STO to Sovnarkom, and authorised it to take decisions which had the force of decisions of STO.²⁵ This was a formal rather than an actual enhancement of its authority. It already had the right in practice to report to Stalin without going through an intermediary; and both before and after the decree of February 12 all its significant proposals, and many minor ones, had to be referred to Stalin for final decision. But the actual power of Komzag was greatly increased by the establishment of a network of its plenipotentiaries at the district as well as regional and republican levels. The district plenipotentiaries were responsible for allocating the grain plans to each kolkhoz and to each individual peasant household, and for enforcing the plans both directly and through the local soviet authorities.

By appointing district plenipotentiaries directly subordinate to Komzag, the authorities hoped to make the collection of grain an ordered administrative process rather than a feverish campaign. In previous years, urban workers and officials, parachuted into the districts and villages, were crucial to the campaign. In 1931, the local administrative network, including rural plenipotentiaries, was controlled by the agricultural cooperatives (see p. 92). In 1932, the new grain collection organisation, Zagotzerno, attached to the newly established Komzag, assumed responsibility for the bulk of the

²⁴ RGAE, 8040/8/4, 34–35 (not dated, but evidently written between January 19 and February 12).

²⁵ SZ, 1933, art. 58. A further decree reduced the powers of Zagotzerno, which had been responsible for the day-to-day administration of the grain collections. Previously it had been attached to Komzag (Zagotzerno pri Komzage), and was now made a constituent part of Komzag (Zagotzerno Komzaga). Many of its staff were transferred to Komzag. (SZ, 1933, art. 69, dated February 14.)

collections. At the end of 1932, Zagotzerno included 1,877 inter-district and district offices.²⁶ In 1933, during a period of three months following the reorganisation of Komzag and Zagotzerno, the Komzag district plenipotentiaries were selected by a high-level commission headed by Kaganovich, who was also responsible for appointing the heads of the MTS politotdely.²⁷ The Politburo stipulated that the plenipotentiaries should be 'chosen from those officials who in the last two years were sent by both central and regional and republican organisations as plenipotentiaries of various kinds of collection campaigns ... and from provincial food commissars [that is, from civil war days], who were tested in practice in the struggle for grain'.²⁸

As in the case of the heads of the politotdely, a high proportion of the district plenipotentiaries were party members of long standing. In Ukraine, 266 of 373 plenipotentiaries had joined the party in 1917–20, and about 60 per cent had a secondary or higher education. During the summer of 1933, a further 1,500 party members were sent to the districts as plenipotentiaries, 600 of them from Moscow and Leningrad.²⁹ But the successive reorganisations of the grain collection apparatus, and the unpleasantness of the duties, must have resulted in a severe haemorrhaging of grain officials at the regional and district level. And the district units of Komzag were quite small, being scheduled to include, in addition to the plenipotentiary, only one or two assistants and one or two record-keepers.³⁰ To supplement the grain plan, they therefore had necessarily to rely at the village and kolkhoz level on the cooperation of local party and soviet officials, and of the numerous temporary plenipotentiaries who were again sent in from the towns in 1933.

In the first three months of 1933 the regional delivery norms were disaggregated to the districts, the kolkhozy and (for individual peasants) to the village soviets. By April, information about characteristic deficiencies in the process had been collected in Moscow, and on April 17 Stalin and Molotov sent a telegram to regional party secretaries and chairs of soviet executive committees complaining that local organisations had adopted several devices to reduce the size of

²⁶ RGAE, 8040/8/4, 34 (Chernov memorandum, n.d. [January 1933]).

²⁷ ST, 4, 193, 12 (Chernov); B, 11, June 15, 1933, 27 (editorial).

²⁸ Cited by Kuibyshev (1933), 20–1.

²⁹ Fridberg (1973), 393.

³⁰ SZ, 1933, art. 58.

their deliveries:

- (1) they sought to underestimate the autumn sown area;
- (2) they falsely attributed spring sowing plans to the individual sector in order to reduce the burden on the kolkhozy;
- (3) they exaggerated the number of kolkhozy serviced by MTS in order to increase the weight of the reduced norms; and
- (4) they continued to treat the spring sowing plans as a matter for discussion rather than a firm plan.

Stalin and Molotov insisted that firm measures to deal with these defects must be adopted by April 25 at the latest.³¹ Following the telegram, republican and regional agencies sent out instructions to the districts.³²

(B) THE GRAIN PLAN

The grain deliveries' plan for the 1933 harvest had already been outlined by Komzag and Zagotzerno before the reorganisation of the collection system. In a document dated December 5, 1932, Zagotzerno proposed that total collections, from a 1933 harvest planned at 85.8 million tons, should amount to 24.08 million tons.³³ A month later, on January 5, Chernov, on behalf of Komzag, proposed that deliveries from the peasant sector (that is, from kolkhozy and individual peasants) should amount to 18 million tons, plus 2.79 million for payment in kind to the MTS: 20.8 million tons in all.³⁴ If the milling levy and the deliveries from sovkhozy were added to this total, it would amount approximately to the plan proposed by Zagotzerno. (For these and later figures, see Table 25.)

The national-economic plan for 1933, adopted by TsIK on January 26, reduced the harvest estimate to 80.2 million tons.³⁵ The grain deliveries' plan was reduced in about the same proportion.

³¹ RGAE, 8040/8/22, 402–401.

³² See, for example, the Ukrainian Politburo decision in RGAE, 8040/8/20, 118–120. However, as this decision was not adopted until April 26, the Stalin–Molotov deadline was not achieved.

³³ RGAE, 8040/6/242, 8–9.

³⁴ GARF, 5446/27/29, 59–55.

³⁵ SZ, 1933, art. 38.

On January 14, Chernov proposed that the total from the peasant sector, excluding the MTS payment in kind, should be reduced by about a million tons.³⁶ This proposal formed the basis for the plan approved by Sovnarkom on January 21.³⁷ This covered only the peasant sector: no official figure for the rest of the grain collections was approved at this time. But the Sovnarkom plan implied that all collections would amount to 22–23 million tons.

In May 1932, the ‘reformist’ plan for the peasant sector from the 1932 harvest, 18.07 million tons, had been reported lavishly in the press. In contrast, the plan approved on January 21, 1933 was classified as top secret. Only the regional norms per hectare of sown area were published. Yet the 1933 plan for the peasant sector was only slightly higher than the 1932 ‘reformist’ plan; and the total deliveries plan for 1933 purportedly left substantially more grain in the hands of the agricultural population than in the previous year.³⁸ But the plan relied on the assumption that the 1933 harvest would equal the record harvest of 1930. Even if the weather proved to be good, this hope was placed in jeopardy by the serious harvest failure of 1932, and the subsequent extreme shortage of grain for seed and fodder as well as food.

The grain deliveries’ plan did not include the ‘insurance’ which the regions were instructed to include in the district norms. The total amount of the insurance is not known. On January 5, Chernov suggested that the total for the USSR should amount to 80 million puds (1.31 million tons);³⁹ and the figures for the regions indicate that the amount was, in fact, about 4 per cent – that is, one million tons.⁴⁰

There was much uncertainty about the size of the payment in kind to the MTS. In January 1933, it was variously estimated at between 2.7 and 4.1 million tons.⁴¹ By the beginning of July 1933, on the eve of the harvest, the government had approved a more

³⁶ GARF, 5446/27/29, 81–80.

³⁷ GARF, 5446/57/23, 19–26.

³⁸ In December 1933, Zagotzerno anticipated that the gross grain harvest less all collections would amount to 61.5 million tons from the 1933 harvest (85.58 – 24.08), but only 49.31 million tons from the 1932 harvest (69.20 – 19.89).

³⁹ RGAE, 8040/8/6, 217.

⁴⁰ See GARF, 5446/57/23, 19–20; and RGAE, 8040/8/6, 108, 112.

⁴¹ 170 or 250 million puds (see Chernov, January 5, in GARF, 5446/27/29, 59–55); 165 million (Narkomzem, cited in memorandum of January 13, in RGAE, 8040/8/4, 23); and 225–250 million puds (at end of January – RGAE, 8040/8/6, 59).

modest plan – 2.13 million tons. By this time, the obligatory deliveries had been increased by approximately the same amount: the total plan, at 23.4 million tons, was about the same as that envisaged the previous January.⁴²

Komzag was evidently sceptical about the prospects for obtaining this amount of grain. On July 4, in submitting the grain utilisation plan for the agricultural year 1933/34 to the Politburo, Chernov stated that the total grain receipts were planned at 1,428 million puds (23.39 million tons), but advised that ‘I consider it necessary to plan to use only 1,275 million puds’ (20.08 million tons). Chernov’s plan for the utilisation of 20.08 million tons included the establishment of reserve stocks in the Nep Fund and the State Fund amounting to 3.15 million tons. The reduction from 23.39 to 20.08 million tons was evidently intended to allow for a likely shortfall in the grain deliveries; and for possible unplanned use of grain (the plan did not include any allowance for the loan of grain to the kolkhozy for seed, food and fodder, which had been a substantial part of grain expenditure in 1932/33).

Chernov’s memorandum was complex and ambiguous; it is tempting to think that it was designed to bewilder the Politburo. At all events, on August 7, the Politburo adopted a grain utilisation plan for 1933/34 which included state grain receipts from all sources amounting to only 1,250 million puds (20.48 million tons).⁴³

The reduction in the plan for grain receipts, together with the large allocation to reserve stocks, justified Chernov’s description of the plan in his memorandum of July 4 as ‘quite tense’. He pointed out that ‘the scale of grain expenditure in the new year cannot be increased and more likely should be reduced’. In the plan as adopted by the Politburo on August 7, some small increases were incorporated, compared with 1932/33, in grain used for alcohol and grain exports. ‘Commercial sales’ off the ration at high prices were greatly increased, but bread on the ration under the heading ‘General Supply’ was reduced.

In the previous two years, the grain plan was reduced during and after the harvest. But in 1933 it was at first increased, though the

⁴² See RGAE, 8040/8/7, 306–310 (Chernov memorandum of July 4, 1933).

⁴³ The Politburo decision increased the actual reserve stock carried over from 1932/33 on July 1, 1933, from the 1.38 million tons in Chernov’s memorandum of July 4 to 1.83 million tons; we have not found a satisfactory explanation for this increase (see SR liv(1995), 654 – Davies, Tauger and Wheatcroft).

increases were much smaller than the reductions in 1931 and 1932. There were two substantial increases. First, following the 'scandal' of the Odessa Grain Trust (see p. 245–6), the plan for the sovkhozy was increased from 1.8 to 2.6 million tons. Second, on August 7, the Politburo established a commission headed by Kaganovich to consider a possible increase in the novel and untested MTS payment in kind, 'in view of the high yield' of grain.⁴⁴ Three days later, the Politburo accepted the proposal of the commission to increase the payment from 2,129,000 to 2,785,000 tons (130 to 170 million puds).⁴⁵ Regions and politotdely complained that the increase was too big. In West Siberia the new total was reported to be twice as large as the reduction in the norms conceded to kolkhozy serviced by MTS.⁴⁶

On the other hand, between August and December, proposals to reduce regional plans were authorised by the Politburo on more than twenty occasions. These cuts were relatively small, and were normally covered by the 'insurance' included in the regional plans. In September, Komzag reported that, in the case of the two Volga regions, the Urals and Kazakhstan, the available reserves in their plans had all been utilised, but the gap could be met by transferring the reserves available in regions with good harvests. Available reserves were estimated at 639,000 tons, while the reductions proposed by Komzag for the four regions amounted to only 495,000 tons.⁴⁷

(C) THE COLLECTIONS

The collections proceeded very rapidly; and their rapid pace carried with it its own difficulties. On the eve of the collections, confronted with plans concentrated into a few months, Khataevich complained about the lack of horse transport in his region, and asked to be

⁴⁴ RGASPI, 17/3/928 (decision no. 58/4, taken by poll).

⁴⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/928, 25 (decision no. 105/91, taken by poll).

⁴⁶ Telegram from Eikhe to Stalin and Molotov dated August 15 (RGAE, 8040/8/22, 443).

⁴⁷ RGAE, 8040/8/8, 94 (n.d., but evidently prepared soon after the Politburo decision on September 16 to reduce the Kazakhstan plan). Komzag estimated that the deliveries from the peasant sector were likely to amount to 1,129 million puds, compared with the plan of 1,040 million, but 50 million of the 89 million puds to be collected in excess of the plan were due from individual peasant households, and were unlikely to be forthcoming. So an excess of 39 million puds (639,000 tons) would be available.

allocated more lorries, more oil fuel for the threshers, and more petrol for the lorries. He also complained about the acute shortage of sacks.⁴⁸ In September, a high-level OGPU report pointed out that storage space for the grain was extremely scarce, which meant that in many districts grain was left in the open air, and that some collection points were unable to cope with the influx of grain.⁴⁹ In spite of these problems, however, 16.4 million tons were collected by October 1. This was almost twice as much as in 1930 and 1932, and 5 million tons more than in 1931. (See Table 14(c).) To complete the plan in full, however, nearly one-third of the total had still to be collected. On October 3, Molotov, Kaganovich and Chernov despatched a long telegram to Stalin proposing a quarterly plan for October to December amounting to 7.07 million tons, so that the collection would be completed apart from the remainder of the milling levy.⁵⁰ Stalin, with characteristic political acumen, replied by telegram on the following day:

It is not a good idea to give the quarterly plan now, because with a quarterly plan the work might be reduced in the first two months, they will try to transfer the work to the last month, and the annual plan will be dragged out to January or later.

He proposed instead that the annual plan should be completed by the end of November, and monthly plans should be issued for October and November.⁵¹ Kaganovich and Molotov promptly drew up the monthly plans, with the main weight on October.⁵²

In October, the plan failed badly for the first time in this agricultural year: collections were 2 million tons less than planned. Some cuts were made in the plan, in response to appeals from the regions that the harvest had been poor in certain areas.⁵³ But these cuts accounted for

⁴⁸ RGAE, 8040/8/20, 143–146 (letter to Chernov from Dnepropetrovsk region dated June 11).

⁴⁹ RGAE, 8040/8/21, 90–97 (report on situation by September 1, sent by Yagoda and Mironov to Poskrebyshev – for Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich and Chernov).

⁵⁰ SKP, 373–4.

⁵¹ SKP, 374.

⁵² SKP, 374–5 (dated October 4 or 5); 5.37 million tons would be collected in October and 1.21 in November; these figures exclude the milling levy. They were approved by Stalin; and by the Politburo on October 6 (RGASPI, 17/3/932, 14, decision by poll).

⁵³ See, for example, RGASPI, 17/162/15, 99 (dated October 9); 17/3/933, 25 (dated October 26). Stalin agreed to these cuts without change (SKP, 378, 404).

only a small part of the gap. Komzag evidently did not exercise the pressure on the regions that had been characteristic of the previous year; and Stalin and the Politburo were not sufficiently anxious about the grain supply to adopt harsh measures. By the end of the year, only 5.2 million tons had been collected, compared with the plan of 7.07 millions; and little grain was collected in the remainder of the agricultural year. The annual collection was over 2 million tons less than the August 1933 plan of 24.8 million tons. The receipts from kolkhozy, the grain loan repayment and the milling levy were all less than planned. The sovkhozy provided only 73 per cent of their plan as revised after the attack launched by Stalin and Molotov on the Odessa Grain Trust (see pp. 245–6). This was only slightly greater than their initial plan. Only collections from the individual peasants, surprisingly, slightly exceeded the plan. (See Table 25.⁵⁴)

Chernov presented these results to the Politburo in favourable terms. In a memorandum dated December 29, he announced that ‘the annual plan of grain collection has been carried out in full’; the grain budget for 1933/34 now exceeded the August 1933 budget by as much as 2.75 million tons! He achieved this remarkable result by the kind of sleight of hand with which we are already familiar in Chernov’s documents. He compared the grain collection not with the total plan but with the reduced plan of only 20.48 million tons which he had prudently used in drawing up the grain budget in his document of July 4, 1933 (see pp. 245–6). He also added the purchases (*zakupki*) to the grain receipts. These were estimated optimistically at 620,000 tons. They had not been included in either his reduced plan or the approved version of the plan.⁵⁵

Compared with previous years, the amount collected was nevertheless very substantial: it was 4 million tons greater than in the previous year, and almost equalled the record collection of 1931/32. Moreover, as the export of grain was considerably less than in 1931/32, an additional $2\frac{1}{2}$ million tons was available for internal use. This did not solve the grain problem confronting the authorities. By

⁵⁴ The gap was as follows (thousand tons): peasant sector – 960; payment in kind to MTS – 70; sovkhozy – 700; loans – 300; milling levy – 300. A separate figure for the individual peasants has not been available for the August plan; collections exceeded the January plan approved by Sovnarkom by 160,000 tons.

⁵⁵ Compare RGAE, 8040/8/7, 306–316 (July 4) with 8040/8/8, 572–576 (December 29). The actual purchases amounted to 400,000 tons (Striliver *et al.* (1935), 17).

the end of 1933 the state had incurred substantial new grain commitments compared with the August 1933 grain budget. The most important of these were the seed and food loans, which were already scheduled at 1.26 million tons, and an additional half a million tons committed to grain exports. Together with other smaller and unexpected increases in expenditure, the new commitments for 1933/34 amounted to nearly three million tons; and the revised grain utilisation balance reduced the allocation to reserve funds by 400,000 tons.⁵⁶

Moreover, the revised plan had major deficiencies. First, as Chernov pointed out in his accompanying memorandum, the constraints were much greater in the case of food grains than of fodder grains: although two-thirds of grain expenditure consisted of food grains, the estimated stock of food grains for July 1, 1934 amounted to only 55 per cent of all grain stocks.⁵⁷ Secondly, the revised grain budget on December 29 took a very optimistic view of likely expenditures. An attached table showed that in the first half of the agricultural year (July–December), more than half the annual allocation on several major items, including General Supply, had already been spent.

During the second six months of the agricultural year, the strain on the grain budget increased. On February 28, 1934, the Politburo reduced the plan for the total stock of food grains remaining on July 1, 1934, from 2.01 to 1.51 million tons. This was an increase of only 0.05 million over July 1, 1933.⁵⁸ Total grain stocks, including fodder grains, were now planned at only 2.56 million tons compared with 3.93 million tons planned on December 29, 1933, and the 1.95 million tons actually achieved on July 1, 1933. Then, on May 20, 1934, a further Politburo resolution and Sovnarkom decree stated that the stock of food grain on July 1, 1934 would be at the level of the previous year.⁵⁹ Stalin's hopes of accumulating a substantial reserve stock of grain were still a long way from achievement at the end of the agricultural year 1933/34.

Although the collections were 4 million tons greater than in the previous year, the good harvest meant that the grain retained by the

⁵⁶ See RGAE, 8040/8/8, 572–576 (dated December 29).

⁵⁷ See RGAE, 8040/8/8, 572–576.

⁵⁸ Calculated from the revised grain-fodder balance of 1933/34 in RGASPI, 17/162/16, 7, 11–12 (decision by poll no. 99/82).

⁵⁹ RGASPI, 17/3/945, 40, no. 181/171; GARF, 5446/1/475, 230–231, art. 1207/206s.

agricultural population also increased. The various versions of the total budget for grain prepared in TsUNKhU all show an increase in personal consumption by the agricultural population and (less conclusively) in the use of grain for fodder, as the following examples show:⁶⁰

Grain consumption in agricultural sector (million tons)

	<i>Personal consumption</i>	<i>Fodder</i>
1931/32A	23.6	13.1
1931/32B	26.3	12.3
1932/33A	22.5	12.3
1932/33B	24.9	11.1
1932/33C	18.4	10.2
1933/34A	25.0	13.9
1933/34B	25.2	11.0

The estimates in 1932/33B are obviously too high, and were evidently designed to fit in with an exaggerated estimate of the harvest. Otherwise, the trend which is obvious from other evidence is clear in the statistics. The kolkhoz annual reports and the peasant household budgets from different districts and regions also show a substantial decline in food consumption in 1932/33, followed by a substantial dramatic increase in 1933/34. The kolkhoz reports show that, in the calendar year, the grain issued per able-bodied collective farmer increased by 27 per cent in Ukraine, 39 per cent in the Lower Volga region and as much as 142 per cent (!) in the Azov-Black Sea region (formerly part of the North Caucasus). The increase was substantial even in the Moscow and Leningrad regions, and purportedly amounted to as much as 80 per cent in the USSR as a whole for these selected regions (see Table 41). Somewhat less dramatically, the peasant budgets show an increase in rural personal consumption per adult in seven regions of the USSR of 26.3 per cent in January-June 1934, compared with the same months of 1933 (see Table 42).

This general improvement did not end the rural food crisis everywhere in the USSR. By the autumn of 1933, an acute shortage of grain was reported from a number of districts. As early as August, the Bashkir ASSR reported that thirty kolkhozy had no grain left to

⁶⁰ For sources, see Appendix.

distribute after completing the deliveries to the state and setting grain aside for seed.⁶¹ In November, an MTS politotdel in the Volga-German ASSR complained that two kolkhozy which had previously been placed on the Board of Honour, and in which many people had died of starvation in the previous winter, 'are now suffering from an acute shortage of grain'.⁶² In December, the North Caucasus GPU reported that 'at least one-third' of the 2,082 kolkhozy it had investigated 'either have no grain to distribute for labour days', or the available grain had already been distributed and consumed.⁶³ Reports of grain shortages in kolkhozy and of cases of famine continued until July 1934 (see pp. 411–2).

⁶¹ RGAE, 8040/8/22, 435–434 (dated August 6).

⁶² RGASPI, 112/29/9, 55 (received by Narkomzem on November 21), published in TSD, iii, 677.

⁶³ TsAFSB, 2/11/905, 10 (dated December 16), published in TSD, iii, 822–3.

CHAPTER NINE

CROPS OTHER THAN GRAIN

Grain was by far the most important Soviet crop. In 1913 it occupied 90 per cent of the sown area; and in the later 1920s and early 1930s its share did not fall below 80 per cent. A higher proportion of grain was marketed, and mobilised by the state, than of any other food crop apart from sugar beet and vegetable oil. In 1933, about 40 per cent of grain and sugar beet was carried by rail, compared with only 6.5 per cent of potatoes; the railways carried eight times as much grain as potatoes.

But grain was not afforded absolute priority. Industrial crops provided essential raw materials for the textile industry, and food crops other than grain constituted an indispensable supplement to the basic diet of bread. The authorities sought to advance the whole of agriculture; and the sown area of almost all crops increased between 1928 and 1932 at the expense of pasture and fallow. This general tendency was reversed only after the 1932 harvest, when the harmful consequences of the disruption and even destruction of crop rotation had become extremely clear.

Food and industrial crops were far more labour-intensive than grain, and yielded a much higher income per hectare. Between them, they were responsible for about 45 per cent of the value of all crops. Soviet agriculture cannot be understood without bringing them into the picture:

Sown area and value of gross production, by type of crop
(in percentages of totals)

	<i>Percentage of sown area of all crops</i>	<i>Percentage of value of gross production of all crops, in 1926/27 prices</i>
1. Grain		
1929	85.3	56.5
1932	80.6	52.2
1933	83.1	56.3
2. Potatoes and vegetables		
1929	6.8	29.5
1932	7.4	32.4
1933	7.1	30.2

(Continued)

3. Industrial crops

1929	8.0	13.9
1932	12.1	15.4
1933	9.8	13.5

Source: Calculated from data in *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 240–1.

Notes: These figures exclude grasses grown for fodder.

Sugar beet and sunflowers are classified as industrial crops in Soviet sources, including the above table, but are treated in this chapter as food crops.

The market price of grain increased relative to those of most other crops during the years of extreme grain shortage, and so its value measured in later years than 1926/27 would be relatively higher.

(A) FOOD CROPS

(i) *Sugar beet*

Sugar beet was largely grown for the industrial production of sugar. Beet tops were fed to cattle, and the producers retained some whole beets for fodder. But 90 per cent or more of raw beet was sold to the state sugar factories (see Table 6(a)).

For reasons of climate, production was concentrated in Ukraine and the Central Black-Earth region. Before the revolution, beet was mainly grown on landed estates.¹ During the civil war, many estates were taken over by the Soviet government and transformed into sovkhozy – in 1928 they were responsible for 32 per cent of all beet. Far more was grown on peasant farms than before the revolution, but in 1930 and 1931 most joined the kolkhozy, and by 1932 the socialised sector was responsible for 85 per cent of all sown area and 84 per cent of all production.²

The circumstances for beet production in the early 1930s were particularly unfavourable. First, beet, like most other crops, was sold to the state at low fixed prices. But, unlike potatoes or grain, it was rarely sold on the market; so for both peasants and kolkhozy the market incentive to grow beet was small. Secondly, it was a labour-intensive

¹ According to Danilov (1977), 292–3, in 1914 only 21 per cent of sugar beet was grown on peasant farms.

² See Table 6(a) and *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 447.

crop. With labour scarce and lacking adequate incentives, planting, cultivation and harvesting were all badly affected. Thirdly, beet was grown in rotation with grain; and beet producers were confronted with insistent demands from the state for both more grain and more beet. With the expansion of the area sown to beet, the conflict between the rival demands of beet and grain cultivation became increasingly acute.

While the main instruments used by the state to influence the beet growers were political pressure, sanctions and penalties, it also offered them certain economic incentives. In 1931, the contracts between the collection agencies and the beet growers provided manufactured sugar and syrup to sovkhozy, kolkhozy and individual peasants in specified amounts per *tsentner* of beet collected. Industrial consumer goods were also made available to the sugar-beet areas at fixed prices well below the market level. Both kolkhozy and individual peasants growing sugar beet were freed from agricultural tax.³

The sugar-beet areas produced substantial amounts of grain; and the collection of both grain and beet from these areas proved particularly difficult. In October 1931 Soyuzsakhkar, in charge of the sugar-beet sovkhozy, was castigated by the Politburo for allegedly concealing the size of its grain harvest, and its managers were dismissed (see pp. 73–4). Brigades sent out to the sovkhozy by the Politburo were instructed to check the theft of beet as well as grain.⁴ In November 1931, the Politburo bombarded the beet districts with telegrams calling for the acceleration of the harvest, ‘making up for lost time’. It also ordered that control figures stating the amount of beet to be collected were to be disaggregated to every sovkhoz and kolkhoz, and to every individual peasant household. These arrangements followed the example of grain, and the Politburo also decided that the campaign for sugar beet was to be conducted with the same priority as the grain collection campaign. ‘Stolen millions of tons’(!) were to be recovered from individual peasants, and the stipulated amount of grain as well as sugar beet was to be collected in full. Disobedient party members were to be expelled and put on trial.⁵ These fierce measures were followed in December by the establishment of a sugar-beet commission of the Politburo chaired

³ RGASPI, 17/3/817, 12 (dated March 20, 1931).

⁴ RGASPI, 17/3/857, 7–8 (dated October 30).

⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/859, 7, 9–10 (dated November 9).

by Kaganovich.⁶ The campaign was extremely belated: the optimum date for completing the harvest in 1931 was given as October 15–20!⁷

The 1931 beet harvest was larger than the average harvest in the second half of the 1920s. But the average yield on the increased sown area declined, and the harvest was lower than in 1930, and a mere 53 per cent of the extremely ambitious plan.⁸ Moreover, according to official figures, the state collections declined from 94 per cent of the harvest in 1930 to 87 per cent in 1931 (see Table 6(a)). This apparent decline may, however, partly result from the exaggeration of the harvest by the statistical agencies in 1931 as a result of pressure from the authorities.

The plan for the 1932 harvest was approved as early as August 1931. It again stipulated the sown area, the yield per hectare, and the sugar, syrup and industrial goods to be provided to the beet growers per *tsentner* of beet.⁹ With customary optimism, the sown area was planned at 1.65 million hectares, 12 per cent greater than the plan for 1931. This expansion, together with an increase in the yield, was planned to result in a harvest of 24.2 million tons, double the actual harvest in 1931.¹⁰ The plan to increase sown area was almost achieved. But the sowing took far longer than normal: 45 instead of the normal 30–35 days.¹¹ In consequence, the planting of the beet overlapped and competed for labour with hay-making, and with the spring ploughing for the autumn sowing of grain. Labour for weeding and processing the beet, already difficult to obtain in view of the increased sown area, became increasingly scarce in the course of the season.¹²

Early in June 1932, Vareikis, anxious to achieve a successful harvest in the Central Black-Earth region, presented a memorandum to the Politburo proposing that the amount of sugar supplied to collective

⁶ RGASPI, 17/3/864 (item no. 18, dated December 8).

⁷ For the optimum date (known as *normal'nyi srok*), which varied from year to year depending on the weather, see *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 456. In Ukraine, 77 per cent and in the Central Black-Earth region, 67 per cent of the harvest eventually produced had been harvested by this date.

⁸ See BP (Prague), c (November–December 1932), 10.

⁹ SZ, 1931, art. 341 (decree of STO dated August 17).

¹⁰ See Table 6(a) and SZ, 1931, art. 500 (dated December 25, 1931).

¹¹ *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 453, 455.

¹² BP (Prague), c (November–December 1932), 10; for labour shortage and high labour turnover in sugar-beet *sovkhozy*, see P, November 18, 1932.

farmers and individual peasants per tsentner of beet should be doubled, and that the supply of industrial consumer goods should equal 20 per cent of the value of the beet collections.¹³ The Politburo established a commission to consider this proposal.¹⁴ On July 1, Sovnarkom approved a decree incorporating most of Vareikis' main proposals.¹⁵ On July 15, a further decree called for both the harvesting and the transport of beet to receive as much attention as the grain collections, and condemned 'the bourgeois tendencies and opportunist practices of Soyuzsakhhar'.¹⁶

By this time, as a result of bad weather, poor weeding and overcropping, disaster had struck.¹⁷ The TsUNKhU monthly report for July 1932 noted that by July 19 as much as 975,000 hectares of the sown area (60 per cent of the total) had been infested with caterpillars, and 183,000 hectares of this had been destroyed.¹⁸ On August 2, Kaganovich reported to Stalin that 'the sugar-beet situation is bad, particularly the weeding and the struggle with the second generation of caterpillars'. Until this time no mention had been made in legislation of the need to supply grain to the beet growers. But Kaganovich now reported sympathetically to Stalin a joint proposal from Ukraine and the Central Black-Earth region that 'for every hectare of beet weeded and protected from caterpillars, the peasant should receive 5–6 puds of grain'.¹⁹ Apparently, nothing came of this immediately. But on August 24, Kaganovich and Kuibyshev reported to Stalin and Molotov that 20–25 million puds (0.33–0.41 million tons) of the agreed reduction in the Ukrainian grain collection plan (which was to be reduced by 40 million puds in all), was to be allocated to the

¹³ For Vareikis' memorandum, see Kaganovich's exchange of telegrams with Stalin dated June 8 and 9, 1932 (SKP, 150–1).

¹⁴ The commission consisted of Kaganovich, Mikoyan, Vareikis and Yakovlev, and thus did not include a representative of Ukraine. Stalin commented, 'Why is Ukraine silent, when it supplies three or four times as much sugar beet as the Central Black-Earth region?' (*loc. cit.*).

¹⁵ SZ, 1932, art. 308. On June 21, Stalin rejected a point in the draft decree stating that grain collections should be reduced when sugar beet occupied 5 per cent or more of the sown area, and a further point which stated that 3 kilograms of sugar should be supplied for every tsentner of beet collected in excess of the plan (the normal allocation was a mere 200 grams per tsentner) (SKP, 185).

¹⁶ SZ, 1932, art. 336.

¹⁷ A Gosplan report noted that only 56.3 per cent of the plan for weeding had been completed by July 10 (*Vypolnenie*, January–June 1932, *Sel'skoe khozyaistvo*, p. 2).

¹⁸ *Osnovnye pokazateli*, July 1932, 19.

¹⁹ SKP, 257.

sugar-beet districts. Half the reduction was to be used to stimulate the beet harvest and collections.²⁰ The beet districts were frequently mentioned specifically when the Politburo allocated seed, fodder and food loans in grain to areas suffering from famine; and these districts were also often (and sometimes simultaneously) singled out for repressive measures.²¹

On September 17, 1932, the authorities recognised belatedly that the 1932 sugar-beet plan was unrealistic. A published Sovnarkom decree reduced the planned harvest to 12.1 million tons, insisting that this figure could be reached because a 'considerable reserve' of beet was available on 'so-called perished and uncultivated areas'. To encourage the harvesting, Sovnarkom allocated further amounts of sugar per *tsentner* of beet delivered both to *sovkhoz* workers and to carriers. At the same time, it also ruled that the notorious decree of August 7, 1932 was to be applied to the theft of sugar beet as well as grain.²² All these measures were in vain. One-third of the area sown to beet – 513,000 hectares – entirely perished, and the yield of the remaining areas was more than 25 per cent lower than the low yield of the previous year (see Table 6(a)).²³ The 1932 harvest was a mere 54 per cent of the revised lower plan of September, and of the 1931 harvest.

The sugar-beet plan for 1933 was approved by Sovnarkom on February 16–17.²⁴ As with other industrial crops, the sown area for sugar beet was reduced compared with the previous year. The decree also insisted that the planting of beet should be spread more widely, so that more *kolkhozy* were involved; the percentage of the sown area devoted to beet was to be reduced in all *kolkhozy*, with the intention of restoring proper crop rotations. As in previous years, the 1933 plan assumed that the yield would increase substantially, so that the total amount of sugar beet taken by the state would amount

²⁰ SKP, 297; for the reduction in the Ukrainian grain collection, see pp. 182–3 and Table 21.

²¹ Thus, on March 18, 1933, the Politburo allocated seed, fodder and oats to the Kiev sugar-beet districts, as well as authorising the expulsion of 1,000 followers of Petlyura from these districts (RGASPI, 17/162/14, 101, art. 78/60).

²² SZ, 1932, art. 413.

²³ The size of the sown area which perished may be estimated from the figures given in the source for the total crop and sown area, and for the yield on the harvested area.

²⁴ SZ, 1933, art. 68.

to some 13 million tons.²⁵ The decree offered more generous allowances of sugar in return for beet than in the previous year.²⁶

The 1933 harvest was spared a mass infestation of caterpillars, and the authorities had great hopes of a major triumph. On September 12, Molotov wrote to Kuibyshev, 'I am very pleased about the good prospects for sugar beet', merely adding cautiously 'doesn't 13 million tons go too far?'²⁷ But in the event the yield was only slightly higher than the 1932 yield in the areas on which the crop had survived. The harvest amounted to only 9 million tons, the second lowest in the 1930s (see Table 6(a)). At the XVII party congress in January 1934, Yakovlev, reporting these unsatisfactory results, called for improved crop rotation and the wider use of deep ploughing in the autumn before the sowing.²⁸

(ii) *Potatoes and vegetables*

Grain and sugar beet were traditionally grown almost entirely in the village fields (*nadely*) and formed part of the common crop rotation of the village. Potatoes and vegetables, however, were grown partly in the fields, and partly on the household plots (*usad'by*) of the peasants. In 1913, according to a careful estimate, 32 per cent of the potato harvest was grown on household plots.²⁹ An even higher percentage of cabbages, onions, cucumbers, root crops, tomatoes and other vegetables, known together as *ovoshchi*, was grown on the household plots and in the emerging market gardens.³⁰ Melons and

²⁵ As in the case of grain (see pp. 250–9), in 1933 the state collections were replaced by compulsory deliveries (11.1 million tons) plus payment in kind to the MTS. A further decree issued on September 17 announced the 'final plan' that the total collection of beet, including the payment to the MTS, would amount to 13 million tons (SZ, 1933, art. 345).

²⁶ 300–350 grams per *tsentner* for *kolkhozy*, 200 grams for individual peasants; newly sown areas were to receive a further 50 grams per *tsentner* (in 1932, the allocation in all cases was 200 grams per *tsentner*). Contrary to Stalin's comment in the previous June (see note 15 above), the decree also provided that beet supplied in excess of the plan would receive an additional allocation of sugar.

²⁷ RGASPI, 79/1/798, 3–4, *cit. Stalinskoe Politbyuro* (1995), 136.

²⁸ *XVII s"ezd* (1934), 158. In the peasant sector, 52 per cent of the area sown to sugar beet was deep ploughed for the 1931 harvest, and 70 per cent for the 1932 harvest, but the percentage was only 48 for 1933 (*Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 452).

²⁹ Gukhman (1925), 130–1.

³⁰ Carrots, parsnips and other root crops were sometimes classified separately as fodder crops (*kormovye*); and sometimes the part of the harvest which was consumed

related crops (known as *bakhchevye* – cucurbits), however, were mainly grown in the rotation on the village fields.

A small part of the potato and vegetable crop was marketed for processing, and a larger part for urban consumption. But the marketed proportion of the crop was far smaller than for most other industrial crops, and considerably smaller than for grain. Moreover, before the First World War, 10 per cent of the grain crop was exported, while the export of potatoes and vegetables was trivial. The trade in potatoes and vegetables was very largely small-scale trade for the local market: in 1913, only 443,000 tons of potatoes were transported by rail, compared with 18.3 million tons of grain.³¹

Potatoes require a moist, cool climate, and on the eve of the First World War were grown primarily in the north-west, the Central Black-Earth region, Belorussia and the north of Ukraine. By 1913, they were still supplying only a fairly small part of the Russian diet, at most one-eighth of the nutritional value from grain. (The carbohydrate and protein content of grain was about four to five times greater per unit weight, and measured by weight at least twice as much grain as potatoes was used as food.³²)

Nevertheless, potatoes were a valuable crop. Although they required much more labour than grain, the yield by weight was some ten times as high. The nutritional value of a hectare of the potato harvest was roughly double that of a hectare of grain. They were largely free of the exactions by the state and the local authorities which characterised the grain trade in 1918–22, and intermittently later in the 1920s. Their cultivation therefore appealed to the peasants, and production declined less than grain during the civil war, and expanded more rapidly in the 1920s. Moreover, in the first post-revolutionary decade, the production and consumption of potatoes expanded to the east and south-east, continuing the pre-war trend. The importance of the household plots was even greater than before the war: by 1926 they occupied 39.6 per cent of the total sown area of 5.23 million hectares.³³

by the population was listed as 'fodder crops for the table'. We have included 'fodder crops for the table' with vegetables wherever possible.

³¹ *Sots. str. 1935* (1936), 377.

³² For a Soviet estimate that one ton of grain was equivalent to four tons of potatoes, see SO, 3–4, 1930, 24. For a higher Western estimate, see *Chambers's Encyclopaedia* (1967), v, 739.

³³ See SO, 12, 1928, 24.

By 1927/28 the harvest had increased to 41.5 million tons, compared with 30 million tons on the eve of the war. It was estimated that in 1927/28, 19.5 million tons of the crop were used for food (including 2.1 million tons by the urban population) and 12.3 million tons for fodder, mainly for pigs.³⁴ The potato market expanded considerably during NEP. But there continued to be a huge gap between potato and grain marketing: in 1928, 16 million tons of grain were carried by rail, but only 1.3 million tons of potatoes.³⁵

The data available on the production of vegetables and cucurbits, both before and after the revolution, are particularly unreliable. The production of vegetables evidently declined to a greater extent than potatoes during the civil war, and recovered more slowly in the 1920s. It probably did not reach the pre-war level until 1928.³⁶ Cucurbits, grown in the village fields, recovered even more slowly.

The effects of collectivisation, food crisis and famine on the production of potatoes and vegetables in the early 1930s were very complicated. On the one hand, a high proportion of the potato and vegetable crop continued to be grown on the household plots, and was less subject to state collections than grain or the other industrial crops. By 1933, the percentage of the area sown by individual peasants and on the household plots of collective farmers still amounted to 49.4 per cent for vegetables and 41.3 per cent for potatoes, compared with 27.5 per cent for cucurbits and 25.5 per cent for grain (nearly all of the latter amount was grown by individual peasants).³⁷

³⁴ See SO, 3–4, 1930, 30. The remaining 10 million tons was used for seed (7.1 million), and for manufacturing starch and other industrial uses (1 million); wastage was estimated at 1.6 million.

³⁵ *Nar. kh.* (1932), 206–7.

³⁶ See Davies, ed. (1990), 274 (Wheatcroft).

³⁷ In 1934, the following areas, by social sector, were sown to the crop concerned (as percentages of the total crop):

	<i>Sovkhozy and kolkhozy</i>	<i>Collective farmers on household plots</i>	<i>Individual peasants</i>
Potatoes	55.0	24.0	20.9
Vegetables	50.2	33.4	16.3
Cucurbits	72.1	17.5	10.4
Grain	88.3	0.7	11.0

(estimated from data in *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 264). We have not traced separate figures for collective farmers and individual peasants for previous years.

As in the case of grain, the huge increase in the market prices of potatoes and vegetables at the end of the 1920s led to the introduction of compulsory collections by the state at low fixed prices, designed to provide food for the population and raw materials for industry. In 1929/30 the centralised collection of potatoes amounted to 3.3 million tons (see Table 6(b)). This was equal to the combined consumption of industry and the non-agricultural population in 1927/28. The collections increased to 5.7 million tons in the following year. Most of the collections were distributed as food to the urban population at low fixed prices.³⁸

In September 1931, the Politburo belatedly approved the 1931 collection plans for potatoes and the main vegetables. Following the example of the grain collections, the potato plan was to be broken down to village and kolkhoz level, and plenipotentiaries were despatched to the main regions for $1\frac{1}{2}$ –2 months.³⁹ The collection plans for vegetables were not achieved: only 756,000 tons of cabbage were collected, compared with the plan of 1.2 million tons.⁴⁰ In terms of quantities, the potato collections almost reached the plan of 7 million tons (see Table 6(b)). However, potatoes were not graded; the kolkhozy and the peasants kept the best potatoes for themselves. Many small potatoes were sent to the towns, and when they were used in canteens half of them were wasted.⁴¹

The initial plan for potato collection from the 1932 harvest was set even higher than in 1931, at 10.85 million tons. However, following the reduction of the grain collection plan and the legalisation of the kolkhoz market in May 1932, in June the potato collection plan was reduced to 6.9 million tons, with the specific intention of encouraging trade on the kolkhoz market.⁴² Six weeks later, the plan was further reduced to 5.03 million tons, substantially less than the actual collections in the previous year. The decree authorising this reduction provided that kolkhozy, collective farmers and individual peasants, once they had fulfilled their collection plan, could 'sell

³⁸ According to the potato budget drawn up by TsUNKhU, potato consumption by the non-agricultural population increased as follows (million tons): 1928, 2.7; 1929, 3.5; 1930, 4.8; 1931, 5.8; 1932, 4.8. Industrial consumption increased between 1928 and 1932 from 1.0 to 2.9 million tons (RGAE, 4372/30/881, 11).

³⁹ RGASPI, 17/3/846, 16, 35–39 (dated September 5).

⁴⁰ *Tekhnicheskie kul'tury*, ii (1936), 85.

⁴¹ *Sovetskaya torgovlya*, 4–5, 1932, 199.

⁴² SZ, 1932, art. 286 (decree dated June 14).

potato surpluses at bazaars and via kolkhoz shops', and forbade local organisations from restricting these activities.⁴³

But the production of potatoes, like that of grain, declined in 1932. The decline was probably less than in the case of grain, but the extent of the decline is uncertain.⁴⁴ The potato collections, like the grain collections, were inhibited by the legalisation of the market. Before the 1932 harvest the market price of potatoes had already reached 66 kopeks per kilogram (average for the first eight months of the year), compared with the mere 3.5 kopeks paid by the state.⁴⁵ In the remaining months of 1932 the market price increased still further.⁴⁶ Moreover, the provision of industrial consumer goods as a reward for successful collections, which was of some importance in the case of grain, applied only to the relatively small amount of potatoes collected for industrial use.⁴⁷ Sanctions and administrative pressure were in practice less severe for potatoes than for grain. As a result of all these circumstances, the potato collections were considerably lower in 1932 than in each of the previous two years (see Table 6(b)).

For vegetables, the reduction in the state collection plan in 1932 was even more dramatic. On April 8, STO issued a decree 'On the Organisation of Fruit and Vegetable Collections from the Harvest of 1932'.⁴⁸ This was the first of the series of decrees which culminated in the legalisation of the kolkhoz market. It declared that 'local organisations shall be afforded a broad degree of independence in the collection and supply of fruit and vegetables, and sovkhozy and kolkhozy ... [shall be afforded] a broad possibility of the independent sale of their production'. The centralised collection plan for vegetables was accordingly reduced to 847,000 tons, a mere 48 per cent of the actual collections in the previous year.

⁴³ SZ, 1932, art. 354 (decree of STO dated July 28).

⁴⁴ According to official figures, in 1932 potato production was 5 per cent less than in 1929, and 13 per cent less than in 1930; the equivalent figures for grain are 3 per cent and 16 per cent (see Tables 6(b) and 1). The extent to which both the grain and the potato harvests on socialised land were exaggerated increased annually, but in the case of potatoes the amount grown on household plots may have been underestimated.

⁴⁵ *Tovarooborot* (1932), 148, 141.

⁴⁶ In different regions it ranged from 1r25 to 2r50 per kilogram as late as September 1933, when prices were already falling (RGASPI, 17/3/970, 39, dated September 12, 1933).

⁴⁷ See SZ, 1932, art. 354.

⁴⁸ SZ, 1932, art. 156.

The results for vegetables in 1932 were a refreshing contrast to those for almost all other crops. According to official figures, the harvest of vegetables, and of cucurbits, was somewhat higher than in 1931, and the vegetable collections, while less than in 1931/32, amounted to 1,400,000 tons, 58 per cent greater than the April plan (see Tables 6(c) and (d)).⁴⁹ While the collections were taking place, however, it became clear that, in conditions of general food shortage and approaching famine, the planned level of collections was insufficient to meet the needs of even the main industrial centres. At the September–October 1932 plenum of the party central committee, Mikoyan, while claiming that ‘the production of vegetables now is sufficient’, criticised the ‘inflated prices for vegetables’, which he attributed to competition between rival collection agencies. Kosior condemned the monopolistic position of kolkhozy situated near markets, and the ‘spontaneous organisation’ by suppliers for the large towns, which had resulted in big profits.⁵⁰ The resolution of the plenum called for ‘the expansion of decentralised collections by cooperatives, canteens and other trading organisations, the development of kolkhoz markets, and the creation of food production bases attached to factories’.⁵¹

A few days after the plenum, on October 5, the Politburo, in an unpublished decision, resolved to strengthen the centralised collection system in the case of both potatoes and vegetables: in future, annual amounts to be collected should be approved for each of the main towns. The Politburo commented with some hyperbole that ‘potatoes and vegetables, equally with bread and meat, will decide the question of the supply of the workers’.⁵² A further Politburo decision on the same day resolved that the ‘vegetable economy’ should be highly organised, with production areas specifically attached to the main industrial centres.⁵³ Three days later, on

⁴⁹ These figures refer to the collections by the two main agencies Tsentropodovoshch’ and Soyuzzagotplodovoshch’ (see *Tekhnicheskie kul’tury*, ii (1936), 174), and so do not include the decentralised collections (on which, see note on pp. 288–91).

⁵⁰ RGASPI, 17/2/500, 8, 50–51.

⁵¹ *KPSS v rez.*, ii (1954), 704.

⁵² RGASPI, 17/3/902, 14, 46–53 (art. 55/35, approved by poll). The allocation for Moscow, for example, was set at 823,000 tons of potatoes, 165,000 tons of cabbage, 17,500 of onions and 22,000 of carrots.

⁵³ RGASPI, 17/3/902, 14, 55–56 (art. 56/36, also approved by poll).

October 8, a Sovnarkom decree announced these measures publicly, and condemned 'the lack of preparedness of the regions, which is repeated year after year'.⁵⁴ An unpublished Sovnarkom decree on the same date instructed the OGPU, the procuracy and administrative agencies to check wastage of potatoes and vegetables.⁵⁵

All these measures were a retreat from the reforms of the previous spring. In preparation for the 1933 harvest, the Politburo systematised the arrangements for managing the supply of potatoes and vegetables. On February 20, 1933, Sovnarkom replaced the contract system for potatoes by a system of compulsory deliveries, parallel to that for grain. Kolkhozy, collective farmers and individual peasants were required to hand over to the state a specific quantity of potatoes per hectare of planned sown area. Depending on the region, kolkhozy had to deliver between 8 and 11 tseentners per hectare, and individual peasants between 12 and 16 tseentners.⁵⁶ In physical terms, the plan for the centralised potato collections was fixed at 5.78 million tons.⁵⁷

The size of the 1933 potato harvest is uncertain. The published figure showed an increase of 14 per cent over 1932, but may have been somewhat inflated. The collection plan was fulfilled almost completely; the collections exceeded the previous year by 27.8 per cent (see Table 6(b)). On October 1, 1933, the precedent of bread and meat sales was followed by placing potatoes on so-called 'free sale' at higher fixed prices in special state shops in large towns. At first the price was fixed at 1r20k a kilogram.⁵⁸ However, because of the rapid fall in market prices, the price in the special shops was reduced to 75k at the beginning of November.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ SZ, 1932, art. 446.

⁵⁵ GARF, 5446/1/70a, 138–142 (art. 1540).

⁵⁶ SZ, 1933, art. 74, and the subsequent Komzagh instruction (SZ, 1933, art. 126, dated March 16). Kolkhozy served by MTS paid a lower amount, but also, as in the case of grain, made a payment in kind to the MTS.

⁵⁷ *Osnovnye pokazateli*, 1933, 190.

⁵⁸ RGASPI, 17/3/930, 39 (Politburo decision dated September 13); SKP, 339 (letter dated September 12).

⁵⁹ RGASPI, 17/3/933, 28 (art. 139/121, dated October 28). Previous to this decision, Kaganovich, Molotov and Kuibyshev, in a telegram to Stalin on the same day, proposed this reduction, pointing out that 'the collection of potatoes and the formation of stocks is complete in Moscow and will soon be finished in Leningrad; market prices have fallen considerably' (SKP, 406).

In the case of vegetables, no compulsory delivery system was introduced formally, but Komzag was instructed to fix the norms for the state collections per hectare of sown area, as with grain and potatoes. The collection plan was set at 1.86 million tons, and provision was made to supply grain and industrial goods to economic units fulfilling the plan.⁶⁰ According to official figures, vegetables yielded a record harvest in 1933, 29 per cent higher than in 1932 (see Table 6(c)). In a remarkable reversal of previous trends, the Politburo resolved that, in view of the cucumber surplus in eleven regions, the amount to be salted down was to be increased.⁶¹ The collection plan for vegetables was almost achieved (see Table 6(c)).⁶² The greater general availability of vegetables led to a decline in their market price by December 1933, to 27.5 per cent of the peak level in May 1933, a greater decline than for any other group of food products.⁶³

Considerable attention was devoted during these years to the development of the *koopkhozy* of the retail cooperatives, to increase the supply of potatoes and vegetables to factory workers and others. A Sovnarkom decree of April 17, 1933 noted that the amount of vegetables and potatoes supplied by the *koopkhozy* of the retail cooperatives had increased from a mere 246,000 tons in 1930 to 2,460,000 tons in 1932, and proposed that in 1933 the supply should be increased to 5,730,000 tons.⁶⁴ This measure failed completely: the amount produced for workers' supplies was only 1,650,000 tons (960,000 tons of vegetables and 690,000 tons of potatoes).⁶⁵

In general, potatoes and vegetables made a significant contribution to the rural diet during the stormy years of the first decade of industrialisation, and their importance increased during the agricultural

⁶⁰ SZ, 1933, art. 111 (STO decree dated March 11).

⁶¹ RGASPI, 17/3/931, 29, 62–70 (art. 156/127, dated September 29, 1933).

⁶² However, the collections of cucumbers amounted to only 207,000 tons, compared with the planned 290,000 tons (for the plan, see SZ, 1933, art. 111; for the amount collected, see *Tekhnicheskie kul'tury*, ii (1936)), 103.

⁶³ *Kolkhoznaya torgovlya v 1932–34*, i (1935), 132–3. The index is for the average price obtained by collective farmers and individual peasants at the urban markets of nineteen towns. The equivalent figures for other products were: flour, 38.3 (June–December); meat, 62.0 (March–December); dairy products, 64.7 (March–December); eggs 62.7 (March–December).

⁶⁴ SZ, 1933, art. 162.

⁶⁵ *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 1351; this figure includes the Departments of Workers' Supply of the economic commissariats, to which many of the *koopkhozy* were transferred at this time. This source gives the output of the *koopkhozy* of Tsentrosoyuz in 1932 as 1,720,000 tons.

crisis. According to the Gosplan budgets in kind, they accounted for between 14.5 and 18.6 per cent of the calories supplied by sown crops in 1932, compared with 12.3 per cent in 1928:

	1928			1932A			1932B		
	million tons	calories $\times 10^{12}$	calories as percent of total	million tons	calories $\times 10^{12}$	calories as percent of total	million tons	calories $\times 10^{12}$	calories as percent of total
Grain	31.2	90.5	87.7	24.9	72.2	85.5	18.4	53.4	81.4
Potatoes	17.2	10.8	10.5	15.2	9.5	11.3	15.2	9.5	14.5
Vegetables and cucurbits	9.9	1.8	1.8	13.6	2.7	3.2	13.6	2.7	4.1
Total	58.2	103.1	100.0	53.7	84.4	100.0	47.2	65.6	100.0

Sources: Grain: See table in TSD, iii (2001) (Wheatcroft), which gives two widely different figures for rural grain consumption in 1932, shown here in 1932A and 1932B.

Other crops: consumption in tons estimated from budgets in kind in RGAE, 4372/30/881; consumption in calories obtained by using ratios implied by peasant budgets of 1930s: grain – 2,900 calories per kilogram; potatoes – 630 calories per kilogram; vegetables and cucurbits – 200 calories per kilogram.

Notes: These figures in calories do not bring out the point that vegetables and cucurbits are less valuable as sources of proteins and fats than grain and potatoes, but more valuable as sources of vitamins. The data available do not provide information on the role of meat and dairy produce in the rural diet. As will be seen in the Ukrainian data for 1932–33 below, meat and dairy produce was not important in terms of calories, but quite important as a source of protein, and very important as a source of fat. Western norms give a rather higher calorific content per unit weight of grain and potatoes, and a much higher calorific content per unit weight of meat, than the Soviet sources (for the Western norms, see *Chambers's Encyclopaedia* (1967), v, 739).

In the famine period of the winter and spring of 1932–33, potatoes and vegetables were even more important as a source for the diminished total amount of calories consumed. The summary data for the peasant budgets in Kiev region in 1933 show that, in the first six months, the most intense period of famine, potatoes and vegetables accounted for 25.3 per cent of calories consumed from crop production, but in the second six months of the year, when the new grain harvest relieved the desperate situation, the proportion fell to the more normal 17.3 per cent.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Estimated from data in RGAE, 1562/77/19.

The monthly data for the Donetsk and Odessa regions in 1932 show equally striking results. The peasant budgets for these regions show that, in the relatively favourable months of July or September, potatoes, vegetables and cucurbits were much less important than in December, when the famine was already biting:

Consumption by types of food, 1932
(in calories per person per day)

	<i>Grain</i>	<i>Potatoes</i>	<i>Vegetables and cucurbits</i>	<i>Other food products</i>	<i>Meat and dairy produce</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Donetsk region</i>						
July:						
quantity	1536	320	71	191	666	2784
per cent	55.1	11.5	2.6	6.9	23.9	100.0
December:						
quantity	857	207	108	35	166	1370
per cent	62.6	15.1	7.9	2.2	12.1	100.0
<i>Odessa region</i>						
September:						
quantity	1736	162	252	68	277	2495
per cent	69.6	6.5	10.1	2.7	11.1	100.0
December:						
quantity	801	97	123	40	115	1176
per cent	68.1	8.2	10.5	3.4	9.8	100.0

Source: Donetsk region: estimated from data in RGAE, 1562/76/17; Odessa region: estimated from data in RGAE, 1562/77/18.

Notes: See note to table in text above. See also data on Kiev region in *Cahiers du Monde russe* (1997), 538, 557 (Wheatcroft).

(iii) *Vegetable oils*

Before the revolution and in the 1920s, seeds for the production of vegetable oil were grown mainly in the village fields as part of the crop rotation. The most important by far were sunflower seeds: in 1928 sunflowers occupied 86 per cent of the area specifically sown for oilseeds and accounted for 63 per cent of the total crop.

Sunflowers require moderate warmth, and are resistant to drought. They were grown mainly in the North Caucasus, the Volga regions, the Central Black-Earth region and part of Ukraine.⁶⁷ Like potatoes, they required about twice as much labour per hectare as grain, but generally resulted in a higher grain yield if included in the rotation.⁶⁸ In the case of flax, some was grown specifically for the production of seeds for linseed oil (len-kudrash), and seeds were also grown for oil by flax which had been planted mainly for fibre (len-dolgunets). Vegetable oil was also produced from hemp seeds and various minor crops.⁶⁹ Some vegetable oil was used for industrial purposes, but from the earliest times vegetable oils were an essential ingredient of Russian and Ukrainian cooking and diet. Moreover, in the years when meat and dairy products were particularly scarce, vegetable oil provided a substantial proportion of the fat consumed by peasants. In the Donetsk region, vegetable oil provided 22 per cent of fat in July and 10 per cent in December 1932; the equivalent figures in the Odessa region were 16 per cent in September and 18 per cent in December.⁷⁰

As with vegetables, the production of oil seeds, including sunflower seeds, did not decline precipitately during the civil war, and by 1928 it exceeded the 1913 level by 33 per cent.⁷¹ However, as with cotton and other crops, the yield declined considerably: by 1928,

⁶⁷ For a regional breakdown see *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 397–8, 391.

⁶⁸ See Danilov (1977), 288–9.

⁶⁹ The total area sown to oil seeds as specialised crops was as follows (thousand hectares):

	1928	1932	1933
Sunflowers	3905	5306	3897
Flax for oil seeds	372	645	316
Mustard	83	318	265
Soya	49	300	164
Other	123	290	221
Total	4532	6859	4863

(*Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 397). Hemp and flax for fibre were not grown specifically for oil seeds, and their sown area is not included in these figures: the total area sown to hemp was 913,000 hectares in 1928 and 755,000 in 1933 (*Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 437). For the sown area of flax grown mainly for fibre, see Table 7(b).

⁷⁰ For sources, see note to table on p. 283.

⁷¹ According to *Pyatiletñi plan*, i (1930), 144, production amounted to 3,401,000 tons, compared with 2,554,000 tons in 1913.

the area grown to sunflowers was stated to be nearly treble the pre-war level.⁷² By 1928, 50 per cent of the crop of sunflower seeds was already collected by the state under contract with the growers, a higher percentage than for most other food crops (see Table 6(e)). Most of the state collections were processed by state-owned factories in so-called 'large-scale' industry. But much sunflower oil was produced by artisan enterprises. The personal consumption of sunflower seeds was also high, as the streets and paths bore witness in any village where sunflowers were grown.⁷³

The years 1929 and 1930 were particularly poor for sunflowers. Sown area and yield declined, and state collections declined even more rapidly (see Table 6(e)). In 1931, the authorities made considerable efforts to secure the harvest, and to increase the share of the harvest obtained by the state collections. The sown area in 1931 was 35 per cent higher than in 1930 (see Table 6(e)), increasingly particularly rapidly in the two Volga regions.⁷⁴ In August, the Politburo decided that state collections of sunflower seed should amount to 1.7 million tons, more than twice as much as in 1930, and that the seeds should be collected by the same dates as grain.⁷⁵ A later Politburo decision stressed the 'special importance' of sunflower seed collections in 1931, and called for the application to the sunflower crop of the July 15 decree on the grain collections.⁷⁶ Then, on October 30, a further decision noted with alarm the 'direct threat of the perishing of the crop in a number of areas', and ruled that a 'general labour obligation (*pogolovnaya povinnost'*)' should be imposed in the areas concerned, so as to secure the harvest within a five-day period.⁷⁷ Finally, as late as November 12, when the harvest should

⁷² For 1913, see BP (Prague), c (November–December 1932), 7; for 1928 see Table 6(e).

⁷³ In 1925/26, the uses of the crop of sunflower seeds were estimated as follows (thousand tons): for sowing, 38; consumed as seed, 299; processed by large-scale industry, 935; processed by small-scale industry, 740; exported, 110; increase in stocks, 110; total 2,225 (I. Milyavskii in SO, 12, 1928, 19).

⁷⁴ For the regional breakdown, see *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 387–8. The rapid expansion in sown area may have been because of the shortage of grain for seed: a similar development occurred in 1926 (see SO, 12, 1928, 14).

⁷⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/842, 3, 7 (session of August 15, item 8); similar provisions were made for flax and hemp seed (*loc. cit.*, item 25).

⁷⁶ RGASPI, 17/3/847, 8 (art. 46/11, dated September 8); for the decree of July 15, see p. 92.

⁷⁷ RGASPI, 17/3/857, 8 (art. 46/20).

long since have been completely gathered, the Politburo resolved 'as an exception' that 6,000–7,000 soldiers should be employed for a maximum of ten days to get in the lagging crops of sunflowers, beet and maize.⁷⁸

In the event, the yield per hectare as well as the sown area increased, and a record harvest was achieved (see Table 6(e)).⁷⁹ Although collections were lower than planned, they were 81 per cent greater than in 1930 (see Table 6(e)). Sunflower convincingly demonstrated its ability to flourish in a time of drought.

This satisfactory performance did not continue. Although the sown area continued to expand in 1932, the size of the crop declined, and the state collections were a disaster. On October 3, 1932, Sovnarkom very belatedly set the collections at only 1.37 million tons, slightly below the actual collection in 1931, and much lower than the 1931 plan. The decree instructed that artisan oil processing plants should not operate until the state collections had been completed.⁸⁰ In the outcome, although the harvest declined by less than 10 per cent, the collections amounted to only about 35 per cent of the 1931 collections and the 1932 plan (see Table 6(e)).

There was only a slight improvement in 1933. Sunflowers still failed to secure the careful tending they required: 29 per cent of their sown area was not weeded at all, and only 19 per cent was weeded twice.⁸¹ The harvest was only slightly larger than in 1932, and the collections, though an improvement on 1932, remained lower than in 1931 (see Table 6(e)). The industrial production of vegetable oil from all kinds of seed, which had amounted to only 490,000 tons in 1932, only slightly greater than the 448,000 tons produced in 1928, declined in 1933 to a mere 320,000 tons.⁸² This decline was evidently due to the low level of collections in the two successive years, 1932 and 1933. The Narkomzem report to the VII Congress of soviets commented brusquely that 'the lack of attention to oil-seed crops was shown by the low level and instability of their yield'.⁸³

⁷⁸ RGASPI, 17/3/860, 9 (art. 37/5).

⁷⁹ The Volga regions, where the expansion in sown area had been greatest, were an exception: the yield here fell considerably (see *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 387–8).

⁸⁰ SZ, 1932, art. 439.

⁸¹ *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 378, 396.

⁸² *Promyshlennost'* (1964), 443; these figures exclude domestic production of oil by peasants.

⁸³ *Sel. kh. VI–VII* (1935), 70–1.

Thus the fate of the different food crops varied considerably in these years. Sugar beet, grown in the village fields, produced almost entirely for the state, sold to the state at low prices, and particularly subject to infestation by insects, was an unsuccessful crop. By 1933, output still amounted to only 64 per cent of the 1930 level. Melons and other cucurbits fared even worse. Production declined continually between 1930 and 1933, falling over the three years to only 55 per cent of the 1930 level. The decline does not seem to have been caused by particularly heavy state collections.⁸⁴ These crops were grown almost entirely on the kolkhoz or village fields, and the decline may partly have been because they were squeezed out by crops which were regarded as more important, or which required less labour.

Potatoes and sunflower seeds just about held their own. In 1933, the area sown to potatoes was about the same as in 1930, and output the same or somewhat lower. Potatoes were grown both in the fields of the kolkhozy, and by individual peasants and collective farmers. Both individual and collective sowings were subject to state collections, but the percentage of the harvest collected was lower than for grain, and far lower than for sugar beet. The incentives for both kolkhozy and peasants to grow potatoes were by no means negligible. More potatoes were grown near large towns and industrial areas, especially in Moscow, Leningrad, Nizhnii-Novgorod and Ivanovo regions, as well as in Belorussia, where the climate was particularly favourable to potatoes. On the other hand, in certain regions the authorities made considerable efforts to reduce the area sown to potatoes, and increase the area sown to grain or sugar beet. In Ukraine, the area sown to potatoes declined from 1,351,000 hectares to 797,000 hectares between 1928 and 1933, while the area sown to sugar beet substantially increased. In the Central Black-Earth region, the sown area of potatoes declined by almost 25 per cent, and the area sown to grain and industrial crops increased.⁸⁵ But, in general, the vast increase in the marketing of

⁸⁴ No data have been available for the state collections. Little importance was attached to them: they do not appear at all on the form returned from the districts for the 1933 harvest, where as many as 28 items of state collections were listed (including 10 which related to grain) (see, for example, GARF RSFSR, A-374/16/411, 78ob.).

⁸⁵ See *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 243-9, 479-80.

potatoes was reflected in the increase in the amount carried by rail from 1.3 million tons in 1928 to 3.25 million tons in 1933.⁸⁶

Between 1928 and 1932, the area sown to sunflowers increased by 36 per cent, but the harvest increased by only 6.6 per cent; and it remained at the same level in 1933. Sunflowers were a labour-intensive crop, grown mainly in the kolkhoz fields; the incentives for growing them were poor; and the main processes of cultivation were badly performed.⁸⁷

Vegetables were the success story of the famine years. Grown mainly on the household plots of the collective farmers and the individual peasants, they were less subject to the state collections than other crops.⁸⁸ A breakdown of the state vegetable collections by social sector has not been available, but the amount collected from the household plots was probably small. Between 1930 and 1933, the area sown to vegetables almost doubled. This increase occurred throughout the USSR, even in the Central Black-Earth region and Ukraine, where the sown area of potatoes declined. Although the yield of vegetables declined between 1930 and 1933, production rose by as much as 57 per cent. According to Soviet data, the consumption of potatoes as food increased by 14 per cent between 1927/28 and 1932, from 19.5 to 22.3 million tons, but the consumption of vegetables and cucurbits, taken together, increased by 36 per cent, from 12.4 to 16.9 million tons.⁸⁹

A note on 'decentralised collections' of food

By the end of the first five-year plan, the system by which grain was obtained from the peasantry by the state and by individual consumers was

⁸⁶ *Sots. str.* 1935 (1936), 357.

⁸⁷ Thus the percentage of the total sown area completed by May 15, 85.7 per cent in 1930, declined to 58.4 per cent in 1931, 46.3 per cent in 1932, and was still only 47.7 per cent in 1933 (RGAE, 4372/32/617a, 69).

⁸⁸ In 1933, for example, centralised collections absorbed 11.5 per cent of the potato harvest, but only 8.6 per cent of the vegetable harvest.

⁸⁹ For 1927/28, see SO, 3-4, 1930, 30; for 1932, see *Vtoroi* (1934), i, 390. Separate figures for vegetables and cucurbits have not been traced. A budget in kind in the Gosplan archives gives even higher figures for vegetables and cucurbits: personal consumption for food is given as increasing from 11.03 million tons in 1928 to 17.57 million tons in 1932 – an improbable 59 per cent (RGAE, 4372/30/881, 11). According to the same source, potato consumption for food in the same period increased only slightly, from 19.86 to 19.96 million tons.

relatively simple. That part of grain and other products which was transferred from the producers to other users by state compulsion or sale on a market was known as 'commodity' or 'marketed' production (*tovarnaya produktsiya*). The term 'commodity production' sometimes included transfers within the countryside, and sometimes excluded them. The latter was known as 'extra-rural' (*vnederevenskaya*) commodity production. Most 'commodity' grain was collected by the central authorities as state collections (*zagotovki*) (renamed 'obligatory deliveries' – *obyazatel'nye postavki* – in 1933), paid for at low fixed prices. In addition, a 'milling levy' (*garntsevyi sbor*, known in Ukraine as *merchuk*) was paid by grain producers; a percentage of this was retained by the local authorities. From 1932, additional 'purchases' (*zakupki*) were made by the central authorities at somewhat higher prices – in practice these were also more-or-less compulsory. From 1933, grain was also paid in kind (*naturoplata*) to the MTS by those *kolkhozy* which used their services. All these sources of grain were managed and distributed by *Komzag*, and its republican and local representatives. A relatively small amount of grain and flour was sold by *kolkhozy* and peasants on the market, at market prices ('bazaar' trade); the 'kolkhoz market' was legalised in May 1932, on condition that the annual compulsory grain payments for the whole region had been made to the state. Decentralised collection of grain was sometimes referred to in the regional archives, but it does not appear to have had any legal status after 1930.

With other agricultural products the situation was more complicated. Take the case of potatoes. As with grain, part of the marketed production was collected as 'centralised collections' (compulsory deliveries), and another part was sold on the *kolkhoz* market. But there was a large gap between these two items, and the total amount is given in the statistics as 'marketed production'. Thus, in 1932, the marketed production of potatoes was stated to be 8.98 million tons out of a total production of 43 million tons.⁹⁰ Marketed production was not defined precisely, but the 8.98 million tons almost equalled 'extra-rural' commodity production. According to the Gosplan potato budget in kind, consumption of food by the non-agricultural population (4.82 million) *plus* urban consumption as fodder (0.11 million) *plus* industrial use (2.90 million) *plus* losses in channels of communication (0.86 million tons) *plus* increased stocks apart from agriculture (0.2 million) – this amounted to a slightly smaller total of 8.89 million tons.⁹¹

The breakdown of the 8.98 million tons in terms of the channels by which potatoes were transferred from the producers is given as

⁹⁰ *Vitrovi* (1934), i, 529.

⁹¹ For these figures see the potato balance in kind in RGAE, 4372/30/881, 11.

follows (thousand tons):⁹²

Centralised state resources	4642
From suburban economies	343
Kolkhoz trade (including decentralised collections)	3999
Total	8984

The third item is the ambiguous one. The first item corresponds to 'centralised collections', 4,451,000 tons in the agricultural year 1932/33 (see Table 6(b)). The second item evidently refers to potatoes grown on allotments attached to factories and other organisations. But the third item was presumably obtained as a residual from the data on extra-rural consumption. Kolkhoz bazaar trade is only a small proportion of this amount: even in the following year, 1933/34, when kolkhoz trade was much more fully developed, it was estimated at only 1.2 million tons.⁹³

So how large were 'decentralised collections'? One Soviet source gives very high figures, nearly as high as for centralised collections:⁹⁴

Decentralised collections (thousand tons)			
1930/31	1931/32	1932/33	1933/34
4296	5091	3592	4538

Apart from 1932/33, these figures *plus* centralised collections are too high to correspond to extra-rural marketed production.⁹⁵

N. I. Popov, a specialist on kolkhoz trade, claimed that such high figures for decentralised collections include simple purchases, as well as suffering from duplication when potatoes were transferred from one administrative unit to another.⁹⁶ He argues that a more reliable series is that for those decentralised collections which were registered by the areas in which they were purchased. From 1933, this registration was undertaken by the so-called 'convention bureaux', which operated from 1932 at the central, regional and district level. These bureaux were nominally a consortium of collection agencies, but in practice were subordinate to a Central Convention Bureau (TsKB) attached to Komzag.⁹⁷ This series is startlingly

⁹² *Vtoroi* (1934), i, 529.

⁹³ Popov (1936), 128.

⁹⁴ *Sel. kh. VI-VII* (1935), 196.

⁹⁵ Centralised plus decentralised equals 10,108,000 tons in 1930/31, and 11,970,000 in 1931/32, but urban consumption *minus* losses *plus* increase in stocks equals only 8,430,000 in 1930/31, and 9,110,000 in 1931/32.

⁹⁶ Popov (1936), 75.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 71.

lower than the one given above: 355,000 tons in 1932; 143,000 in 1933; and 355,000 in 1934. Popov acknowledges that the figures for 1933 and 1934 'suffer from a certain incompleteness', but claims that the figure for 1932, which he assembled from various sources, includes 'a considerable number of repurchases and sometimes centralised collections as well'.⁹⁸

Whichever series we take, the main question is left open. According to Soviet estimates at the time, a large quantity of potatoes was consumed in the towns, in addition to the centralised collections, the supplies from suburban producers, and purchases at the bazaars. By what channels was the transfer of these potatoes effected?

The breakdown of 'marketed production' is also available for vegetables and cucurbits in 1932 (thousand tons):⁹⁹

Centralised state resources	1673
From suburban economies	1546
Kolkhoz trade (including decentralised collections)	968
Total	4187

'Marketed production' was a smaller proportion of total production – 17 per cent compared to 21 per cent for potatoes – and the gap covered by decentralised collections was much smaller. A large part of consumption by the non-agricultural population, which amounted to some 3.9 million tons, was covered by the extensive development of factory farms, urban allotments and suburban *koopkhoz*y; most of the rest was met by the centralised collections and by *kolkhoz* trade.¹⁰⁰

(B) INDUSTRIAL CROPS

(i) Cotton

Cotton was the most important industrial crop, providing the raw material for the main industrial consumer goods' industry. It was thus a key factor in the exchange between town and country. Two-thirds of all cotton fabrics were sold to the agricultural population.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 76–7.

⁹⁹ *Vtoroi*, i (1934), 529.

¹⁰⁰ For estimated consumption by the non-agricultural population see RGAE, 4372/30/881.

¹⁰¹ See *Materials* (1985), 365–7.

In the 1920s, as before the revolution, the cotton textile industry was heavily dependent on imported cotton. In 1927/28 the home production of raw cotton was substantially higher than in 1913, but about 40 per cent of cotton was still imported.¹⁰² In May 1929 a lengthy resolution of the party central committee pointed out that 'during the five-year plan the raw material base of the textile industry will be the main bottleneck determining the amount of its production'.¹⁰³ Accordingly, the five-year plan proposed that the production of raw cotton should increase from 718,000 tons in 1927/28 to 1,907,000 tons in 1932/33. To achieve this, the sown area would double, and yield would increase by 30–35 per cent.¹⁰⁴ As a result, the USSR would be freed from dependence on cotton imports, while at the same time the production of cotton textiles would substantially increase.

In the two years 1928–30 cotton production increased by as much as 36 per cent. This was entirely the result of the increase in the sown area by over 60 per cent; yield, instead of increasing, declined by over 20 per cent (see Table 7(a)). But cotton imports were drastically reduced, resulting in a decline in both the total supply of cotton, and the production of cotton textiles (see Table 7(a) and vol. 3, p. 515).

In 1931 this general trend continued. The area sown to cotton rose by a further 35 per cent, but as a result of a further decline in yield, production increased by only 16 per cent. In 1932 and 1933, cotton shared the problems of the rest of agriculture: sown area declined slightly, and yield failed to increase. Cotton imports were reduced still further, and by 1933 amounted to only 2.6 per cent of the supply of cotton.¹⁰⁵ In the five-year period as a whole, sown area increased to the extent planned, but yield, instead of increasing, declined by 25 per cent.¹⁰⁶ At the same time, throughout the five-year plan, the quality of raw cotton deteriorated: a report in the archives notes 'the considerable reduction of higher grades of raw cotton and fibre, and an increase in the medium and especially

¹⁰² *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 421.

¹⁰³ *Directive*, ii (1957), 52 (dated May 3).

¹⁰⁴ *Pyatiletnii plan*, i (1930), 141, 144–5.

¹⁰⁵ *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 421.

¹⁰⁶ There was also a large increase in the area sown to cotton in areas where cotton was not previously grown, not envisaged in the five-year plan: the amount of cotton grown in these areas was minute.

the lower grades'.¹⁰⁷ The shortage of cotton frequently led to stoppages in the textile industry. In June 1932, for example, Molotov and Kaganovich sent a telegram to Stalin reporting that cotton textile output would decline in July–September, and proposed an increase in imports of cotton. Naturally Stalin promptly rejected this proposal as 'adventurism in view of the present foreign trade situation'.¹⁰⁸ Between 1928/29 and 1933, the output of cotton textiles, planned to increase by 70 per cent, declined slightly in quantity and considerably in quality (see vol. 3, p. 509; and vol. 4, pp. 108, 394–5, 521).

Several factors contributed to the decline in yield. First, as throughout agriculture, the collectivisation drive disrupted traditional methods of production. Until 1930, almost all cotton was produced by small individual holdings. In 1930, a quarter of all holdings were collectivised in Uzbekistan, which was responsible for two-thirds of all cotton production. The authorities believed that the socialisation of agriculture would automatically carry with it higher yields, and, in view of the importance of cotton production, they hindered the mass withdrawal from the *kolkhozy* which prevailed in most regions of the USSR. By the end of 1930, the proportion of households collectivised in Uzbekistan had risen to 38 per cent (see vol. 1, pp. 442–3). During 1931, collectivisation proceeded rapidly, and by the end of the year, 76 per cent of households were collectivised in Uzbekistan and 64 per cent in Central Asia as a whole (approximately the same as in the rest of the USSR).¹⁰⁹

Collectivisation in the cotton areas met with considerable resistance. Hostility to the overthrow of the traditional way of life was universally attributed by the Soviet authorities, in both published and secret reports, to the anti-Soviet activities of the richer cotton growers, the *bai*. In April 1931, a headline in the agricultural newspaper announced 'Fierce Attacks of the *Bai* (baistvo) on Cotton'. The reported 'attacks' included the continued use of the traditional digging instrument, the *omach*, instead of the plough: 'From many districts,' the newspaper noted, 'alarming information is being received that European implements lie in the snow and are not sold.' To the indignation of the newspaper, the practice continued to be

¹⁰⁷ RGAE, 4372/30/881, 53 (dated July 1932).

¹⁰⁸ Telegrams of June 16 and 17 (SKP, 116–17).

¹⁰⁹ See Table 27; for Central Asia, see the source to the table.

widespread of 'toi (weddings) lasting several days'.¹¹⁰ A few weeks later, a feature article in *Pravda* reported even more starkly:

All the forces of town, *kishlak* and *aul* [village units] hostile to us, from the traditional mullah in the *kishlak*, and the former official of the emir, to the kulak and the bourgeois nationalist, are attacking the socialist offensive in a united front.¹¹¹

In the spring of 1932, an OGPU report claimed that 'in 1931, 388 counter-revolutionary *bai* groupings were disclosed and eliminated in the kolkhozy of Uzbekistan alone'; in Central Asia as a whole 'various anti-Soviet elements were eliminated – 22,584 persons'. The report claimed that such activities were continuing in 1932, and often involved rural officials.¹¹²

A second and even more important factor inhibiting the peasants from the energetic cultivation of cotton was the growing shortage of food, particularly grain. The agricultural newspaper reported as early as the spring of 1931 frequent cases when grain was sown on irrigated land instead of cotton; the newspaper attributed this to the malevolent influence of the *bai*, but also admitted that it was a result of 'temporary grain difficulties'.¹¹³ *Pravda* acknowledged that the main slogan of the agitators, backed by quotations from the Koran, was that the 'dekkany (peasants) will die of hunger if they sow the irrigated lands with cotton'.¹¹⁴

The plans for vastly expanding cotton production presumed that grain grown in Central Asia would be replaced by grain from Siberia and elsewhere: this was one of the main arguments for constructing the Turksib railway, completed in the spring of 1930.¹¹⁵ In practice, the amount of grain allocated to the cotton growers from central supplies was far less than planned. Grain supplied 'to stimulate state cotton collections' increased substantially in 1930/31; this no doubt played a part in the increase in the 1931 cotton harvest. But in the following two years the grain supplied was not only less than

¹¹⁰ SZe, April 14, 1931.

¹¹¹ P, May 15, 1931.

¹¹² TsAFSB, 2/10/53, 1–64, published in TSD, iii (2001), 339–40.

¹¹³ SZe, April 14, 1931.

¹¹⁴ P, May 15, 1931.

¹¹⁵ See Carr and Davies (1969), 901; and vol. 3 of the present series, p. 352.

planned, but even declined absolutely:

Grain to stimulate state cotton collections
(thousand tons)¹¹⁶

1929/30 ^a	1930/31 ^a	1931/32 ^b	1931/32 ^c	1932/33 ^b	1932/33 ^c
<i>Actual</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Plan</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Plan</i>	<i>Actual</i>
503	728	800	524	800	582

The amount of grain supplied to Central Asia via Turksib was a small proportion of this total.¹¹⁷

A third factor militating against higher yields was the failure to replace traditional methods by modern technology. The simultaneous increase in yield and sown area stipulated in the five-year plan required an enormous expansion in machinery and fertilisers. Some progress was made: the stock of tractors increased from 2,000 in 1930 to over 10,000 in 1933.¹¹⁸ By 1932, in kolkhozy served by MTS, 38 per cent of ploughing was undertaken by tractors. But the level of mechanisation for other processes was small: at most 16 per cent of sowing, only 1 per cent of pre-harvest cultivation, and only 0.5 per cent of harvesting.¹¹⁹ Meanwhile, contrary to the original plan, the number of horses available for cotton cultivation declined substantially.¹²⁰

The five-year plan was particularly optimistic about the prospects for improving cotton yields by the application of mineral fertilisers: '100 per cent of the area,' it declared, 'will be covered by chemical fertilisers.'¹²¹ The outcome was catastrophic. The amount of fertiliser used on the cotton fields did increase, from 311,000 tons in 1930 to 369,000 in 1931, and this may have been a minor factor in

¹¹⁶ Sources: ^a See vol. 1, p. 483; ^b RGAE, 8040/1/12, 75 (grain budget dated June 2, 1932); ^c See Table 15(b).

¹¹⁷ A handsome secret volume celebrating the tenth anniversary of the completion of Turksib acknowledged that grain sent from Siberia to Central Asia via the railway amounted to only 64,000 tons in 1931, 166,000 in 1932, and 131,000 in 1933 (RGAE, 1884/31/23, 46; the volume was prepared in 35 numbered copies; the copy in the archives, no. 3, was for Kaganovich).

¹¹⁸ *Sel. kh. VI-VII* (1935), 139.

¹¹⁹ *Vtoroi*, i (1934), 227. These figures cover most of cotton production: in 1932 over 80 per cent of cotton was grown in kolkhozy, and 92 per cent of cotton sown in kolkhozy was sown in kolkhozy served by MTS (*Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 215-16, 657).

¹²⁰ In Central Asia as a whole, the number of work horses declined from 550,000 in July 1928 to 427,000 in July 1932, and 418,000 in July 1933 *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 513-19; separate figures for the cotton areas have not been available.

¹²¹ *Pyatiletnii plan*, i (1930), 89.

the increased production in that year. But imports were then drastically reduced, long before the fertiliser plant planned for Central Asia was completed. The fertiliser available fell to a mere 82,000 tons in 1932 and 65,000 in 1933.¹²²

Against this background – a large increase in sown area coupled with a slow improvement in technology and a decline in incentives – poor cultivation inevitably resulted. Much of the new land was of poor quality, and the irrigation system was badly maintained, on both established and new land. In a remarkable understatement, the published report on agriculture presented to the VII Congress of soviets in January 1935 acknowledged ‘the unsatisfactory use of water, which is a most important factor in the cultivation of cotton on irrigated land’.¹²³ A further difficulty was that cotton seed set aside for sowing was poorly maintained and infested with weeds.¹²⁴ At the XVII party congress Stalin complained that ‘the seed arrangements for grain and cotton are so confused that it will take a long time to untangle them’.¹²⁵

As with grain farming (see p. 109), the rapid expansion in sown area, and the complications of combining the land allotments of the individual peasants, disrupted crop rotation. By the end of the first five-year plan, 72 per cent of the sown area in the cotton districts of Central Asia was sown to cotton, far more than the optimum.¹²⁶ The early drafts of the second five-year plan assumed that the area sown to cotton would continue to increase. In the summer of 1932, however, in a letter to Kaganovich, Stalin – belatedly convinced of the need for proper crop rotation – castigated the resolution of the USSR Cotton Conference for its proposal to increase the area sown to cotton by the cotton sovkhozy as ‘madness, a childish infatuation with figures on the part of the petty officials in Narkomzem’. He insisted that the total area planned for cotton in 1937 should be reduced from 3.4 to ‘at most’ three million hectares: ‘The task now is not to expand the area sown to cotton, but to increase the yield, improve cultivation, and train up cadres.’¹²⁷ This still represented a substantial increase: the sown area in 1932 was 2.2 million hectares (see Table 7(a)). Ten weeks later, a joint decree of the party central

¹²² *Sel. kh. VI–VII* (1935), 143.

¹²³ *Sel. kh. VI–VII* (1935), 137.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 137, 149.

¹²⁵ *XVII s’ezd* (1934), 23.

¹²⁶ *Sel. kh. VI–VII* (1935), 141.

¹²⁷ SKP, 232 (dated July 17).

committee and Sovnarkom announced that the area sown to industrial crops was not to increase at all in 1933. Further expansion would overload the available labour and draught power, and cause a fall in yield.¹²⁸ But a serious attempt to reintroduce crop rotation was not undertaken until the preparations for the 1934 harvest in the autumn of 1933.¹²⁹

The attempt to grow cotton without irrigation in areas of the North Caucasus and Ukraine where it had not previously been grown was a dismal failure. In 1932, the new areas occupied 20 per cent of the area sown to cotton, but produced a mere 5 per cent of the crop; and in 1933, the results were even worse.

At the XVII party congress in January 1934, Ikramov, party secretary in Uzbekistan, held forth enthusiastically on the successes of the cotton campaign. But he was brusquely interrupted by Stalin:

All the same, you don't give us much cotton! (*General laughter.*)¹³⁰

Nevertheless, in comparison with many other branches of agriculture, cotton cultivation was a success – or less of a failure. The production of cotton did not decline in the grim years of 1931–33. Cotton was relatively favoured in several respects. The number of households in kolkhozy remained relatively stable during the upheaval of the spring of 1930. The percentage of peasant households expelled from their villages as kulaks or *bai* was far lower than in the grain regions: 0.6 per cent of households in Central Asia were exiled in 1930 and 1931, compared with 1.6 per cent in the USSR as a whole.¹³¹ The stock of tractors increased fivefold in the cotton areas of Central Asia; while in the USSR as a whole the stock trebled. And in Central Asia the number of horses declined less rapidly than in the rest of the USSR.¹³² Central Asia fared worse only in respect of mineral fertilisers (see pp. 295–6). But the original intention

¹²⁸ SZ, 1932, art. 436 (dated September 27).

¹²⁹ *Sel. kh. VI–VII* (1935), 151; *Vtoroi* (1934), i, 226. The final version of the second five-year plan set the area sown to cotton in 1937 at 2.04 million hectares, 0.13 million less than in 1932 (*Vtoroi* (1934), i, 468).

¹³⁰ *XVII s"ezd* (1934), 84.

¹³¹ See Table 28(a). 6,944 Central Asian households were exiled in Category II, out of a total of 1.2 million (the latter figure was estimated from data in *Nar. kh.* (1932), 130–5).

¹³² The decline was 33 per cent in the USSR as a whole in 1928–33, compared with 27 per cent in Central Asia (*Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 515–19).

of reducing the area sown to grain in Central Asia was not carried out.¹³³ The Central Asian republics continued to grow a substantial amount of grain for their own consumption. While, like all the other regions of the USSR, Central Asia received less grain than planned, the amount of grain available to the populations fell relatively less.¹³⁴

(ii) *Flax*

Flax for the production of linen cloth was grown from the earliest times in the cool, moist climate of north-west, west and central Russia.¹³⁵ Flax was traditionally processed domestically by peasant households. Factory production of linen textiles was established in the nineteenth century. By the eve of the First World War, flax had been superseded by cotton as the main raw material for textiles, though its production was not diminished. Only about one-fifth of the crop was used for factory production of textiles. Over a quarter was still retained in the village (so-called *osedanie*) for domestic use and artisan production. About half the crop was exported in 1913: it was the fourth most important item of export, after grain, timber and dairy produce.¹³⁶

¹³³ See *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 249.

¹³⁴ Net grain available in Central Asia and Kirgizia (million tons):

	1930/31	1931/32	1932/33
Production ^a	2.07	2.38	1.70
Grain supplied ^b	1.04	0.78	0.81
less			
State grain collections ^b	0.38	0.41	0.35
Net grain available	2.73	2.72	2.16

Notes: ^a *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 270–1. ^b *Ezhegodnik khlebooborota*, [vi] (1934), 4–5, 16–17, and see vol. 1, pp. 430–1.

¹³⁵ Later some flax was also grown in the Urals and Siberia, but sowing was reduced sharply in the early 1930s.

¹³⁶ Different estimates give the following range of figures for the production and use of flax fibre in 1909–13 (average) (thousand tons):

Production	387–405
Export	200
Large-scale industry	72–74
Artisan production	11
Domestic (<i>osedanie</i>)	99–105

(see SO, 6, 1930, 38–40 – N. Narbekov). In publications of the 1920s, production in 1913 (a good year for flax as well as grain) was given as 454,000 tons (see vol. 1, table 1). In later Soviet textbooks it is given as only 260,000 tons in 1909–13 and 330,000 tons in 1913, without explanation.

Flax production declined dramatically during the civil war, but, with much flax still being used domestically by the peasants, recovery was rapid. By 1928/29 the sown area had reached the pre-war level. Yield, however, was lower, and production reached only about 80 per cent of the 1909–13 average. Substantial changes took place in the uses of the crop. In the agricultural year 1928/29, only about one-fifth of the pre-war quantity was exported, but the amount of flax used both in large-scale industry and by the peasants domestically increased.¹³⁷

During the first five-year plan, the area sown to flax for fibre expanded rapidly: in 1932 it was 84 per cent greater than in 1928. In each of the years 1931–33, however, the yield was lower than in 1928, and production increased by about 50–55 per cent. (See Table 7(b).) As with other crops, the quality of the fibre declined.¹³⁸ The proportion of the harvest transferred to the state did not increase: it amounted to 53 per cent in 1928, and 50.1 in 1931–33 (average). A large amount of flax continued to be retained by the peasants, and the Narkomzem report to the VII congress of soviets admitted that there were also ‘huge losses in harvesting and cultivation’.¹³⁹

In contrast to most other crops, some of the indicators of efficient production improved in 1932–33. The dates of both sowing and harvesting were earlier, and the amount of flax processed in factories by mechanisation increased.¹⁴⁰ But in many other respects, the standard of cultivation deteriorated. Much of the newly sown land was

¹³⁷ The breakdown for 1928/29 was estimated as follows (thousand tons):

Production	322
Export	40
Large-scale industry	118
Artisan industry	12
Domestic (osedanie)	118
Increase in peasant stocks	17
Unaccounted for [stocks with state organisations?]	(17)

(SO, 6, 1930, 160–1).

¹³⁸ *Sel. kh. VI–VII* (1935), 158.

¹³⁹ *Sel. kh. VI–VII* (1935), 153.

¹⁴⁰ For the dates, see *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 431, 433. The output of factory-processed fibre increased as follows (thousand tons):

1927/28	1931	1932	1933
5.7(3.5%)	31.1 (12.5%)	70.8 (27.6%)	96.0 (36.1%)

(*Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 436).

unsuitable. Most sowing was still done by hand. Too much flax was sown per hectare of cultivated land; and proper rotation did not begin to be restored until 1933. Although the amount of selected seed increased, it reached only a mere 3.3 per cent of sown area in 1933.¹⁴¹ Much of the seed sown, according to the Narkomzem report, was 'overgrown, weedy and extremely infested'. The amount of both manure and chemical fertiliser declined.¹⁴²

While the amount of state collections increased in absolute terms, part of this was absorbed by an increase in exports, and the deterioration in the flax count meant that linen textiles manufactured from the fibre were cruder and heavier.¹⁴³ The production of linen textiles, measured by length, declined from 174 million metres in 1928 to 141 million in 1933. Consumers did not benefit from the increase in flax production.

¹⁴¹ *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 433.

¹⁴² See *Sel. kh. VI-VII* (1935), 158-62.

¹⁴³ In 1927/28 23,000 tons were exported; 54,000 in 1929; 50,000 in 1930; 54,000 in both 1931 and 1932; and 49,000 in 1933 (*Vneshnyaya torgovlya 1918-40* (1960)).

CHAPTER TEN

THE LIVESTOCK DISASTER¹

(A) THE DRIVE FOR SOCIALISATION, AUTUMN 1930 TO DECEMBER 1931

In spite of the decline in the number of animals between 1928 and 1930, the Soviet authorities approached the livestock problem with an air of great confidence. In the autumn of 1930 they used the methods of the grain campaign to enforce the livestock collections. In December, Mikoyan presented a report to the plenum of the central committee 'On the Supply of Meat and Vegetables', which attributed the decline in livestock to a kulak campaign to persuade peasants to kill their animals, and again emphasised the need to solve the meat problem by the methods used in the grain campaign: 'It is clear [Mikoyan insisted] that in the sphere of meat we lagged about 2 years behind grain in all respects.' The report called for the rapid expansion of livestock production. Animals could be made heavier by the intensive use of grain and artificial fodder in 1931, and this could be accompanied by the development of specialised livestock kolkhozy and MTS. But the main emphasis in the report was its call for the more efficient collection of animals by the state, which would enable the meat problem to be solved by 1932.² The report soon proved to be redolent with dramatic irony.

The resolution of the plenum, even more boldly, cited Stalin's forecast at the XVI party congress in July 1930 that it should be possible 'within a year to enable the supply of meat in full'. The resolution praised 'the first successes in the organisation of socialised livestock', and did not even mention the decline in the number of animals. It strongly emphasised the role of 'wrecking' in the livestock collection agency Soyuzmyaso (see vol. 1, p. 374).³

The effort to develop socialised livestock continued throughout 1931. The specialised cattle-breeding sovkhozy were expanded, and specialised cattle, sheep and pig *fermy* were established within the

¹ This chapter deals primarily with animals raised for food. Horses are discussed in the chapters on the grain harvests.

² B, 1, January 15, 1931, 10–23 (abridged stenogram).

³ *KPSS v rez.*, vii (1954), 625–7 (dated December 21, 1930).

kolkhozy. The use of the Western word 'farm' for the kolkhoz livestock unit rather than the Russian *khozyaistvo* reflected the hopes for modernisation embodied in this policy. The first kolkhoz *fermy* (referred to here as units) were established in the autumn of 1930. By October, there were 95 units in the North Caucasus region, with a total of 9,500 cows. In February 1931, the Politburo authorised the region to transfer 30,000 cows to the units, with the aid of earmarked loans.⁴ By July 1, 1931, 8,925 cattle units and 6,494 pig units had already been established. These units were not huge. On average they contained 169 cows and 61 pigs, and the sheep units, developed somewhat later, contained an average of 600–700 sheep.⁵

On July 5, the Politburo established a commission under Molotov to consider a draft decree on 'the socialised livestock sector'. The Politburo instructed the commission to 'bear in mind that we must put livestock on its feet [!] in the same way that we put grain farming on its feet in the past'.⁶ Four weeks later, on July 30, the Politburo approved three major decisions. The first was a declaration of the party central committee and Sovnarkom 'On the Development of Socialised Livestock Farming', which was published the following day.⁷ According to the declaration, the establishment of livestock sovkhozy and '*tovarnye fermy* (market or commodity units)' in kolkhozy was a 'central task for the near future':

1931 and 1932 must be years of a breakthrough in the sphere of the development of livestock as decisive as 1929 and 1930 were in the organisation of grain farming.

The new units would be supported by the increased production of silage and concentrated fodder, and by training a variety of livestock experts. This was an inherently impossible project. Bovine animals (such as cows) have relatively long life-cycles of five to seven years, so there is no physical way to increase numbers very quickly.

The main thrust of the declaration was revealed by the term 'market or commodity units'. It frankly admitted that the main

⁴ Oskol'kov (Rostov, 1973), 275; RGASPI, 17/3/814, 15 (decision by poll dated February 17). The Politburo also authorised a similar transfer of 25,000 cows in Siberia.

⁵ *Sots. str.* (1934), 236–40.

⁶ RGASPI, 17/3/834, 2 (item 4).

⁷ RGASPI, 17/3/839, 5 (decision no. 11/4), published as SZ, 1931, art. 312, and in the newspapers.

advantage of the units was that up to 70 per cent of their output would be marketed, compared with only 10–20 per cent in the case of the livestock of individual peasants, and 10–30 per cent in the case of the ‘normal socialised kolkhoz herd’. To establish and expand the units, kolkhoz boards, with the support of party organisations and agricultural agencies, ‘should buy young animals from the kolkhoz members, and socialise part of the newly-born cattle of collective farmers’.

Even before the promulgation of this declaration, further measures had been adopted to encourage the socialisation of livestock. Livestock were usually tended by women, and on July 9 Rabkrin and the party central control commission ruled that 25–30 per cent of the membership of the kolkhoz boards should consist of women. Where the work was mainly carried out by women, the boards should consist mainly of women.⁸ Three days later, a decree on the distribution of kolkhoz income ruled that animal fodder should be allocated to collective farmers according to the labour days they earned, but only after the stipulated amount of fodder had been transferred to the state, the kolkhoz livestock units, the other socialised livestock in the kolkhozy, and the insurance Fodder Fund.⁹

Following the declaration of July 30, Tsil’ko, responsible for livestock in Narkomzem, declared enthusiastically that the USSR must complete in two or three years what it had taken capitalism ‘decades and centuries’ to accomplish; and an editorial in the agricultural newspaper, claiming that ‘large-scale economy is decisive’, insisted that livestock as well as other branches of agriculture must be part of this large-scale economy.¹⁰

The second Politburo decision on July 30 approved an ambitious programme to construct giant meat combines on the American model. At the central committee plenum in December 1930, Mikoyan had claimed improbably that the ‘wreckers’ in Soyuzmyaso had sabotaged slaughter houses and adopted an expensive plan to reconstruct the existing plant; this had been cut back in favour of the construction of large meat combines in Moscow and Semipalatinsk,

⁸ P, July 16, 1931.

⁹ P, July 13, 1931 (a decree of Narkomzem and Kolkhozsentr approved by Sovnarkom). When collective farmers did not possess livestock, they were to be paid in money in lieu of fodder. For other aspects of this decree, see p. 383.

¹⁰ B, 14, July 31, 1931, 35; SZe, August 2, 1931.

with American assistance.¹¹ The decree now approved by the Politburo, 'On the Development of the Meat and Preserves Industry', planned to construct as many as eight large, fourteen medium-sized and thirty-five small meat combines in the course of 1931–33. Meat canning shops associated with the combines would produce 2,400 million tins of preserved food in 1933, including 450 million tins of meat.¹² For unknown reasons, the publication of the decree was delayed until September 29 when, like the declaration on socialised livestock, it was issued as a declaration of the central committee and Sovnarkom.¹³ In the event, four large combines were built (see vol. 4, p. 481), but only 108 million tins of meat, and 329 million tins of all kinds of food, were produced in 1933.¹⁴

The third major decision of July 30 dealt with the livestock collections from July 1, 1931 to December 31, 1932. It provided for the collection of 1,669,000 tons in terms of live weight in the second half of 1931, and 2,408,000 tons in 1932. The decision stipulated the amount within these totals which was to be transferred to the socialised animal herd.¹⁵ These figures nodded slightly in the direction of realism. The existing Narkomsnab plan was reduced by small amounts (71,000 tons in 1931 and 202,000 tons in 1932). The version of the decision adopted by Sovnarkom on August 2 provided that, in the period October 1, 1931 to December 31, 1932, peasants should be supplied with industrial goods to the value of at least 25 per cent of the value of the cattle surrendered, and that 295,000 tons of grain should be set aside to supply as cattle feed.¹⁶ The arrangements for the collections had already been strengthened by a decree ruling that contracts with the remaining 'kulaks and well-to-do peasants' should include fixed collection plans along the lines of the grain collections from kulaks, and that contracts by land societies

¹¹ B, 1, January 15, 1931, 18–20.

¹² RGASPI, 17/3/839, 26–35. The plan was submitted to the Politburo by Narkomsnab on May 20 and accepted 'in the main' (RGASPI, 17/3/826, 3 – no. 8/11). On July 10, the Politburo adopted a revised version of the plan which proposed that as many as 3,000 million tins of preserved food, including 750 million tins of meat, should be produced in 1933 (RGASPI, 17/3/835, 2. 9–24 – decision no. 6/10).

¹³ SZ, 1931, art. 395.

¹⁴ *Sots. str.* (1935), 275; in addition, the industry produced 21 million jars of meat and 488 million jars of all kinds of food. Both the tins and the jars are measured in standard 400-gram units.

¹⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/839, 23–25 (decision no. 23/16).

¹⁶ GARF, 5446/57/15, 149–153 (art. 161s).

(where they continued to exist) should be obligatory for all their members.¹⁷ Slaughter houses not under the control of the state had already been made illegal (in practice, peasants continued to kill their own livestock).¹⁸ A further decree ruled that hides and skins should not be sold to private individuals, and that kolkhozy could not rework them without special permission.¹⁹

In spite of the optimism of the decisions of July 30, the authorities were well aware of the poor state of livestock farming, and of the deterioration of the meat supply to the towns. The decision on the livestock collections instructed Mikoyan to recommend a reduction in the meat ration. When Stalin departed on leave at the beginning of August 1931, he left an aide-memoire for Kaganovich, item 10 of which read 'Put pressure on poultry: there will not be enough meat this year, and poultry can be brought in (and also rabbits)'.²⁰ This was unhelpful advice. The poultry sector provided only a small fraction of the meat consumed in the towns, and, like the rest of the livestock sector, had greatly contracted.²¹ In 1931, poultry collections were estimated to have doubled, from 15 million to 31 million birds. But this increase resulted from the shortage of fodder caused by the drought and the general shortage of grain, which impelled the owners to kill off their poultry. The total number of poultry in the USSR was estimated roughly at 200–250 million in 1928, 135–140 million in 1930, and a mere 90–95 million in 1932.²² A frantic drive to develop rabbit breeding yielded trivial results.²³

¹⁷ SZ, 1931, art. 121, dated February 17.

¹⁸ See *Kollektivizatsiya* (Kuibyshev, 1970), 217, reporting the decision of TsIK and Sovnarkom dated November 1. Slaughter outside official premises required the permission of the village soviet.

¹⁹ SZ, 1931, art. 49, dated January 13.

²⁰ SKP, 37.

²¹ A table reporting the results of the livestock collections for October–December 1932 included a separate column on poultry collections in terms of meat, amounting to only 10,000 tons compared with 399,700 tons from other animals (RGAE, 8040/3/17, 3, dated January 1, 1934). State egg collections declined from 17,859 railway wagon loads in 1929 to 6,152 in 1930, and in spite of great efforts increased to only 8,346 in 1931 (*Sovetskaya torgovlya* (1935 [1936?], 15).

²² RGAE, 4372/30/881, 80–81 (dated August 1932). The report begins 'a record (uchet) of the number of domestic poultry does not exist'.

²³ See the lively journalistic account in Urch (1939). The first of many decrees on rabbit breeding was promulgated on August 3, 1932 (SZ, 1932, art. 364). Rabbits are probably the most susceptible of all species to problems when managed intensively in large numbers; and are extremely likely to succumb to respiratory diseases such as pneumonia. Reduced growth rate resulting from morbidity and mortality are major

The plans for socialised livestock meant – as the declaration of July 30 acknowledged – that much of the livestock in the kolkhoz units would be obtained by cajoling and forcing both individual peasants and collective farmers to surrender their personal livestock. Six months before the declaration, the OGPU had already reported that peasants and collective farmers were slaughtering large numbers of animals illegally because they believed they would be confiscated and transferred either to the kolkhozy or to the livestock collection agency.²⁴ An inherent difficulty of the collections in the case of cattle was the one which faced Shylock: the kolkhozy and the collection agency could not take the collections in pounds of flesh. They had to take over whole animals from peasant households, which normally owned only a single cow. Complaints appeared very frequently that the kolkhoz or the state had taken ‘the last cow’.²⁵ At the June 1931 plenum of the party central committee, Sheboldaev pointed out that this meant that the livestock question was ‘the sharpest in our whole economy’:

To take the last cow or the last pig from a collective farmer is very difficult both politically and practically. We will meet with tremendous opposition.²⁶

After the declaration of July 30, the pressure on the peasants to surrender their livestock greatly increased. On August 15, Kaganovich complained to Stalin that ‘the meat situation is uniquely bad’; Mikoyan had failed to bring specific proposals to the Politburo about the livestock collections.²⁷ On August 30, the Politburo approved proposals from a chastened Mikoyan which required Narkomsnab to intensify the collection campaign. The decision also allocated money, industrial goods and concentrated fodder to the collection agencies. It acknowledged that meat supplies from the livestock of the sovkhozy and kolkhozy would be insufficient at first, but claimed that 1932 would be ‘the last year of difficulties with meat supply’.²⁸

issues with rabbits. Even today, commercial rabbit feeds are laced with high levels of antibiotics, which need to be changed every few weeks.

²⁴ RGAE, 7486/37/193, 32–30, 24 (dated January 15, 1931).

²⁵ See, for example, *ibid.*, 29.

²⁶ RGASPI, 17/2/473, 23ob. (morning session of June 12).

²⁷ SKP, 46. Stalin, his attention concentrated on the grain collections, ignored these comments.

²⁸ RGASPI, 17/3/845, 2, 15–23 (decision no. 10/19). The Narkomsnab proposals were made on August 19 – they obediently included a mention of the significance of poultry

The collection contracts for the new campaign suffered from the usual defects. In extreme cases, they stipulated that peasants should surrender more animals than they possessed. Fixed individual plans, intended for well-to-do peasants, were sometimes imposed on poor peasants. As in the grain campaigns, the plenipotentiaries sent to the villages used threats and force to impose the plans: 'if you do not give up your last cow and don't contract your calves,' one plenipotentiary informed the peasants, 'you will be given fixed plans, and you will be dekulakised and driven from your home'.²⁹

OGPU reports on the campaign frequently mentioned peasant discontent. In the Central Volga region, for example, 'the sharp dissatisfaction of individual peasants has led in some cases to anti-Soviet actions'. A middle peasant complained: 'that's the government for you, they take the last cow from the poor peasant, it is not a Soviet government but a government of thieves and marauders'.³⁰ In the Central Black-Earth region, a collective farmer from the middle peasants complained: 'they don't give peasants any freedom, they mock us and take away our last cow'.³¹

The autumn was the most propitious time for the collections. Peasants were more willing (or less unwilling) to surrender their animals because of the difficulty of providing them with fodder during the long winter months. In the period July–December 1931, the collection plans were at first sight very successful. In terms of live weight, 1,504,000 tons were collected: this almost equalled the plan and was far higher than the amount collected in the same months of 1930 (1,027,000 tons); and total collections in 1931 exceeded those in 1930 by 62 per cent.³² The number of cattle held in kolkhoz units increased during the six-month period, from 1,516,000 to 5,390,000.³³ In 1931, the state collection of milk and butter, measured in terms of butter, nearly doubled; over 60 per cent of the total was collected in July–December.³⁴

These apparently encouraging figures misrepresent the success of the collections. First, the collection of both livestock and butter had

²⁹ See, among many others, the OGPU report from Kirgizia dated April 19, 1932 (RGAE, 7486/57/235, 119–117).

³⁰ RGAE, 7486/37/192, 423–422 (report covering period up to October 20).

³¹ RGAE, 7486/37/192, 383 (dated September 21), published in TSD, iii, 178–81.

³² See vol. 1, pp. 434–5; the figure for July–December has been derived as a residual.

³³ *Sots. str.* (1934), 238.

³⁴ For the annual figure, see Table 16; for the quarterly figures, see RGAE, 4372/30/881, 95.

declined greatly during the upheaval of 1930, and collections were only slightly higher in 1931 than in 1929.³⁵ Secondly, the conditions under which the animals were kept in the kolkhoz units were extremely poor, and this impaired the meat supply considerably. A devastating OGPU report, prepared in February 1932, noted that animals were often supplied with inadequate fodder and water, and kept in dilapidated buildings. In some cases, buildings were lacking, and animals were left without fodder to wander about at temperatures down to -30°C . They tended to 'lose weight, get sick, and perish in large numbers'. Those which survived were killed in slaughter houses which were often unsanitary, and in any case provided less meat than normal (34 per cent of the live weight, compared with the normal 42 per cent).³⁶ (Today, even a spent Holstein dairy cow would yield about 50 per cent.) In the outcome, the amount of meat and butter consumed per head of the Soviet population declined substantially in 1931.³⁷

The state made considerable efforts to increase the supply of fodder. According to the official figures, the supply of root crops increased considerably, and the area sown to grass increased by 24 per cent without any decline in yield. The official series also showed a substantial increase in the area of wild hay; however, if the improbable figure for Kazakhstan is omitted, the area declined. The production of silage on a considerable scale took place for the first time in 1931, and amounted to 10 million tons. (See Table 4.) Yakovlev, proudly reporting this figure to TsIK, asked rhetorically: 'Two years ago, when we began this business, were there many peasants who understood what silage was?'³⁸ However, the supply of grain for the production of cattle cakes and other concentrated fodder was greatly reduced after the poor harvest of 1931, and the amount of mill feed fell sharply because of the increased extraction rate from grain for flour. The evidence about the total availability of fodder is inconclusive. What is certain is that all sectors of livestock farming complained about the lack of fodder. This was particularly the case for animals owned personally by collective farmers and individual peasants. The shortage of fodder was a necessary consequence of the competition between human beings and animals for scarce grain and other food in these years.

³⁵ See *Sovetskaya torgovlya* (1935 [?1936]), 15.

³⁶ RGAE, 7486/37/235, 108–106.

³⁷ See Moshkov (1966), 136, citing RGAE, 4372/30/881, 9.

³⁸ Yakovlev (1933), 148–9.

Sickness affected both socialised and personally-owned livestock, no doubt encouraged by the mixing of animals from different households and farms. According to one report, while the number of places in which sickness occurred was somewhat reduced in the first six months of 1932 compared with the same period of 1931, the number of animals affected by illness was high, and rising. Cases of foot-and-mouth disease increased from 150,154 in January–June 1931 to 220,318 in January–June 1932.³⁹ In both 1931 and the first six months of 1932, the number of deaths from sickness and poor nourishment was far higher than normal. Peasants continued to slaughter their livestock in large numbers. The high level of slaughter in 1931/32 was reflected in the urban free market ('bazaar') price of beef, which declined during the period July–November 1931, in contrast to the experience of the previous and the following year.⁴⁰

Between the two livestock counts of July 1, 1931 and July 1, 1932, the number of horses, cattle, sheep and pigs declined much more rapidly than in the previous twelve months. Excessive slaughter also played a part, together with administrative pressure, in the continuing high level of wool and hide collections in 1931 (see Table 17).

(B) THE RETREAT FROM SOCIALISATION, 1932/33

The national-economic plan for 1932, approved by TsIK on December 26, 1931, proposed a considerable increase in sovkhoz and kolkhoz livestock, and failed to mention either the individual peasants or the personal economies of collective farmers.⁴¹ But Narkomzem, bombarded with reports about the continued decline in the number of livestock, the mismanagement of socialised animals, and the discontent of the collective farmers, began to change its attitude. Yakovlev addressed TsIK in support of the plan to expand the kolkhoz livestock units, but nevertheless insisted:

This must be developed so as not to be harmful to the livestock of the collective farmers themselves, but together with it. The livestock unit must not be seen as

³⁹ See RGAE, 4372/30/8702, 41 (Narkomzem report dated August 1932). The incidence of some diseases affecting only a small number of animals declined in the same period.

⁴⁰ Prices declined by 16 per cent in July–December 1931, but over the same period increased by 82 per cent in 1930 and 32 per cent in 1932 (calculated from data in RGAE, 1562/12/2322, 33 – series compiled in mid-1933).

⁴¹ SZ, 1931, art. 600.

*an enemy and rival of the pigs, hens and cows of collective farmers. On the contrary ... in many cases the livestock units can and must support the development of the livestock of collective farmers (for example, with pedigree bulls, and by transferring calves).*⁴²

A month later, Sovnarkom approved a decree on pig breeding which planned optimistically to increase the number of pigs by 35 per cent in 1932, and envisaged that, by the end of the year, several million additional pigs would be owned by collective farmers and individual peasants. The decree also ruled that peasants would be required to provide only one or two piglets per litter to the state; they could retain the others 'at their complete discretion'. It also rescinded in the case of pigs the earlier decision that slaughter could take place only in official slaughter houses.⁴³

This was the first move towards a major change. A district party secretary in the Central Volga region later reported that at the beginning of March he had met Yakovlev and had a telephone conversation with Khataevich in which they criticised 'leftist distortions' and compulsory socialisation.⁴⁴ The change in policy was signalled in the press. On March 5, an article in *Pravda* by A. Azizyan criticised the excessive socialisation of livestock, and concluded that 'hasty action can only slow down the movement forward'.

At about this time the results of the major livestock census held in February 1932 began to be received; these confirmed that the situation was deteriorating rapidly. In March, Yakovlev sent a memorandum to Sovnarkom, drawing attention to the continued decline in livestock, which had taken place entirely in the peasant sector. He attributed the decline to 'compulsory socialisation', to 'distortions' in the livestock collections (particularly the seizure of livestock by the collection agencies), and to the inadequate provision of fodder. A draft decree attached to the memorandum called for measures to 'assist the purchase and breeding of livestock by collective farmers'.⁴⁵

⁴² Yakovlev (1933), 149 (speech of December 26).

⁴³ SZ, 1932, art. 38 (dated January 29).

⁴⁴ *Kollektivizatsiya* (Kuibyshev, 1970), 294 (report delivered at the end of March).

⁴⁵ RGAE, 7486/19/154, 125-127, published in TSD, iii, 315-7; for other aspects of the draft decree see p. 316. On April 28, Osinsky reported the results of the census to Molotov in more detail, and at the end of May they were issued for official use in 200 copies (RGASPI, 82/2/536, 1-38ob.).

Following this memorandum, on March 26, a dramatic short resolution, 'On the Compulsory Socialisation of Livestock', was promulgated in the name of the party central committee, and was immediately widely publicised.⁴⁶ It strongly criticised existing practices which had previously been officially encouraged, and proposed a dramatic shift in policy:

The practice may be observed in a number of districts of socialising the cows and small animals of some collective farmers, by what are actually compulsory methods. This violates in a most crude fashion the frequent instructions of the central committee, and the Statute of the agricultural artel.

Those who permitted this were 'enemies of the kolkhoz'; and attempts at compulsory socialisation would be punished by expulsion from the party. The aim of the party was to ensure that 'every collective farmer has his own cow, small animals, and poultry'. The resolution also ruled, contrary to the declaration of July 30, 1931 (see p. 303), that in future kolkhoz livestock units should expand only by rearing animals themselves or by purchasing them.

In a subsequent decree, Kolkhozsentr called for the collection of seeds to enable the expansion of the area sown to fodder grains and other fodder crops, and for additional manufacture of silage. In addition, 'independent areas of pastureland' must be set aside for the personal livestock of collective farmers, and it must be served by the veterinary service of the kolkhoz system.⁴⁷

Following these decrees, many aggrieved collective farmers sent petitions to the authorities seeking the return of their animals.⁴⁸ But old attitudes die hard. In July, Yakovlev complained about the many people in the provinces who 'keep in reserve the "little theory" that ... if a collective farmer has a cow or a pig this means the destruction of the kolkhoz'. He also criticised those who argued that it would be easier to administer the kolkhoz if all the animals were socialised.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ *Kollektivizatsiya* (1957), 410–1; Yakovlev submitted the resolution to the Politburo, which approved it on March 23 (RGASPI, 17/3/877, item 9).

⁴⁷ Published in TSD, iii, 356 (dated April 8). For a typical regional decision along the same lines, see *Kollektivizatsiya* (Kuibyshev, 1970), 291–2 (dated March 29).

⁴⁸ See, for example, the letters written by peasants in June 1932 and deposited in the Novosibirsk archive, published in TSD, iii, 392–4.

⁴⁹ P, July 15, 1932.

The decrees implied a major change, as at this time the 14 million kolkhoz households owned only about 8 million cows and 3 million pigs. The large annual survey of kolkhozy in 1932 showed the percentage of kolkhoz households which owned their own animals was 57 per cent for cattle (including 53 per cent for cows), 28 per cent for sheep and goats, and 16 per cent for pigs, with the percentage varying considerably by region. Personal ownership of a cow was most widespread in the traditionally grain-deficit regions, rising to 83 per cent in the Ivanovo region. In the grain-surplus regions, with the important exceptions of Siberia and the Central Volga region, it tended to be lower: in Ukraine it was a mere 37 per cent.⁵⁰ The overwhelming majority of households with animals owned only one cow or pig, and two or three sheep. In Kazakhstan and Central Asia, however, the number of sheep per household was much higher.⁵¹

The new approach to the peasants did not imply any slackening of the drive to establish the livestock sovkhozy. On March 31, five days after the decree attacking compulsory socialisation, a decree on the livestock sovkhozy strongly criticised their inefficient leadership, which had led to excessive deaths and a very low birth rate of calves, and complained that only 69 per cent of the plan to transfer meat to the towns had been achieved. The decree ruled that, in future, all the increase in sovkhoz livestock should be obtained from their existing stock, rather than being obtained from the kolkhozy and elsewhere; and it endorsed the full collection plan for 1932.⁵²

⁵⁰ *Kolkhozy v 1932 godu* (1934), Table 13.

Percentage of households owning their own animals in 1932, by region

<i>Region / republic</i>	<i>All cattle</i>	<i>Cows</i>	<i>Sheep and goats</i>	<i>Pigs</i>
Moscow	71.8	69.9	48.0	17.3
Ivanovo	85.0	83.0	41.5	6.8
Central Volga	63.2	56.7	38.1	3.7
Lower Volga	52.8	50.2	27.9	15.2
North Caucasus	53.6	48.4	6.6	13.0
West Siberia	58.1	52.5	39.2	12.7
Ukraine	41.2	36.8	3.7	16.5
All USSR	57.0	52.6	28.1	16.2

⁵¹ Compare Table 13 with Tables 14 and 15, in *Kolkhozy v 1932 godu* (1934). The only Central Asian region covered in this survey was Kirgizia, where the number of personally-owned sheep amounted to 97 per household, but only 5.7 per cent of households owned sheep.

⁵² SZ, 1931, art. 143. The importance of the decree was emphasised by issuing it jointly from Sovnarkom, the party central committee, and Narkomzem.

The results of the February livestock census encouraged local authorities to petition the centre for a reduction in the collections.⁵³ The defects in the collection system were by now cautiously admitted in the press. An agricultural journal noted that 'plans are often issued which do not take into account the specific circumstances and possibilities of each household; and they are frequently changed'.⁵⁴ Then, on May 10, 1932, four days after the decree announcing lower grain collections, Sovnarkom and the party central committee issued a decree, 'On the Plan for Livestock Collection and on Meat Trade by Collective Farmers and Individual Working Households'.⁵⁵ The plan, covering April–December 1932, was reduced for kolkhozy, collective farmers and individual peasants from 1,414,000 tons (live weight) to a mere 716,000 tons, but increased for sovkhozy to 138,000 tons compared with the 90,000 tons collected in 1931. The decree provided that, in future, the plan could be met with any kind of animal, that all restrictions on the slaughter of animals for personal consumption or for sale were abolished, and that kolkhozy, collective farmers and individual peasants who were fulfilling the plan were granted the right to sell livestock and meat 'without restriction at bazaars, markets and kolkhoz stalls'. At the same time, the local authorities were to root out private traders and speculators who tried to profit by an increase in peasant trade.

The reductions in the livestock plan differed considerably by region. They amounted to only about a quarter in the grain-deficit regions, but as much as 50–60 per cent in most of the grain regions. The reduction in Ukraine, where the number of livestock had by 1931 declined less than in the other grain regions, was only 28 per cent. The reduction for Kazakhstan, where the decline in livestock had been catastrophic, was 78 per cent.

On May 11, the day following the decree, Kuibyshev addressed a conference of Komzag plenipotentiaries. His report was a powerful and far-reaching indictment of existing practices, notable for the complete absence of any reference to kulaks or the class struggle.⁵⁶

⁵³ On April 26, for example, in spite of the decree of March 31, Sheboldaev requested a 'considerable reduction' of the sovkhos quota for the North Caucasus (GARF, 5446/27/9, 109).

⁵⁴ *Sotsialisticheskoe rekonstruktsiya sel'skogo khozyaistva*, 1, 1932, 133.

⁵⁵ SZ, 1932, art. 195. For a similar decree for eggs and poultry, see SZ, 1932, art. 162, dated April 7.

⁵⁶ Kuibyshev (1937), 289–93; the report was not published until 1937.

Its key passages deserve quoting at length:

It would be laughable to think that the growing requirements of our national economy for the products of agriculture can be satisfied exclusively by state centralised collections. If this is correct for 1932, it will be still more correct for 1933 and 1934, when the requirements of the national economy, in view of its increased size, will increase still more ...

Take the livestock collections. If they are carried out by methods which violate the interests of the kolkhoz and individual peasantry, if they have the character of a centralised quota (*razverstka*), it is entirely obvious that, in spite of the considerable reduction of the livestock collection plan, these methods will mean that there will be no kolkhoz trade, no incentive to develop livestock farming, and animals will be killed for the personal consumption of the peasant population ...

Extraordinary measures must be taken to stop the process of the reduction in the number of livestock which took place in 1931 and so far in 1932 ...

People little acquainted with the livestock situation in our economy may think that the measures of the central committee could have negative results for the growth of animals ... Some people fear that the removal of bans and restrictions on slaughter may result in the increased slaughter of animals. Some think that permission to trade in livestock products in bazaars, in shops, at kolkhoz stalls, etc. before the completion of the collections will have the result that the collection obligations will not be met, and marketed output will be sold at higher prices via kolkhoz bazaars.

Evidently the sources of these doubts are ignorance of how things are in practice. Practice demonstrates that, on the contrary, precisely because the slaughter of animals was banned, it took place in disordered, distorted forms ... If the economic interest of a particular individual or collective farm household dictated the necessity of slaughtering cattle, it is absolutely obvious that no bans could in the last resort prevent the slaughter of cattle in one form or another. The ban on slaughter led to illegal slaughter, with the loss of leather and by-products.

Kuibyshev added that the lack of sales possibilities led to illegal deals in which speculators profited, and merely resulted in the decline of the number of animals. He called for a fresh approach to

the collections, which avoided 'all negative political consequences'. Officials responsible for the collections were now faced with 'heightened requirements in the sense of their social feeling'; they must be 'politically literate, and exclude any possibility of going too far (peregiby), and a bureaucratic and purely administrative attitude to their work'.

By this time the market price of livestock had soared far above the price paid by the state for the collections. A Gosplan report for August 1932 pointed out that, in the North Caucasus, the market price for cattle had reached 250–400 rubles per *tsentner*, compared with the maximum collection price (the 'limit' price) of 25 rubles.⁵⁷ Under the new arrangements, the sale of grain was far more restricted than the sale of livestock and meat. The sale of grain was forbidden until the collection plan for the whole region for the year had been completed. No similar restriction could be placed on the sale of livestock, because it continued throughout the year. The decree of May 10 merely stated that, to gain the right to sell on the market, 'kolkhozy, collective farmers and individual peasants should punctually (akkuratno) fulfil the centralised plan of livestock collections'. Sales on the market immediately greatly increased, and collection and trading agencies complained forthwith about the negative consequences which Kuibyshev had anticipated, but discounted, in his report of May 11. The TsUNKhU report for May 1932 already noted that 'in some places demobilisation attitudes have appeared and collections have actually ceased'.⁵⁸ The report for the first six months of 1932 noted that during this period the amount collected had declined, insisted that 'the sale of livestock on the market has a negative influence on the collections', so that '*the question of supervising the fulfilment of the collection plan* has acquired a practical and very major significance'.⁵⁹ In September, a further TsUNKhU report concluded that 'it is completely obvious that a very considerable part of gross meat production has not been obtained this year through the planned collections, but is being sold on the bazaars and retained in the countryside'.⁶⁰

At least in the short term, this alarm was justified. In June 1932, the livestock collected amounted to only 49,000 tons, a mere 30 per cent

⁵⁷ *Vypolnenie*, August and January–August 1932, *Torgovlya i snabzheniye*, p. 3.

⁵⁸ *Osnovnye pokazateli*, May 1932, 103.

⁵⁹ *Osnovnye pokazateli*, January–June 1932, 140.

⁶⁰ *Tovarooborot* (1932), 84.

of the amount collected in June 1931. This decline was only partly caused by the decline in the number of livestock: in January–March 1932, before the regulations were relaxed, collections were 44 per cent of those in 1931. The amount collected in April–December 1932 was 795,000 tons – 93 per cent of the revised plan.⁶¹ This apparent success reflected the modesty of the plan: collections in 1932 were only 43 per cent of those in 1931. The collections of butter and dairy produce also declined in 1932, but to a lesser extent (see Table 16).

The decline in the collections meant that centralised meat supplies at low prices to the non-agricultural population declined still further. In July–September 1932 only a minority of manual workers received a meat ration, and this amounted to only 1,000 grams a month for those on the Special List, and 500 grams for those on List 1 – at most eleven million people in all, compared with the 40 million or so who received bread rations. Dependants received no meat ration. Among white-collar workers, only the 380,000 privileged ‘commanding personnel’ (*nachsostav*) received a meat ration. The position with butter and milk was even worse. (See vol. 4, pp. 181–2, 452–4, 530–3.)

The reduction in the livestock collection plan was followed a few months later by the reform of the collection system. This preceded, and was a kind of trial run for, the reform of the grain system (on which, see pp. 250–9). In March 1932, Yakovlev’s memorandum to Sovnarkom about the results of the livestock census was accompanied by a draft decree proposing that ‘the present system of livestock collections should be changed fundamentally’.⁶² In future, both *kolkhozy* and peasant households should be given a ‘state order (*zakaz*) for the production and delivery of meat to the state for a number of years’:

This order shall be firm and may not be increased by anyone. In the present year, no later than November 1, the orders for livestock delivery shall be fixed for 1933, 1934 and 1935 [‘1935’ is crossed out in the original].

The *kolkhoz* itself should divide the plan between the livestock of the *kolkhoz* and the collective farmers. Payment to the peasants should be ‘in a form stimulating [their] interest’, and should include concentrated fodder, industrial consumer goods and grain.

⁶¹ The above figures were calculated from the data in *Osnovnye pokazateli*, January–June 1932, 144; and in Table 16.

⁶² GARF, 7486/19/154, 128–129. For other aspects of the memorandum and draft decree see p. 310.

Yakovlev's draft did not specify how the amount to be collected should be determined, and the revision of the system was not undertaken until the autumn. On September 23, 1932, a decree of Sovnarkom and the party central committee provided that, from October 1, 1932, kolkhozy and peasant households should receive 'obligations for the delivery of meat to the state at fixed state prices, having the form of a tax'. These should be fixed in kilograms of live weight. The amounts should depend on both the geographical Zone and the type of owner, and should cover the fifteen months October 1, 1932 to January 1, 1934. For example, in Zone 1 of the three Zones individual peasants should deliver 50 kg, collective farm households in kolkhozy without livestock units should deliver 32 kg, and collective farm households in kolkhozy with livestock units should deliver 25 kg. The plan was divided into five periods of three months. The decree explained that those delivering livestock 'may join together in a group for the joint fulfilment of the obligation to supply meat'. There was a sting in the tail. Those who failed to carry out the plan would have to pay a fine in money 'up to the market price', and their animals would be seized without right of appeal.⁶³

The decree also stipulated the amount to be delivered by sovkhozy, which was further increased to 300,000 tons, compared with 130,000 tons in the previous fifteen months. For the first time, the total amount to be supplied by the peasant sector was kept secret. A decree, which was not published, specified that the amount to be collected in the fifteen months was 1,000,000 tons.⁶⁴ This continued the moderation of the previous year: the total amount to be collected from all sectors was 1,300,000 tons in fifteen months, compared with the 1,211,000 tons collected in the calendar year 1932.

Similar arrangements were made for the delivery of other animal products to the state. For dairy products, the 'contracts' with the kolkhozy and with village soviets had in practice been a more or less arbitrary imposition, collected in the form of both butter and milk, but by 1932 the capacity to manufacture butter had mainly been transferred to Narkomsnab or the sovkhozy.⁶⁵ On November 19, 1932, a radical decree introduced a tax in litres of milk per cow per year.

⁶³ SZ, 1932, art. 418.

⁶⁴ GARF, 5446/1/70a, 36–39 (art. 4186). Kolkhozy would deliver 220,000 tons, collective farmers 365,000 tons and individual peasants 415,000 tons.

⁶⁵ Nifontov (1937), 81, states that collections were mainly in the form of butter in the agricultural years 1926/27 to 1931/32, but a small milk ration was issued in 1930–32, mainly to children.

As with the livestock collections, the amount varied by region and by type of owner. Those in Group I of the four geographical groups, including the Northern region, West Siberia, the Urals and Ivanovo region, had to deliver twice to three times as much as those in Group IV, which included Crimea and the settled districts of Central Asia. In Group I, individual households were required to deliver 280 litres per cow, collective farmers in kolkhozy without dairy units 220 litres, and those in kolkhozy with dairy units 180 litres. Kolkhozy were required to deliver between twice and seven times as much milk per cow from the socialised livestock: thus, in geographical Group I the amount was as much as 580 litres. At this time the average annual milk yield per cow was less than 1,000 kilograms (that is, about 970 litres). The delivery was made in the form of milk, except in districts where there were no butter or cheese factories. The decree included an important concession: the butter factories were required to return 50 per cent of the weight of the milk collected to the kolkhozy from 'the by-products from the manufacture of butter' to the kolkhozy, and 35 per cent to the collective farmers and individual peasants.⁶⁶ The 1933 collections, measured in terms of butter, were fixed at 110,000 tons, 85,000 tons of which was to come from the peasant sector, and 25,000 tons from the sovkhozy.⁶⁷ A further Sovnarkom decree indicated the greater extent to which the Soviet authorities were willing to use the market to encourage the sale of livestock and its products. Industrial cooperatives were encouraged to collect additional hides and wool, and were allocated specific areas for this purpose. They were urged to call at households, buy up at bazaars and kolkhoz stalls, offering industrial consumer goods 'not in deficit supply' in exchange, as well as market prices.⁶⁸

The effort to expand the personal ownership of livestock continued throughout 1933. Stalin, in his speech at the First Congress of Kolkhoz Shock Workers (see p. 208) made one of his rare references to livestock. In the section of his speech on 'women and women

⁶⁶ The decree is SZ, 1932, art. 500, and includes many further details of the system. For the average milk yield in the years 1926/27 to 1935, see Nifontov (1937), 52: in 1928/29 it was 1,000 kilograms, and by 1931/32 had fallen to 950.

⁶⁷ RGASPI, 17/3/909, 5 (item 15, dated December 1). As in the case of livestock, the collection plan from the peasant sector was not published. The sovkhoz plan was announced in the decree of November 19 as 30,100 tons (SZ, 1932, art. 500), and then revised on December 1 to 25,000 tons. On March 16, 1933, the arrangements for the collection of wool were similarly reformed (SZ, 1933, art. 127).

⁶⁸ SZ, 1933, art. 146, dated March 29, 1933.

collective farmers', insisting that 'the question of women is a major question', and that 'women are a major force' and must be promoted, he continued:

The Soviet government did of course have a small misunderstanding with women collective farmers in the recent past. But the question of the cow is now sorted out, and the misunderstanding has vanished. (*Prolonged applause.*) We have achieved the situation that most collective farmers have a cow in each household. After a year – or a couple of years – you will not find a single collective farmer who does not have his own cow. We Bolsheviks will try to ensure that all our collective farmers have a cow. (*Prolonged applause.*)⁶⁹

On June 20, 1933, Sovnarkom approved a decision of Narkomzem about the agricultural communes, where, traditionally, all livestock was owned in common. This stipulated that 'in view of the demands from members,' every member had the right to hold a cow, small animals and poultry in their individual economy, and must be assisted in this by the kolkhoz board, and by the soviet organisations. All commune members possessing animals must receive fodder as part of their payment for labour days.⁷⁰ How far members of the small number of communes did wish to move towards the artel form of kolkhoz is uncertain. A year or two later, in a remarkable demonstration of the urge of the state towards conformity, most communes were cajoled and compelled to apply to be reclassified as artels.⁷¹

The annual livestock count on July 1, 1933, showed that, in spite of the famine, the ownership of livestock by collective farmers had increased substantially compared with the previous year. Since July 1, 1932, the number of cows held by collective farmers had increased by 860,000, the number of sheep by 1,712,000 and the number of pigs by 812,000. This increase was partly at the expense of the socialised livestock: the number of cows and pigs held by kolkhozy somewhat declined. But the largest decline was in the livestock held by individual non-collectivised peasants – a further step towards their eventual extinction. (See Table 2(a).)⁷²

⁶⁹ Stalin, *Soch.*, xiii, 251–2 (February 19, 1933).

⁷⁰ SZ, 1933, art. 233. The Narkomzem decision was approved on June 15.

⁷¹ This development will be dealt with in vol. 6.

⁷² This evidence is contradicted by the results of a survey of 12,707 kolkhozy in 1932 and 1933, which was presumably unrepresentative. This purported to show that the

In 1932 and 1933, the authorities again made strenuous efforts to overcome the fodder shortage. Following the livestock census of February 1932, Gaister, in a memorandum to Kuibyshev, emphasised the chronic shortage of fodder, and proposed various measures to rectify the situation. The Red Army should be employed to collect hay which would otherwise be abandoned; collective farmers should be paid in hay as well as money for hay-making; special plenipotentiaries should be despatched to supervise hay cutting and the preparation of silage.⁷³ But in famine conditions these proposals were largely ineffective. In 1932 and 1933, the amount of fodder available was less than in 1931, and the amount of silage produced declined. The situation was ameliorated only by the fact that fewer animals needed to be fed.

Following Stalin's statement about the personal ownership of cows, a decree of August 14, 1933, announced that collective farmers were to be enabled to purchase one million calves at low 'convention' prices – 228,000 from kolkhozy, and 772,000 from other collective farmers and from individual peasants. In return, the livestock deliveries due from the sellers were to be reduced.⁷⁴ A few months later, another decree added a further 500,000 calves for regions where a particularly larger number of households did not possess cows, and allocated 15 million roubles to be issued to collective farmers as an interest-free loan, 'if required'.⁷⁵ These decrees were acclaimed by the émigré Menshevik journal as '*a very substantial step*', 'a kind of kolkhoz Nep', which meant that the Soviet leaders recognised that private-property instincts had not been transformed.⁷⁶

These measures did not result in an immediate substantial increase in the number of cows owned by collective farmers, which rose by only 144,000 between July 1, 1933 and July 1, 1934. But the number of cattle as a whole, including calves and heifers, increased by 2,336,000 to a total of over 17 million. The summary kolkhoz reports for 1934, covering 13.7 million households, showed that 8.0 million owned cows (58.3 per cent), 1.9 million owned calves, and 3.9 million (28.1 per cent) did not own any cattle. The percentage of

percentage of households owning cows and sheep declined slightly between 1932 and 1933 (RGAE, 1562/77/70, 67–68, which also gives a breakdown by regions).

⁷³ GARF, 5446/27/11, 62–58 (dated August 1932).

⁷⁴ SZ, 1933, art. 303 (decree of Sovnarkom and central committee).

⁷⁵ SZ, 1933, art. 395 (decree of Sovnarkom and central committee).

⁷⁶ SV (Paris), 16–17, 1933 (A. Yugov).

households owning pigs or sheep was much smaller.⁷⁷ The percentage of households owning cows had thus increased substantially compared with 1932 (see Table 2(a)). These developments appeared to indicate that the goal of a cow in every household could soon be achieved. But by the eve of the war less than two-thirds of kolkhoz households owned their own cow, and the percentage was even lower in the 1960s.⁷⁸

The most satisfactory aspect of the July 1, 1934, count was that for the first time since 1928 the number of all types of animals (except horses) had increased substantially (see Table 2(a)). The new policies of the spring of 1932 were bearing fruit. The results of the livestock and dairy collections were, however, ambiguous in the calendar year 1933. While the collection of milk and dairy products increased substantially, the collection of livestock in terms of live weight, though it reached over 90 per cent of the plan, was still lower than in the previous year. It was not until 1934 that livestock collections began to increase, but, even including the decentralised collections, they were still lower than in 1931. (See Table 16.)

(C) THE KAZAKH CATASTROPHE

Between 1928 and 1933 the number of livestock in Kazakhstan declined far more rapidly than in the rest of the USSR. According to TsUNKhU estimates, by July 1930 the number of cattle had already declined by a third, and the number of sheep and goats by nearly 40 per cent. The decline continued during the next three years – by July 1933 the numbers of horses had declined by 87 per cent, cattle by 77 per cent, and sheep and goats by as much as 89 per cent.⁷⁹ And between 1930 and 1933 the number of camels fell, from 1,057,000 to a mere 73,000. At the end of 1933, a report from the Kazakh MTS to the central authorities stated bluntly that ‘the picture is plainly catastrophic’.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ RGAE, 7486/3/4988, 65–70. 3.8 million households owned sheep or goats, 4.2 million owned pigs, and 2.5 million owned neither sheep nor pigs.

⁷⁸ By January 1, 1941, when there were 19 million kolkhoz households, collective farmers owned 12.7 million cows, 31.6 million sheep and goats, and 8.6 million pigs. By 1970, 14.4 million households owned 8.6 million cows (*Sel. khoz.* (1971), 246–8, 488–9).

⁷⁹ *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 517.

⁸⁰ Published in TSD, iii, 687–91.

The decline in livestock affected the nomadic and semi-nomadic Kazakhs in particular, as they raised livestock in the semi-desert central regions of the republic. The collapse of livestock farming was accompanied by the devastation of the Kazakh way of life.

Five inter-related factors were responsible for the catastrophe, in which all the negative features of the livestock policy pursued in the rest of the Soviet Union were intensified.

First, collectivisation and dekulakisation clashed even more harshly with the traditional Kazakh way of life than with peasant agriculture elsewhere in the USSR. In 1928 a kind of dekulakisation was initiated, with the dispossession of a small number of leading households (the *bai*) in the vain hope of winning over the Kazakh population as a whole (see vol. 1, pp. 140–1, 409). In the course of 1931, the percentage of households collectivised increased, from 37 per cent to 58 per cent, and reached 73 per cent on June 1, 1932, higher than in the USSR as a whole.⁸¹ The number of households dekulakised amounted to 5,500, or over 5 per cent of the total number of households at the beginning of the year.

Secondly, collectivisation was accompanied by a sustained attempt to settle the Kazakh population. On June 30, 1931, the regional party committee called for the establishment of permanent 'livestock and farming artels' except in very backward districts.⁸² Six months later, on December 25, a joint decree of the regional committee and Sovnarkom declared that the whole Kazakh population should be settled by the end of 1933 in European-type settlements, each including 500 households.⁸³ But in August 1932 the chair of the Kazakh Sovnarkom informed Stalin bluntly that 'the administrative transformation of semi-desert livestock districts into "agricultural" districts has had a ruinous effect on livestock farming'.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, in the following month, the Politburo claimed that 200,000 households had already been settled, and that the area sown by Kazakhs had increased from 31 per cent to 50 per cent of the total area sown in Kazakhstan.⁸⁵ But Ryskulov, a deputy chair of

⁸¹ According to Kazakh figures, the percentage increased from 32 on January 1 to 69 on December 1, 1931 (*Nasil'stvennaya* (Almaty, 1998), 184).

⁸² Reported in GARF, 5446/27/23, 250ob. (Ryskulov memorandum dated March 9, 1933).

⁸³ Reported in RGASPI, 82/2/670, 11–14ob. (Ryskulov memorandum dated October 6, 1932).

⁸⁴ *Nasil'stvennaya* (Almaty, 1998), 155.

⁸⁵ RGASPI, 17/162/13, 116–117 (dated September 17); for this decision see p. 324.

Sovnarkom of the RSFSR with special responsibility for Kazakh affairs, insisted in a memorandum to Stalin that only 50,000 households had been settled, and that these were mainly households which were settled, already; according to Ryskulov, the whole settlement process displayed 'ignorance of the interests of livestock in districts which were mainly livestock districts'.⁸⁶

Thirdly, collectivisation and compulsory resettlement were accompanied by the compulsory socialisation of livestock. Tataev, head of the labour and income department of Narkomzem, reported in a memorandum to Yakovlev that in his visit to the Karaganda and East Kazakhstan regions of Kazakhstan, 'I everywhere came across the complete socialisation of productive and small animals (cows, sheep and calves)', and even of hens, which promptly perished:

Not a single household where I visited had a cow, a heifer or even a calf, or pigs, etc. ... Collective farm men and women told me: 'They ordered that all cows should be driven into the kolkhozy, and we drove them in.' There was nothing voluntary about the socialisation of animals.⁸⁷

Fourthly, the livestock areas had traditionally been supplied with grain from the largely Russian grain-growing areas of Kazakhstan. The high state collection of grain from Kazakhstan damaged the livestock sector still further, especially when, in spite of the poor harvest of 1931, the collections were pursued with great ruthlessness. On November 26, 1931, the Politburo authorised the Kazakh procurator, for the period of the collections, to impose the death penalty without reference to the People's Commissar of Justice of the RSFSR.⁸⁸ By the spring of 1932, secret reports already described large numbers of deaths from famine (see p. 408). In a memorandum to Stalin prepared in August 1932, Isaev, chair of the Kazakh Sovnarkom and a native of Kazakhstan, summed up the results of the 1931/32 grain collections: 'the disorganised supply of bread to the livestock producers, together with the complete seizure of marketed grain by the state collections in the neighbouring agricultural

⁸⁶ For this memorandum see note 83.

⁸⁷ RGAE, 7486/37/202, 44-50 (dated September 1932), published in TSD, iii, 484-7.

⁸⁸ RGASPI, 17/162/11, 73.

districts, resulted in a further increase in the consumption of meat by the livestock farmers themselves'.⁸⁹

Following the 1932 harvest, the situation deteriorated still further under the impact of the grain collections, and deaths from famine continued.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, on November 27, Stalin sent a telegram to the Kazakh authorities complaining that grain collections in Kazakhstan had 'ceased in practice in spite of the fact that the collection plan has been reduced to the maximum', and insisting that the Kazakh authorities 'must go over to repression', particularly of reluctant communists.⁹¹

Fifthly, the central authorities continued to impose livestock collections on Kazakhstan, reducing the number of livestock still further. In the prevailing chaos and hunger, these collections were extremely inefficient. According to Ryskulov, between February 1931 and the cattle census of February 1932, the number of animals of all kinds declined by 4.14 million, but only 1.5 million were delivered to the collection agencies – the rest were eaten by hungry peasants or simply perished.⁹²

The central authorities in Moscow were slow to react to the Kazakh catastrophe. In August 1932, Isaev, in his letter to Stalin, condemned 'the administrative transformation of semi-desert livestock districts into "agricultural" districts' and 'the compulsory socialisation of all animals', and proposed that the party central committee should hear a report about Kazakhstan. It was not until September 17, when the number of cattle had fallen to less than a quarter of the 1928 level, that Stalin, Kuibyshev and Goloshchekin presented to the Politburo (by poll) a resolution, 'On Agriculture and in particular on the Livestock of Kazakhstan'. In some respects this proposed a major reform. It announced that, in the Kazakh districts, the *artel* form of the *kolkhoz* should be replaced by the simpler *TOZ* (*tovarishchestvo po sovместnoi obrabotke zemli*), and that each Kazakh household in livestock districts should be permitted to own 8–10 cattle, up to 100 sheep, and 3–5 camels. But the resolution also claimed that the policy of 'gradual' settlement of the Kazakh population in European-type settlements was correct.⁹³ It accordingly

⁸⁹ *Nasil'stvennaya* (Almaty, 1998), 155.

⁹⁰ See TSD, iii, 525–8; a further report, dated December 7, is published in *ibid.*, 564–6.

⁹¹ RGASPI, 558/11/45, 45, published in TSD, iii, 548–9.

⁹² For his report, see note 83 above.

⁹³ RGASPI, 17/162/13, 113–117.

invoked the wrath of Ryskulov, whose 'memorandum-report' to Stalin dated October 6, 1932, proposed more far-reaching reforms.⁹⁴

Further changes soon took place. In his letter of August 1932, Isaev commented 'I personally think that comrade Goloshchekin ... will not have the necessary strength for a decisive turn-round.'⁹⁵ The Politburo eventually agreed. On January 21, 1933, it 'approved the request' of Goloshchekin to relinquish his post, and replaced him with Mirzoyan.⁹⁶ Goloshchekin and the other party leaders in Kazakhstan were held responsible: 'Throughout 1930, 1931 and 1932', Goloshchekin's successor declared at the XVII party congress, 'the Kazakh party organisation committed a number of the crudest political mistakes in the management of agriculture, particularly livestock.'⁹⁷ These strictures were an exaggeration. Goloshchekin struggled hard to reduce the impossibly high grain collection plans imposed on his republic: he was the only regional party secretary to have objected to the grain plan at a plenum of the party central committee after it had already been approved by Stalin (see p. 91). On the other hand, Goloshchekin himself acknowledged, when objecting to the recriminations against him, that the regional officials had failed to defeat 'leftist distortions and arbitrariness in the districts', and that 'we also made mistakes in resettlement, forcing it through without an adequate material and organisational base'.⁹⁸ Goloshchekin was appointed Chief Arbitrator of the USSR, and (perhaps on the pretext of his office) he was not re-elected to the central committee at the XVII party congress.⁹⁹

Mirzoyan pressed vigorously for the alleviation of the Kazakh situation, for reforms in the structure of Kazakh agriculture, and – at a time when nationalist deviations were being stamped out in Ukraine and elsewhere (see pp. 190–1) – strongly encouraged Kazakh culture and language. In a memorandum to Stalin and Kaganovich dated July 30, 1933, he complained that 'documents in the Kazakh village

⁹⁴ RGASPI, 82/2/670, 11–14ob., published in TSD, iii, 503–9. Another copy of the letter is published in *Nasil'stvennaya* (Almaty, 1998), 183–93, dated September 29.

⁹⁵ *Nasil'stvennaya* (Almaty, 1998), 162.

⁹⁶ RGASPI, 17/3/914, 9.

⁹⁷ *XVII s"ezd* (1934), 89 (Mirzoyan).

⁹⁸ Appeal to Stalin and Kaganovich dated August 4, 1933, published in *Sovetskoe rukovodstvo* (1999), 248. For his second protest letter, dated September 20, 1933, and addressed to Kaganovich, see *ibid.*, 258–9. See also Rees, ed. (2002), 78 (Rees).

⁹⁹ See *XVII s"ezd* (1934), 680–1.

soviets [auls] and districts are written in Russian, and the posts and telegraphs will not accept correspondence in the Kazakh language'.¹⁰⁰ He was supported by Ryskulov, who in a further memorandum to Stalin dated March 9, 1933, presented a very bleak picture of the famine in Kazakhstan and condemned the deviations in national policy.¹⁰¹ Throughout 1933, numerous concessions were made to Kazakhstan, including a considerable reduction in the grain plan, and the artels in the Kazakh districts were duly transformed into TOZy.¹⁰² In July 1934, the livestock count already reported a modest improvement in Kazakhstan, as elsewhere in the USSR.¹⁰³

(D) THE OUTCOME

In the four years from the summer of 1929 to the summer of 1933 the livestock sector collapsed. By 1933, there were only half as many cattle and pigs and a mere one-third as many sheep as in 1928. This decline was unprecedented. The cattle and sheep population fell much more precipitately than in either of the First or Second World Wars, and did not recover to the 1914 level until about 1958. Only pigs – quicker to rear and easier to kill – did slightly better.

Percentage decline in the number of livestock in the First World War and civil war, collectivisation and the Second World War

	<i>Horses</i>	<i>Cattle</i>	<i>Sheep</i>	<i>Pigs</i>
1914–23	39.5	35.6	41.8	55.2
1928–33	50.4	45.2	65.8	53.5
1941–46	51.8	13.1	26.9	61.6

The only exception was the fishing industry, where the production of raw fish increased from 864,000 tons in 1928 to 1,426,000 tons in 1931, entirely as a result of the expansion of the 'centralised' fisheries; this took place mainly in the North Caspian, Azov-Black Sea

¹⁰⁰ *Levon Mirzoyan* (Almaty, 2001), 46–50.

¹⁰¹ GARE, 5446/27/23, 245–253, published in *Sovetskoe rukovodstvo* (1999), 204–25.

¹⁰² For details, see *Nasil'stvennaya* (Almaty, 1998), 220–3, 226–8, 228–32, and the Politburo and Sovnarkom decisions of April 9, 15, and 23 (RGASPI, 17/162/14, 119; GARE, 5446/502/23 – art. 736/139s, and 5446/502/24 – art. 812/157s). See also *Otechestvennaya istoriya*, 3, 1993, 50–1 (Zelenin).

¹⁰³ See *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 517.

and Eastern fisheries.¹⁰⁴ However, even here production declined in 1932 and 1933, and did not return to a figure above the 1931 level until 1934.¹⁰⁵

These were years of a continuous decline, not only in numbers of animals, but also in the average weight of the animals provided for the state collections:

Average weight of grown animals slaughtered for
the state collections (kilograms)¹⁰⁶

	1927/28	1932	1933
Cattle	335	223	231
Sheep and goats	41	32	29
Pigs	111	55	56

The weight of pigs killed by the collective farmers for home consumption in 1932 was reported to have been 50 per cent greater than those slaughtered for the collections, whereas in 1927/28 the weight of pigs sold on the market, before state collections were effective, was 25–30 per cent higher than the weight of those slaughtered for home consumption. The same tendency probably applied to other animals.¹⁰⁷

Another indication of the deterioration in the quality of livestock was the decline in carcass weight as a proportion of live weight. In the case of cattle, the proportion was 52 per cent in 1928/29, but in 1930/31–1933/34 it had fallen to 44–46 per cent.¹⁰⁸

Livestock statistics were not published in the Soviet press in 1932 and 1933. At the XVII party congress in January 1934, Stalin acknowledged for the first time the extent of the crisis; his report included a table showing that ‘in the number of head of cattle in the period reported [1930–34] we do not have a growth but a still continuing decline in comparison with the pre-war level’. He attributed the decline to the ‘very high level of saturation of the livestock branches of farming with large-scale kulak elements, and the intensive

¹⁰⁴ See RGAE, 4372/30/881, 113 (report on the first five-year plan dated August 1932).

¹⁰⁵ *Promyshlennost'* (1957), 381: 1,333,000 tons in 1932, 1,303,000 tons in 1933 and 1,547,000 tons in 1934. Production stagnated in the rest of the 1930s, and only amounted to 1,404,000 tons in 1940.

¹⁰⁶ Nifontov (1937), 31.

¹⁰⁷ Nifontov (1937), 31.

¹⁰⁸ Estimated from data in Nifontov (1937), 81.

kulak agitation for the slaughter of livestock'. He also complained that agricultural agencies, instead of treating livestock as a priority issue, 'sometimes in their reports even try to conceal the real position with livestock from public opinion in the country, which is impermissible for Bolsheviks'.¹⁰⁹ Our account has shown that the pressure for collections by the state and compulsory socialisation were both major factors leading to the slaughter of animals and the high level of deaths from poor maintenance and disease. In the case of cattle and pigs, the shortage of fodder concentrates, in which grain was an essential ingredient, was an further important factor.

There was an initial increase in the state collections of livestock products in 1929, and a temporary increase in 1931. However, following the decline in the number of livestock, in spite of all the pressures from the state, the collections sharply declined. In 1932, 1933 and 1934, they were less than half the 1929 level (see Table 16). Moreover, they did not markedly increase as a proportion of gross production, amounting to 24.8 per cent in 1928/29, 20.8 per cent in 1932/33, and 27.6 per cent in 1933/34.¹¹⁰

With other livestock products – including wool and hides, and milk and dairy products – pressure from the state succeeded in increasing the amount collected as a proportion of the declining gross production, and the amount retained by the peasants for their own consumption, and for sale on the market, declined sharply. Thus, between 1928 and 1933, the amount of wool collected declined only slightly, from 41,000 to 38,300 tons, even though gross production fell from 178,000 to 62,000 tons. The collection of milk increased from 6.8 per cent of gross production in 1928/29 to 18.6 per cent in 1933/34.¹¹¹

Grain was always the agricultural commodity round which state policy revolved, and the traditional grain-surplus regions (the Volga, North Caucasus, Siberia and Ukraine) were the first to be subject not only to collectivisation and dekulakisation but also to the hasty socialisation of livestock. Moreover, the pressure on them to expand the area sown to grain in years of poor harvests resulted in a shortage of natural fodder as well as a particularly acute shortage of

¹⁰⁹ Stalin, *Soch.*, xiii, 321–2, 329–30.

¹¹⁰ Estimated from data in Nifontov (1937), 69, 81. The original data are in terms of carcass weight.

¹¹¹ For gross production of livestock products, see Nifontov (1937), 69, 74, 76; for state collections, see Table 16.

concentrated fodder. Between 1928 and 1932 the number of cattle in these regions halved, while in the traditional grain-deficit regions, and in the Transcaucasus, it declined by only about one quarter. The percentage of cattle located in the grain-surplus regions declined between 1928 and 1933 from 43.9 to 39.0 per cent (see Table 3).

The effect of these developments on the livestock collections, for which the grain-surplus regions, together with Kazakhstan, were primarily responsible, was even more marked. According to a report on the results of the five-year plan preserved in the archives, the share of 'the grain-surplus belt of the European USSR' in the collections declined from 67.5 per cent in 1928 to 58.5 per cent in 1930, 47.7 per cent in 1931 and 50 per cent in 1932, while the share of the grain-deficit regions increased from 9.4 to 16.9 per cent.¹¹²

With milk and dairy products, the most important change was the decline in the dominant position of Siberia, the traditional butter-producing region, where state collections (measured in terms of butter) declined from 43.7 per cent of the USSR total in 1928 to 29.2 per cent in 1931, while the proportion collected in the Lower Volga, the North Caucasus and the Transcaucasus increased.¹¹³

The effort to strengthen the socialised sector of livestock was a permanent feature of Soviet policy. Even after the retreat in the spring of 1932, the authorities gave priority to sovkhoz livestock, and continued to support the kolkhoz livestock and dairy units. Significantly, in his only recorded intervention at a conference on the livestock collections in October 1932, Stalin emphasised not the peasant ownership of livestock but the need to enhance livestock in the sovkhozy.¹¹⁴ Socialisation was the long-term goal of the regime; but the attention devoted to it in these stormy years was primarily a result of the belief that socialised livestock would provide a higher proportion of its output to the state collections than the livestock of collective farmers and individual peasants. The share of socialised cattle in the USSR total increased inexorably: it was a mere 8.2 per cent in 1930, increased to 22.5 per cent in 1931, and to 33.6 per cent in 1932. In spite of the new policy, it declined only

¹¹² RGAE, 4372/30/881, 82 (dated August 4, 1932). The figures for 1932 are preliminary, but must be close to the final outcome. We have not traced a regional distribution for 1933.

¹¹³ RGAE, 4372/30/881, 92. Regional data for later years have not been traced.

¹¹⁴ RGASPI, 17/165/25, 108 (conference under auspices of party central committee, October 27, 1932).

slightly to 31.6 per cent in 1933, and returned to the 1932 proportion in 1934.¹¹⁵ The position was similar with other animals.

The wager that socialised livestock would provide a sound basis for the state collections proved justified. In 1933, the livestock of sovkhozy and kolkhozy provided a higher percentage of their output for distribution off-farm than collective farmers and individual peasants, as well as providing a higher proportion of their output to the state collections than in the case of the collective farmers. The socialised sector also provided a greater proportion of its output of milk and dairy products than the individually-owned sector. In 1933, 23.7 per cent of the cows were socialised, and they provided 23.4 per cent of the gross production of milk and dairy products (measured in terms of milk). But they provided 42.3 per cent of off-farm production and 50 per cent of the collections.¹¹⁶

Individual peasants were an exception to this pattern. As a result of the discrimination exercised against them both in taxation and in the collections, their share of the collections was higher than their share of gross production. The discrimination against individual peasants resulted in many of them discarding their livestock, and often moving out of the countryside altogether. At the XVII party congress in February 1934, Yakovlev pointed out that, in 1933, 'the growth of the number of livestock owned by collective farmers, for all forms of livestock except pigs, did not compensate for the continuing huge loss of animals held by individual peasants'. He called for 'especially vigilant supervision' of this livestock, the further decline of which 'may reduce to nothing' the successful development of the livestock of kolkhozy and collective farmers.¹¹⁷

The Achilles' heel of all these arrangements was, of course, the decline in the number and quality of all types of livestock. In 1930, 1931 and 1932, state pressure in all regions and on all sectors of the livestock economy resulted in a declining absolute amount of meat; and the amount of livestock collected by the state remained below the 1929 level even on the eve of the Second World War.¹¹⁸ By 1934, however, the new policies had begun to reverse the decline in the

¹¹⁵ Calculated from data in Table 2(a).

¹¹⁶ For gross and off-farm (tovarnoe) production, see RGAE, 1562/3/378, 27 (n.d. [?1935]); for collections by sector see RGAE, 8040/3/24, 53 (n.d. [?1937]); for cows, see Table 2(a).

¹¹⁷ *XVII s"ezd* (1934), 156-7.

¹¹⁸ See Table 2(a); and, for 1940, *Sel. khoz.* (1971), 76.

number of livestock. At the XVII party congress, Stalin noted that 'in pig breeding a reverse process has already begun', and predicted that this meant that '1934 must and can be a breakthrough year to the growth of the whole livestock economy'.¹¹⁹ The policy of encouraging the livestock of collective farmers was not mentioned by Stalin, and had undoubtedly played a major part in this reversal. But the decline of the livestock held by individual peasants continued unabated.

¹¹⁹ *Soch.*, xiii, 322.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE SOVKHOZY

In July 1928, after much controversy, the plenum of the party central committee decided that large, mechanised sovkhozy must form a major element in the transformation of agriculture. Specialised grain sovkhozy, managed by the grain trust Zernotrest, were given top priority.¹ In 1930, spring sowing by the grain sovkhozy was reasonably successful. After the harvest they provided a useful 475,000 tons to the state.² The XVI party congress, which convened in June–July 1930, envisaged a major expansion of the sovkhoz programme. In his report to the congress, Stalin proclaimed that, by 1931, all the sovkhozy taken together would produce over 7 million tons of grain. The new sovkhozy alone would provide the state with 200 million puds (3.3 million tons). By the end of the first five-year plan (then assumed to be 1932/33) the sovkhoz area sown to grain would be as much as 20–25 million hectares, ‘more than in the whole of Canada’.³ This was a very substantial figure: the total area sown to grain in the USSR in 1930 was some 95 million hectares.

A month after the party congress, a Sovnarkom decree provided for the establishment of several hundred additional sovkhozy specialising in pig, cattle and sheep breeding. These specialised livestock sovkhozy would be launched by transferring to them large numbers of animals delivered to the state by kolkhozy and individual peasants.⁴

By the spring of 1931, the total number of sovkhozy in the USSR, both old and new, amounted to 5,383, compared with 3,125 in the spring of 1928.⁵ Most of these sovkhozy, in both years, were relatively small enterprises, often established as auxiliary farms in the

¹ See Carr and Davies (1969), 186–91.

² See vol. 1, pp. 339–40 and Table 31 in this volume. The total grain supplied by all sovkhozy to the state amounted to 1.27 million tons, compared with only 0.39 million in the previous year (see vol. 1, p. 428).

³ *XVI s"ezd* (1931), 585.

⁴ SZ, 1930, art. 442 (dated August 11). On December 20, a STO decree ordered the urgent supply to the livestock sovkhozy of building materials, fodder and labour, and the provision of adequate drinking water, so that the animals would survive during the winter months (SZ, 1931, art. 15).

⁵ *Sel. kh.* 1935 (1936), 715, 728.

retail cooperatives (the so-called *koopkhozy*). The bulk of resources was concentrated in the 143 specialised grain *sovkhozy*. By the beginning of 1931 they had been allocated more than half the total stock of tractors in *kolkhozy*, and all of the small supply of combine harvesters. The pride of the *sovkhoz* system was the 'Gigant' *sovkhoz* in the North Caucasus, which alone sowed 113,000 hectares in 1930 and was praised by Gerchikov, the director of Zernotrest, as having 'the largest harvested area in the world'.⁶

The VI congress of soviets, which assembled in March 1931, approved a resolution, 'On *Sovkhoz* Construction', which announced that by 1933 the area sown by *sovkhozy* would reach 19 million hectares (a slight reduction of the plan proposed in 1930) and they would supply 6.5 million tons of grain to the state. This plan also specified large increases in the number of animals held by the *sovkhozy*, and the meat, milk and industrial crops to be supplied to the state (see Table 30).⁷

In the effort to achieve this programme, the area sown by *sovkhozy* greatly increased, rising from 3.9 million hectares in 1930 to 11 million in 1931, and to 14.1 million in 1933. Throughout these years, 70 per cent or more of the total sown area was sown to grain. According to the official record, grain production increased substantially, and by 1932 reached 250 per cent of the 1930 level (see Table 30). But this increase was far less than planned, because the yield declined from 8.9 to 7.2 *tsentners* per hectare.⁸

Much of this increase was evidently used to feed the vastly increased number of employees on the various types of *sovkhozy*, and to provide fodder for their animals. The plans provided for a huge increase in the grain available from the large grain *sovkhozy*, nearly all of which was intended to be delivered to the state. But, in fact, the grain produced by these *sovkhozy* increased between 1930 and 1932 by only 76 per cent – from 773,000 to 1,361,000 tons – and the yield declined dramatically, from 6.7 to 3.8 *tsentners* per hectare. The increase in production on the grain *sovkhozy* took place almost entirely in the single year 1931.⁹

⁶ *XVI s"ezd* (1931), 613.

⁷ *Direktivy*, ii (1957), 251–5.

⁸ The high figure for production and yield of grain in 1933 is particularly not comparable with those of earlier years (see Appendix).

⁹ See Bogdenko (1958), 175, 247 and Table 31.

As a consequence of these developments the grain supplied to the state by the sovkhozy as a whole increased by only 55 per cent between 1930 and 1933, far more slowly than the stated grain output of the sovkhozy. The plans approved in 1930 and 1931 had failed utterly. In 1933, only 2.1 million tons of grain were supplied to the state by all the sovkhozy, compared with the planned 6.5 million tons.

These failures occurred in spite of the huge resources supplied to the sovkhozy. At the beginning of 1931 they held 48 per cent of all tractors in the USSR in terms of horse-power. In the next three years they continued to receive a substantial supply of the vastly increased numbers of tractors, and on January 1, 1934, they still held 44 per cent of all tractor horse-power in the USSR (see Table 13).¹⁰ They received an even higher share of the combine harvesters: on January 1, 1934, they held 56 per cent of the USSR total.¹¹

Investment in tractors, combine harvesters and other agricultural machinery and implements amounted to about a quarter of all investment in sovkhozy.¹² The other major items included the purchase and growth of livestock, the construction of farm buildings, and the provision of housing.¹³ In total, investment in sovkhozy amounted to 52.5 per cent of all investment in the socialised sector of agriculture in 1931, declining to 37.5 per cent in 1933 (see Table 11). The investment in sovkhozy was equal to the total investment in the fuel and power industries in 1931–33, and nearly three times as large as investment in the armaments industries during the arms drive of 1932.¹⁴

Although they were responsible for only a small share of agricultural production, the sovkhozy placed a heavier burden on agriculture than that of the kolkhozy. Virtually the whole of sovkhoz investment was paid for by the state budget. In contrast, the kolkhozy were

¹⁰ The net addition to tractor horse-power in the sovkhozy amounted to 48.3 per cent of all h.p. in 1931, 40.2 per cent in 1932, and 35.8 per cent in 1933 (estimated from data in Table 13).

¹¹ The net addition to the sovkhozy amounted to 97.8 per cent in 1931, and 72.2 per cent in 1932. In 1933, the MTS were given priority, and the sovkhozy received only 15.7 per cent of the net addition (estimated from data in Table 11).

¹² *Sots. str. 1935* (1936), 288. These investment figures and those in Table 11 are in current prices, which somewhat underestimate the relative value of machinery.

¹³ In 1931, for example, the division was as follows (in percentages of the total): machinery and implements 22.5; animals and poultry 25.6; farm buildings 18.0; housing and some other items 12.9 (*Sots. str. 1935* (1936), 288).

¹⁴ For investment in these sectors, see vol. 4, tables 2 and 3 (pp. 506–10).

responsible for the cost of nearly all of their own investment. Even in the case of the state-owned MTS, while most of the cost of tractors and other machinery was borne by the state budget, part of it was defrayed by the shares of Traktorotsentr, purchased by the kolkhozy.¹⁵ In the three years 1931–33, taken together, investment by the sovkhozy amounted to 46.0 per cent of all investment in the socialised sector of agriculture, and as much as 75.8 per cent of the expenditure of the Union budget on agriculture was allocated to the sovkhozy.¹⁶

The sovkhozy also received substantial subsidies from the state to cover their current costs. Manual and white-collar workers in sovkhozy all received a regular money wage. The sovkhozy transferred their production to the state at low fixed prices, and so always worked at a loss. The gap between the earnings and costs of the sovkhozy was covered by the state. In sharp contrast, collective farmers received payments in kind and money which depended on the earnings of the kolkhoz. The collective farmer, not the state, bore the burden of balancing the kolkhoz accounts.

The gap between costs and earnings in the sovkhozy was very large. In theory, the sovkhozy, working on American lines, were supposed to be capital-intensive, employing only a small number of workers. Wage costs would be low. In 1930, Gerchikov denounced 'all the chatter about costs and the unprofitability of large farms', and claimed that the Gigant sovkhoz, and a number of others, were already producing grain at a profit, for 49 rubles a ton.¹⁷ In fact, grain grown by the grain sovkhozy cost 84 rubles a ton in 1930, and this increased to 230 rubles a ton in 1932.¹⁸ The losses of Zernotrest alone amounted to 242 million rubles in 1931, and 307 million in 1932.¹⁹

A major reason for the high cost of sovkhoz production was that, for many agricultural processes, modern machinery was not available. Instead, the work had to be done manually, or with the use of simple implements and machines. Gerchikov reported to the first congress of workers of agricultural sovkhozy in June 1931 that even in the new grain sovkhozy the necessity of using simple harvesters rather

¹⁵ In 1932, 222 million rubles were received by Traktorotsentr in the form of these shares (*Otchet ... 1932* (1933), 183).

¹⁶ Estimated from data in *Otchet ... 1931* (1932), 188–9; *Otchet ... 1932* (1933), 181–7; and *Otchet ... 1933* (1934), 182–8.

¹⁷ *XVI s'ezd* (1931), 613. The state paid an average of 59 rubles a ton for rye and 80 rubles for wheat in 1930/31 (see Malafeev (1964), 393).

¹⁸ Bogdenko (1958), 181–2.

¹⁹ Zelenin (1982), 39.

than modern combine harvesters meant that huge numbers of temporary workers would be required to stack and thresh the grain.²⁰ In 1932, even though the number of combines had increased considerably, they harvested only 27 per cent of the grain in sovkhozy. And when grain *was* harvested by combines, lack of transport often meant that it was left in the open in 1½-ton piles and deteriorated rapidly – thus reducing the yield and increasing the unit cost.²¹

The sovkhozy specialising in livestock and industrial crops were much more labour-intensive than the grain sovkhozy. The total sovkhoz labour force expanded from 724,000 in 1930 to 1,411,000 in 1931, and to 2,208,000 in 1932.²² And in these years of inflation the money wage of sovkhoz workers, like that of other workers, increased rapidly.

Consistent figures on the size of the state subsidies have not been traced. They were provided through the State Bank and appeared only in part in the accounts of the state budget, which were careful not to reveal the total amount. In 1931, the bank allocated 1,001 million rubles to agriculture in addition to the 1,787 million provided to the state sector of agriculture by the Union budget.²³ In 1932 and 1933, however, at least part of the subsidies appeared as part of budgetary expenditure. With regard to Narkomsovkhozov, while the total Union budget allocation was approximately the same in both 1932 and 1933, the amount allocated to subsidies in 1933 increased greatly, and the amount allocated to investment declined.²⁴ Similar increases in subsidies undoubtedly took place in the other sovkhoz systems.

²⁰ SZe, June 2, 1931.

²¹ NAF, 3 (May–June), 1933, 16.

²² *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 715. Workers in sovkhozy were nominally divided into 'permanent', 'seasonal', and 'temporary'. But in the first stages the distinction was often blurred: many 'permanent' workers left at the end of the harvest season because they had no work and received no pay (see Bogdenko (1958), 118).

²³ *Otchet... 1931* (1932), 184–5.

²⁴ The amounts were as follows (million rubles):

	1932	1933
Capital investment	1000	543
Working capital, etc.	573	1004
Total	1573	1547

Sources: *Otchet... 1932* (1933), 181, 186; *Otchet... 1933* (1934), 186. For Narkomsovkhozov, see p. 345.

From the outset, almost all the agricultural specialists had criticised the sovkhos programme as utopian. Their objections were temporarily silenced by denouncing them as reactionary and Right-wing. At the XVI party congress, Stalin castigated 'bourgeois scribblers and their opportunist yes-men' who had asserted that the five-year plan for the sovkhosy could not be achieved in three years. Gerchikov proudly announced that 'the forecasts of the Right-wing professors ... and of the Right-wing deviation have been ground into dust' – they were 'a completely unjustified fantasy of so-called "scientists", who tried to drag our country backwards'.²⁵

To justify their ambitious programme, the Soviet authorities cited American experience, drawing on the support of the American farmer, Thomas D. Campbell, and his 30,000-hectare farm in Montana.²⁶ Campbell visited the USSR for three weeks in 1930, and wrote about the new sovkhosy with considerable enthusiasm:

I have raised wheat throughout my life, I have driven through grain fields in all portions of the American continent, but never before had I seen such fields of grain as I saw on that night ride across the Giant [Gigant] Farm ...

The machine shop on the Giant Farm is undoubtedly the best farm machine shop in the world.²⁷

His positive views were duly reported in the Soviet press.²⁸

But the farmers who managed large-scale American farms and the mechanics who worked in them were experienced in the use of modern machines; and the soil of the American farms was replenished by ample quantities of fertiliser. These conditions were absent in the USSR. Practically no one in the USSR had experience of mechanised farming. And on the grain sovkhosy, the absence of horses and other animals meant that natural fertiliser was not available, while Soviet industry produced only a trickle of chemical fertiliser.

²⁵ *XVI s'ezd* (1931), 31, 613; see also Carr and Davies (1969), 191.

²⁶ For his visit in 1928, see Carr and Davies (1969), 188–91.

²⁷ Campbell (1932), 96–105; he did, however, note that the staff were afraid to depart from their instructions for fear of being accused of sabotage. For his comments on the 'Verblyud' (camel) experimental sovkhos and the Simferopol and Kherson grain sovkhosy see *ibid.*, 114–16.

²⁸ See, for example, SZe, July 18, 1930. The American economist Knickerbocker, visiting Gigant in the autumn of 1930, was far more critical, and claimed the director gave him 'flagrantly inconsistent information' (Knickerbocker (1931), 108–11).

Activists at every level in the sovkhoz system were enthusiastic and hard-working; but this did not offset their lack of experience and common sense. In Moscow, the Soviet leaders plunged into the construction of the new grain sovkhozy with considerable naïveté. Yakovlev envisaged a spectacular increase in the average size of the grain sovkhozy: they must each have ‘*not tens of thousands but hundreds of thousands of hectares*’ – far more than the largest American farms. He offered a prescription for their organisation based on an extreme belief in monoculture:

Land consolidation must be extremely simple. *The whole territory must be divided by roads into sections to be sown. The roads must run from north to south and west to east. Each section between the roads must be the fundamental unit ... On the section there must be no additional buildings except for tents for the workers.*²⁹

The partial application of this scheme was a major factor in the disastrous performance over the next three years. The new grain sovkhozy generally planted wheat immediately following wheat, usually without a season of fallow. Even on virgin lands these practices soon resulted in a fall in yield. By 1932, the fields were overgrown with weeds. The combines harvested the grain only with great difficulty, and the harvested grain had to be sifted several times to remove the weeds.³⁰ In face of these difficulties, the amount of land ploughed in the autumn of 1932 ready for sowing in the spring was reduced drastically, and the spring seed had to be planted in the stubble.³¹

²⁹ *XVI s"ezd* (1931), 585. He acknowledged that much of the area sown would be semi-arid, so that yields would vary considerably from year to year, but proposed that this should be dealt with by sowing a larger area and establishing food and fodder stocks to use when there was a bad harvest.

³⁰ Zelenin (1982), 34–5, citing the archives.

³¹ Percentage of sown area previously ploughed:

	<i>Spring-sown grain ploughed previous autumn</i>	<i>Autumn-sown grain ploughed previous spring</i>
1930	80.4	62.2
1931	80.4	62.0
1932	70.8	50.4
1933	38.1	69.5

Source: *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 746.

Note: It will be observed that a recovery occurred only for the autumn sowings of 1933.

The livestock sovkhozy absorbed even larger investments than the grain sovkhozy. Within the Narkomsovkhozov system, the estimated increase in fixed capital in the livestock sovkhozy in the two years 1932–33 amounted to 715 million rubles, while the equivalent increase in the grain sovkhozy was only 301 million.³² Substantial expenditure was required, not only for the purchase of animals and machinery but also for the construction of farm buildings and housing. The shortage of food for the workers and fodder for the animals impelled the sovkhozy to abandon their initial high degree of specialisation and undertake the production of food and fodder grains. In spite of all efforts, the number of livestock and the supply of meat to the state increased more slowly than the growth in grain, and was far less than planned (see Table 30).

This poor performance was a striking example of the general phenomenon that the investment available, though substantial, was insufficient for the ambitious tasks imposed by the state. In 1930 and 1931, animals were readily available for purchase, though usually of poor quality: peasants frequently sold off their animals before joining the kolkhozy, or because they were unable to feed them.³³ But the sovkhozy could not cope with the increase in stock. Sheds for wintering the animals were built hastily and in insufficient quantities. 'With the onset of winter,' the OGPU noted in a general survey in January 1932, 'a considerable proportion of the livestock are not supplied with the necessary buildings'; in some places they were even left in the open.³⁴ A further OGPU report described cattlesheds which were hastily built on a marsh, and were unusable.³⁵

Fodder was insufficient and of poor quality. The OGPU report of January 1932 noted that 'the unsatisfactory realisation of the plan for preparing silage, and the disorder and negligence of the administration of a number of sovkhozy, has led in places to a tense situation with fodder'. As a result of the poor accommodation, the lack of fodder, and the inadequacy of the veterinary services, 'mass epidemic illnesses are widespread and the percentage of deaths is high':

*in the pig sovkhozy of the Lower-Volga region 89 per cent of the animals died between January 1 and December 10, 1931.*³⁶

³² *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 726.

³³ See Zelenin (1982), 37.

³⁴ RGAE, 7486/37/235, 45 (report covering Ukraine, the Volga regions, Tataria and the Transcaucasus, dated January 19, 1932).

³⁵ RGAE, 7486/37/192, 373–371 (dated September 21, 1931).

³⁶ RGAE, 7486/37/235, 44–42.

Another OGPU report, covering all the sovkhozy of the pig-farm trust Svinovod, described the situation as 'catastrophic': more than 59 per cent of all adult pigs and 38 per cent of piglets aged less than two months died in the period January–November 1931.³⁷

The results for the sovkhozy specialising in industrial crops were even less satisfactory. While the area sown to cotton by sovkhozy greatly increased in 1931–33, the yield fell drastically. In all sectors of agriculture these were difficult years for the cotton-growers, and total output of raw cotton in 1932 and 1933 was only slightly higher than in 1930 (see Table 7(a)). But the yield declined much more rapidly in sovkhozy than in agriculture as a whole.³⁸ The sugar-beet sovkhozy were the longest-established sovkhoz system, and were already responsible for nearly a quarter of all sugar-beet production in 1930. But in the next three years, the sovkhoz area sown to sugar beet declined, and, as with the cotton sovkhozy, the yield fell more drastically than in the rest of agriculture.³⁹

In all the sovkhozy, performance was impaired by the failure to establish a sufficiently large and skilled permanent labour force. OGPU reports frequently stated that housing was very poor; workers often had to live in dugouts and sheds. Wages were often delayed – sometimes for several months. Food and clothing were inadequate.

³⁷ RGAE, 7486/37/192, 429–428 (dated December 26, 1931).

³⁸ Yield of raw cotton in tsentners per hectare:

	<i>Sovkhozy</i>	<i>All agriculture</i>
1930	0.62	0.70
1932	0.36	0.59
1933	0.33	0.64

Source: Estimated from data in *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 399, 401.

³⁹ Yield of raw sugar beet (for factory production) in tons per hectare:

	<i>Sovkhozy</i>	<i>All agriculture</i>
1930	16.1	13.5
1932	5.9	4.3 ^a
1933	7.5	7.4

Source: Estimated from data in *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 447.

Note: ^a Estimated from sown area, not actual harvested area, from which the yield was 8.6.

An indignant Ukrainian worker, declaring 'Give us clothes and footwear', took off his tattered boots and showed his wet feet to the management. One of his companions commented: 'They treat us like dogs under Soviet power, worse than under the old regime.' The OGPU report of January 1932 noted 'the worsening of the political attitude of some groups of workers', which led them to quit their jobs or to a concerted failure to turn up to work. In extreme cases, workers went on strike: the OGPU report noted three recent strikes of protest in the Moscow region against wage delays, but these involved only 295 workers.⁴⁰

As in other sectors of the economy, the Soviet leaders gradually modified their policies in the light of bitter experience. It soon became clear that the large grain sovkhozy were unmanageable, and that too great an emphasis on monoculture was unwise. On August 25, 1931, the collegium of Narkomzem resolved that the harvested area of each grain sovkhoz should be reduced to 40,000–50,000 hectares, that the size of the sections into which each sovkhoz was divided should be reduced, and that crop rotation should be compulsory.⁴¹ Three months later, on November 27, these decisions were reinforced by a decree of Sovnarkom and the party central committee, which criticised the sovkhozy for 'senseless wastefulness and an impermissibly criminal attitude to state property' and for failing to use machinery adequately to improve yields, and insisted that the Narkomzem decisions should be carried out within a month. Gerchikov was dismissed from his post as head of Zernotrest and replaced by the veteran sovkhoz administrator, Yurkin.⁴²

These decrees were gradually put into effect. The average area of a grain sovkhoz had almost trebled in 1930; it was substantially reduced by the end of 1933.⁴³ The average size of the sections into which the sovkhozy were divided was also reduced.⁴⁴ But the

⁴⁰ RGAE, 7486/37/235, 38–36, 32–31.

⁴¹ I, August 28, 1931; Bogdenko (1958), 65.

⁴² SZ, 1931, art. 459; for other aspects of this decree see p. 344.

⁴³ Average area occupied by a grain sovkhoz on January 1 (thousand hectares):

	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
All land	86.1	82.6	56.3	49.4	30.3
Sown area	8.3	23.9	19.9	13.8	9.2

Source: *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 728.

⁴⁴ See *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 728.

authorities concluded that these decisions had not gone far enough. On November 27, 1933, Sovnarkom approved a further decree on the grain sovkhozy which stated that the land 'capable of being ploughed' should be reduced to 20,000–25,000 hectares (this implies that the sown area would be some 12,000–15,000 hectares). The decree again insisted, repeating the decision of two years previously, which had not been very effective, that 'crop rotation should be introduced in every sovkhoz and in each of its sections, ensuring the cleansing of the fields from weeds, especially fallow land'; this should be put into effect 'in 1934 at the latest'. In a further move away from monoculture, the decree provided that every grain sovkhoz should include auxiliary livestock breeding. It also made elaborate provisions for improving the housing, wages and food of sovkhoz workers.⁴⁵ In 1934, the average size of grain sovkhoz was reduced substantially.⁴⁶

In parallel to the decisions in the autumn of 1931 about grain sovkhozy, a decree on livestock sovkhozy, dated March 31, 1932, noted with approval the establishment of 1,480 livestock sovkhozy with a substantial stock of animals, but condemned their poor management. It complained that the sovkhozy were relying too much on the purchase of animals; in future they should expand solely by breeding their own livestock. The decree ruled that the size of the livestock sovkhozy should be reduced, stipulating the maximum number of animals to be held by each sovkhoz.⁴⁷ This provision was put into effect immediately.⁴⁸ But many faults of the livestock sovkhozy were deeply rooted. On November 2, 1933, a lengthy

⁴⁵ SZ, 1933, art. 453 (wrongly dated December 22, 1932, in Zelenin (1966), 43).

⁴⁶ See note 43 above.

⁴⁷ SZ, 1932, art. 143 (joint decree of Sovnarkom, the party central committee and Narkomzem).

⁴⁸ Within the Narkomsovkhoz system, the average number of animals held per sovkhoz was as follows (thousands on January 1 of each year):

<i>Type of sovkhoz</i>	<i>Type of animal</i>	<i>1931</i>	<i>1932</i>	<i>1933</i>	<i>1934</i>	<i>1935</i>
Beef and dairy	Cattle	6.5	7.0	2.6	2.5	2.2
Pig	Pigs	0.6	1.6	1.1	1.5	1.0
Sheep	Sheep	23.7	33.9	21.2	21.4	18.0

Source: Sel. kh. 1935 (1936), 723.

decree from the Commission for Fulfilment of Sovnarkom strongly criticised the failure of the livestock sovkhozy to prepare for the 1933–34 winter. New sheds for animals had not been built; and existing ones had not been repaired. In sovkhozy specialising in beef, butter and sheep, the stock of fodder was enough only for one month instead of the stipulated three months. Workers' wages were again in arrears.⁴⁹

A further important compromise legalised the auxiliary personal husbandry of sovkhoz workers. Until 1933, sovkhoz workers were assumed to have the same status as industrial workers. Their remuneration was a money wage, enhanced by food rations at low prices. However, the average permanent sovkhoz worker received a wage which was only 60–65 per cent of the average wage in large-scale industry;⁵⁰ and, as we have seen, living conditions were extremely poor. The political departments (politotdely) established in the sovkhozy in 1933 (see p. 345) sought to provide better incentives to the workers. Previously, the doctrine had prevailed that sovkhoz workers did not need a household plot on which to grow their own food. The political departments called for the abandonment of this doctrine, and by the autumn of 1933 almost all workers in Ukrainian grain sovkhozy had their own small vegetable allotments.⁵¹ The decree on the grain sovkhozy, dated November 27, 1933, officially permitted permanent sovkhoz workers to hold a small allotment: 'Set aside individual allotments not larger than $\frac{1}{4}$ hectare per family for permanent family workers and specialists employed in grain sovkhozy.'⁵² Moreover, the same decree provided that a minority of skilled workers should be allotted livestock for the use of the family.

These were promises for the future, an attempt to enable the sovkhozy to advance after three years of failure. In the meantime, repressive policies continued. The Soviet authorities had assumed optimistically that the sovkhozy, the most progressive form of agriculture, would set an example to the rest of agriculture in delivering their production to the state. But as late as July 1933, an agricultural journal complained that 'many leaders of sovkhozy and trusts have not yet understood and mastered ... the Bolshevik proposition that all

⁴⁹ SZ, 1933, art. 401.

⁵⁰ See *Trud* (1936), 96, 276.

⁵¹ See Zelenin (1966), 115.

⁵² SZ, 1933, art. 453. The term used was *ogorod*; the larger allotment of a collective-farm household was called an *usad'ba*.

the production of the sovkhoz, as a state enterprise, fully belongs to the state'.⁵³ The sovkhozy, like the kolkhozy and the individual peasants, were anxious to retain as much of their production as possible. They needed food for their workers and fodder for their livestock. And they used every opportunity to reduce their losses by selling their output at higher prices on the free market and elsewhere. A typical OGPU report, written in December 1931, complained that the pig-breeding trust in the Central Black-Earth region, instead of transferring its pigs to Soyuzmyaso, the state meat-collection agency, at low prices, sold them through the retail shop of the trust in Moscow; the higher prices were profitable both to the trust and to the sovkhoz.⁵⁴

To counter these trends, the state subjected the sovkhozy to relentless pressure, accusing them of underestimating their output and failing to transfer it to the state. As usual, bourgeois and Right-wing officials, and concealed kulaks, were blamed for these transgressions. On at least two occasions these misdeeds acquired the dimensions of a national scandal. In October 1931, the Politburo, in a widely-publicised case, arraigned Soyuzsakhkhar for deliberately underestimating its grain production (see pp. 73–4). Then, in June 1933 the Politburo, in a similar blaze of publicity, condemned the Odessa Grain Trust for underestimating its production in order to violate the law on the compulsory delivery of grain (see pp. 246–7).

These notorious incidents were the most publicised moments in a continuous campaign. Thus, following the decision on Soyuzsakhkhar in October 1931, the decree of November 27 on the grain sovkhozy (see p. 341) condemned the 'impermissibly criminal attitude to state property'. The decree claimed that no proper record of grain was kept in most sovkhozy; grain yields and stocks were underestimated; and food grain was often consumed at twice the level permitted even for top-priority factories. In every sovkhoz, a 'special supervisor from Narkomzem' was to be appointed, independent of its director, in order to check records, consumption and deliveries to the state.⁵⁵

The campaign continued unabated in 1932. In August, Voznesensky, future head of Gosplan, at this time in charge of a Rabkrin brigade to investigate the sovkhozy, condemned their 'bourgeois tendencies to conceal marketable grain from the state', and of distributing too much

⁵³ NAF, 3 (May–June), 1933, 14 (L. Ostrovskii, speech at the Agrarian Institute of the Communist Academy, July 1, 1933).

⁵⁴ RGAE, 7486/37/235, 128.

⁵⁵ SZ, 1931, art. 459.

grain to peasants who were working temporarily on the sovkhozy during the harvest.⁵⁶ On September 1, the Politburo rejected a proposal from Narkomzem and Komzag to reduce the grain collection from sovkhozy in the North Caucasus and the Lower Volga. At the same time, it accepted their proposal to increase the collections from sovkhozy in Ukraine, the Central Volga region and elsewhere.⁵⁷ As a result, the collection plan for the sovkhozy increased from 2.49 to 2.6 million tons.⁵⁸ It was presumably in order to reinforce the control of the sovkhozy by the state that on October 1, 1932, the administration of the sovkhozy was separated from Narkomzem by a decree of TsIK, which established a People's Commissariat for Grain and Livestock Sovkhozy, Narkomsovkhozov, parallel to Narkomzem.⁵⁹ Seven weeks later, the Politburo expelled the director of the Ukraine-Crimea Grain Trust from the party for 'presenting deliberately false data which underestimated the grain resources of the grain sovkhozy'.⁶⁰ In January 1933, political departments were established in the sovkhozy parallel to those in the MTS. The political departments in Narkomsovkhozov were managed by K. P. Soms, a veteran agricultural administrator.⁶¹ In the next few months 70,000 officials of Narkomsovkhozov and the other sovkhoz systems, and their component trusts, were dismissed – 17.5 per cent of the total staff.⁶² But the sovkhozy failed utterly to reach the planned level of collections: the total collected in 1932/33 amounted to only 1.7 million tons, compared with the annual plan of 2.6 million (see Tables 20 and 30).

In the summer of 1933, the pressure on the sovkhozy again continued throughout the harvest campaign. On June 21, Sovnarkom decreed that in future grain collection should be the direct responsibility of the directors of the sovkhozy, and not of their deputies.⁶³ In the grain plans for the 1933 harvest, the grain to be delivered to

⁵⁶ P, August 23, 1932.

⁵⁷ RGASPI, 17/3/898 (item 24).

⁵⁸ The grain collection plans of the sovkhozy, like those of the kolkhozy, were, however, reduced piecemeal in the course of the winter of 1932/33 (see Table 20).

⁵⁹ SZ, 1932, art. 435.

⁶⁰ RGASPI, 17/3/907, 5 (item 15, November 25 session), published in SPR, viii (1934), 654.

⁶¹ See Zelenin (1966), 101–4, and *Materialy*, vii (1959), reprinting from the archives documents on the sovkhoz politotdely. In the sovkhozy, unlike the MTS, the politotdely continued until 1940.

⁶² VIK, 3, 1983, 81.

⁶³ SZ, 1933, art. 229.

the state by the sovkhozy was at first fixed quite modestly at 1,802,000 tons, compared with the 1,623,000 tons collected in 1932/33.⁶⁴ But the prospects for the harvest were reported to be good, and in consequence Sovnarkom increased the plan for all the major regions; the total increase amounted to 699,000 tons, making a total of 2,501,000 tons.⁶⁵ In its effort to achieve this ambitious plan, on August 15 the Politburo condemned as 'completely incorrect' 'the conduct of the top leadership of Narkomsovkhozov and its officials, especially comrade Grushevskii [first deputy People's Commissar], in relation to the determination of the yield'. Grushevskii was dismissed, and suffered the humiliating penalty of being sent to Kazakhstan as a plenipotentiary.⁶⁶ On the following day, Kos'ko, director of the prestigious 'Gigant' sovkhoz, was also dismissed. The initial decision by Narkomsovkhozov described his departure as being due to ill-health. But Stalin, when he learned of this while on vacation, wrote an indignant letter to Kaganovich describing the Narkomsovkhozov order as 'a shameful bourgeois diplomatic lie'; and on August 31 the Politburo announced publicly that 'in fact comrade Kos'ko was removed for bad work on the harvest and on the grain deliveries'.⁶⁷

In spite of these strenuous efforts, the increased plan was not achieved. The total collected amounted to 1,906,000 tons – 100,000 tons in excess of the original plan (see Table 25). But this modest achievement was far less than the revised plan, and only a fraction of what had been anticipated in 1930 and 1931. At the XVII party congress, which convened in January–February 1934, Stalin, who had led the campaign to established huge mechanised sovkhozy at break-neck speed, now dissociated himself from their failure:

It must be said about the sovkhozy that they have still failed to achieve what is required of them. I do not at all underestimate the

⁶⁴ RGAE, 8040/8/7, 306 (memorandum from Chernov to Stalin, Kaganovich and Molotov, dated July 4, 1933).

⁶⁵ SZ, 1933, art. 251 (dated July 13) and art. 300 (dated August 10); and see NAF, 3 (May–June), 1933, 15 (L. Ostrovskii).

⁶⁶ RGASPI, 17/3/928, 4 (item 10). For the dismissal of Grushevskii, officially dated August 17, see *Soviet Government Officials* (1989), 289.

⁶⁷ RGASPI, 17/3/930, 9, published in SPR, viii (1934), 655. For Stalin's letter of August 27 and Kaganovich's replies, see SKP, 316, 319. The decision was published in the newspapers on September 1.

revolutionary significance of our sovkhozy. But if the huge investments of the state in the sovkhozy are compared with the present actual results of their work, there is a huge discrepancy in their disfavour. The main cause of the discrepancy is that our grain sovkhozy are too cumbersome; the directors cannot cope with huge sovkhozy; the sovkhozy themselves are too specialised, and do not have crop rotation including fallow, and do not have livestock. Evidently the sovkhozy must be divided up, and their extreme specialisation must be eliminated.

Characteristically, Stalin put the blame on Narkomsovkhozov for failing to take the initiative in bringing about these changes.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ *XVII s"ezd* (1934), 23.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE KOLKHOZY

When the Soviet political leaders embarked on the mass collectivisation of agriculture in the autumn of 1929, their conception of the future structure of a kolkhoz and how it would function was vague and utopian. They anticipated that, after a short transition, the kolkhozy would become large, multi-village units modelled on the state farms. All the capital used in production would be owned by the kolkhoz. The household plots surrounding the cottage of each family would soon be discontinued, and the peasant market would be entirely superseded by planned socialist trade. The members of the kolkhozy would be remunerated by wages paid along factory lines.¹

By the end of 1930, greater realism had prevailed. The relationship between the kolkhozy and the existing villages and settlements was extremely complicated, but the typical kolkhoz, in conception as well as in practice, was no longer a multi-village unit. The long-established patterns of land settlement varied greatly by region. Some peasants lived in scattered settlements containing just a few households, while others lived in large nuclear villages containing many hundreds of households. By 1931, the kolkhozy, the vast majority of which had been established since 1929, were sometimes contiguous with a settlement, and sometimes included several settlements; a large settlement would often be divided into two or more kolkhozy. But, after the ignominious collapse of *gigantomania* in the spring of 1930 the general principle was followed that the kolkhoz should be based on the settlement or village. Accordingly, the size of the kolkhoz varied greatly by region. In the autumn of 1931 there were on average 65 households per kolkhoz, but the average number of households in the Leningrad region was 25, while in the North Caucasus it was as many as 220. Within each region the kolkhozy varied greatly in size: thus in the North Caucasus there were 794 households per kolkhoz in the Tikhoretskii district, but only 49 in the Otradnenskii district.²

¹ For the development of the kolkhoz system to the beginning of 1931, summarised below, see vol. 2.

² *Ezhegodnik po sel. kh. 1931* (1933), 442–3, 446–7, 467.

Fully socialised farming remained the ultimate goal. But in the immediate future the predominant form of kolkhoz would be the *artel*. In the *artel*, the main fields (the *nadel*), often divided into strips before collectivisation, were cultivated by the kolkhoz as a whole. The kolkhoz was also responsible for the socialised livestock, and for other forms of specialised production. In particular, the horses and other draught animals used to cultivate the main fields, and the associated agricultural implements, were owned collectively by the kolkhoz. On the other hand, it was not the kolkhoz but the state which owned the tractors and combine harvesters and their attachments, and other more advanced agricultural machinery. These were administered by the state Machine-Tractor Stations (MTS). The kolkhoz paid the MTS for its services, and remunerated the tractor drivers, who were themselves usually members of the kolkhoz.

Even before mass collectivisation, collective labour in the kolkhozy was normally organised in 'brigades' (*brigady* – a non-Russian term for a novel activity). These were groups of peasants, varying in size; some were temporary, others permanent. Some brigades were so-called 'production brigades', each responsible for a particular aspect of production. Others were 'territorial' or 'settlement' brigades – groups of neighbouring households responsible for all the agricultural activity on a part of the territory of the kolkhoz. By 1931, the authorities had come to favour the production brigades over the territorial brigades, on the grounds that they were more efficient. The switch to production brigades was also intended to weaken traditional links between households. Within this broad framework, the structure of the kolkhozy remained tentative and experimental.

The most crucial issue was the payment of the collective farmers for their work. By the end of 1930 the authorities were insisting firmly – with certain minor modifications – that the collective farmers were to be remunerated according to the quantity and quality of their work. In this respect they would be no different from wage earners in state industry. But the uncertainties of agricultural production, and the immaturity of the kolkhoz system, made it impossible to guarantee the kolkhoz members a wage rate determined in advance. Instead, they were assigned 'labour days', the number of which depended on the amount of time they worked and the skill or intensity of the work. The annual net income of the kolkhoz came in the form of both agricultural products and money.

The remuneration for one labour day was determined at the end of the agricultural year by dividing the available income by the total number of labour days earned by the members of the kolkhoz in the course of the year. Thus it was the kolkhoz and not the state which appeared to be responsible for the level of earnings.

In addition to their collective work, each collective-farm household was allocated a household plot (usually the *usad'ba* on which the cottage was situated), on which the family grew food and reared its own animals. The collective farmers could consume the products of the plot, or sell them, at their own discretion – with various important limitations.

Much of the production of the collective lands, and some of the products of the household plot, were sold compulsorily to the state at fixed low prices. But a small part of collective production, and a substantial part of the production of the personal plot, were sold at the 'bazaars', or local markets, at much higher market prices. The local markets continued to exist throughout collectivisation; they were legalised in May 1932, and officially named the 'collective-farm market' (*kolkhozni rynok*).

In principle these arrangements provided a viable compromise between the interests of the state and the interests of the peasants, between the great potential advantages of large-scale mechanised agriculture and the long-established traditions of farming in family units. The collective organisation of labour, combined with individual remuneration for work, was intended to provide an incentive structure within which former individual peasants would learn to become socialist agricultural workers. At the same time, the household plot and the peasant market would satisfy peasant tradition and supplement peasant income until the advantages of mechanised agriculture predominated. The authorities confidently expected that this would be a matter of only a year or two.

The 'collective-farm compromise' was an extremely ambitious scheme. In the course of a few years, peasant family agriculture, which had dominated the Russian economy for centuries, was to be superseded by farming on factory lines, employing vast quantities of machinery and requiring the training of many hundreds of thousands of farm managers and foremen, agronomists, vets, technicians, drivers, bookkeepers and record keepers. Above all, tens of millions of former individual peasants would need to acquire fundamentally new work habits, and a new psychology.

This scheme would have been inherently difficult to implement even if adequate resources had been available to agriculture.

But, from the first, the state sought to squeeze as much production as possible from the kolkhozy, with the deleterious consequences described in previous chapters. The removal of production from the kolkhoz by the state meant that the products retained and the money obtained by the kolkhoz were utterly inadequate to remunerate the collective farmers for their work. They received far more income in the form of the produce of their household plot, their earnings from the sale of part of this produce on the market, and for their part-time or seasonal work outside the farm. Throughout the famine years, the low level of remuneration brought to nothing the heroic efforts to introduce new forms of socialist labour in agriculture. Although conditions improved after the 1933 harvest, the exploitation of agriculture by the state, and the consequent poor return to the peasants for their work on the kolkhoz, continued to be the Achilles' heel of Soviet collective farming throughout the sixty years of its existence.

(A) STATE CONTROL OF THE KOLKHOZ

At the end of 1930, the agricultural cooperatives, the MTS and the kolkhozy retained a certain degree of autonomy. Two years later, they had all been firmly incorporated into the machinery of state.

The agricultural cooperatives were already subject to strong state influence in the 1920s. From 1929 onwards, while they bore executive responsibility for the grain and other agricultural collections, their activity was under the firm management of Narkomsnab and the party plenipotentiaries despatched to the countryside. The cooperatives were often bypassed. During the collectivisation drive of 1930 their role in relation to kolkhoz production and organisation almost disappeared. Moreover, with the rise of the kolkhozy, the less socialised producer cooperatives (often known as 'settlement societies'), which were the direct responsibility of the agricultural cooperatives, declined in importance, and many of them were transformed into kolkhozy. The supreme agricultural cooperative organisation, the Union of Unions, planned that in 1931, in 'first-priority districts', all producer cooperatives would be converted into the *artel* form of kolkhoz.³

When Narkomzem of the USSR was established in December 1929 (see vol. 1, p. 169), it was placed in charge of the 'management

³ See IZ, lxxiv (1963), 34-5 (M. P. Bogdenko).

and unification of the work of agricultural cooperation and the system of agricultural credit'.⁴ On January 5, 1931, Mikoyan, in a memorandum to Stalin, pointed out that, in RSKs, 'agricultural cooperation has ceased to be an elected organisation, turning in practice into a collection agency, working to the instructions and under the leadership of the state'. He accordingly proposed that 'the general management of the activities of agricultural cooperation should be transferred from Narkomzem to Narkomsnab' (his own commissariat).⁵ Following this memorandum, a commission of the Politburo was established under Kuibyshev, and the Politburo approved its proposals on February 15. A large part of the agricultural cooperative structure was swept away, and the rest was consolidated under tighter state control. The Union of Unions and the equivalent republican and regional agencies were abolished, and their staff transferred to Narkomzem. The cooperative organisations responsible for the main branches of agriculture were merged into a single grain and livestock centre, *Khlebozhivotnovodtsentr*. This was responsible for the state collections from all peasant households, including those in *kolkhozy*, and for the 'production servicing' of individual peasants, including the supply of seeds and simple implements. On the vexed question of the management of the agricultural cooperatives, which was strongly disputed between Narkomzem and Narkomsnab, the Politburo approved an uneasy compromise. *Khlebozhivotnovodtsentr* was to be controlled by Narkomsnab in respect of the collections, and by Narkomzem for the production side of its activities. But the centre of gravity had moved to Narkomsnab. The production activities of the cooperatives were severely circumscribed by the large increase in the number of peasant households which joined the *kolkhozy*, and by the decision that 'simple production associations', which now came under *Khlebozhivotnovodtsentr*, should no longer be established in districts where more than 50 per cent of households were collectivised.⁶ These arrangements were confirmed by a Sovnarkom decree dated March 11, 1931.⁷

⁴ SZ, 1929, art. 718 (decree of TsIK dated December 7).

⁵ RGASPI, 84/2/16, 1-3, published in TSD, iii, 59-61.

⁶ The Politburo decision is in RGASPI, 17/3/813, 6, 25 (item 24 on agenda). For the accompanying Narkomzem orders, see IZ, lxxiv (1963), 35-6; the order abolishing the Union of Unions was approved on February 1, two weeks before the Politburo decision.

⁷ SZ, 1931, art. 151.

This was not quite the end of the agricultural cooperatives, however. In June 1931, over 20,000 settlement societies still remained under *Khlebozhivotnovodstentr*. But they were soon transformed into *kolkhozy*.⁸ Then, in February 1932, with the formation of *Komzag*, *Khlebozhivotnovodstentr* was merged with the other organisations responsible for the collections. Henceforth all the agencies responsible for grain and livestock collections were purely state agencies, firmly subordinated to *Komzag* (see p. 143).

With the diminution of the role of the agricultural cooperatives, the district collective farm unions (the *kolkhozsoyuzy*) emerged as the main soviet authority responsible for the *kolkhozy*. The Sovnarkom decree of March 11, 1931, provided that *kolkhozsoyuzy* should be established in every district to manage the burgeoning *kolkhoz* system.⁹ These agencies had a nominal staff of ten, and were administratively subordinate to their regional and republican equivalents, and to the *Kolkhoztstentr* of the USSR. They worked in parallel with the land departments, which were subordinate to both *Narkomzem* and the local soviets. Where MTS had been established, they formed a third line of control, responsible to their own chain of command under *Traktorotsentr*.

When the *kolkhoz* structure emerged in the mid- and late 1920s, it had a certain autonomy from *Narkomzem*, but by 1931 it was unambiguously subject to state and party control. But, for a state determined to establish a firm hierarchy of subordination, the continued existence of the nominally autonomous *kolkhozsoyuzy* remained an anomaly. While the collections were managed unambiguously, first by *Narkomsnab* and then by *Komzag*, the agricultural activities of the increasing number of *kolkhozy* served by MTS were managed by at least three agencies: the land departments, the *kolkhozsoyuzy*, and the MTS of *Traktorotsentr*.

This gave rise to much confusion. A report on the 1932 spring sowing campaign based on an investigation of a large number of *kolkhozy* noted 'the extremely weak leadership by the district *kolkhozsoyuzy* and the completely unsatisfactory leadership by the

⁸ *IZ*, lxxiv (1963), 36.

⁹ *SZ*, 1931, art. 151. In districts with a low level of collectivisation, the *kolkhozsoyuzy* had been downgraded in the summer of 1930 to 'kolkhoz sections' of the *raikoopkolkhozsoyuzy* (district unions of agricultural cooperatives and *kolkhozy*). For the complex and rather baffling reorganisation of the cooperative and *kolkhoz* system in the summer of 1930, see *NFK*, 24, 1930, 49–57.

MTS'. All orders to kolkhozy served by MTS were supposed to be issued via the MTS, but in practice both the kolkhozsoyuz and the MTS issued instructions, resulting in 'depersonalisation' and 'the irresponsibility of both organisations'.¹⁰ The third controlling organisation, the district land department, issued plans to both the district kolkhozsoyuz and the MTS, but by the time they reached the kolkhoz they 'very frequently failed to coincide'.¹¹

The role of the MTS in the agricultural system naturally increased as their number increased, and they acquired more tractors and other machinery. The number of MTS increased by 171 per cent between June 1931 and June 1934. By June 1934, they served 58 per cent of all kolkhoz households, and 64 per cent of the sown area. Over 55 per cent of the MTS served kolkhozy in areas designated as specialising in grain production.¹²

In the interaction between the MTS and the kolkhozy, there was no clear division of function between the MTS agronomists, the heads of the MTS sectors, and the chairs of the kolkhozy.¹³ On average, each MTS was responsible for 30–40 kolkhozy. The MTS were divided into detachments, each of which provided services for between eight and twelve kolkhozy.¹⁴ These detachments were later known as brigades (not to be confused with the brigades of the kolkhozy). The number of tractors per MTS amounted to forty or less in 1931–32 – some 450–550 h.p. By June 1934, the average

¹⁰ RGAE, 260/1/168, 100–101 (written in summer 1932). The decision that orders should be issued via the MTS was made in a resolution of Rabkrin and the central control commission dated February 16, 1932. For depersonalisation, see vol. 4, p. 72.

¹¹ RGAE, 260/1/186, 18–19 (report dated March 1932).

¹²

MTS on June 1 of each year

	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934
Number of MTS	158 ^a	1228	2115	2660	3326
Number of kolkhozy served (thousands) ^b	11.6	51.7	71.8	92.5	106.7
Percentage of kolkhoz households served ^b	24.5	35.3	45.8	53.3	58.4

Source: *Sots. str.* 1935 (1936), 310.

Notes: ^a In addition there were 479 cooperative MTS, later absorbed in the state system. ^b Includes cooperative MTS.

¹³ See RGAE, 260/1/168, 105.

¹⁴ SZ, 1932, art. 205 (dated May 8); Miller (1970), 134.

tractor h.p. per MTS was still only 652.¹⁵ In 1933, on a Soviet estimate, tractors and other machinery supplied only 30 per cent of the energy resources used in kolkhozy, and horses and oxen supplied the rest.¹⁶ Coordination between the machines of the MTS and the horses of the kolkhozy was crucial to the success of semi-mechanised agriculture, and was a prime task of the MTS. But a report on the situation at the end of 1932 in kolkhozy attached to MTS complained that horses 'were badly looked after; the feeding arrangements were disgraceful; the horses were used destructively'.¹⁷ While the MTS were supposed to be responsible for all the economic activities of the kolkhozy they serviced, in practice they concentrated on the tractors. According to one observer, 'we have not seen the organisation of the whole complex of production in even a single MTS'.¹⁸

Towards the end of 1932, a drastic series of decisions, largely unheralded and unsung, sought to remove most of the anomalies and to bring to an end all the remaining autonomy. On October 1, 1932, the decree of TsIK establishing Narkomsovkhozov (see p. 345) inappropriately included a clause breaking up Traktorotsentr into five specialised branch administrations of Narkomzem, with corresponding regional agencies.¹⁹ The unifying force of an undivided Traktorotsentr, headed by the independent-minded Markevich, founder of the MTS, was brusquely destroyed. Markevich was placed in charge of the grain MTS, and appointed first deputy people's commissar of Narkomzem.²⁰ But it soon emerged that a dark cloud hung over the former leadership of Traktorotsentr. Yakovlev informed the January 1933 plenum of the central committee that a counter-revolutionary organisation had been discovered in Traktorotsentr.²¹ Extensive acts of sabotage by MTS officials were described in the press.²² Then, on February 26, 1933, Markevich was

¹⁵ *Sots. str.* 1935 (1936), 310.

¹⁶ *MTS v vtoroi pyatiletke* (1934), 87.

¹⁷ *Materialy MTS* (1934), 86; see also Postyshev's report in P, March 26, 1933.

¹⁸ RGAE, 260/1/186, 32 (report of March 1932 from the North Caucasus).

¹⁹ SZ, 1932, art. 435; the administrations were for MTS responsible for grain, cotton, sugar beet, vegetables and potatoes, and hay – each MTS was attached to the administration responsible for its predominant activity.

²⁰ SZ, 1932, ii, art. 229 (dated October 17).

²¹ RGASPI, 17/2/514, ii, 15.

²² See, for example, the claim in Nikulikhin (1934), 52–3, that the use by saboteurs of a too-rigid definition of 'moral depreciation' (obsolescence) had resulted in the unnecessary scrapping of tractors.

removed from his post in Narkomzem simultaneously with his fellow deputy commissars Konar and Vol'f.²³ A week later, *Pravda* announced that more than seventy agricultural officials had been arrested.²⁴ After an OGPU hearing, thirty-five of them were summarily executed, including Konar and Vol'f (see vol. 4, p. 337). Markevich was not mentioned publicly in connection with the Konar case, but he was evidently under suspicion.

On November 27, 1932, soon after the abolition of Traktorotsentr, the Politburo resolved to abolish Kolkhozttsentr.²⁵ Two days later, a secret decree of Sovnarkom laconically ordered the abolition not only of the Kolkhozttsentr of the USSR, but also of the republican Kolkhozttsentry and the regional and district kolkhozsoyuzy.²⁶ Two months elapsed before a decree of TsIK, dated February 23, 1933, announced publicly that the staff numbers in district land departments were to be increased 'in connection with the abolition of the district kolkhozsoyuzy'.²⁷

The land departments were now supposed to be responsible for both the kolkhozy and the individual peasant households on their territory, working via the MTS in the increasing number of districts where MTS were established. But the land departments were a weak instrument. Speaking at the XVII party congress in January 1934, Kaganovich claimed that 'our land departments are at a low ebb', and 'as it were cannot find their responsibility', and Yakovlev complained that information about faults and difficulties in the countryside was received not through Narkomzem and its agencies but through party channels.²⁸

The staff of the land departments of the 3,000 districts in the USSR amounted, even when up to establishment, to only 34,800 persons, about twelve per district. The staff of a district generally included no more than three agronomists, for an average of some 8,000 peasant households.²⁹ The total staff of the MTS was nearly

²³ SZ, 1933, ii, arts. 80–2.

²⁴ P, March 5, 1933.

²⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/909, 7; unlike the decision to diminish the role of the agricultural cooperatives in March 1931, this decision was made by poll, so was not discussed by the Politburo as an item on its agenda.

²⁶ GARF, 5446/1/466, 97 (art. 1763/372s); the decree was classified as 'secret' rather than 'not for publication'; it was signed by Kuibyshev as deputy chair of Sovnarkom.

²⁷ SZ, 1933, art. 129.

²⁸ *XVII s'ezd* (1934), 522, 154.

²⁹ SZ, 1933, art. 129. The total staff of district soviets amounted to 260,500 on April 1, 1935 (*Trud* (1936), 30–1).

nine times as numerous as the staff of the district land departments. On average, there were seven agronomists in each MTS.³⁰

The district party committees exercised far more influence on the kolkhozy than the district soviets and their land departments; they were linked directly to the regional party committees, and through them to the Politburo. The full-time staff of the district party was quite small. It has been estimated that it amounted on average to about twenty people by 1932, covering all aspects of activity within the district.³¹ But district party officials were able to issue instructions to some 900,000 rural party members, some two-thirds of whom were members of kolkhozy.³² This was a large number. Even so, most kolkhozy did not include enough party members to establish a party cell, the minimum requirement for which was three members and candidate members.³³ There was considerable variation between regions. In June 1932, there were party cells in 20 per cent of all kolkhozy, and about the same percentage in Ukraine. In North Caucasus and the Volga regions, on the other hand, there were party cells in over 50 per cent of kolkhozy, while in the Western region and Belorussia only about 6 per cent of kolkhozy had cells.³⁴ In contrast, virtually every MTS had a party cell. But the chairs of kolkhozy were often party members, particularly in the main grain regions.³⁵

In 1932, even the district party officials were an unreliable instrument of the Politburo. Many district party committees objected openly to their grain collection plans and were unwilling or unable to enforce demands from the centre to obtain more grain from hungry

³⁰ At the end of 1933, the total staff of the 2,916 MTS and MTM, excluding tractor drivers, amounted to 310,000, including 23,500 agronomists (*MTS vo vtoroi* (1937), 11, 90). There were thus more than twice as many agronomists in each MTS as in each land department.

³¹ Thorniley (1988), 59–60. For the earlier increase in the size of the district soviet and party staff, consequent upon the abolition of the okrugs, see vol. 1, p. 351.

³² See Fitzpatrick (1994), 176, data for January 1, 1933.

³³ The number of party cells in kolkhozy was as follows: January 1, 1931: 5,000; January 1, 1932: 30,000; January 1, 1933: 36,200; July 1933: 44,000 (Thorniley (1988), 202–3).

³⁴ Thorniley (1988), 86.

³⁵ See p. 369, n. 75. Party members mainly worked as administrators. In October 1933 only 34.2 per cent of the total membership were ordinary collective farmers, 15.7 per cent were brigade leaders and 11.1 per cent were kolkhoz chairmen. Many of the remainder headed branches of production. (See Thorniley (1988), 50.)

peasants. Before the end of 1932, in the North Caucasus, the Lower Volga region, Ukraine and elsewhere, many district party secretaries were dismissed from their posts and expelled from the party; some were summarily arrested.³⁶

The establishment of the politotdely (political departments) of the MTS, modelled on the politotdely in the Red Army and on the railways during the civil war, marked the climax of the desperate endeavours to force grain out of the countryside and to bring about an elementary order in agriculture and the countryside.³⁷ In November 1932, a Politburo commission headed by Postyshev was instructed to select 1,000 heads and 3,000 deputy heads of politotdely to be established in the North Caucasus and the Lower Volga region.³⁸

The establishment of the politotdely in the whole of the USSR was not authorised formally until January 11, 1933. A long resolution of the central committee plenum, which dealt with the politotdely of the sovkhozy as well as the MTS, made it abundantly clear that they were being established in the context of 'fierce resistance from the anti-soviet elements in the village'.³⁹ It entrusted them with a dual function. They were to 'apply administrative and punitive measures to the organisers of the theft of social property and the sabotage of the agricultural measures of the party and government'. At the same time, they would assist in the 'improvement of yields, better management of livestock, timely organisation of the autumn and spring sowing, and the harvesting and threshing'. Every head of a political department was to be simultaneously the deputy director for political work of the MTS. The heads were to be assisted by two deputies, and by an assistant for work with the Komsomol.⁴⁰

The function of appointing the heads and deputy heads of the politotdely and generally supervising their activities had already passed from Postyshev to Kaganovich, who was appointed head of

³⁶ For the material in this paragraph, see Chapter 6 above.

³⁷ For the politotdely established in the sovkhozy in 1933, see p. 345; for the politotdely established on the railways later in 1933, see vol. 4, pp. 389–90.

³⁸ See OI, 6, 1992, 43 (Zelenin), citing RGAE, 7486/3/207, 17–19.

³⁹ *KPSS v rez.*, ii (1953), 730–41.

⁴⁰ An assistant for work with women, and the editor of the mimeographed newspaper, were later added to the basic establishment (Politburo resolution of June 15, 1933 – RGASPI, 17/3/924, item 17 – introduced by Kaganovich, published in SPR, viii (1934), 673–4); the editors were also known as assistants for education.

the agricultural department of the central committee when it was established in December 1932. Within Narkomzem, Krinitskii, an old Bolshevik, and for many years a senior party official, was appointed as head of its newly-established political administration. From the beginning, the politotdely were placed firmly under the authority of the party.

Of the two deputy heads of the politotdely, one was to be responsible for 'mass political work'. According to a top-secret order of the OGPU, promulgated on January 25, 1933, the second deputy must be 'a responsible official of our [that is, the OGPU's] agencies ... with long experience of operational work, and a fully-trained communist'. The function of the deputy from the OGPU was to expose and combat counter-revolutionary groups and activities, and to defend socialist property; he was to inform and be informed by the district GPU about political attitudes in the sovkhozy, the MTS and the kolkhozy.⁴¹ The relationship of the deputy from the OGPU with the head of the politotdel was evidently a tense one. On February 3, an OGPU circular, signed both by Yagoda on behalf of the OGPU and Krinitskii on behalf of Narkomzem, stated that the deputy was to be 'wholly subordinate' to the head of the politotdel, and was to inform him about the political and economic situation in the MTS and the kolkhozy. But it added the important proviso that the deputies from the OGPU were to 'retain complete independence' in their operational work and in their work with their agents.⁴²

By the end of 1933, politotdely had been established in 2,655 of the 2,856 MTS, and heads and deputy heads, and assistants for the Komsomol, had been appointed in almost all the politotdely.⁴³ The 12,550 officials who were appointed by Moscow in the course of the year were far more senior and long-established in the party, and far better educated, than the urban party members and others sent to the countryside in previous campaigns. As many as 58 per cent of the politotdel heads came from Moscow (38.2 per cent), Leningrad (10.5 per cent) and the army (9.3 per cent);⁴⁴ 76.9 per cent of them

⁴¹ TsAFSB, 66/1-t/56, 3-3ob., published in TSD, iii, 678-9.

⁴² GANO, P-175/1/1, 1, published in TSD, iii, 679.

⁴³ Assistants for work with women were appointed in about two-thirds of MTS; but assistants for education were appointed in only about one-third.

⁴⁴ *Materialy MTS* (1934), 205. By November 1934, the total number of politotdely had reached 3,360 and the number of officials appointed amounted to 17,000 (*KPSS v rez.*, iii (1953), 804).

joined the party before 1921, and 45.7 per cent had received higher education, mainly in the party education system. Most of the deputies and assistants were also of long standing in the party, and had also received either higher or secondary education (63 per cent). The deputies for the OGPU, however, were less well educated – only 1 per cent had received higher and 30 per cent secondary education. (See Table 45(a).)

The most important immediate function of the politotdely was to carry out a thorough purge of the staff of the MTS and the kolkhozy. Yakovlev, in retrospect, claimed that before the politotdely were established 'we had many directors of MTS, chairs of kolkhozy and other leading rural communists who had carried out the spring sowing campaign quite well, but when it came to the collections, decided to act as "defenders" of the kolkhozy from the state', and as a result proved to be 'the worst enemies of the kolkhozy'. According to Yakovlev, it was 'in this connection that politotdely were created on Stalin's initiative'.⁴⁵ About one-third of those removed during the 1933 purge were classified as 'class-alien'; about two-thirds as 'unsuitable' (for definitions see Table 46). Those removed as class-alien were accused *inter alia* of being 'heads of and participants in wrecking groups; Whiteguards, kulaks and former traders sent to responsible posts on the staff of many MTS'. Such people 'confused the economy and the finances of the MTS, deliberately carried out wrecking measures in agricultural processes and in the use of tractors and machines and the organisation of production in the kolkhozy'. They included 'a torturer in the White army', and 'the son of a landlord who destroyed the finances of the MTS'. Others were simply castigated as 'the kulak son of a tsarist policeman', or just as a 'tsarist policeman'.⁴⁶ A typical OGPU memorandum, based on the reports of politotdel deputies for the OGPU, gave numerous examples of 'counter-revolutionary groupings' and 'individual counter-revolutionaries' who 'wrecked the repair of tractors' by arson, and by the theft and concealment of spare parts and materials.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Yakovlev (1933), 18 (report to training courses for directors and heads of politotdely, senior agronomists and mechanics of new MTS, July 3, 1933).

⁴⁶ *Materialy MTS* (1934), 6, 8.

⁴⁷ OGPU report 'On Counter-Revolutionary Phenomena in the Repair of the Tractor Stock', signed by Agranov and dated December 27, 1933 (TsAFSB, 2/11/1050, 186–193, published in TSD, iii, 692–4).

The purge proceeded rapidly. In the MTS, as many as half of those dismissed had already been removed by the end of June.⁴⁸ Many MTS directors were dismissed, including 70 out of 112 directors in the Odessa region, and 37 out of 117 in the Dnepropetrovsk region.⁴⁹ Very large numbers of the senior staff of MTS were also removed, including 46 per cent of the heads of their production sections. In kolkhozy served by MTS, half of all chairs, 47 per cent of the heads of sectors and 31 per cent of brigade leaders were removed. Many minor kolkhoz officials, and a smaller but still significant percentage of tractor drivers, were also dismissed. The numbers removed in the main grain regions were particularly high, including an astonishing 84 per cent of kolkhoz chairs in the North Caucasus and 64 per cent in the Central Volga region. (See Tables 46(a) and (b).) Reviewing the situation at the end of 1933, the official report on the MTS admitted that the purges had led to a great shortage of qualified personnel. Nevertheless, it still insisted that 'wrecking and class-alien elements have not been completely purged'.⁵⁰

Many of those dismissed were party members. In an endeavour to strengthen the position of the party in the kolkhozy, the Politburo authorised a general switch from territorial cells in the countryside to 'production cells', established in the kolkhozy themselves. In the many kolkhozy where party membership was too small, joint party-Komsomol cells, and cells of 'sympathisers' (supervised by a designated party official) should be established.⁵¹ By the end of 1933, party and party-Komsomol cells had been established in 72,000 kolkhozy, nearly one-third of the total, as compared with 35,000 at the beginning of the year.⁵² But these unprecedented initiatives were unsuccessful. The expulsion of rural party members led to a net reduction in their numbers, from 832,000 in mid-1932 to 790,000 in October 1933.⁵³ This was the beginning of a decline which led eventually to the virtual collapse of the party in the countryside.

Although the establishment of the politotdely was inspired by the failure of the grain collections, it came too late to influence the

⁴⁸ *Materialy MTS* (1934), 6.

⁴⁹ *Materialy MTS* (1934), 8, 18. Figures for the removal of directors of MTS in the USSR as a whole have not been traced.

⁵⁰ *Materialy MTS* (1934), 10.

⁵¹ For this decision see n. 40 above.

⁵² See *XVII s"ezd* (1934), 557, and *OI*, 6, 1992, 48 (Zelenin).

⁵³ Thorniley (1988), 149; *XVII s"ezd* (1934), 557.

campaign. But, from the spring sowing onwards, many politotdely made strenuous efforts to bring about elementary order in agriculture. The official report on the MTS for 1933 claims that their staff played an important role in such matters as determining the location for and accelerating the sowing, organising weeding (and renewing weeding where it had ceased), and arranging that horses were washed regularly, and their hooves cleaned.⁵⁴ The memoirs of the head of a politotdel in Ukraine, who was a former army commissar and a future famous journalist, relate that the staff of his politotdel set an example by learning to repair tractors themselves, getting to the fields at dawn; unlike previous party officials, they talked directly to the collective farmers in the fields.⁵⁵ An experienced American journalist praised the competence and dedication of the politotdel officials, and detected a shift in their style of work from force to assistance.⁵⁶

Further investigation is required to assess how far these efforts overcame the fear inspired by the purges for which the politotdely were responsible, and how far the endeavours of a small number of officials made a substantial difference to agricultural practices. There is no doubt that many politotdel officials appraised the situation in the countryside realistically, and reported its sorry state to their authorities. The political sector of the MTS for the Dnepropetrovsk region, for example, reported widespread famine and cases of cannibalism. The political sector in the Khar'kov region noted the lack of seed, food and fodder, and 'the deaths of draught animals on a catastrophic scale'. The Kazakhstan political sector estimated that at least two million people had departed because of hunger and illness.⁵⁷ At a higher level, Krinitskii, on behalf of the political administration of Narkomzem, sent elaborate recommendations to Stalin and Kaganovich about improving the payment system for collective farmers, based on materials from the politotdely.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ *Materialy MTS* (1934), 79–82, 86–92.

⁵⁵ D. I. Ortenberg, from the Sumskaya MTS, Khar'kov region (VIK, 3, 1983, 97–106). Although the politotdel officials got to the fields at dawn, the kolkhoz officials failed to turn up....

⁵⁶ Fischer (1935), 203–5.

⁵⁷ RGASPI, 112/26/9, 116; 112/9/4, 221–224; 112/47/7, 281–283, cited in OI, 6, 1992, 47 (Zelenin).

⁵⁸ RGASPI, 112/25/4, 172–165, dated November 17, 1933, published in TSD, iii, 680–4.

These representations, coming from experienced party members, undoubtedly contributed to the more realistic assessment of agriculture which prevailed increasingly in the Politburo.

The functions of the politotdely overlapped those of the district party committee. Typically, there was one MTS per district; at most, two or three. The politotdel was not subordinate to the district, however, but to the regional political sector for the MTS, to the political administration of Narkomzem, and to Kaganovich and the agricultural department of the central committee. The overlap between district party committee and MTS politotdel was the source of considerable friction.

At first the central authorities in Moscow strongly backed the politotdely against the objections of the district party committee. Kaganovich, addressing politotdel staff in March 1933, commented that 'there is enough work for a hundred district committees and politotdely in 1 district', and assured the politotdely that a 'really Bolshevik' district committee would welcome them with open arms.⁵⁹ Then, on June 15, the Politburo complained that district committees did not have direct links with the leading officials of the kolkhozy, and reproved 'a number' of them for their 'incorrect and at times non-party attitude to the politotdely of the sovkhozy and MTS'. It also authorised the politotdely to remove and transfer secretaries of kolkhoz party cells within their MTS. But it also instructed the politotdely to inform the district committees about such measures, reiterated that the district committee was responsible for 'soviet construction, finance, education and propaganda' throughout the district, and that it would continue to be responsible for territorial and production cells in villages not served by the MTS. Disagreements between politotdel and district committee were to be resolved by the first secretary of the regional party committee.⁶⁰

The tense relationship between the head of the politotdel and the director of the MTS, and between politotdel and district committee, was never satisfactorily resolved. At the XVII party congress in February 1934, Kaganovich implicitly revealed a widespread unease about the role of the politotdely when he insisted that 'it is harmful to raise now the question of the elimination of the politotdely', and that 'it is wrong to create around the politotdely an atmosphere

⁵⁹ P, March 5, 1933.

⁶⁰ For this resolution see n. 40 above.

of abolition'. He also envisaged that, in the future, politotdely would be transformed into district party committees (raikomy) or sub-committees within the district (podraikomy).⁶¹ The new party Statute approved by the congress stated that the central committee could establish politotdely in important 'backward sections of socialist construction', but added that 'insofar as they fulfil their shock tasks', they should become 'normal party organs'.⁶² The abolition of the politotdely was already contemplated at the moment of their greatest triumph; it followed ten months later.

(B) THE STRUCTURE OF THE KOLKHOZ

The second collectivisation drive reached its peak at the end of 1931. During 1932, the number of collective farmers declined by 717,000. Nearly the whole of the decline took place in the main grain regions. Although the total number of collective farmers in the USSR increased in the first three months of 1933, it continued to decline in the grain regions, apart from Ukraine and Siberia.⁶³

Number of households collectivised in main grain areas,
1932-33 (thousands)

	<i>Jan. 1,</i> <i>1932</i>	<i>April 1,</i> <i>1932</i>	<i>June 1,</i> <i>1932</i>	<i>Jan. 1,</i> <i>1933</i>	<i>April 1,</i> <i>1933</i>
Ukraine	3319	3314	3277	3135	3174
Central Volga	990	977	942	930	872
Lower Volga	769	728	711	661	650
North Caucasus	1084	1042	1018	962	891
West Siberia	759	733	724	758	773
East Siberia	236	231	222	208	214

(Continued)

⁶¹ *XVII s"ezd* (1934), 560. Earlier, Sheboldaev had argued that MTS must be transformed into sub-districts and not districts, 'because MTS-districts are too small to be able to manage all of them from the region' (*ibid.*, 150).

⁶² *Ibid.*, 677.

⁶³ *Source*: January 1, 1932, and June 1, 1932: *Ezhegodnik po sel. kh.* (1933), 442-7; April 1, 1932, January 1, 1933, and April 1, 1933: *Osnovnye pokazateli*, January-March 1933, 48-9. *Ezhegodnik po sel. kh.* (1933) also gives a series for April 1, 1932, with minor differences from the latter source.

	<i>Jan. 1, 1932</i>	<i>April 1, 1932</i>	<i>June 1, 1932</i>	<i>Jan. 1, 1933</i>	<i>April 1, 1933</i>
Kazakhstan	733	656	663	615	558
Net reduction over previous date in these areas		217	161	430	96
USSR	15424	15144	14991	14707	15015
Net reduction in USSR		280	153	284	+308

Notes: Net reduction in above areas, January 1, 1932–April 1, 1933: 760,000; net reduction in the USSR, January 1, 1932–April 1, 1933: 409,000.

The decline greatly alarmed the regional party authorities. On June 25, 1932, a resolution of the Central Volga regional committee noted 'mass departures from kolkhozy and attempts to remove horses' in a number of its districts (eight were named). According to the committee, this reflected the 'increase in wavering among the most unstable part of the middle peasants, which results from food difficulties'. This wavering was encouraged by 'idiotic rumours' that the central authorities intended to distribute the horses to the peasantry and dissolve the kolkhozy. The committee ruled that horses which had been removed must be returned, and that requests to leave the kolkhozy should be refused until the end of the harvest. 'Disorganisers and slackers' should be expelled, but the GPU should be used only against 'class-alien kulak elements which are engaged in anti-kolkhoz provocative activity'. The committee also called for the provision of incentives to collective farmers to remain in the kolkhozy. Advances of hay, vegetables and money should be issued against the remuneration due for labour days worked, more consumer goods should be supplied, and kolkhoz horses should be made available for the personal needs of the collective farmers. However, the committee pointed out that it could not supply food aid in the form of grain, because it had not received any from the centre. At the beginning of the harvest, however, district committees should supply collective farmers with an advance of one month's grain, plus additional grain for all members of the families of collective farmers who had worked well.⁶⁴

In the following month, a plenipotentiary of Kolkhoztsestr in the Central Black-Earth region reported that in a number of kolkhozy

⁶⁴ RGASPI, 17/21/2550, 294.

many peasants had left, taking their horses with them, and field work had ceased. The militia had seized the horses, and in order to force the peasants to disperse, had fired on them, killing three and wounding two; a considerable number of peasants had been arrested.⁶⁵ On July 17, Stalin, informed by Vareikis about the departures from the kolkhozy, reacted with uncharacteristic complacency:

Vareikis' communication about the departures of peasants from the kolkhozy need not be sent to our regional officials for the time being. These departures are a temporary occurrence. It is not worth shouting about them.⁶⁶

He had second thoughts. Three days later, he stated in a letter to Kaganovich that, as a result of the legalisation of kolkhoz trade, kulak elements 'will try to confuse the collective farmer and incite him to leave the kolkhoz'. His solution now was entirely characteristic:

I propose to instruct the OGPU and its local agencies:

a) to place the countryside under strict surveillance and remove and send to a concentration camp (on an individual basis) all active propagandists of the idea of leaving the kolkhoz.⁶⁷

Two weeks later, in his capacity as Moscow regional party secretary, Kaganovich reported to Stalin that, even in Moscow, 'in the last month we have recently had noticeable departures from the kolkhozy'. In one district the officials, adopting erroneous liberal tactics, had permitted those who departed to take over land. But party representatives in the district had exposed an 'SR-kulak group', demanded the return of state loans, and forbidden the division of kolkhoz land, which would have disorganised the harvest. As a result of such measures, the departures had ceased and a considerable number of peasants had returned to the kolkhozy.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ RGASPI, 631/5/75, 101–97 (report to Kolkhozsentr).

⁶⁶ SKP, 233.

⁶⁷ SKP, 235–6. This is the letter in which Stalin first suggested the measures which emerged as the notorious August 7 decree.

⁶⁸ SKP, 264 (dated August 5). In the Central Black-Earth region the number of collectivised households declined slightly between January 1 and May 1, but increased slightly during May. In the Moscow region they declined from 717,000 on January 2 to 683,000 on June 1. (*Ezhegodnik po sel. kh. 1931* (1933), 446–7, 442–3.)

But in the areas which suffered most from famine (with the notable exception of Ukraine) it was not until the worst of the hungry months had passed that the departures from the kolkhozy came to an end.

During 1931–33 the size and type of the kolkhozy remained fairly stable. Between January 1, 1931, and June 1, 1932, the average number of households per kolkhoz increased from 53 to 71 in the USSR as a whole; by April 1, 1933, it had declined slightly to 68. In 1931, when the total number of collective farmers expanded rapidly, several different trends were in operation. On the one hand, existing kolkhozy increased in size through the addition of new households.⁶⁹ However, most new kolkhozy were established in the grain-deficit regions, in which the average size of rural settlement, and the average kolkhoz, tended to be smaller. The average number of households in the new kolkhozy was only 36. In the major grain regions, however, few new kolkhozy were established (in the Lower Volga region the number of kolkhozy even declined, and the number of households per kolkhoz increased).⁷⁰ The net effect of these changes in 1931 was that the average size of kolkhoz somewhat increased.

After 1931, many small kolkhozy were amalgamated, in both the grain-surplus and the grain-deficit regions; and some of the large kolkhozy in the grain-surplus regions were divided up. The bureau of the North Caucasus regional party committee resolved on January 1, 1932, that 'in view of the serious defects which have been disclosed in the work and organisation of particularly large giant kolkhozy, kolkhozy with more than about 500–600 households shall be divided up'.⁷¹

In 1932, while the average size of the kolkhoz remained about the same in the grain-deficit regions, and declined in most grain-surplus regions, in Ukraine it increased, so that by April 1933 the average kolkhoz in Ukraine contained 10 per cent more households than

⁶⁹ The incomplete 1931 survey recorded that the number of households per kolkhoz existing in 1930 increased from 73.1 in autumn 1930 to 113.5 in spring 1931 (*Kolkhozy vesnoi 1931* (1932), 24–5; the kolkhozy in this survey were larger than the average for all existing kolkhozy).

⁷⁰ *Kolkhozy vesnoi 1931* (1932), 18–9.

⁷¹ *Kollektivizatsiya ... Severnogo Kavkaza* (Krasnodar, 1972), 492–3; the division was to be completed by February 15.

in March 1930:

Average number of households per kolkhoz (on 1st of month)

	<i>March 1930</i>	<i>October 1930</i>	<i>January 1931</i>	<i>April 1931</i>	<i>January 1932</i>	<i>April 1932</i>	<i>April 1933</i>
USSR	133	58	53	60	67	69	68
RSFSR	137	56	56	56	63	64	63
Central Volga	196	69	71	97	174	188	139
Lower Volga	481	110	140	187	240	227	203
North Caucasus	262	169	162	189	226	213	182
Ivanovo	81	28	27	25	27	27	29
Moscow	97	29	28	30	38	38	39
Ukraine	123	123	77	109	107	109	137

Sources: *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 442–3, and *Osnovnye pokazateli*, January–March 1933, 48–9.

In the USSR as a whole, the percentage of kolkhozy containing 15 households or fewer fell from 16.2 at the end of 1932 to 10.1 per cent at the end of 1933, while the percentage of kolkhozy with more than 500 households declined, from 0.9 to 0.5. But the difference in size of kolkhoz between regions remained immense.⁷²

Between 1930 and 1933, the artel form of kolkhoz, already three-quarters of the total number by the middle of 1930, became overwhelmingly predominant. Communes, the most socialised form of kolkhoz, remained significant in only a few regions. In the Ural region they contained 3.7 per cent of kolkhoz households on June 1, 1932; in the Azov–Black Sea region, they still contained 9.5 per cent of kolkhoz households at the end of 1933. In the Khar'kov, Dnepropetrovsk and Donetsk regions of Ukraine the percentage was also appreciably higher than average. The TOZy, the simplest form of kolkhoz, in which all animals, including draught animals, normally remained in private possession, were numerous only in Central Asia and some other national regions. In Kazakhstan, TOZy were revived as part of the reforms following the disasters of 1931–32;

⁷² For example: in the Ivanovo region at the end of 1933, 24.2 per cent of kolkhozy included 15 households or fewer, and there were no kolkhozy with more than 500 households; the equivalent percentages for the North Caucasus were 0.4 and 1.5. See *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 644–6.

in the cotton-growing Uzbek republic, by contrast, they were superseded by artels.⁷³

In 1931–33, as in 1930, the kolkhoz was managed by a chairman, nominally elected, and a small executive board. In 1931, the average board comprised 4.3 persons.⁷⁴ Great efforts were made to place politically reliable individuals at the head of the kolkhoz. The percentages of party members who were chairs of kolkhozy were remarkably high.⁷⁵ The chairs and board members were almost invariably men: in the spring of 1931, only 11.3 per cent of board members were women, and the percentage of women chairs was certainly lower.⁷⁶

The kolkhoz chair was supported by kolkhoz members responsible for different aspects of farm work, the most important of which was the person in charge of field work. The crucial figure in the daily administration of agriculture was the brigade leader. Following lengthy discussions in 1930, on July 7, 1931, a party resolution reiterated an earlier decision that brigade leaders were to be appointed by the kolkhoz board.⁷⁷ However, in some kolkhozy they continued to be elected at general meetings of the kolkhoz.⁷⁸ More frequently,

⁷³ The percentages of the different forms of kolkhoz were as follows (June 1 of each year):

	1930	1931	1932	1933
Communes	8.8	3.6	2.0	1.8
Artels	73.9	91.7	95.9	96.3
TOZy	17.3	4.7	2.1	1.9

Source: *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 636–8; for earlier years, see vol. 2, p. 185.

On June 1, 1933, the percentage of TOZy in the national republics were as follows: Kazakhstan ASSR, 29.3 (an increase from 5.3 in 1931); Turkmen SSR, 33.5; Tadjik SSR, 50.4; Uzbek SSR, 0.5.

⁷⁴ *Kolkhozy vesnoi 1931* (1932), 124–6; comprehensive figures for later years have not been traced.

⁷⁵ In 1933, in the 605 kolkhozy served by MTS which returned information, the percentage of kolkhoz chairs held by party members and candidate members in different regions was 28.6 (Moscow); 40.7 (Odessa); 51.9 (Central Black-Earth); 64.8 (Kiev); 70.5 (North Caucasus); 73.2 (Donetsk); 76.9 (Lower Volga); and 80.0 (Central Volga) – a crude average of 60.8 (*Materialy MTS* (1934), 46).

⁷⁶ *Kolkhozy vesnoi 1931* (1932), 124–6.

⁷⁷ P, July 16, 1931 (resolution of party central control commission and Rabkrin).

⁷⁸ See, for example, *Kollektivizatsiya ... Gruzii* (Tbilisi, 1970), 443 (report of labour sector of Georgian Kolkhoztsestr dated August 25, 1932).

the candidates were proposed by the board and then discussed at kolkhoz or brigade meetings.⁷⁹

The turnover of kolkhoz officials was very high. Apart from the large number leaving their posts voluntarily, a high percentage were dismissed. In 1933 alone, in kolkhozy served by MTS, 14.2 per cent of chairs were dismissed as 'class-alien' and a further 35.8 per cent as 'unsuitable'; the equivalent figures for brigade leaders were 8.6 and 22.6 (see Table 46(b)).

(C) THE KOLKHOZ BRIGADE

While production brigades were favoured by the party and agricultural authorities, throughout 1931 territorial brigades based on contiguous households (brigady-dvorki) were widespread in the Lower Volga region, North Caucasus, Ukraine and other grain regions, and even in the Central Black-Earth region. In the Lower Volga, they were reported to be responsible for 64 per cent of the 1931 kolkhoz harvest.⁸⁰ In Ukraine, some territorial brigades even established their own crop rotation, independent of the rest of the kolkhoz.⁸¹ In the North Caucasus, according to another report, 'the mass of collective farmers understand very little of the permanent brigade'.⁸² In the Central Volga region, groups of households which were located together were allocated their own equipment, with the object of transferring responsibility for farm work to the members themselves.⁸³ When production brigades did exist, they were often established on a seasonal or temporary basis, 'an amorphous irresponsible unit, distinguished by great instability'.⁸⁴

At the end of 1931, a *Pravda* editorial again criticised the brigade-dvorka in strong terms, an indication that it was still widespread.⁸⁵ Then on February 4, 1932, a Politburo resolution, published in the

⁷⁹ See, for example, NP, 9, 1932, 84 (survey of 19 kolkhozy in Lower Volga region).

⁸⁰ Report by Polovenko to the conference on production brigades of the Labour Sector of NIKI, March 5, 1932, discussing the 1931 experience (RGAE, 260/1/158, 1); for the Central Black-Earth region, see also SZe, April 12, 1931.

⁸¹ SZe, March 19, 1931.

⁸² RGAE, 260/1/158, 24 (report by Ershov).

⁸³ RGAE, 260/1/70, 135-137 (report by Ulasevich to conference of brigades in grain districts, September 8, 1931).

⁸⁴ SZe, November 16, 1931 (A. Shushakov).

⁸⁵ P, December 18, 1931.

daily press as a decision of the party central committee, insisted on 'the establishment of brigades with a permanent staff of collective farmers, so that as a rule they shall carry out all the main agricultural work over the whole year on definite parcels (uchastki) of land'; the brigade should be allocated machinery, implements and working animals for which it would be entirely responsible.⁸⁶ Following this decision, a confidential official report claimed that in the 1,491 MTS surveyed, as many as 82 per cent had permanent brigades.⁸⁷ This was certainly an exaggeration. A leading agricultural official noted in 1932 that the brigade based on households had 'deep social roots in the strength of custom'.⁸⁸ Many reports from the regions stated that territorial brigades were still widespread.⁸⁹ And in June 1932 a prominent article in *Pravda* pointed out that, at the time of the spring sowing, many kolkhozy had no annual plans, and made do with hastily compiled plans for the spring sowing – new brigades had to be organised for weeding and harvesting.⁹⁰ Even as late as February 1933 the Khar'kov regional party committee found it necessary to call for the immediate establishment of 'permanent production brigades, with specific land, implements and animals attached to them'.⁹¹

Nevertheless, in the course of 1932 the production brigade came to prevail over the territorial brigade in most kolkhozy. On January 30, 1933, a lengthy resolution of the TsIK session sought to take the permanence of the brigades a stage further. It called upon Narkomzem

to carry out, as a rule, in connection with the introduction of crop rotation, the attachment of parcels of land in the fields of the rotation to permanent kolkhoz field brigades for the period of the rotation [that is, for several years instead of one agricultural year].⁹²

But with crop rotation only just being re-established in many kolkhozy, this was an expression of hope rather than a plan.

⁸⁶ RGASPI, 17/3/871, art. 54/17 (approved by poll); P, February 6, 1932.

⁸⁷ RGAE, 7486/3/5059b, 124, dated April 30, 1932.

⁸⁸ B, 5–6, March 31, 1932, 60 (N. Anisimov).

⁸⁹ See, for example, Gushchin (1973), 326, on West Siberia.

⁹⁰ P, June 17, 1932 (Bumber); for examples, see RGASPI, 631/5/74, 51.

⁹¹ P, February 6, 1933 (plenum of February 4).

⁹² SZ, 1933, art. 41.

The size of the brigades varied considerably. The larger brigades tended to be established in the larger kolkhozy which prevailed in the main grain regions. In 1931, there were 46 able-bodied people per brigade in the USSR as a whole. But there were as many as 143 per brigade in the North Caucasus, and 98 in the Lower Volga region, compared with only 16 in the Leningrad region and 25 in the Moscow region.⁹³ We obtained these figures by simply dividing the average number of able-bodied persons per kolkhoz by the number of brigades per kolkhoz. They exaggerate the number of people actually working in each brigade. Many collective farmers did not belong to brigades (they were in the labour reserve of the kolkhoz, or away on *otkhod*, or they were housewives with children, or they simply failed to work on the collective lands). At first, brigades varied considerably in size within each region, or even within each district, even when the pattern of agricultural production was the same. In the North Caucasus, a case was recorded of a brigade containing 500–600 persons.⁹⁴ But another kolkhoz in the same region established twenty-four brigades with only three people in each brigade.⁹⁵

The normal field brigade in the grain regions included 40–60 persons,⁹⁶ and was thus far larger than the total number of able-bodied people in the average kolkhoz in the grain-deficit regions. Brigades concerned with flax and cotton were smaller, comprising between 20 and 40 people.⁹⁷ The field brigades were supplemented by much smaller ‘specialised brigades’, established for various kinds of animal husbandry and market gardening.⁹⁸

In the North Caucasus the large brigades operated at first as a single unit (known as ‘*skopom*’ – that is, *en masse*). Impressively large columns of tractors or horses were displayed frequently in posters and photographs. But any breakdown resulted in the whole column being held up.⁹⁹ In any case, large, undivided brigades were difficult to supervise. The practice elsewhere, eventually also adopted in the

⁹³ Estimated from data in *Kolkhozy vesnoi 1931* (1932), 18–9, 110–11. Comparable figures for later years have not been traced.

⁹⁴ SZe, April 27, 1931.

⁹⁵ SZe, April 12, 1931.

⁹⁶ RGAE, 260/1/158, 1, 30 (reports to conference of March 5, 1932, referring to the Lower Volga and the North Caucasus).

⁹⁷ P, April 11, 1932 (Bumber).

⁹⁸ See, for example, B, 7, April 15, 1931, 93 (Tataev).

⁹⁹ See, for example, P, May 18, 1931 (report from Slavyanskii district in the Kuban’).

North Caucasus, was to divide larger brigades into smaller 'links' (zven'ya) or groups, responsible for specific agricultural processes or particular areas. According to a survey undertaken in the spring of 1932, inverse economies of scale operated: the smaller the link, the greater the amount of land harrowed or sown per implement.¹⁰⁰

Whether 'links' should exist, and how independent they should be, continued to be disputed throughout the history of Soviet collective agriculture. In the years we are examining, 1931–33, the appropriate degree of autonomy for the brigade itself, and for the links where these existed, was not resolved satisfactorily. At one extreme, some kolkhozy, following the example of industry, established 'khozaschet brigades', for both the territorial and production brigades.¹⁰¹ Each khozaschet brigade had its own earnings and paid for MTS and other services from them. This arrangement was rejected as early as the spring of 1931 by Tataev, the Kolkhoztsestr official responsible for labour problems, on the grounds that each brigade would become a separate small kolkhoz.¹⁰² An article in the agricultural newspaper was even headed 'Kulak "khozaschet": each brigade is a kolkhoz for itself'.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, for a time these brigades continued to exist. In April 1932, an article in *Pravda* cited a remarkable example of an attempt in Ukraine to equalise the position of each khozaschet brigade by allocating the same amount of good, average and poor land to each brigade. A kind of strip system re-emerged.¹⁰⁴

The composition of brigades was subject to much experimentation and argument. An OGPU report described a kolkhoz in which 'the brigades are composed according to class: well-to-do and middle peasants are included in one brigade, and poor peasants in another, and the latter are given unprofitable work'.¹⁰⁵ Elsewhere, brigades were divided into groups according to age, but the youngsters were too inexperienced to cope.¹⁰⁶ For obvious reasons, 'good and skilful workers try to get into the same brigade' – with the

¹⁰⁰ RGAE, 260/1/168, 47–49 (this was a comprehensive survey of the activity of brigades in several regions). See also Anisimov, ed. (1931), 65–6.

¹⁰¹ For an example of khozaschet brigades in the North Caucasus and in the Buryat ASSR, see Anisimov, ed. (1931), 32.

¹⁰² B, 7, April 15, 1931, 54.

¹⁰³ SZe, April 12, 1931.

¹⁰⁴ P, April 4, 1932 (Bumber).

¹⁰⁵ RGAE, 7486/37/235, 25 (dated January 25, 1932, referring to Ivanovo Industrial region).

¹⁰⁶ SZe, April 27, 1931 (North Caucasus).

inevitable result that other brigades worked badly and were poorly remunerated.¹⁰⁷

Some brigades consisted entirely of women.¹⁰⁸ There were many complaints, however, that women were not permitted to be members of permanent brigades, and, together with adolescents, were brought into field brigades only at peak periods.¹⁰⁹ Following tradition, women did the weeding and looked after the livestock.¹¹⁰ Surprisingly, these anecdotal reports are contradicted by more systematic data for kolkhozy served by MTS, relating to seventeen regions, which show that, in 1933, women undertook a higher proportion of field work than men.¹¹¹

The most intractable problem in establishing permanent brigades was the inherently seasonal character of agriculture. While family farms occasionally employed artisans or others as temporary labour at peak periods, traditionally peasants simply worked longer hours during the spring sowing and the harvest, and at other times took on other tasks in the farm or outside it; they were all members of the household as an economic unit. An agricultural specialist from the North Caucasus pointed out that, in kolkhozy, 'brigades attempt to retain reserves within the brigade in order to manoeuvre with them during the peak periods', but added that this was undesirable from the point of view of the management, because it meant that insufficient labour was available for other agricultural tasks or for otkhod.¹¹² Experience favoured the establishment of a formal or informal central labour reserve for the whole kolkhoz, available to the brigades as required. Outside the peak periods, members of the reserve would engage in building bridges or roads, or in repair work, or simply 'just sat in the office'.¹¹³ In practice, the 'reserve' tended to be housewives, old people and schoolchildren, who did not generally engage in agricultural work.¹¹⁴ Whatever the administrative devices

¹⁰⁷ P, July 3, 1932 (Kalinin).

¹⁰⁸ Oskol'kov (Rostov, 1973), 280.

¹⁰⁹ B, 5–6, March 31, 1932, 68 (Anisimov); NP, 9, 1932, 79.

¹¹⁰ B, 7, April 15, 1931, 56 (Tataev); NP, 5–7, 1932, 164. See also p. 382.

¹¹¹ In these kolkhozy, women comprised 50 per cent of all workers, but 54 per cent of field workers, while more men than women worked with farm animals (*Materialy MTS* (1934), 147). This may have been because more men were required to supplement the reduced level of draught power and were described as working with farm animals.

¹¹² RGAE, 260/1/158, 38–40 (Ershov, conference of March 5, 1932).

¹¹³ RGAE, 260/1/168, 19 (spring 1932 survey).

¹¹⁴ RGAE, 260/1/158, 30, 40.

adopted, the huge migration of labour to the towns and the industrial building sites, at its height in 1931, meant that in many areas the problem of finding enough labour for the seasonal peaks would always trouble the kolkhozy.

The decision that specific horses and implements should be attached to each field brigade left open the question of the responsibility for their upkeep. By 1932, horses were normally housed in collective stables, where they were maintained by full-time grooms, with roughly twelve horses for every groom.¹¹⁵ In North Caucasus, however, grooms were abolished, and each horse was attached to a particular member of a field brigade, with the object of avoiding 'depersonalisation'. According to the 1932 survey, however, 'in fact all you got was uniquely poor maintenance of the horse'. The responsible collective farmer was too tired to look after the horse when he returned from work, and at night the horses were left hungry even when fodder was available. In some places, a small team (*supryaga*) of a couple of collective farmers looked after each horse, but apparently this led to them receiving too many labour days.¹¹⁶

Eventually, on February 10, 1933, the Politburo approved a compromise:

In order to eliminate depersonalisation in the use of horses, a collective farmer shall be attached to each pair of horses, to work with them during the whole period of agricultural work. Responsibility for the preservation, careful maintenance and prompt feeding of the horses entrusted to the collective farmer shall rest on him, together with the groom.¹¹⁷

(D) THE INCOME OF THE COLLECTIVE FARMER

(i) *Remuneration from the kolkhoz: the problem of the labour day*

By the time of the VI Congress of soviets in March 1931 the authorities had finally decided that collective farmers must be paid in labour days (see vol. 2, pp. 158–9). But the labour-day system of

¹¹⁵ See RGAE, 260/1/158, 44.

¹¹⁶ RGAE, 260/1/168, 60–64.

¹¹⁷ RGASPI, 17/3/916, art. 45/10 (approved by poll). For the corresponding decree of Sovnarkom, promulgated on the same day, see SZ, 1933, art. 50.

remuneration did not go entirely unchallenged. Some officials hankered after a wage system. Immediately before the VI Congress a certain Gushchin, in a memorandum to the central authorities, argued that groups of collective farmers, or individual collective farmers, should be remunerated on the basis of fixed production prices – in effect, they would receive a wage. Gushchin argued that, as the value of a labour day was not known in terms of money or payment in kind, the collective farmer would lack incentives to work better: the kulaks would argue that ‘*the collective farmer receives for his work empty labour days which are worth nothing*’.

In reply to Gushchin, Yurkin, head of Kolkhoztsestr, in a memorandum dated March 7, 1931, bluntly stated:

The main danger in the organisation of labour would be to put the kolkhozy in the position of sovkhozy. If piecework were evaluated in money, this would transfer the collective farmers on to a firm wage, and would push them into becoming parasites who make demands on the state.

Yurkin pointed out that, in 1930, piecework had in fact often been evaluated in money, and as a result many kolkhozy had found themselves in debt to their collective farmers.¹¹⁸

The issue was raised again in a somewhat different form after the 1931 harvest. Vareikis proposed that every collective farmer should be attached to a particular land area for the whole economic year, whether working in a brigade or as an individual. The whole product of each area should be sold to the state via the kolkhoz, and payments by the state should be transferred entirely to the collective farmers, who would themselves pay the kolkhoz for the machinery and animals with which they were supplied. This would encourage the initiative and independence of the collective farmers. Vareikis’ proposal was firmly rejected by Tataev in memoranda addressed to Stalin on December 11 and 25, 1931. He claimed that the result would be ‘the strengthening of petty-bourgeois tendencies, the formation of closed groups within the kolkhoz, and possible attempts of

¹¹⁸ For similar memoranda by Sheboldaev and Tataev, see RGASPI, 631/5/60, 102, 102ob. (memorandum from Sheboldaev, dated February 28, 1931), 98–99ob. (memorandum from Yurkin), 93–97 (memorandum from Tataev to Stalin and Molotov, n.d.). Gushchin’s memorandum has not been available, and is summarised from the quotations given by his critics.

separate groups of collective farmers to break away from the kolkhoz'. The present system was correct in principle; the trouble lay in the failure to apply a piece-work system, or in the use of sham or spurious piece work: 'there is no need to discover any new Americas'.¹¹⁹

A few weeks later, the North Caucasus regional party committee prepared a draft resolution suggesting that, in the spring of 1932 '*piece payments in kind should be assessed for each specific task*'. It again fell to Tataev to point out that this would mean that the amount of grain to be paid out per labour day would be determined in advance, before the size of the harvest or the amount of grain to be collected by the state was known.¹²⁰

While no more was heard of these various proposals, they reveal the extent to which, at this late date, prominent party officials were dissatisfied with the labour-day system. Documents in the archives frequently report cases in which the collective farmers themselves called for a firm wage. A report on the results of the spring sowing in 1932 asserted that 'kulak agitation against the sowing turned on the demand for a firm wage'.¹²¹ Another report noted that in the Central Black-Earth region peasants demanded a minimum of one ruble per labour day.¹²² Such demands occasionally found their way into the open press: the agricultural newspaper reported that in a Belorussian kolkhoz a 'small group of peasants' had called for regular wages, complaining that piece work meant 'three or four days work for one day's pay'.¹²³

Payment according to labour days was delayed by the lack of printed labour books, or even forms for the use of brigade leaders or their assistants. On March 19, 1931, the appropriate sectors of Narkomzem and Kolkhoztseentr approved an extremely elaborate set of forms for recording kolkhoz activities.¹²⁴ Group IV of the forms, 'Labour Records', included Form No. 19, to be issued to every brigade leader, designed to show the production instructions

¹¹⁹ RGASPI, 631/5/60, 32–40, 27–31; Vareikis' memorandum has not been available.

¹²⁰ RGASPI, 631/5/60, 15–17 (dated January 2, 1932). The secretary of the North Caucasian committee was Sheboldaev, who twelve months earlier had firmly rejected Gushchin's somewhat more radical proposal (see n. 118 above).

¹²¹ RGAE, 260/11/168, 107.

¹²² RGASPI, 631/5/75, 70.

¹²³ SZe, March 28, 1931.

¹²⁴ The forms appear in full in SZe, March 23, 1931; they had been approved by Rabkrin.

(naryady) to the brigade, and their outcome. Group IV also included the text of a 14-page Labour Book (or more elaborate Membership Book), to be issued to every 'able-bodied male and female collective farmer', in which the labour days were to be recorded.¹²⁵ At first, the kolkhozy were supposed to prepare the forms themselves, but the vast majority of kolkhozy lacked both expertise and paper. If work for the kolkhoz was recorded at all, it was simply as the number of hours or days worked. In May, however, with the spring sowing almost over, the central printing presses worked in three shifts in order to produce the vast number of Labour Books required. Not surprisingly, the task was not completed until the end of the month.¹²⁶ According to central records, Labour Books had been issued to only 19.7 per cent of kolkhozy by June 20. Following a five-day campaign which sought to secure the issue of Labour Books to all collective farmers, the percentage reached 54.8 by July 10.¹²⁷ In remoter areas, the issue of the books lagged by many months, but by June 1, 1932, over 90 per cent of collective farmers had received them.¹²⁸

According to the regulations, the number of labour days earned depended on both the type and the amount of work. At first the scales were determined by the kolkhoz or the region. A more skilled collective farmer, such as a ploughman, was typically allocated 1.5 labour days for a standard day's work, while someone less skilled, such as a watchman, received only 0.75 labour days. Where piece-work was feasible, norms for a standard day's work were fixed (such as 0.6 hectares of ploughland). Production in excess of the norm earned additional fractions of labour days.¹²⁹

Labour records included a column for noting the 'quality' of work, and provided for a reduction for bad quality.¹³⁰ This provision was ignored in practice. In December 1931, Tataev, in a trenchant memorandum to Stalin, claimed that piece work '*has so far not yet been applied correctly in practice and in many cases is inherently false*': 'The falsity results from the calculation of piece work according to

¹²⁵ Although labour days were recorded for every *individual*, a monthly summary for each *household* formed the basis for issuing remuneration.

¹²⁶ See RGAE, 7486/2/501, 1-4 (report sent to Central Black-Earth region by Narkomzem and Kolkhoztsestr, dated May 31).

¹²⁷ P, July 18, 1931. For the campaign, see SZe, June 22 and 24, 1931.

¹²⁸ RGAE, 7486/3/5059b, 124.

¹²⁹ For examples, see *Kollektivizatsiya ... Severnogo Kavkaza* (Krasnodar, 1972), 485-9.

¹³⁰ SZe, March 23, 1931.

the number of hectares, and not according to the quantity and quality of production obtained per hectare.' Similarly, the piece rate for milking was fixed in terms of the number of cows milked, not the yield of milk. As a result, '*the collective farmer strives for area, and to serve a large number of animals, and not for yield*'.¹³¹

This fundamental defect was not corrected, and it was only after considerable exertions that labour days were recorded in terms of hectares. In July 1931, a survey in *Pravda* claimed that 44.7 per cent of kolkhozy had established 'piece-work norms', while the Lower Volga region even claimed that piece work had been introduced in as many as 93.3 per cent of its kolkhozy. In December, a further *Pravda* article claimed that the 'main mass' of kolkhozy went over to piece work after the June 1931 plenum of the party central committee, and that labour days were properly recorded.¹³² At best, these assertions were a considerable exaggeration. An OGPU report at this time stated bluntly: 'Many kolkhozy have not yet gone over to piece work. Equalisation has not been eliminated.'¹³³

In 1932, in conditions of mounting hunger and disillusionment, record keeping failed to improve, at least in the main grain areas. On January 30, 1933, a TsIK resolution complained that 'the recording of labour and output, without which the kolkhoz economy cannot exist, is in most cases organised in an unsatisfactory manner'.¹³⁴ After the politotdely of the MTS were established, they reported at the end of 1933 that 'in many brigades record keepers were absent', while

in a large number of kolkhozy served by MTS labour records were disgracefully organised. The collective farmer did not know how much he had worked, and as a result his interest in the labour day dwindled, labour discipline was shattered and the productivity of labour declined.¹³⁵

Brigade leaders were at first instructed to record separately the work undertaken by every individual within the brigade. Thus

¹³¹ P, July 18, 1931; RGASPI, 631/5/60, 34-5, dated December 11, 1931.

¹³² P, December 17, 1931 (V. Gailis).

¹³³ RGAE, 7486/37/235, 25 (report of secret political department, dated January 19, 1932).

¹³⁴ *Kollektivizatsiya* (1957), 446.

¹³⁵ *Materialy MTS* (1934), 70.

Ptukha insisted that 'to record piece work for the whole brigade, without taking individual labour into account, is equalisation'.¹³⁶ Soon after Ptukha's statement, however, the agricultural newspaper argued that it was impracticable to record the piece work of individuals.¹³⁷ During the harvest of 1931 and the spring sowing of 1932, piece work in most kolkhozy was recorded for the whole brigade, or for the group within a brigade. This was the case even for such activities as weeding, where it was easier to record piece work on an individual basis.¹³⁸ On July 5, 1932, the resolution of Sovnarkom and the party central committee officially decided that 'in all kolkhozy everywhere brigade (or group) methods of piece work must be used'.¹³⁹

Norms for the amount of sowing, ploughing or harvesting which could be undertaken in a day naturally varied according to the type of soil and the implements used. There was much confusion about who should prepare the norms. In Ukraine, they were prepared by the Ukrainian Kolkhoztsetr, but an article in the Moscow party journal argued that they should be the responsibility of the district and of the kolkhoz itself.¹⁴⁰ In most of the USSR in 1931 the kolkhozy prepared their own norms in accordance with local conditions. Whether norms were prepared centrally or locally, complaints frequently appeared in the agricultural press that the norms were too low, 'oriented on the slackers'.¹⁴¹ In the Kuban', a kolkhoz based the labour day on the norm for an adolescent working a six-hour day, and even after objections by visiting correspondents it increased the norm only slightly.¹⁴²

Following this experience, in the spring of 1932 the Ukrainian authorities recommended that the norms should be increased. But the new norms were fixed mechanically for all kolkhozy without allowing for the quality of the soil. When a kolkhoz proposed to reduce its norms, the district authorities insisted that the only revision which could be made was upwards. Partly because of the poor condition of the horses and partly because of the low morale of the

¹³⁶ P, June 18, 1931.

¹³⁷ SZe, July 6, 1931.

¹³⁸ See the survey of 18 kolkhozy in various regions in spring 1932 in RGAE, 260/1/168, 47-9.

¹³⁹ SZ, 1932, art. 312. For collective piece work in the mining industry, see vol. 4, pp. 125-6.

¹⁴⁰ B, 11, June 15, 1931, 60, 62 (A. Nikanorov).

¹⁴¹ See SZe, April 17, May 5, 1931 (both referring to Ukraine); SRSKh, 8, 1931, 90; P, May 12, 1931 (Yurkin).

¹⁴² SZe, May 17, 1931.

collective farmers, labour productivity in Ukraine was greatly reduced during the spring sowing, and the norms were not fulfilled.¹⁴³

This situation also prevailed more generally. In consequence, collective farmers engaged in field work tended to earn less labour days than watchmen or storekeepers, whose work was more regular. On February 28, 1933, a Narkomzem order sought to remedy this deficiency by increasing the ratio of labour days to calendar days for field workers. But the results were unsatisfactory, for two main reasons. First, auxiliary workers necessarily worked more calendar days than basic field workers. A survey of 185 kolkhozy in various regions conducted by the Political Administration of the MTS showed that, at the height of the agricultural season, between March 1 and July 1, 1933, watchmen worked on average 100 days out of the 122 calendar days available, as against 79 days for those engaged in basic field work. Secondly, most of those engaged in field work failed to reach the norms laid down by Narkomzem in the decree of February 28. Those engaged in ploughing reached only 51 per cent of the norm, and those engaged in sowing reached only 59 per cent. Auxiliary workers, on the other hand, received the standard number of labour days.

In practice, kolkhozy adjusted the earnings of the field workers so that they received somewhat more than one labour day per calendar day worked. Nevertheless, the end result was that field workers earned less labour days than dairymaids, and only slightly more than watchmen.¹⁴⁴

The year 1931 was the first in which labour days – with many exceptions – were the main method for recording collective farmers' entitlement to remuneration from the kolkhoz. Throughout 1931–33, in every region the number of labour days earned by the average able-bodied collective farmer in a calendar year was less than half the number of calendar days (see Table 38).¹⁴⁵ Several

¹⁴³ RGAE, 260/1/168, 37–8.

¹⁴⁴ For details, see RGASPI, 112/25/4, 172–165 (dated November 17, 1933), and 46–32 (n.d.).

¹⁴⁵ In 1933, the total number of labour days earned in the 141,000 kolkhozy for which data were available (out of a total of 225,000) were distributed between different activities as follows (percentages):

Field agriculture	54.3	Non-agricultural activities	6.8
Pasture	4.2	Administration and maintenance	5.7
Horticulture etc.	3.8	Cultural	1.3
Total agriculture	62.3	Other	10.3
Livestock	13.6	Total labour days	100.0
Total farming	75.9		

(*Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 654).

factors were involved. Agriculture was seasonal in character. Peasants had been cajoled into joining the kolkhozy, and tried to avoid working for them. Women earned far fewer labour days than men: while men traditionally undertook the field work, women looked after the children, the cottage, the land round the cottage (the household plot) and the animals (usually privately owned) (see, however, p. 374). In certain regions, land was abundant, and collective work was 'rationed': heads of households in large families were allocated more collective work, to provide them with a fair amount of food per head. Incomplete records indicate that the average number of labour days per year earned by an able-bodied person increased by only just over 1 per cent in 1932. In 1933, on the other hand, the collective farmers were much more aware that it was necessary to work on the collective land if they were to receive grain to feed their families. The number of labour days increased by between 23 and 34 per cent.¹⁴⁶

The kolkhoz management was remunerated by allocating them a certain number of labour days. The legislation provided that there must not be a 'large gap' between their labour-day scale and that for skilled collective farmers.¹⁴⁷ However, as the allocation was in practice the responsibility of the management, the excessive number of labour days they made available to themselves was a frequent source of complaint.¹⁴⁸ At first, brigade leaders were often full-time administrators, and received a specific number of labour days.¹⁴⁹ But by 1932 they normally worked as members of the brigade, and their entitlement formed part of the entitlement of the brigade as a whole.

(ii) *Remuneration from the kolkhoz: payment in money*

Part of the production of the collectively-worked land and from the collectively-owned animals was transferred to the state as compulsory

¹⁴⁶ These figures were estimated by us from the data in Table 38, weighting each of the six regions and two republics by the number of households in the kolkhozy on July 1, 1931, and June 1, 1932. These areas included 6.89 million of the 13.6 million households collectivised on July 1, 1931.

¹⁴⁷ Decree of Rabkrin and party central control commission dated July 9, 1931 (P, July 10, 1931).

¹⁴⁸ See, for example, the 1932 OGPU report (RGAE, 260/1/168, 84).

¹⁴⁹ SZe, May 27, 1931.

collections, paid for at low fixed prices. Various kinds of 'decentralised collections' were sold to the state and other agencies at somewhat higher prices. Part of the remaining production was sold on the market at much higher prices. Part was retained by the kolkhoz for seed and other collective uses (see below). The rest was distributed in kind to the collective farmers, mainly in accordance with the number of labour days worked. The money income of the kolkhoz from the sale of production and other activities (on which, see below) was distributed in a similar way.

The available estimates of the money income of the kolkhoz are rough and incomplete. The estimates by Narkomfin in Table 33(a) show that an increasing proportion of kolkhoz income was obtained from 'unplanned' sales on the market, and from non-agricultural activities; according to these estimates, these two sources provided 48 per cent of kolkhoz money income in 1932.

The various channels through which kolkhoz money income was distributed are shown in Table 33(b). A decree of July 12, 1931 provided that sums should be set aside to cover debts, taxes and capital construction, and for 'special social funds'.¹⁵⁰ The principal monetary source of capital investment was the 'Indivisible Fund'. The legislation of 1930 provided that 10 per cent of net income should be allocated to the Indivisible Fund, and 5 per cent to the Social-Cultural Fund (see vol. 2, p. 128). Subsequently, complicated and confusing legislation was adopted about these percentages and how they should be calculated.¹⁵¹ In Table 33(b), the percentage of kolkhoz money income actually allocated to the Indivisible Fund is estimated at 10.7 per cent for 1930; 16.7 per cent for 1931; and 14.8 per cent for 1932.

In 1930 and 1931, collective farmers were supposed to be allocated 5 per cent of the gross harvest in proportion to the property they had transferred to the kolkhozy (see vol. 2, pp. 143, 152-3). The 5 per cent was reduced to 2 per cent in districts of comprehensive collectivisation, but this provision was sometimes applied illegitimately by kolkhozy in other districts.¹⁵² According to the Narkomfin estimates, the money transferred to collective farmers in this way formed quite a high proportion of the total money payments to collective farmers

¹⁵⁰ P, July 13, 1931 (decree of Narkomzem and Kolkhozsentr of the USSR and RSFSR, approved by Sovnarkom).

¹⁵¹ See, for example, the decree of Kolkhozsentr in P, September 20, 1931.

¹⁵² P, September 20, 1931 (decree of Kolkhozsentr of the USSR and RSFSR).

(27.2 per cent in 1930, and 13.9 per cent in 1931).¹⁵³ But as the payment was made only in money, this was a trivial proportion of the real income of the collective farmer. It was discontinued in 1932.

The residual money income was distributed to collective farmers in proportion to the number of labour days earned. Remuneration varied greatly by region. In 1933, for example, it amounted to 134 rubles per household in Moscow but only 25 rubles in the Central Volga region.¹⁵⁴

(iii) Remuneration from the kolkhoz: payment in kind

Payments in kind from the kolkhoz were far more important to the collective-farm households than the money payments. The decree of July 12, 1931 (see p. 383) provided that, after the requirements of the state for grain and other products had been satisfied, the kolkhozy should transfer a further part of their food production into a 'Seed Fund', an 'Insurance Seed Fund', and a 'Special Food Fund' (also known as a Social-Cultural Fund'). According to the decree, the Seed Fund should be sufficient to enable the extension of the sown area by 10–20 per cent in 1932. The Insurance Fund should amount to 10–15 per cent of the Seed Fund. The Special Food Fund would enable the supply of food to families with a small number of able-bodied persons, or none, to village teachers, agronomists and vets, and to otkhodniki and their families.¹⁵⁵ By a later provision, kolkhozy were also supposed to supply a food ration to tractor drivers who belonged to the kolkhoz and were also on the staff of the MTS, even though the MTS worked for several kolkhozy.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ According to Table 33(b), the payment amounted to 150 million rubles in 1930, and 179 in 1931, as compared with labour-day payments of 402 and 1,105 million rubles. In Table 36, however, the percentage of earnings from the deduction is much smaller.

¹⁵⁴ Regional data will be found in the sources for Table 33.

¹⁵⁵ P, July 13, 1931. The amount of food allocated to the Special Food Fund was normally supposed to be 2 per cent of the gross harvest (P, September 20, 1931). Village teachers were supposed to receive a ration from the kolkhoz or sovkhoz not less than that received by industrial workers on List 2 (SZ, 1931, art. 425, dated October 28).

¹⁵⁶ RGAE, 7486/1/40, 72, dated January 15, 1933, stated, however, that the ration was to be issued through the MTS and was to be provided by the kolkhoz in proportion to the number of labour days the driver earned in the kolkhoz concerned.

Our account of the annual sowing campaigns has shown the extreme difficulties involved in enforcing the provision about the Seed Fund. In March 1932, as a result of the lack of seed grain, the areas which had suffered from drought in 1931 were permitted to incorporate the Insurance Fund into the general Seed Fund.¹⁵⁷ But it seems doubtful whether anything like an Insurance Fund ever existed in the kolkhozy. In any case, the use of the term 'Fund' for any of these activities is misleading. At a time of acute shortage, the setting aside of grain and other products for seed and fodder (except perhaps in the autumn just after the harvest) was a makeshift affair.

After the Seed Fund had been set aside, a major difficulty in arranging the remuneration of collective farmers in kind from the remainder of the harvest was that the issue of some grain and other products, as well as money, had to begin before the harvest was complete and the accounts were settled. Advances in kind and money had to be made to the collective farmers as incentives to work – and in these grim years grain often had to be issued as soon as the harvest came in if the peasants were not to starve. In 1931, the decree of July 12 provided that collective farmers would be issued with advances dependent on the number of labour days they had earned, and that 'up to two-thirds' of their entitlement should be distributed to them by November 1, and the rest by January 15, 1932. But when the advances were made, the kolkhoz management did not know the size of the harvest or the proportion of it to which the collective farmers would be entitled, and this incorporated an arbitrary element into the proceedings. In the following year, the decree on the harvest campaign, dated July 5, 1932, and referring specifically to grain, provided austere that the advances in kind should amount to 10–15 per cent of the grain actually threshed. The remainder of the food and fodder grain should be issued when the collections had been delivered to the state from the early grain crops, and the Seed Funds had been set aside.¹⁵⁸

Advances inherently involved 'equalisation'. The collective farmers normally remained in the fields all day during sowing and harvesting, and when the field was a long way from the village they set up camp ('tabor') overnight. At this time they often received collective meals (classified as 'public catering' – *obshchestvennoe pitanie*) from the kolkhoz. The number of meals consumed in the fields during the

¹⁵⁷ RGAE, 7486/19/132, 146 (Narkomzem order of March 10).

¹⁵⁸ For the advances, see also pp. 124–5 above.

agricultural season was substantial. Thus the average adult received 26.9 meals in the Donetsk region in July 1932, and 43.9 meals in Odessa region in September of the same year.¹⁵⁹ Meals were also issued to children.¹⁶⁰ Crucially, the meals normally included a daily allowance of bread.

According to the legislation, the food received in meals and advances was ultimately deducted from the final settlement.¹⁶¹ But often this provision was not complied with. An order of Kolkhoztsestr published towards the end of September 1931 complained that in many districts advances were issued 'per eater', and that even when food was issued in principle on the basis of labour days, needy families frequently received grain in excessive quantities.¹⁶² A few weeks later, a resolution published on October 19 condemned the issue of advances per eater as 'kulak equalisation', and insisted that future food issues must be adjusted to correct this.¹⁶³ However, during the spring sowing of 1932, those working in the fields frequently received 'chits (*cheki*)' from the brigade leader entitling them to bread.¹⁶⁴

Kaganovich reported to Stalin that when the Politburo discussed the advances from the 1932 harvest, some members still proposed that they should be issued per eater, but were overruled (see p. 124). Nevertheless, advances were still frequently issued for each calendar day worked. A resolution of the Lower Volga regional party committee, referring to the 'first few months' of the 1932 harvest, referred to the 'predatory squandering of grain on public catering, the self-seeking, disordered and chaotic issue of advances, grabbing them straight from the threshing floor without recording the number of labour days earned'.¹⁶⁵ In the spring of 1933, those taking part in

¹⁵⁹ RGAE, 1562/76/17, 28; 1562/77/18, 28. The monthly issue of meals fell to only 1.8 per adult in Odessa region in December 1932. These figures were obtained by dividing the total number of meals issued during the month by the number of adults.

¹⁶⁰ In September 1932, 6.8 meals were issued per child in Odessa region, but only 1.2 meals in the Donetsk region in July 1932.

¹⁶¹ See EZh, October 19, 1931 (resolution of presidium of party central control commission and collegium of Rabkrin).

¹⁶² P, September 20, 1931.

¹⁶³ EZh, October 19, 1931.

¹⁶⁴ RGAE, 260/1/168, 28.

¹⁶⁵ RGASPI, 17/27/2771, 9ob., dated July 7, 1933. For a similar Central Volga decision, see RGASPI, 17/21/2552, 22, 22ob., 31–32; the decision approved the practice of issuing food differentially according to the extent to which the brigade had fulfilled the norms.

the spring sowing in the famine areas often simply received a bread ration on the days on which they worked (see p. 120).

A Central Volga resolution insisted that, in 1933, advances should be issued only from kolkhoz stocks, and not from the current harvest.¹⁶⁶ But even after the 1933 harvest the practice of issuing bread or flour as a daily ration continued. The party bureau of the Volga German ASSR noted that a kolkhoz had 'issued 45 per cent of threshed grain as an advance and retained the forbidden practice of using grain for public catering in addition to the advance'. Moreover, a directive from the district (kanton) had instructed kolkhozy to issue between 500 and 1,000 grams of grain as a daily advance, irrespective of the state of the threshing.¹⁶⁷

The main distribution of food grain for the collective farmers and fodder grain for their animals was supposed to take place only after the state collections were complete and the Seed Funds had been set aside. The higher authorities often complained that the grain for labour days had been issued too early. After the 1932 harvest they tried to claw some of it back from the collective farmers (see p. 194). On the other hand, many complaints also appeared that kolkhozy had unwarrantably delayed the final distribution in kind.¹⁶⁸

The decision that collective farmers should be remunerated only according to labour days earned, and that labour days should be recorded on the basis of piece work, was slow to take effect. Narkomzem and Kolkhoztsestr themselves at first authorised a certain element of equalisation. Their order of July 12, 1931, provided that, in every kolkhoz, an upper limit should be fixed for the amount of food grain to be issued to the collective farmer who had earned most labour days. Above that limit, payment should be in money, and not in kind.¹⁶⁹ According to an OGPU report, grain in 1931 was in fact issued per eater in many kolkhozy. Even when labour days were recorded, the record was often inaccurate, or simply coincided with the number of calendar days worked.¹⁷⁰ The Sovnarkom and party central committee decree of July 5, 1932, complained in retrospect of the '*equalising approach* in deciding the amount of issues in kind per labour day' adopted in 1931 – and, in implicit criticism of

¹⁶⁶ For this resolution, see previous note.

¹⁶⁷ RGASPI, 17/21/3132, 221–222, dated August 17, 1933.

¹⁶⁸ See, for example, I, February 26, 1934.

¹⁶⁹ P, July 13, 1931.

¹⁷⁰ RGAE, 7486/37/235, 27–7 (report dated January 19, 1932).

the order of July 12, 1931, it banned in future 'the restriction of the amount issued in kind which occurred in the practice of last year'. But in many kolkhozy the issue of grain from the 1932 harvest was still a haphazard affair. When the politotdely were established at the beginning of 1933, they complained that the records in the kolkhozy were often so poor that the collective farmers did not know how much work they had done.¹⁷¹ It was only after the 1933 harvest that Postyshev was able to claim with any truth that 'collective farmers have learned to value the labour day'.¹⁷²

The proportion of the grain harvest distributed to the collective farmers was quite small. All the available figures on grain distributed to collective farmers for labour days include advances and 'public catering' to those working in the fields. Even so, according to a survey of 12,707 kolkhozy, in the USSR as a whole, grain distributed amounted to only 24.1 per cent of the gross harvest in 1932, and 26.8 per cent in 1933. In 1932 the amounts varied from 41–42 per cent in the grain-deficit Moscow region to only 10 per cent in the North Caucasus, and 13–18 per cent in Ukraine (see Table 40).¹⁷³

The absolute amount of grain recorded as having been distributed per labour day and per person in a year is shown in Table 41.¹⁷⁴ In 1931, the amount per person declined in nearly all the traditional grain-surplus regions. The exception was the North Caucasus, which was less affected by the drought – though the increase shown is improbably large. Grain issue per person also increased in 1931 in the Leningrad and Moscow regions, and in Siberia. In 1932 this pattern continued, though now the North Caucasus was also badly hit. The figure for the Lower Volga region, where the famine was severe, cannot be representative: evidently, households and villages destroyed by the famine were not included in the statistics. Following the 1933 harvest, however, grain issues increased everywhere.

The absolute amount of grain distributed to collective farmers after both the 1931 and the 1932 harvests was extremely small.

¹⁷¹ *Materialy MTS* (1934), 70.

¹⁷² P, November 24, 1933.

¹⁷³ These are given as percentages of the 'barn harvest' in both years; for this sample of kolkhozy, the yield in the USSR as a whole was stated to be 5.14 tsentners per hectare.

¹⁷⁴ Most of the grain distribution from the harvest took place in the calendar year concerned, but the lack of data on grain distribution by agricultural year somewhat distorts the picture.

In 1932, in the USSR as a whole it amounted to only 120–130 kilograms per person, or 330–340 grams a day, for all needs, including the provision of grain as fodder to livestock owned by the household; and this fell to a mere 250–260 grams a day in the North Caucasus and Ukraine.¹⁷⁵ But collective farmers depended on the kolkhoz for their grain. They grew little grain themselves; and in most districts their purchases on the market were also quite small. These were starvation rations. Moreover, owing to the small amount of grain received in many grain regions in two successive harvests, the stocks of grain held by the kolkhozy and the collective farmers fell drastically.

Potatoes, vegetables, meat and milk were also issued in return for labour days, but most of these foods were obtained from the household plots (see Table 43, and pp. 276 and 390). In any case, bread and other grain products were by far the most important item in the diet of the peasants. The need for grain forced collective farmers to work in the kolkhoz fields.

(iv) *The household plot*

Throughout the upheaval of collectivisation, most peasants, including collective farmers, retained the household plot (*usad'ba*) round their cottages.¹⁷⁶ In 1933, the total area sown by collective farmers amounted to 2.35 million hectares, or approximately 0.157 hectares per household. The average size of the household plot, and of the area sown by households individually, varied enormously from district to district and region to region. A sample of 23 districts in six regions in 1931–33 showed that the average area sown individually per household was only 0.035 hectares in the Urals but as much as 0.305 hectares in the Central-Volga region. Within each region, the average sown area per household also varied greatly from district to

¹⁷⁵ These estimates are based on the amounts per able-bodied collective farmer in Table 41.

¹⁷⁶ However, the annual survey of kolkhozy for 1932 reported that 60.4 per cent of kolkhoz households engaged in 'individual sowing' in that year, the percentage ranging from 82.6 in Belorussia to only 28.0 per cent in the Crimea (RGAE, 7486/3/4456, Table 13; our estimate above assumes that all 15 million collectivised households had their own plot). This is a surprisingly low figure, even allowing for the absence of collective farmers on otkhod, and for kolkhoz households engaged in non-agricultural occupations. It has not been confirmed by any other source.

district. In four districts in the North Caucasus, the sown area per household ranged from 0.089 to 0.295 hectares.¹⁷⁷

Thirty per cent of the sown area of the household plots was sown to grain, but the most important crop was the potato, in terms both of sown area and the calories it supplied. In districts where the climate was favourable, melon crops planted by collective farm households were also significant.¹⁷⁸ Substantial amounts of cabbages, tomatoes and cucumbers were also grown, as well as root crops for both food and fodder. Hemp provided both raw material and oil. The collective-farm household was responsible for 61.2 per cent of the potatoes and 72 per cent of the vegetables sown in kolkhozy in 1933 (sample data for seven regions) (see Table 43).

Kolkhoz households also obtained almost all their meat and dairy produce from their own livestock, which was accommodated as part of the household plot, often in a shed adjacent to the cottage. Cattle as well as other animals grazed frequently on pasture which formed part of the household plot: the extent to which personally-owned animals were permitted to graze on collective land was much disputed. According to a sample survey of 9,384 kolkhozy in 1933, 54.4 per cent of households owned their own cow, and a further 10.2 per cent their own heifers. The percentage of households owning cows was much higher in better-off regions such as Leningrad and West Siberia, and much lower in Ukraine and the North Caucasus. The number of households owning their own sheep and pigs was much lower.¹⁷⁹ Nearly all horses and oxen were owned by the kolkhozy (see Table 2(a)).

¹⁷⁷ These figures were obtained from the annual district reports in the RSFSR archives; they will be discussed in a forthcoming article.

¹⁷⁸ Both potatoes and melons were grown quite frequently by individual collective farmers in the general fields of the kolkhoz as well as on the household plots; these sowings appear in our figures as part of the 'individual sowings' of collective farmers.

¹⁷⁹ The percentage of households owning their own animals in different regions was as follows:

	USSR	Leningrad	Central Black- Earth	Central Volga	Azov- Black Sea	West Siberia	Ukraine
Cows	54.4	84.3	54.6	53.5	43.8	58.0	42.7
Heifers without cows	10.2	3.3	8.3	9.2	12.6	12.4	11.3
Pigs	19.2	25.9	9.9	4.1	17.5	24.6	25.0
Sheep and goats	21.4	54.8	23.4	26.7	3.2	40.6	2.6

Source: RGAE, 1562/77/70, 67-8.

Collective farmers depended primarily on the kolkhoz for grain, and grain was overwhelmingly the most important source of calories. In many districts, as much potato as grain was consumed in terms of weight, but the nutrition available from the potato was small in relation to weight: one unit weight of potatoes yielded less than a quarter as many calories as one unit weight of grain. In Kiev in 1933, collective farmers received nearly 70 per cent of their calories from grain and 26 per cent from potatoes.¹⁸⁰ However, collective farmers obtained much of their fat intake, and some protein, from their own animals in the form of dairy products and an occasional portion of meat (see Table 44).

While collective-farm households themselves consumed most of the products of their household plot, they used about one-seventh of their potatoes and a small amount of grain, vegetables and milk as fodder. A further proportion of the produce of the household plot had to be supplied to the state collections. The percentage of the potato crop taken by the state varied from 16 per cent in the Moscow region to only 4 per cent in the Odessa region, where very little potato was grown. The average for the seven regions surveyed was 12 per cent. Twelve per cent of the milk and dairy products of the household plot were also taken by the collections.

Part of the produce of the household plots was sold on the market, including an average of 38 per cent of the small grain crop. In the Moscow and Central Volga regions, where the collective farmers received nearly all their grain from the kolkhoz, some of the grain sold by collective farmers came from the remuneration they received for their work on the kolkhoz.¹⁸¹ A smaller proportion of the other products of the household plot of collective farmers was sold on the market. According to the sample survey of seven regions, it amounted to 20 per cent of vegetables, 16 per cent of meat and fat, 10 per cent of milk and dairy products, and 9 per cent of potatoes. (See Table 43(b).) The proportion varied considerably by region.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Calories received per collective farmer in 1933 (thousands): from grain 530 (68.6 per cent); potatoes 204 (26.4); vegetables 19 (2.5); meat and fat 21 (2.7 per cent) — estimated from monthly peasant budget statistics in RGAE, 1562/77/17.

¹⁸¹ In the Moscow region, the plots yielded 0.92 kilograms per person in 1933, and grain sold amounted to 13.6 kilograms per person. The equivalent figures for the Central Volga region were 3.4 and 11.7 kilograms (estimated from data in RGAE, 1562/77/5a, table 17(b)).

¹⁸² Estimates of the kolkhoz bazaar trade in the archives vary widely. The amount of grain sold on the market is given in different sources as 374,000 and 142,000 tons in 1932, and 311,000 and 171,000 tons in 1933 (see RGAE, 1562/12/2322, 77; and 1562/12/2122, 29).

(v) Earnings from otkhodnichestvo

In 1930, the upheaval of collectivisation threatened to disrupt the spontaneous movement of peasants from the villages to the traditional occupations of timber cutting and floating, building and artisan industry. Kolkhoz managements, anxious to retain labour, tried to prevent peasants going away from the farms. The authorities sought unsuccessfully to impose on the countryside a centralised system for the recruitment of seasonal and permanent labour (see vol. 2, pp. 162–7). In preparing for the 1931 season, labour officials continued their efforts to plan labour recruitment. They announced that the annual requirement had increased to 9–9.6 million, from approximately 7 million in the previous year. Accordingly, they proposed to secure a substantial proportion of the total requirement by contracts between the clients and the kolkhozy; the contracts would be based on labour budgets and control figures prepared at regional and district levels.¹⁸³

In the first few months of 1931, little was done. In April, a report in the agricultural newspaper complained that kolkhozy were holding on to their bricklayers, carpenters and painters in case a sudden shortage occurred.¹⁸⁴ Most seasonal labour continued to appear spontaneously from the countryside without either the kolkhozy or the labour agencies being involved.

On June 23, 1931, Stalin, in his well-publicised speech on industrial management, claimed that the improvement of rural conditions was so considerable that in future no spontaneous migration to the towns would take place. ‘Organised recruitment (orgnabor)’ through contracts with the kolkhozy would be the only way to obtain labour from the countryside (see vol. 4, pp. 70–1). This assessment proved to be entirely mistaken. Its immediate consequence was the promulgation of a long decree ‘On otkhodnichestvo’ on June 30, a week after Stalin’s speech (and a week before it was published). The decree was designed to provide further incentives for recruitment by contract. To this end it abolished the charge which previously kolkhozy had been entitled to impose on the wages of the otkhodniki, and freed otkhodniki from the agricultural tax. It also insisted that

¹⁸³ SZe, January 14, 1931, and January 17, 1931 (Barchuk). According to a joint decree of Narkomtrud and Kolkhozsentr, 2.66 million workers (over one-third of the total) were to be supplied by the kolkhozy (SZe, February 14, 1931), which at this time included about 30 per cent of peasant households.

¹⁸⁴ SZe, April 18, 1931; see also report by Ptukha in P, June 18, 1931.

otkhodniki should be given priority in the allocation of work in the kolkhoz when they returned to the village.¹⁸⁵

In the following months, numerous labour contracts were signed with the kolkhozy, but their practical results were small.¹⁸⁶ The spontaneous movement of labour from the villages predominated overwhelmingly. In the Nizhnii-Novgorod region, for example, a plan of August 1931 proposed to send 100,000 peasants to the seasonal industries, but only about 30,000 were recruited through *orgnabor*; the rest simply turned up at the job.¹⁸⁷ In 1932, a Narkomtrud report, referring to the USSR as a whole, complained that 'the percentage of *orgnabor* is still insignificant; the demand for labour is often met by spontaneous flow (*samotek*), on which the majority of economic agencies continue to be oriented'.¹⁸⁸ In the same year, a representative of the North Caucasus complained at a conference on kolkhoz labour: '[Otkhodnichestvo] is hardly regulated at all by anyone; it is necessary to have planned order here, but at present there is complete anarchy in the matter.'¹⁸⁹

In spite of the decree of June 30, in the transition years of 1931–32 the many peasant households which remained outside the kolkhoz found it much easier than the collective farmers to go away on *otkhod*. A survey of peasant money incomes in 1930/31 and 1931/32 revealed that non-agricultural incomes were a much higher proportion of total money income for individual peasants than for collective farmers. Individual peasants earned substantially more from wages, from artisan production and from timber cutting and floating than did collective farmers, and were sent more money from outside the village by *otkhodniki* working away from home (see Table 32).¹⁹⁰ A TsUNKhU report for seven regions of the RSFSR, covering the period January–March 1932, confirmed this general picture. It showed that only 55 per cent of *otkhodniki* in these regions came from kolkhozy; at this time, 64 per cent of peasant households in these regions were collectivised.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁵ SZ, 1931, art. 286 (dated June 30). This was followed by a series of supplementary decrees (see Panfilova (1964), 46–9).

¹⁸⁶ See Panfilova (1964), 106.

¹⁸⁷ RGAE, 7446/2/479, 128–129.

¹⁸⁸ Report for January–June, cited in *Formirovanie* (1964), 10.

¹⁸⁹ RGAE, 260/1/217, 24 (Pluks, Eisk district).

¹⁹⁰ The gap between the average non-agricultural incomes of collective farmers and individual peasants was narrower in 1931/32 than in 1930/31.

¹⁹¹ Estimated from data in *Osnovnye pokazateli*, May 1932, 98. The total number of households in each region was estimated from data in *Sots. str. 1934* (1935), 159; for

A higher proportion of individual peasants participated in otkhod in the USSR as a whole, partly because the main grain regions, where collectivisation was well advanced, traditionally did not participate in otkhod to the same extent as regions such as Moscow, Leningrad and Ivanovo. But the tendency for a higher proportion of individual peasants than collective farmers to take part in otkhod prevailed in every region.

The total numbers of otkhodniki in 1931–33, from both orgnabor and uncontrolled movement, are not known at all accurately. According to Soviet estimates, the annual number declined from over 6.7 million in 1928/29 to 5.45 million in 1931, and to 3.64 million in 1932.¹⁹² These figures are almost certainly underestimates. In the winter and spring of 1930–31 the total may have reached over 7 million. The 1931 spring survey of kolkhozy, which covered two-thirds of all kolkhoz households, reported that 10.9 per cent of able-bodied collective farmers were otkhodniki (see Table 39). If this figure is applied to all able-bodied peasants in the USSR (about 60 million in total), the number of otkhodniki would be 6.6 million. But even this is probably an underestimate, because the percentage of collective farmers who were otkhodniki was certainly lower than for the peasants as a whole (see below). In 1932, however, in contrast to 1931, the total number of otkhodniki evidently declined: the proportion of collective households supplying otkhodniki fell in five of the six regions of the RSFSR for which data are available, and in Ukraine and Belorussia (see Table 39). There was, however, no reduction in the length of time during which otkhodniki worked outside the kolkhoz: it was estimated at an average of 5.4 months a year in 1932. In Ukraine and in six of the eight regions of the RSFSR for which data are available, the period of departure was longer than in 1930, and comparable with the average in the 1920s.¹⁹³

Several trends influenced the scale of otkhodnichestvo. The deteriorating conditions in the villages impelled peasants to move to

the total number of households collectivised on March 1, 1932, see Table 26, and *Ezhegodnik po sel. kh. 1931* (1933), 442–5. The proportion of collective farmers working outside their own region was somewhat higher, at 60 per cent (Leningrad region is excluded from this calculation because the data are not comparable).

¹⁹² For 1928/29, see *Industrializatsiya 1929–1932* (1970), 359, reprinting *God raboty pravitel'stva 1928/29* (1930). For 1931, see Sonin (1959), 182. For 1932, see Panfilova (1964), 110–11.

¹⁹³ For the USSR figure see RGAE, 7486/3/4456,8. For the regional figures, see RGAE, 1562/76/158, 7ob.–8 (document dated 1934).

whatever non-rural seasonal occupations were available. But rural conditions also led them to move permanently from the countryside, or to permanent work in the sovkhozy, thus reducing the need for seasonal labour. The state encouraged this switch. In the building industry, the winter decline in the number of workers was much less in 1931 and 1932 than in previous years (see vol. 4, Table 17). In this case, the permanent labour force relatively increased, and the seasonal labour force relatively declined. In other industries, however, the lack of food rations discouraged both seasonal and permanent recruitment of labour. Timber cutting and hauling expanded rapidly in 1928–30, but from 1931 the supply of labour stagnated, and may have declined. In this industry much seasonal work was traditionally undertaken by peasants, together with their horses and carts, and the decline in the number of horses (and the absence of fodder for the horses which were available) worsened the situation.¹⁹⁴ In 1931/32, the average earnings of collective farm households from the timber industry declined considerably, and the average earnings of individual peasant households from the industry remained constant in nominal terms, but declined in real terms (see Table 32).

In 1932/33, the food crisis led to substantial reductions in the number of rations, and the amount of food per ration, available to workers and their dependants in almost every economic activity (see vol. 4, pp. 530–3). In consequence, some peasants at first moved back to the countryside in search of food. Then, as hunger mounted in the countryside from the autumn of 1932, peasants fled from the famine-stricken areas to the towns. The authorities, who until then had acquiesced in the spontaneous drift to the towns, now sought to curb it. The introduction of the internal passport in major towns (see vol. 4, pp. 290–1) was accompanied by legislation which regulated *otkhodnichestvo* more strictly. On March 17, 1933, a decree of TsIK and Sovnarkom abrogated the legislation of June 30, 1931,

¹⁹⁴ The available series for labour employed in timber cutting and floating in full-time annual equivalents is not consistent. For 1929 and 1930, it *excludes* workers accompanied by their own horses, and for 1931–33 it *includes* them (thousands):

1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
415	611	557	1140	1193

(*Trud* (1936), 10–11; also in *Sots. str.* (1934), 306–7 (for 1929–32) and *Sots. str.* (1935), 474–5 (for 1933).) In 1928/29, the number of *otkhodniki* in the industry (seasonal workers, not full-time equivalent), was over 2.2 million (*Industrializatsiya 1929–1932* (1970), 359).

and provided:

privileges for collective farmers shall henceforth be available only to collective-farmer otkhodniki who have gone away on otkhod on the basis of a special contract with economic agencies, registered with the board of the kolkhoz.

Collective farmers who left on their own initiative must be expelled from the kolkhoz, and 'flitters' must be deprived of the right to income from the kolkhoz.¹⁹⁵

Once the worst of the famine was over, the authorities resumed their attempts to plan the movement of labour from the countryside. The timber industry remained the most serious problem. On November 19, 1933, a Sovnarkom decree criticised the timber commissariat and the local soviets for the inadequacies of the organizer arrangements, and ruled that plans for the procurement and transport of timber for October–December 1933 and the calendar year 1934 should be drawn up centrally and disaggregated to 'every district, village and kolkhoz'. Contracts with 'obligatory judicial force' should be signed by the timber agencies and the kolkhoz by December 15. All the earnings of the collective farmers and their horses should go to the collective farmers themselves, unless the general meeting of a kolkhoz decided to replace this by a labour-day system administered by the kolkhoz. In any case, the board of the kolkhoz was to be responsible for the procurement, transport and delivery of timber in accordance with the plan.¹⁹⁶

In addition to voluntary departure and organised recruitment, the peasants were also subject to compulsory labour. A decree of Sovnarkom and TsIK, dated March 4, 1931, instructed republican governments to issue legislation providing for the compulsory participation of the rural population in the building of all roads in which they were 'directly interested'.¹⁹⁷ The corresponding decree for the RSFSR provided that road work and road repair should be carried out without payment by all peasants aged 18 to 45 for six days a year. During this period they should supply draught animals and carts. The roads should not be more than 10 km from the place of residence. Peasants who were away on otkhod, and other peasants

¹⁹⁵ SZ, 1933, art. 116.

¹⁹⁶ SZ, 1933, art. 409.

¹⁹⁷ SZ, 1931, art. 147.

excused by the village soviet, could pay a sum equal to the average wage in the area for similar work.¹⁹⁸

Peasants were also frequently required to undertake other kinds of compulsory work without supporting legislation. In the Moscow region, they had to transport stone for the construction of the Bobriki chemical combine, and were fined if they refused. In the Western region, a peasant complained:

Fines and compulsory labour – that is our socialism.¹⁹⁹

In the Central Black-Earth region, peasants had to deliver bricks and undertake other work for the defence society Osoaviakhim without payment.²⁰⁰

(E) MONEY INCOME AS A WHOLE

To sum up. The money income and expenditure of the collective-farm household, and of the kolkhoz as a unit, included only part of their total economic activity. Almost all agricultural products were obtained by the household in kind, either from the kolkhoz or from the household plot.²⁰¹ Sample surveys of seven regions in 1933 showed that collective farmers received 75 per cent of their vegetables, 90 per cent of their meat and fat, over 97 per cent of their grain and potatoes, and as much as 99 per cent of their milk and dairy products from these two sources (see Table 43). Only a small part of the produce received by the households was transferred to the state or sold on the market. The kolkhoz, on the other hand, transferred a large part of its production to the state; in this respect, the practice of serfdom was resumed, with the state taking the place of the serf owner. And the kolkhoz and its members, taken together, continued the tradition of pre-revolutionary peasant farms. They were partly an economy working for the market, and partly consumers of their own produce.

¹⁹⁸ SU, 1931, art. 362, dated August 10, 1931. 'Kulaks and other non-working peasants' were subject to twelve days' labour.

¹⁹⁹ RGASPI, 631/5/53, 79–78 (dated March 1931) – a summary of unpublished letters sent to *Sotsialisticheskoe zemledelie*.

²⁰⁰ *VI s'ezd* (1931), 8–9.

²⁰¹ State loans of grain for seed and food were also transmitted in kind, and were normally received by the household via the kolkhoz.

Money income and expenditure performed important economic functions. The information available on both the household and the kolkhoz is incomplete and confused: it is based primarily on peasant budget surveys which, following the near-collapse of the rural statistical system in 1930, were not resumed on a large scale until 1933. But certain major trends are clear.²⁰² First, the money income received by households from the kolkhoz, primarily in return for labour days, was only a small part of their total money income: some 19 per cent in 1931/32, and 14 per cent in 1933 (see Table 35). A much larger and increasing proportion of the money income of the households was obtained by selling a relatively small amount of the produce of the household plot on the market: 29 per cent of all income in 1930/31, and 45 per cent in 1933. Various non-agricultural activities also provided a substantial proportion of money income.²⁰³

Secondly, nearly all the money income of the kolkhoz household was spent on purchases of industrial and agricultural commodities. According to the peasant budgets, industrial goods were largely obtained from state and cooperative trading agencies. The proportion varied greatly by region, amounting in 1931/32 to 31 per cent in the Moscow region, and as much as 72 per cent in North Caucasus, West Siberia and Belorussia.²⁰⁴ In 1933, the average spent in the official agencies amounted to 57 per cent.²⁰⁵ As the prices at which industrial goods were purchased on the market were much higher than the official prices, the share of industrial goods obtained from the official agencies was much higher in real terms. On the other hand, the market was the main source from which collective farmers obtained agricultural products. In 1933, as much as 87 per cent of collective-farm household expenditure on agricultural products took place on the market. But the large increases in expenditure in money terms did not indicate a real increase in purchases. A survey for 1931/32 noted that 'only an insignificant part of the purchases [of agricultural products] takes place in the state sector; in view of the great increase in market prices, it may be concluded that

²⁰² Because these data came from different regions, and from different kolkhozy within these regions, they should be taken as illustrative and not precise.

²⁰³ Only a small part of the earnings from *otkhodnichestvo* appears in Table 35: if these figures are accurate, most of this income was retained by the *otkhodniki* themselves and not sent back to the village.

²⁰⁴ RGAE, 7733/11/512, 11.

²⁰⁵ Estimated from data in RGAE, 1562/77/5a, tables 27a and 27b.

in real terms the purchase of agricultural products on the private market ... may even have declined' for certain products.²⁰⁶

The money income of the kolkhoz, measured in per-household terms, was less than half the money income of the collective-farm households in both 1931/32 and 1933. Over 60 per cent of kolkhoz income was obtained from the sale of agricultural products. In 1931, almost all this income was obtained from the compulsory state collections at low prices. In both 1932 and 1933, with the legalisation of the kolkhoz market, although sales on the market were small in real terms, the income from them increased sharply, reaching over 40 per cent of all sales in money terms. The remainder of the money income of the kolkhoz was obtained from non-agricultural activities of various kinds, and from bank loans.

About 40 per cent of the kolkhoz money income was paid out to collective farmers, primarily in return for labour days. A further 25 per cent was paid to central and local state and other agencies as taxes, for insurance, or as repayment and interest on loans. The remainder of kolkhoz income was allocated to capital investment, from bank loans, from kolkhoz general income, or via the Indivisible Fund. A fixed, rather high, proportion of gross kolkhoz income was allocated to the Indivisible Fund, and this allocation, and the amount remaining in the Fund from previous years, were available for investment.²⁰⁷ But net investment by the kolkhozy in these years was small. About half of kolkhoz investment was allocated to livestock, but illness and premature death of livestock cancelled out most of this investment. The remaining investment, spent primarily on building and agricultural implements, was largely devoted to repair and replacement. Little new building took place on the kolkhozy in these years, and investment in farm machinery took place overwhelmingly in the state-owned MTS. Investment by the kolkhoz on resettlement and land consolidation was also extremely small.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ RGAE, 7733/11/512, 11–12. There is a considerable unexplained discrepancy between the amounts shown for expenditure on agricultural products in the two surveys. The survey for 1931/32 reported, for example, that it amounted to only 127 rubles per household in Moscow region and 63 rubles in Belorussia (l. 11). The 1933 survey gives 590 rubles for Moscow and 257 for Belorussia; the discrepancy cannot be explained entirely by price rises.

²⁰⁷ The proportion of gross income allocated to the Fund was 8 per cent in 1930 and 12 per cent in 1931 and 1932 – but this was from gross income, including an estimate of the value of income in kind. The Fund also included a valuation of the capital stock of the kolkhoz, including livestock, but only the allocations in money were in practice available for investment.

²⁰⁸ See *Sots. str.* (1934), 170; *Sots. str.* (1935), 290.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE FAMINE IN PERSPECTIVE

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, large-scale famines took place in Asia and Latin America as well as in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. On very rough estimates, in the second half of the nineteenth century, 12–29 million people died in major famines in India, and between 20 and 30 million in China.¹ In the twentieth century, India and China again suffered from major famines. The loss of life in the Chinese famine of 1958–61 was larger than in any other twentieth-century famine. In both India and China, the very low level of grain or rice output per head of population, and the small number of livestock providing meat and dairy produce, placed their populations permanently on the edge of famine. The lack of livestock in India and China meant that there were no ready reserves to fall back on in times of shortage.

Grain production per head in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union was much higher than in Asia.² But the consumption of a high proportion of the grain by livestock (particularly by horses essential to grain cultivation) reduced the amount of grain available as food. Together with the great annual variation in yield caused by changing weather conditions, this provided conditions for the occurrence of famine if adequate steps were not taken to avoid it.

For the student of famines, the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union have a major merit compared with twentieth-century Asia: a well-developed statistical machinery at both national and local level which registered births and deaths, and collected information on agricultural production and consumption. This advantage has placed the study of famine on a firmer footing – although a very wide range of error still remains in our conclusions.

Serious famines occurred in the Russian Empire and the USSR in 1891/92, 1918–22, and throughout 1930–33. The 1891/92 famine resulted in 400,000–500,000 excess deaths; and excess deaths in the famines of 1918–22 are estimated at as many as 10–14 million. The estimates of excess deaths in the Kazakh famine of 1930–33,

¹ See Davis (2001), 7.

² Grain production per head was one-third of the Soviet level in India, and half the Soviet level in China of the 1950s (see vol. 1, pp. 9–10).

in the rural famine of 1932–33, and the accompanying urban food shortages, range from 4.5 to 8 million. As we explain below, our own view is that both these extreme estimates are implausible, and that excess deaths probably amounted to 5.5 to 6.5 million.

The rural famine of 1932–33, which is the central concern of this book, was not, of course, the last famine experienced on Soviet territory. During the Second World War, famine conditions existed over a large part of the USSR – the best-known famine taking place during the siege of Leningrad. Civilian excess deaths, resulting mainly from the deterioration in living conditions, may have amounted in all to as many as 14 million.³ In 1946–47 a further famine involved 1–1.5 million excess deaths, affecting the Moldavian republic, Ukraine and a large part of the RSFSR.⁴ It was only from 1948 onwards that the Soviet Union was free from large-scale famine.

All famines are to some extent culturally-constructed phenomena, not intrinsically different from other food crises in their causation. Their consequences are, however, strikingly different, involving mass death to an extent qualitatively different from mere food shortages. The use of the term ‘famine’ indicates that the food crisis has passed a certain critical level and has taken on, or is threatening to take on, extraordinary consequences.⁵ The declaration of a famine is a call for extraordinary measures of relief, in circumstances that are recognized as threatening to cause mass deaths. But often governments fail to recognise famine, or recognise it half-heartedly.

When mortality is rising significantly as a result of food shortages, we can, of course, make an external, ‘objective’ determination of famine. Several indicators are used traditionally to indicate the presence of major food crises that are likely to take on famine proportions. These include: sharp reductions in agricultural production; the reduction of food exports; reduction in livestock numbers (though this could have other causes); and rising food prices. Food consumption surveys and anthropometric data provide an indication of food

³ See EAS, xlvii (1994), 21, 680 (Ellman and Maksudov). This very preliminary figure does not include the 3 million Jews murdered by the Nazis, but does include 3 million deaths in labour camps and among the nations deported to the interior of the USSR.

⁴ See *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, xxiv (2000), 603–30 (Ellman).

⁵ There is a linguistic complication in Russian, as ‘*golod*’ means both hunger and famine – the distinction is made clear from the context. In Ukrainian, the term ‘*golodomor*’, hunger involving death, is sometimes used to distinguish famine from hunger.

strain. Amartya Sen has shown that famines are not caused exclusively by a decline in the food available – inadequate ‘entitlements’ for certain groups (lacking purchasing power or access to rations) can often be critical.⁶ But Sen and others have counterposed ‘FAD’ (Food Availability Decline) too starkly to the non-availability of entitlements. Certainly in the Russian and Soviet cases, and perhaps more generally, both aspects of famines have to be taken into account in order to understand why and where they occurred, and what sections of the population were involved.

(A) FAMINES BEFORE 1930

(i) 1891/92

This famine affected about 40 million people and resulted in 400,000–500,000 premature deaths.⁷ It was concentrated in the Volga region, where the death rate increased to 40 per cent above normal, though provinces north and west of the Volga were also affected. The disaster has often been attributed to the general backwardness of Russian agriculture, the immiserating effect of the emancipation settlement, and in particular to the decline in per capita production of grain.⁸ One of the present authors has shown, however, that this is a statistical illusion, and that in the European part of the Russian Empire grain production per head of population tended to increase between the 1870s and 1890s.⁹

In fact, the famine was caused by a combination of factors. First, poor weather in 1890 and severe drought in 1891 led to a dramatic decline in grain output in the Volga and central agricultural provinces. These were also provinces in which grain production had significantly declined in the 1880s, while in Ukraine and the North Caucasus it had risen sharply. Rural indebtedness was particularly high in the areas where grain production had declined, and during the famine it increased sharply. Simultaneously, because of the

⁶ Sen (1981).

⁷ See Edmondson and Waldron, eds (1992), 55–8 (Wheatcroft) for a review of the different estimates. The range in values partly depends upon which years are selected as ‘normal’ – a general problem in measuring deaths from famine.

⁸ See *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, vi, pt 2 (1966), 776 (Gerschenkron).

⁹ Mann and Mixter, eds (1991), 131–6 (Wheatcroft).

decline in production, grain prices rose sharply in 1891, while rural wages declined. Peasants in these provinces who were employed in seasonal agricultural work were the most severely affected. The famine was thus a regional phenomenon. Severe drought affected the traditional areas of Russian agriculture, where rapid population growth without improvement in methods of crop rotation was already leading to a classic subsistence crisis.¹⁰ Mortality was increased at the time of the 1892 harvest by the outbreak of a cholera epidemic. This was particularly severe because, as a result of the famine, many people had moved to emergency, unsanitary accommodation in the Astrakhan area, which was the epicentre of the epidemic.¹¹

The famine was recognised publicly by the tsarist government soon after its outbreak, and a committee for famine relief under the future Nicholas II was established as early as October 1891. The effects of the famine were reduced considerably by the efforts of the government, supported by local agencies and charities. The number of people receiving food aid increased during the agricultural year 1891/92 from 573,000 in July 1891 to over 11 million in June 1892. In the main Volga area, 40 per cent of the population received food aid.¹²

(ii) *The double famine of 1918–22*

A series of largely urban famines in 1918–20 was succeeded by a largely rural famine in 1921/22. This sequence of troubles was described by Lorimer as ‘the most catastrophic ... since the Mongol invasion in the early thirteenth century’.¹³ Estimates of the number of excess deaths range from 10 million to 14 million.¹⁴

The urban famines during the civil war reached their peak in the spring of 1919, both in northern towns such as Petrograd and Moscow, and in southern towns such as Saratov. The level of mortality was between 2.5 and three times the normal. High mortality recurred in the following year, and most of the identifiable deaths

¹⁰ For the information in this paragraph, see Mann and Mixter, eds (1991), 128–72 (Wheatcroft).

¹¹ See Edmondson and Waldron, eds (1992), 58–60 (Wheatcroft).

¹² See *ibid.*, 60.

¹³ Lorimer (1946), 41–2.

¹⁴ See Davies, Harrison and Wheatcroft, eds (1994), 62–4 (Wheatcroft and Davies).

were attributed to infectious diseases rather than starvation. A large number of deaths was caused by the outbreak of cholera in 1918 and the world-wide influenza epidemic of 1918 and 1919. Dysentery, gastroenteritis and typhus were also widespread. Severe malnourishment was undoubtedly a major factor in the spread of these diseases.¹⁵

The urban food shortages began to emerge during the First World War in 1916, and led to food riots in the spring of 1917. The shortages turned into a major crisis following the 1917 harvest. The Soviet government succeeded in collecting only a fraction of the grain which was transferred from village to town in normal years. For most of the period, the main grain-surplus regions were under anti-Communist control. In spite of harsh and often makeshift requisitioning, grain collections by the Soviet state declined from 8.3 million tons in 1916/17 to 1.2 million in 1917/18, and to 1.8 million in 1918/19.¹⁶

The disintegration of the army in 1917–18 was largely caused by the food shortage. During the civil war, a high proportion of the urban population emigrated to the countryside – otherwise deaths in the towns would have been far higher.¹⁷ The shortages particularly affected sections of the population which were not entitled to rations.

Once the civil war was over, the situation temporarily improved. In 1920/21, the grain requisitions increased to 6 million tons, of which 4 million came from territory recently taken over by the Soviet government. In the spring and summer of 1921, the decision to move away from requisitioning and reintroduce the market looked as though it would set the scene for economic recovery. But at this point a new food crisis developed in the south and in the Volga regions. A severe drought in 1921, following poor weather and a poor harvest in 1920, was the immediate background to the famine. According to Soviet data, the grain harvest in 1920 was only about 60 per cent of the pre-war level, and it was even smaller in 1921. The decline was particularly severe in the Volga regions and Ukraine. Grain cultivation was

¹⁵ See Wheatcroft, SIPS no. 21 (1981), appendix 10b, and Table 49 in this vol.; and *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 38 (1997), 526–8, 544–6 (Wheatcroft).

¹⁶ See *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, viii (1989), 993 (Davies).

¹⁷ See Wheatcroft, SIPS no. 21 (1981), appendix 2. The population of Petrograd declined from 2.41 million in 1916 to 0.74 million in 1920. The total population of towns and urban settlements is estimated to have declined by about one-fifth (see Davies, Harrison and Wheatcroft, eds (1994), 335 (Wheatcroft and Davies)).

made extremely difficult by the huge decline in the number of horses, to about 70 per cent of the pre-war level – a decline largely resulting from the persistent grain shortage.¹⁸

The League of Nations report on the 1921/22 famine described it as ‘the worst, both as regards the numbers affected and as regards mortality from starvation and disease, which has occurred in Europe in modern times’.¹⁹ A total population of 20–24 million people was affected, and in Saratov, one of the provinces worst hit by the famine, mortality in February–April 1921 rose to over four times the normal level.²⁰ But available statistics do not enable us to make a reliable division of excess mortality in Soviet Russia as a whole between the 1918–20 and 1921/22 famines.

In these years, the Soviet government, like the tsarist government in 1891, recognised publicly the existence of famine. Lenin, while blaming ‘the bourgeoisie and the wealthy’ for the urban famine in Petrograd and elsewhere, acknowledged its existence as early as May 1918.²¹ In 1919, the attempt of the Norwegian explorer Nansen to provide international relief was accepted in principle by the Soviet side, but came to nothing in the conditions of civil war and international hostility to the new regime. Then, in June 1921, the Soviet authorities acknowledged the existence of the second famine, and accepted proposals from Nansen and others to organise international food supplies.²² In the spring of 1922, the number of people provided with food by international agencies reached more than 12 million, and this prevented the further rise in mortality which would otherwise have occurred in the months before the new harvest of 1922.²³

Poor harvests and food shortages occurred during the mid-1920s, but a new wave of chronic food shortage did not begin until 1928. Throughout the years 1928–33 food shortages plagued the population,

¹⁸ See Davies, Harrison and Wheatcroft, eds (1994), 286–9 (Wheatcroft and Davies).

¹⁹ League of Nations (1923), p. x.

²⁰ See *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 38 (1997), 544–6 (Wheatcroft).

²¹ P, May 24, 1918.

²² P, June 16, 1921. The Politburo decisions on international aid may be found in RGASPI, 17/3/181, item 4 (session of June 29, 1921) and 17/3/188, item 2 (session of July 11).

²³ See Carr (1950), 177–9, (1953), 341–3. Ten of the twelve million received food from the American Relief Administration headed by future US President Herbert Hoover, on which see Fisher (1927); Patenaude (2003).

weakened its health and caused the peasantry to disinvest its wealth (particularly in livestock). Starvation developed in different locations at different times, and soon reached famine proportions. Three separate famines can be distinguished:

- (1) an urban food crisis which began in 1928, and turned in various locations into a famine by the spring of 1932, which continued till the harvest of 1933;
- (2) the Kazakhstan famine, which began in the autumn of 1931, before the rural famine elsewhere, and continued till 1933; and
- (3) the devastating rural famine in the main grain areas, which began in the spring of 1932, and then became much more intense in the months before the 1933 harvest.

(B) THE URBAN FOOD CRISIS OF 1928–33

The crisis of the state grain collections in the autumn of 1927 soon led to general urban food shortage. Rationing of major foods and some consumer goods was introduced piecemeal in the course of 1928 and 1929.²⁴ By the end of 1930, over 30 million people were receiving food from what had become an elaborate rationing system (see vol. 3, pp. 289–300). The number of people receiving rations continued to expand, and reached 38 million by the beginning of 1932.²⁵

However, as a result of the pressures on the state grain collections from these increased numbers, and from the demands of industry and export, it became increasingly difficult to honour the approved rations. Some commodities were taken off the ration in 1931 (see vol. 4, pp. 61–3). At the beginning of 1932, some foods were also de-rationed. For all these goods, the urban as well as the rural population had to fend for itself. On March 23, 1932, a fateful Politburo decision substantially reduced the allocation of grain for 20 million people on the lower-priority ration Lists 2 and 3. The local authorities were supposed to make up the difference; but in practice the amount

²⁴ See Carr and Davies (1969), 700–4.

²⁵ The information in the following paragraphs is summarised from vol. 4, pp. 176–92, 530–3. These figures for those receiving rations exclude servicemen, the OGPU, those confined in prisons, camps and special settlements, the personnel of some special industries and activities, and those engaged in agriculture who received food allocations.

of bread received by this huge segment of the non-agricultural population was substantially reduced. In the months before the new harvest, the urban death rate doubled in the Lower Volga region, the North Caucasus and Ukraine (see vol. 4, p. 187n.).²⁶ Dissatisfaction was widespread. Serious food riots took place in the textile areas; and many workers who failed to receive food rations left their building sites. With the exception of some regions of Ukraine, the death rate in the towns was higher than in the countryside in the spring and early summer of 1932.

The decline in urban rations threatened the whole industrialisation and armament programme, and the authorities made considerable efforts to maintain the supply of bread to the towns. In the famine areas in the winter and spring of 1932–33 the urban population suffered much less than the rural. But rations in many towns were extremely low. In March 1933, Kosior reported to the USSR party central committee that workers in factories in small towns in Ukraine were supposed to receive List 3 rations, but these were ‘not supplied in practice’; workers were swelling up from hunger, though local food supplies had recently enabled some improvement.²⁷ From the Dnepropetrovsk region, Khataevich reported that ‘there are in reality no bazaars’, so manual and office workers on List 3 had to manage with a ration of 200 grams a day and nothing else.²⁸ The urban death rate continued to rise until the 1933 harvest. In June and July 1933 it was double the normal level in the RSFSR as a whole, and more than double that level in Ukraine. Nevertheless, the urban food crisis in these years was less devastating than in 1918–19. In those years, large numbers of people left the major towns. In 1928–32, however, the urban population expanded rapidly. During the famine period there was no mass exodus from the towns. In the spring and summer of 1932, some workers returned to the countryside because of the lack of food in the towns. But by the autumn of 1932 peasants were moving to the towns in search of food. The growth of the urban population ceased, and was partly reversed, only as a result of restrictions on movement and the introduction of an internal passport system.²⁹

²⁶ For urban death rates, see RGAE, 1562/20/41. The monthly figures for 1932–34 are available on <http://www.soviet-archives-research.co.uk/hunger>.

²⁷ See *Golod 1932–33* (1990), 444 (dated March 15).

²⁸ See *Golod 1932–33* (1990), 465–7 (memorandum from Khataevich to Narkomsnab of Ukraine, dated March 21).

²⁹ See vol. 4, pp. 240–1 (for the departure from the towns in the summer of 1932), 390–1 (for the passport system).

(C) THE FAMINE IN KAZAKHSTAN

In Kazakhstan in 1929–31 livestock, a major source of food in the nomad areas, had been devastated (see pp. 321–4). As a result of the bad harvest in northern Kazakhstan in 1931, the nomad areas were not supplied with grain, and food problems had spread to between seven and ten districts by December.³⁰ In January 1932, the OGPU reported that forty people from exiled *bai* families, mainly children, had died from famine in a village in Pavlodar district.³¹ In the following month, five political exiles in the district, in a statement to TsIK of the USSR, reported:

for the last month and a half Pavlodar has been flooded by starving, swollen people in rags, who are mainly Kazakhs.

The local health agencies are being overwhelmed by people dying from famine. Famine is causing an epidemic.³²

Fifty thousand Kazakh refugees flooded into the Central Volga region, which reported that they were 'famished, and suffering from epidemic illnesses'.³³ By the end of February 1932, the famine had spread to thirty-three districts, and, according to incomplete data for the 232 places affected by 'sharp famine', 1,219 people died from famine between December 1931 and March 10, 1932.³⁴ In August, Isaev wrote directly to Stalin reporting that 10,000–15,000 Kazakhs had died from famine in the spring of 1932, and that the number of peasant households in the republic had declined by 23–25 per cent.³⁵

The severe famine continued until at least the summer of 1933. A secret report by the Kazakh statistical agency claimed that the rural population of Kazakhstan had declined from 5.87 million on June 1, 1930 to 2.49 million on June 1, 1933; the decline was as much as 1.9 million in the single year 1931–32.³⁶ An OGPU report even claimed that the number of households had declined from 1.18 million to 0.84 million in the four months December 1, 1931,

³⁰ TSD, iii, 335 (OGPU memorandum, April 1932).

³¹ *Nasil'stvennaya* (Almaty, 1998), 98 (dated January 11).

³² *Ibid.*, 107.

³³ *Ibid.*, 115–17 (decision of Central Volga regional party bureau dated March 8).

³⁴ TSD, iii, 335 (OGPU memorandum, April 1932).

³⁵ *Nasil'stvennaya* (Almaty, 1998), 154.

³⁶ RGAE, 1562/329/143 (dated January 14, 1937). According to the report, the data, based on taxation estimates, were underestimated by 8–12 per cent, but showed 'a more or less correct trend'.

to March 1, 1932.³⁷ Huge numbers of Kazakhs migrated to other regions within Kazakhstan, and to other regions and republics, in search of a livelihood, or simply seeking food, while others emigrated to China. According to one report, ‘half the Kazakh households have migrated out of their own districts, and a considerable number have remained in neighbouring regions; the majority live in the open, without livelihood, and there is famine in a number of places’.³⁸

The 1937 and 1939 population censuses showed the following changes in Kazakhstan as compared with the census of 1926 (thousands):³⁹

	<i>Total population</i>	<i>Of which, Kazakhs</i>	<i>Kazakhs outside Kazakhstan</i>	<i>Total number of Kazakhs in whole USSR</i>
December 1926	6079	3465	503	3968
January 1937	5120	2182	680	2862
January 1939	6151	3101	741	3842

If the Kazakh population had increased at a normal rate after 1926, it would have reached almost five million by 1939. The population deficit as a result of the upheavals among the Kazakhs in the 1930s amounted to some 1.2 million. In addition, many Russians and other nationalities living in Kazakhstan also died from hunger. An unknown number of people emigrated to China; the remainder of the deficit resulted from premature deaths or the decline in the birth rate.

(D) THE RURAL FAMINE OF 1932–33

(i) Areas affected by the famine

Serious food difficulties developed in some villages and rural districts in the winter of 1931–32.⁴⁰ In the spring of 1932, unmistakable signs

³⁷ Published in TSD, iii, 426–7 (dated July 1932).

³⁸ Ryskulov’s report of October 6, 1932; for this report see p. 325.

³⁹ Estimated from data in *Vsesoyuznaya perepis’... 1937* (1991), 46–7, 84, 96; and *Vsesoyuznaya perepis’... 1939* (1992), 22. In this table, the number of Kazakhs in Kazakhstan in December 1926, in the area comparable with 1937 and 1939 areas, has been estimated by using the same proportion as given in the 1926 census; that is, $3707/6503 = 57$ per cent. Since the total number of Kazakhs in the whole USSR remains the same, the number of Kazakhs outside Kazakhstan can be derived as a residual.

⁴⁰ See, for example, the report from Bashkir kolkhoz union: RGASPI, 631/5/75, 22–29 (February 1932), published in TSD, iii, 270–3.

of famine appeared in many villages in Ukraine. In April, registered rural mortality (the crude death rate) increased above its normal level and remained high until August.⁴¹ At the beginning of July, in preparation for Molotov's visit to Ukraine for its party conference, a list was prepared of the thirty-three 'heavily affected' districts requiring food assistance in Ukraine as a whole. Simultaneously, the Khar'kov region alone submitted a list of twenty-five districts which required assistance.⁴²

Following the 1932 harvest, registered rural mortality in Ukraine returned temporarily more or less to normal. By November 1932, however, it was already 30 per cent above normal, and it continued to increase. In June 1933, on the eve of the 1933 harvest, it was as much as thirteen times as high as the normal level. All the Ukrainian regions were affected. Kiev and Khar'kov regions suffered most. Mortality in the more northerly districts of Ukraine, where food other than grain was available in greater quantities, was somewhat lower.

In North Caucasus, the harvest was reasonable in 1931, and the region was much less affected by severe food shortages than Ukraine in the spring of 1932. But the rural death rate increased sharply in September 1932, two months before Ukraine. By June 1933, it reached nearly seven times the normal. On February 23, 1933, the bureau of the regional party committee prepared a list stating that 48 of the 75 grain districts in the region were suffering from famine, including 20 of the 34 districts in the Kuban'.⁴³

The Lower and Central Volga regions, including the German ASSR, together with the Bashkir ASSR to the east of these regions, were also strongly affected by famine. The population of these regions was about 14 million, and they covered an area equal to the territory of Ukraine.⁴⁴ The rural death rate rose to nine times the normal level in the Lower Volga region, and to three times the normal level in the Central Volga.

⁴¹ For the registered death rates cited in these paragraphs, see Table 48. Note that they are considerably lower than the true rate, especially in 1933.

⁴² Published in Vasil'ev and Shapoval, eds (Kiev, 2001), 226–8.

⁴³ *Golodomor* (Kiev, 1995), 115–16 (Oskol'kov); thirteen of these districts were classified as 'especially unfavourable', and twenty as 'unfavourable'. The list was based on information supplied by the GPU. For the famine in the North Caucasus, see Oskol'kov (Rostov, 1991), and Penner (1998).

⁴⁴ *Golodomor* (Kiev, 1995), 123 (Kondrashin). For the Central Volga famine, see Kondrashin (1991).

In the Central Black-Earth region, not generally listed as a famine area, the rural death rate reached over four times the normal level by July 1933.⁴⁵ Serious food difficulties were also reported from the Ural region and the Far East. And the famine continued, and even intensified, in Kazakhstan.

Even excluding the Urals, Siberia and the Far East, the famine areas included over 70 million of the 160 million people in the USSR. The mortality figures for these areas are so large that it is difficult to see them in perspective. Most countries in the world would consider a rise in annual mortality of 10 per cent caused by food problems to be a famine. All regions, even the urban districts of Moscow region, experienced a rise in mortality of over 20 per cent above the normal level for an extended period. For rural areas in the Russian republic as a whole, including areas not greatly affected by famine, there were eight months in 1933 (February–August, and October) when mortality was more than 20 per cent above normal. In rural areas of Ukraine, mortality more than 20 per cent above normal was registered for April–July and November 1932, and for all the first eight months of 1933.

The famine areas also experienced a sharp reduction in the birth rate, occurring roughly nine months after the peak of the famine. In Ukraine and the North Caucasus, the birth rate declined sharply from November 1932 onwards, and by April 1934 it had fallen to a mere 20 per cent of the normal level. It fell almost everywhere in the USSR to a lesser extent. In the Russian republic as a whole it was less than half the normal level in April and May 1934.

Famine conditions did not come to a complete end with the harvest of 1933, however. Many reports of malnutrition, swelling up and deaths from famine were compiled by local GPUs between January and July 1934. Such reports referred to Ukraine, Gor'kii (Nizhnii-Novgorod) region, the Urals, the Central Black-Earth region, the Tatar and Bashkir ASSRs, the Far East and Central Asia.⁴⁶ These reports referred to only a small number of villages,

⁴⁵ For an OGPU report on famine in this region, dated April 1, 1933, see TSD, iii, 661–2. For a general study of famine in the region, see Zagorovskii (Voronezh, 1998).

⁴⁶ See, for example, the reports published in TSD, iii, 838 (Gor'kii region, dated January 15); and TSD, iv, 69 (Ukraine, dated February 19); 93–4 (Sverdlovsk region, the Far East, the Tatar and Bashkir ASSRs and Central Asia (dated April 3); 118–9 (Azov-Black Sea region – formerly North Caucasus, dated May 19); 124–5 (Ukraine,

and, except in the Central Volga region, where a higher death rate continued until October 1934, the registered death rate everywhere, including Ukraine, returned to the normal level in 1934 (see Table 48).

(ii) *Deaths from the famine*

The total number of deaths from the famine is extremely difficult to estimate. The number of deaths officially registered in 1932 and 1933 was much higher than in a normal year. In the whole USSR, with the exception of Kazakhstan, the total amounted to nearly 3 million, compared with deaths as an average of the two years 1926 and 1927. To this total must be added the deaths from famine in Kazakhstan, where no registration system existed. The number of Kazakhs who died from famine in 1931–33 was probably more than one million, and together with the deaths of Russians and other nationalities inhabiting Kazakhstan, the total probably amounted to 1.3–1.5 million. Many exiles also died from famine in the labour camps and the special settlements: the deaths in 1932–33 recorded in the Gulag accounts exceeded the 1934 level by nearly 300,000. The number of excess deaths in 1932–33 (plus the excess deaths in Kazakhstan, which began a year earlier, and the deaths in the OGPU system) therefore amounted to some 4.6 million (2.9 + 0.3 + 1.4 million).

Many deaths were not registered in the course of 1933, as both the archival reports and oral testimony bear witness. Thus, on March 12, 1933, the Kiev GPU reported that deaths were ‘considerably underestimated, because the district machinery of the GPU does not record the number of people who are hungry and swollen up, and often the village soviet also does not know the real number dying from hunger’.⁴⁷ On June 3, the deputy Ukrainian people’s commissar for health reported to the Ukrainian party central committee that in the Kiev region ‘the figures for death are considerably underestimated’. He cited a district in which more than 3,000 people had died by March 1, although the number of registered deaths was

dated May 28); 196–9 (various regions, dated July 8) and 201–4 (various regions, dated July 8); Zagorovskii (Voronezh, 1998), 114–29 (Central Black-Earth region, first six months of 1934).

⁴⁷ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 429–37.

only 742.⁴⁸ Two days later, the Khar'kov GPU reported to the Ukrainian GPU that 'mortality has become so extensive that a number of villages ceased to register the dead'.⁴⁹ Similar reports were submitted in regions outside Ukraine.

It is not generally realised, however, that the current monthly mortality figures were revised substantially after the end of the year (in mid-1934). A document in the archives shows that the figures for deaths in Ukraine and the RSFSR in 1933, which are normally cited in the archive documents, and which we have used in this book, were increased substantially compared with the earlier monthly figures.⁵⁰ The number of deaths was increased by 27 per cent in the RSFSR, and 13 per cent in Ukraine.

These figures were nevertheless still too low, as emerged when the annual revised data for deaths were compared with the results of the 1937 population census. The census gave the total population as 162 million, compared with 147 million in the previous census of 1926. However, if the net increase in population (that is, births minus deaths) shown by the official registrations is added to the 1926 population, the 1937 total becomes not 162 but 168 million.

⁴⁸ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6276, 2.

⁴⁹ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 530–5.

⁵⁰ These revisions were part of the normal seasonal reporting cycle, although the incompleteness of the 1933 monthly data seems to have been much greater than normal. The following table compares the current 1933 data with the later more complete annual data (thousands):

	<i>Deaths</i>		<i>Births</i>	
	<i>1933: current registration</i>	<i>1933: revised registration^a</i>	<i>1933: current registration</i>	<i>1933: revised registration^a</i>
<i>RSFSR</i>				
Urban	635	796	447	549
Rural	1319	2131	1279	2164
All deaths	1954	2927	1726	2713
<i>Ukraine</i>				
Urban	251	231	110	114
Rural	1058	1678	249	336
All deaths	1309	1909	359	450

Sources: The sum of the early monthly registration data received in the month following the event: RGAE, 1562/329/107, 181. Revised annual series produced in the year following: RGAE, 1562/329/108, 6.

Note: ^a Excludes Kazakhstan. The internal discussions which took place in connection with this revision will be discussed in a forthcoming article by Wheatcroft.

The difference between these two estimates is known as the 'Kurman gap', and was given as 6.3 million.⁵¹

Part of this gap must be attributed to the excess deaths in Kazakhstan (1.4 million?) and part to the recorded excess deaths in the OGPU system (0.3 million). What about the remaining 4.7 million of the Kurman gap ($6.3 - 1.4 - 0.3$)?⁵² At one extreme, three Russian demographers, known as ADK from the initials of their surnames, concluded, after various adjustments, that these unregistered deaths were concentrated in the years 1932 and 1933, and their estimates lead to the conclusion that excess deaths in 1930–33 amounted to 8.5 million, of which as many as 7.3 million occurred in 1933.⁵³

This estimate is implausibly high. Among other defects in their calculations, ADK fail to take into account the two adjustments proposed by Lorimer in his classic study of the Soviet population, written long before the archives were opened.⁵⁴ Lorimer argued that throughout the inter-censal period 1926–37 both deaths from infant mortality throughout the USSR and all deaths in the non-European republics of the USSR had been underestimated. Both factors are likely to have been present, and estimating their extent can only be a matter of intelligent guesswork. Using common-sense assumptions, we have concluded that they may well have accounted for 3.6 million of the 4.7 million gap.⁵⁵ But we should emphasise that this is a guesstimate: the 3.6 million can be increased or decreased by using

⁵¹ Kurman was the head of the population department of TsUNKhU. For the text of his memorandum of 1937, see *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya* 6, 1990, 22–4. Kurman argued that the gap would increase to 8 million if births had also been under-recorded.

⁵² The 4.7 million estimated remainder from the Kurman gap should not, of course, be confused with our estimate of 4.6 million registered deaths (including an estimate for Kazakhstan and the Gulag returns).

⁵³ See Davies, Harrison and Wheatcroft, eds (1994), 76, and *Vestnik statistiki*, 7, 1990, 41 (Andreev, Darskii and Khar'kova). According to ADK, excess deaths, taking deaths in 1929 as the norm, amounted (in thousands) to 152 (1930), 369 (1931), 654 (1932) and 7,312 (1933).

⁵⁴ Lorimer (1946). For a review of estimates of famine deaths, see *Population and Development Review*, xix (1993), 743–66 (Livi-Bacci).

⁵⁵ On these assumptions, infant mortality in 1926–37 was underestimated by 1.4 million, and deaths in the non-European USSR by 2.2 million. For details see <http://www.soviet-archives-research.co.uk/hunger>. A further allowance needs to be made for excess deaths in the camps and special settlements in 1934–36, but this is unlikely to have been very large.

different assumptions. If the ‘Lorimer corrections’ are set sufficiently high, the 4.7 million gap can disappear altogether.

Thus the outcome of these calculations is as follows:

Estimates of excess deaths from famine, 1930–33
(millions)

Kazakhstan famine: approximate:	1.3–1.5
Excess deaths in OGPU system	0.3+
Registered excess deaths, 1932–33	2.9
<i>Estimate 1</i> Low estimate (total of above), approx.	4.6
<i>Estimate 2</i> ADK estimate of all excess deaths, 1930–33	8.5
<i>Estimate 3</i> Our estimate, after ‘Lorimer corrections’, approx. (4.6 above + 1.1 million from the Kurman gap)	5.7

Whichever estimate we adopt, or even if we use only the officially registered deaths, this is an enormous figure. In the twentieth century, this number of deaths from a famine was exceeded only in China after 1958.

(iii) Excess deaths by region

What was the incidence of the famine deaths in the different regions and republics? The registered excess deaths, excluding Kazakhstan and the camps and special settlements, were distributed as follows (millions):⁵⁶

	1932	1933	1932–33
Ukraine	0.15	1.39	1.54
North Caucasus	0.04	0.27	0.31
Central Volga	0.03	0.22	0.25
Lower Volga	0	0.15	0.15
Central Black-Earth	–0.03	0.13	0.10
Other regions and republics	0.25	0.32	0.58
Total	0.44	2.48	2.93

⁵⁶ For details, see <http://www.soviet-archives-research.co.uk/hunger>.

Using our estimate for the Lorimer corrections, the unregistered deaths (excluding Kazakhstan, and the camps and special settlements), amounted to about 1 million; on the ADK estimate, they amounted to over 3 million. Some of these deaths certainly took place in Ukraine, the North Caucasus and the Volga regions. But it also seems likely that there were unregistered famine deaths in the Central Asian and Transcaucasian republics. The registered crude death rate increased in nearly all regions of the European USSR in 1933: even in the favoured Moscow region, for example, it increased by 24 per cent. But in Uzbekistan it declined by nearly 15 per cent, and in Azerbaijan by as much as 30 per cent.⁵⁷ This is implausible.

The extreme lack of food was reflected in the quite thorough sample survey of the utilisation of grain in seven major regions in 1933. This shows the disastrous position in January–June before the new harvest. The grain consumed per person amounted to only 350 grams a day in the seven regions as a whole, and a mere 210 grams in the Kiev region and 160 in the Odessa region.⁵⁸ Monthly data for the Kiev region show that grain consumption fell below the starvation level in May–July, and then rose dramatically with the onset of the new harvest.⁵⁹

The famine conditions were also reflected in the dramatic rise of prices on the kolkhoz market. In Kiev, the price of rye flour was already sixty times higher than in 1926–27 by June 1932, and it more than doubled by June 1933. In the Central Black-Earth region, prices quadrupled between June 1932 and June 1933. They doubled even in the better-off Moscow region, though there the absolute price was only 58 per cent of the price in the Kiev region in June 1933.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ See SS, xlii (1990), 361 (Wheatcroft), citing RGAE, 1562/20/42, 76.

⁵⁸ The equivalent amount of bread is about 40 per cent higher than these figures, or about 500 grams in the seven regions, 300 in Kiev region and only 220 in the Odessa region.

⁵⁹

Grain consumption per day in Kiev region per adult equivalent, by months, 1933

	<i>grams</i>		<i>grams</i>
January	243	July	221
February	242	August	439
March	208	September	528
April	236	October	482
May	226	November	467
June	233	December	446

(see *Cahiers du Monde russe*, xxxviii (October–December 1997), 557 (Wheatcroft)).

⁶⁰ See Table 47; see also the urban bazaar prices for a group of food products in the USSR as a whole in vol. 4, p. 556.

In large parts of the famine-stricken regions, grain or flour were not available at all at the height of the famine.

(iv) Excess deaths by social group

During the famine, certain (mainly urban) sections of the population were spared the harshest consequences of food shortage by their entitlements through the rationing system. Some tens of thousands of top officials and their families received special rations: 21,000 of these were registered in Closed Shop No. 1 in Moscow (see vol. 4, p. 453). Below this privileged stratum, at the beginning of 1932, 26 million people, including dependents, received adequate rations on the Special List and Lists 1 and 2. The number of people registered on these lists increased by four million in the course of 1932 (see vol. 4, p. 530). For the remaining 120 million citizens, this was a time of dearth. This was a FAD (food availability decline) famine, modified by entitlements for a minority of the population.

The table below lists the social origins of the 5 million urban and rural people whose deaths were registered in 1933. Only 3.5 million, or 70 per cent, were classified according to social origins. The peasants made up 2.5 million, or 71 per cent, of these, but there was no indication of the split between kolkhoz and individual peasant.⁶¹

The division of registered mortality between different social groups (thousands)⁶²

	<i>Independent</i>	<i>Dependent</i>	<i>Total</i>
Manual worker	170419	260204	430623
Clerical worker	55643	89024	144667
Auxiliary and domestic work	37479	25162	62641
Engaged in agriculture (apart from workers)	1209219	1322698	2531917
Other independent	172134	62919	235053
Uncertain	41959	408295	450254
Total of above	1686853	2168302	3855155
Entirely uncertain			1099782
Total			4954937

⁶¹ Although the forms clearly provided space for collective farmers and individual peasants to be listed, no figures were included in these categories in the tables that we have seen.

⁶² RGAE, 1562/329/16, 30.

The evidence on which groups of peasants suffered most from famine is in some respects contradictory. On February 28, 1933, a report prepared by the Ukrainian party apparatus claimed that the victims of famine were mainly peasants who had not earned many labour days. It even asserted that 'the overwhelming majority of those suffering from hunger are lazy people, who disrupt the development of the kolkhozy'.⁶³ But other reports insisted that the famine did not spare hard-working collective farmers. On the same day as the report for Ukraine as a whole, February 28, the Dnepropetrovsk regional soviet executive committee stated that 'a check of a number of villages and districts by GPU staff has revealed that to a considerable extent those suffering from lack of food are collective farmers active in production who have earned 300–900 labour days' (this was well above the average).⁶⁴ In the following month this view was confirmed by Khataevich, who informed the Ukrainian party central committee that, in the Dnepropetrovsk region, 'a very high percentage of collective farmers who have earned a large number of labour days have swelled up [from hunger], or completely lack grain'.⁶⁵

In other respects, a pattern of deprivation emerges fairly consistently from the reports. Large families, old people and children were all unable to earn enough labour days, and when these were the criteria for the possession of food, they became victims of famine.⁶⁶ Data supplied to the GPU of the Kiev region at the beginning of March indicate that a large number of children suffered from hunger: 112,000 children as compared with 94,000 adults.⁶⁷ Children continued to predominate among the victims in March and April.⁶⁸ However, the extensive food assistance supplied to hungry children may have changed this

⁶³ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 390–1, 394 (report of information and sowing group). See also a similar GPU report from Kiev region dated February 16, published in TSD, iii, 642–3.

⁶⁴ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 397

⁶⁵ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 427 (dated March 12). He attributed this to the 'zealous removal' of the advances in kind issued to them during the harvest.

⁶⁶ See *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 390–1 (large families), 378–80 (old people), 427 (children); on children, see also Kaganovich's diary in the North Caucasus for the end of January 1933, reporting information from Sheboldaev (RGASPI, 81/3/215, 74, published in TSD, iii, 639).

⁶⁷ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 399–400.

⁶⁸ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6276, 1 (dated June 3). In the Kiev region on March 25 there were 178,000 starving children as against 220,000 adults; on April 14, the figures reached 262,000 and 232,000, respectively.

pattern later (see pp. 221–2, 425). Moreover, according to some reports, the pattern was changed by the actions of some of the hardworking, fit people themselves. In the Lower Volga region, ‘children, old people, invalids and sick adults’ received no grain, but collective farmers from their families felt obliged ‘to hand over part of their miserable bread ration’ to them.⁶⁹ In some cases, this sacrifice to the children resulted in the deaths of collective farmers aged 20–40.⁷⁰ Several reports claimed that most of the adults who died were men rather than women.⁷¹

The available data for the RSFSR show that the victims of the famine by age were primarily children aged four and under, and adults aged fifty or over. They also confirm that more men died than women. However, we do need to note that infant mortality was extremely high even in normal circumstances, and that, in percentage terms, there was a lower rise in infant mortality than in the mortality rates for other ages.

Registered mortality in RSFSR in 1933⁷²

(a) by age (in per cent of total)

	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Total population</i>
0–4	33.4	41.1	39.0
5–9	4.3	6.8	6.1
10–14	1.5	2.4	2.1
15–49	25.5	17.5	19.7
50+	33.6	30.5	31.3
Not known	1.8	1.7	1.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

(b) by sex (thousands)

	<i>Urban Thousands</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Rural Thousands</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Total population Thousands</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Males	457.6	58.3	1164.8	55.6	1622.4	56.3
Females	327.1	41.7	930.5	44.4	1257.7	43.7
All	784.8	100.0	2095.2	100.0	2880.0	100.0

⁶⁹ Report from the head of an MTS politotdel, dated May 17, published in TSD, iii, 674.

⁷⁰ Report from a Lower Volga politotdel, dated June 4, published in TSD, iii, 676.

⁷¹ See, for example, report of the OGPU on the North Caucasus, dated April 7, published in TSD, iii, 664–5; and report from politotdel in German ASSR dated May 21, published in TSD, iii, 675.

⁷² GARF, 374/23/229.

The famine also hit individual peasants more severely than collective farmers. In April, Chernyavskii reported to Kosior that, in Vinnitsa region, 'In its overwhelming majority [famine] affects individual peasants, especially from the central and south-eastern districts of our region, where the individual peasant is much weaker than in the frontier districts'.⁷³ Similar reports were issued from other regions.⁷⁴

In the North Caucasus region, the amount of bread issued from food loans had proved inadequate, because the worst-off districts had no other food; even cabbage, gourds and potatoes were rare. Registered mortality in February and March, even in the best-placed *stanitsy*, had been double that in the same period of 1932, and in the worst-placed *stanitsy* it had trebled or quadrupled – without taking account of unregistered deaths:

The sick die first ... The children die, and barbarism has reached the point where the parents eat, and do not feed the children ...

Naturally individual peasants, and collective farmers with a small number of labour days, die in larger numbers. The slogan 'he who does not work, neither shall he eat' is adopted by rural organisations without any adjustment – let them perish.⁷⁵

Descriptions of the famine are amply available in émigré and other memoirs.⁷⁶ OGPU and other reports now declassified in the former Soviet archives differ from these primarily in their view of the causes of the famine. While émigré memoirs tend to present it as being deliberately organised for political reasons, the secret internal documents, like the Soviet publications, tend to attribute all the difficulties in agriculture to the machinations of class enemies and to inefficient organisation. Outstanding features of the famine described in these documents are summarised in sections (v) to (ix) below.

⁷³ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6275, 152–157 (dated April 16).

⁷⁴ See, for example, TsDAGOU, 1/20/6277, 179 (report of district party secretary in Dnepropetrovsk region–March 1933).

⁷⁵ RGAE, 8040/8/25, 32–35, dated March 22. (report of food commission).

⁷⁶ See especially Conquest (1986); Pidhainy, ed. (1953, 1955); *Hearing* (1984); *Commission* (1988); *Cahiers du Monde russe*, xxx (January–June 1989), 5–106 (Graziosi–Italian diplomatic reports). See also the reports of Gareth Jones (adviser to Lloyd George) at http://colley.co.uk/garethjones/soviet_articles.htm

(v) *Use of food substitutes*

In 1932–33, as in other times of acute food shortage, peasants suffering from hunger sought out every kind of substitute. In the Dnepropetrovsk region, for example, they ate cats and dogs, and dug up the corpses of horses. In one district in the region, dogs for food were sold for 12 rubles, and horses for 6–8 rubles per kilogram.⁷⁷ In Vinnitsa region, as well as eating cats and dogs, they also ate ‘carrion and garbage ... and concoctions from weeds and potato peelings’.⁷⁸ Sholokhov informed Stalin that, in the North Caucasus, peasants had been eating boiled and grilled gophers, as well as horses which had been shot because they were diseased, and dogs and cats.⁷⁹

When substitutes proved inadequate, or were no longer available, peasants swollen with hunger travelled in search of work and food to neighbouring villages and towns, and to other districts and regions. Many who could not find work became beggars and tramps. The North Caucasus regional party bureau reported as early as February 22, 1933, that railway stations were ‘overcrowded with elements [of the population] without homes, passports, or means of existence, a large number of which are dying in the railway coaches and the stations’.⁸⁰

(vi) *Cannibalism*

As in 1921–22, there were many cases of cannibalism by peasants desperate for food: both cannibalism in the strict sense – that is, murder for food (known as *lyudoedstvo* – eating people) and corpse-eating (*trupovedstvo*). On January 28, a dramatic ‘special communication’ prepared by a deputy head of the Ukrainian GPU was entitled ‘Cases of Cannibalism in Uman district, Kiev Region’. It described how, on January 15, a 24-year-old peasant killed his wife and ate her. The report carefully emphasised evidence that his action was due to desperation resulting from hunger. The culprit was a collective farmer who was a poor peasant, and whose grain was used up. He claimed

⁷⁷ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 409 (report of regional GPU to Ukrainian GPU, March 5, 1933).

⁷⁸ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6275, 45–56 (report by Chernyavskii to Kosior, March 17, 1933).

⁷⁹ OI, 3, 1994, 18 (letter of April 16, 1933).

⁸⁰ See *Golodomor* (Kiev, 1995), 115–16 (Oskol’kov).

to have been starving for a long time, and he looked 'extremely wasted'.⁸¹ In the North Caucasus, GPU reports described cases of famine from January 29 onwards.⁸² Cannibalism was also reported from the Lower Volga region.⁸³ By March, the Kiev GPU was receiving ten or more daily reports of cannibalism: in at least one district 'in the majority of occurrences is even becoming "normal"'; 'in villages affected by cannibalism the opinion is growing every day that human flesh can be used as food'. In a typical case: 'A mother or father kill a child, the meat is used for food, and their own children are fed with it. Many prepare "stocks" [of human flesh] and salt the meat in barrels.'⁸⁴ In a district in the Dnepropetrovsk region, the flesh of two murdered people was put on sale.⁸⁵

Some secret reports displayed a grim fascination with these events. For example:

A kulak woman aged about 50, dekulakised from Zelenka village in Bogushev district [Kiev region], who hid in the Kuban' in 1932, returned home with her grown-up daughter. On the way from Gorodishche station to Korsun' she ambushed a passing 12-year-old boy and killed him with a knife. She put the internal organs and other body parts in a sack.

In Gorodishche village, citizen Sherstyuk, an inhabitant of this place, allowed these citizens to stay the night. By means of deceit, pretending that the meat of the boy was meat of a calf, the old woman gave the liver and heart to citizen Sherstyuk's family to boil and grill, fed his family and [she and her daughter] ate the food themselves.

At night citizen Sherstyuk, intending to use some of the meat from the old woman's sack, found there the hacked-up body of the boy. The criminals have been arrested.⁸⁶

⁸¹ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6274, 32 (report by Karlson). A brief account of this episode appeared in a report dated January 22, sent by a divisional military commander to the political head of the Ukrainian military region (TsDAGOU, 1/20/6274, 6).

⁸² See Penner (1998), 44. An OGPU report about cannibalism in the region is published in TSD, iii, 648–9.

⁸³ See OGPU report published in TSD, iii, 648–9 (dated March 7), and report from MTS politotdel in TSD, iii, 677 (dated August 5, 1933, but evidently referring to earlier events).

⁸⁴ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 433–7 (dated March 12). According to this report, cannibalism had already taken place in the region in the spring of 1932.

⁸⁵ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 409 (dated March 5).

⁸⁶ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 480–1 (report of information and sowing group of Ukrainian party central committee, dated April 1, 1933).

No comprehensive record has been available of cases of cannibalism, but instances continued to grow until the new harvest. In Khar'kov region, 104 cases were reported in April, and 244 in May.⁸⁷ In the Central Black-Earth region, numerous examples were reported in May and June of starving peasants who murdered for food both the children of beggars and their own children.⁸⁸ Not surprisingly, scattered information indicates that these practices were confined to a small minority of famine victims. In March, in a survey of 42 districts, the Kiev GPU listed seventy-two reported cases of cannibalism and sixty-five of corpse-eating: in these districts, 12,801 people had already died from starvation.⁸⁹ In Vinnitsa region by mid-May there were seventy-one reported cases of cannibalism, nine of corpse-eating; at least 8,985 people there had died of starvation.⁹⁰

On May 22, 1933, the Ukrainian GPU, noting that cannibalism was not covered by the criminal code, instructed GPU and legal agencies to transfer these cases to the local GPU.⁹¹

As the mortality figures indicate, the number of victims of famine continued to expand until the new harvest. In Khar'kov region, for example, out of 64 districts, 21 were recorded as suffering from 'food difficulties' on March 1; 59 on June 1; and 61 on June 10. The numbers of deaths even tended to increase at the end of the spring sowing, because those previously engaged in sowing were no longer receiving food rations.⁹² At the height of the famine, from March 1933 onwards, the number of people dying was so great that in many villages dead bodies were not buried, but left in the peasant cottages or piled on graves or in the grounds of the cottages; they were eventually buried in common pits for 10–15 corpses.⁹³ In a practice familiar from the plague years of the Middle Ages, in many villages special carts went round to collect the corpses.⁹⁴ In the

⁸⁷ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6276, 58 (report of head of Kiev MTS political sector, dated June 14).

⁸⁸ See Zagorovskii (Voronezh, 1998), 96–107.

⁸⁹ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 399–401; the cases of cannibalism and corpse-eating occurred in 22 of these districts.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 510–1 (report of health commission dated May 17).

⁹¹ This instruction is published in the émigré publication *Pidhainy*, i (1953), 230, and appears to be genuine; see also Conquest (1986), 257. Cases involving murder, though covered by the criminal code, were also to be transferred to the OGPU.

⁹² TsDAGOU, 1/20/6276, 48–50, 38 (OGPU report dated June 10, 1933).

⁹³ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 434 (report of GPU of Kiev region to Ukrainian GPU, dated March 12).

⁹⁴ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6275, 225 (report of chair of Khar'kov soviet executive committee, dated May 30).

worst-affected villages, 'many families sit without moving ... not leaving the house, awaiting death'; 'people are deadened, and absolutely fail to react to death or cannibalism'.⁹⁵ Eventually, many or all of the population of a village died, or the whole population left, and the cottages were boarded up.

(vii) *Food assistance*

Republican, regional and district authorities made desperate but quite inadequate efforts to seek out food for the hungry. They appealed, sometimes successfully, sometimes unsuccessfully, to Komzag in Moscow, and to the Politburo and Stalin personally, for grain and other food loans (these central loans are discussed on pp. 214–23). When these proved insufficient, or were not forthcoming, they hunted for untapped local sources of food. Here are a few examples of their activities. In several districts of the Vinnitsa region, grain and other food supplies were assembled to feed hungry adults and children. The consumer cooperatives in the region organised 'decentralised collections' of grain, potatoes, meat and fat from the better-off districts, but they 'were unable to secure even the minimum necessary assistance for districts in an extremely difficult position with food'.⁹⁶ The Kiev GPU sent the republican GPU a list of the quantities of bread, sugar, jam, vegetables and other foods which had been 'mobilised' for the hungry. It also claimed that, in addition to these local transfers, an average of 10–15 tsentners of grain had been collected by each kolkhoz for redistribution within the kolkhozy.⁹⁷ In Odessa region, the party committee complained to its districts that 'decentralised collections have simply not been developed', and established *troiki* (including a representative of the GPU), in the 'most unfavourable' districts to seek out food. The committee also insisted that district health inspectors, and district staff concerned with food supplies, should not be diverted to other activities.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6276, 24 (OGPU report about Khar'kov region, dated June 10); 1/20/6276, 55–57 (report of Kiev MTS political sector, dated June 14).

⁹⁶ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6275, 51–54 (report from Chernyavskii to Postyshev, dated March 17).

⁹⁷ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 401 (early March 1933); this was the same report as that which listed cases of cannibalism in the districts of the region. For another report on the mobilisation of local resources in the region, see *ibid.*, 459–63 (dated March 20).

⁹⁸ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 470 (dated March 27).

The importance of feeding children was strongly emphasised in distributing both the food loans from central supplies (on which, see p. 221), and the local supplies. Food was distributed to children through the schools; existing crèches and children's homes were greatly expanded; and emergency children's homes were established to accommodate the large number of homeless children who had been separated from, or been discarded by, their hungry parents.⁹⁹ Thus, in the Dnepropetrovsk region, following a 'sharp reduction in school attendance' in many districts, the regional executive committee called for an increase of 70,000 in the number of children attending crèches, for the provision of food aid for 50,000 of the 250,000 children of pre-school age, and for 50,000 of the 450,000 children of school age.¹⁰⁰ In the Khar'kov region, the number of children in crèches run by the regional executive committee increased by the end of May from 10,300 to 24,500; but 27,800 remained to be placed.¹⁰¹ Special centres were established to feed undernourished children. In the Kiev region, 317,000 children were receiving food help by April 15 through feeding points, schools, hospitals and crèches.¹⁰² But, for the same date, the Ukrainian People's Commissar of Health reported that the number of children suffering from famine in the Kiev region had reached 262,000, and called for further food assistance.¹⁰³ The crèches in which hungry children were placed in Khar'kov region lacked food, and they had to be fed with substitutes including grasses, and illness and death resulted.¹⁰⁴

These various directives often had an air of unreality and desperation. When the widespread nature of the famine became obvious, the Ukrainian Politburo instructed the regions: 'do not leave a single case of famine without immediate measures to localise it', and required them to provide evidence within seven days that local resources had been mobilised to this end.¹⁰⁵ Following this instruction, the Dnepropetrovsk regional party committee insisted that district authorities should 'immediately take decisive measures so that

⁹⁹ See Oskol'kov (Rostov, 1991), 74, 78 (North Caucasus).

¹⁰⁰ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 397–8 (dated February 28).

¹⁰¹ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6275, 223–225 (report of chair of regional executive committee).

¹⁰² TsDAGOU, 1/20/6276, 3.

¹⁰³ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6276, 1–10 (dated June 3).

¹⁰⁴ TsDAGOU, 1/20/6276, 48–50 (OGPU report dated June 10, 1933).

¹⁰⁵ RGASPI, 17/42/80, 17–17ob. (dated February 8, signed by Kosior), published in TSD, iii, 639–40.

our region does not continue to have even a single case of swelling and death from hunger of conscientious collective farmers'.¹⁰⁶ This was in February, when the disaster was just beginning. A few weeks later, the Kiev regional party committee ordered the courts and the GPU to expose those officials in village soviets and kolkhozy who failed to mobilise resources to assist the hungry, and instructed district party committees to arrange to supply every child with half a glass of milk a day. It also decided that officials who failed to hospitalise people who were in a supine state be prosecuted.¹⁰⁷ But by this time the resources available were hopelessly inadequate. The number of starving peasants and their children continued to grow.

(viii) *Movement control*

The Moscow authorities imposed severe measures to restrict the flood of refugees from the famine areas into other regions. On January 22, Stalin and Molotov noted in a telegram to the key regions that 'the party central committee and Sovnarkom have been informed that in the Kuban' and Ukraine a mass movement of peasants "for grain" has begun – to the Central Black-Earth region, the Volga, the Moscow region, the Western region and Belorussia'. The telegram claimed that a similar movement in the previous year had been 'overlooked' by the authorities; this must not be repeated in 1933. Instead, the party and Soviet authorities in North Caucasus, and Ukraine must prevent mass departures to other regions, including movement from Ukraine to North Caucasus, and North Caucasus to Ukraine.¹⁰⁸ In the regions to which the peasants were moving, such as Moscow and the Volga regions, the OGPU must arrest those coming from Ukraine and the North Caucasus, take away 'counter-revolutionary elements' and send the other peasants back.

Characteristically, the telegram attributed the peasant movement not to hunger but to an organised attempt of 'enemies of Soviet power, SRs and Polish agents to agitate in the northern areas of the

¹⁰⁶ RGASPI, 17/42/81, 103–105 (dated February 10, signed by Khataevich), published in TSD, iii, 641–2.

¹⁰⁷ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 455–6 (dated March 19).

¹⁰⁸ As in 1921–22, hungry peasants sometimes made their way from one famine region to another.

USSR “via the peasants” against the kolkhozy and more generally against Soviet power’. To cast doubt on the authenticity of the peasant refugees, the telegram even referred to them in inverted commas as ‘peasants’.¹⁰⁹

As a result of this telegram, by March 13, 220,000 people had been arrested by the OGPU; 187,000 were sent back to their villages and the remainder put on trial or located temporarily in ‘filter points’.¹¹⁰

The republican and regional authorities also sought to bring the floods of hungry famine victims under control. On May 6, 1933, the Ukrainian central committee adopted a resolution on tramps and homeless children. It established a commission attached to the Ukrainian Sovnarkom with a deputy head of the Ukrainian GPU in the chair. The commission included representatives of the commissariats for health, education, labour and railways. Similar commissions were instituted at the regional level. The commission was instructed ‘to adopt within the next ten days decisive measures to cleanse Khar’kov, Kiev, Odessa, Dnepropetrovsk and other towns from tramps’. The tramps were to be organised into labour battalions, which were directed obligatorily to road construction, stone breaking and to the sovkhozy. Strict labour discipline and supervision would be imposed, to prevent ‘wrecking actions’, but those who worked conscientiously would be transferred to the normal labour force. Those in charge of them, who must be reliable party members, young communists or shock workers, would receive ‘increased wages by reducing the wages of the members of the battalions’.

Children were dealt with less brusquely. The resolution claimed that some district party and soviet executive committees were sending homeless children to the large towns, and were failing to refute provocative rumours to the effect that the large towns were admitting children into children’s homes without hindrance. Henceforth these homeless children were forbidden to travel on the railways or to be taken to the towns. Regions and districts were to organise food assistance in the villages and the kolkhozy for abandoned and orphaned children, both at school and, where necessary, after school.

¹⁰⁹ RGASPI, 558/11/45, 109, 109ob. (signed personally by Stalin; Molotov’s signature was missing), published in TSD, iii, 634–5. This was followed within a few days by appropriate directives in Ukraine and the North Caucasus (published in TSD, iii, 635–8).

¹¹⁰ Ivnitskii (2000), 313 (no source given).

The resolution allocated 6 million rubles, and specified amounts of flour and other food, to maintain the children. The commission, together with the education and health agencies, was instructed to try to find the parents of the children and send them back to the villages from which they came.¹¹¹

During and after the famine, people from other regions were moved to the deserted villages to resume cultivation. Some of these villages were those from which peasants had been exiled for failing to complete the grain collections; in others, the whole population had died, or had moved away in search of food. Between December 1932 and April 1933, 2,300 Red Army families were settled in Poltava *stanitsa* in the North Caucasus, from which the population had been exiled. The *stanitsa* was renamed 'Red Army village' (Krasnoarmeiskoe selo). The operation was strictly controlled: 40 per cent of those settled were to be party members, and 20 per cent members of the Komsomol; the settlers were not to include soldiers who came from North Caucasus or Ukraine.¹¹²

At the end of August 1933, the Politburo and Sovnarkom began the resettlement of the villages abandoned because of the famine. They authorised the resettlement of 14,000 soldiers and junior officers in the North Caucasus, including the Kuban'.¹¹³ Then, in October 1933, they decided to resettle in Ukraine 21,000 collective farmers from Ivanovo and other overpopulated regions. This was a military and police operation. Plenipotentiaries from the party central committee and from Sovnarkom were despatched to select the collective farmers. Resettlement was supervised by the OGPU, and in the charge of a senior army officer with experience of resettlement in the North Caucasus. The groups (*eshelony*) of collective farmers were in the charge of 250 OGPU staff from its transport department, each with two assistants. Mobile kitchens were set up on the trains, and food was supplied by the Military-Cooperative

¹¹¹ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 505–8.

¹¹² See the documents from the military archives published in Romano and Tarkova, eds (1996), 468–84. The initial directive was signed by Tukhachevsky as head of the Revolutionary Military Council.

¹¹³ RGASPI, 17/3/929, art. 154/133 (Politburo resolution, adopted by poll, dated August 27); GARF, 5446/1/470, 179–180 (Sovnarkom decree, art. 1849/402s, dated August 29). On October 11, 1933, a further Politburo decision authorised the resettlement of 14,000 demobilised soldiers in the North Caucasus; these were presumably additional to those in the August resolution (RGASPI, 17/162/15, 100–101, art. 112/89).

Administration of Tsentrosoyuz. Once the immigrants arrived, those short of food were supplied by a Fund under Sovnarkom of Ukraine.¹¹⁴ Other immigrants moved to Ukrainian villages of their own accord, but Ukraine was refused permission to grant them the same privileges as the official settlers.¹¹⁵

(ix) *Disease*

Famine was accompanied by widespread sickness and disease. As soon as people in the famine areas began to eat substitutes for normal food, cases of food poisoning were reported by the GPU. In Dnepropetrovsk region, for example, 354 cases were reported by March 5, including forty-two deaths. The victims had used in their food 'weeds, cotton seeds, byproducts from brewing beer, and apricot and cherry stones'. Children died from eating poisonous weeds within 24 hours, adults in 3–5 days. In one case, a village shoemaker died after eating meat from the corpses of his mother and brother, who had died from starvation.¹¹⁶ Cases of poisoning, illness and death from eating treated grain seed were also reported frequently (eating grain set aside for seed was, of course, strictly forbidden). Poisoning from eating infected horses was also frequent.¹¹⁷ But perhaps the most common cause of food poisoning was eating mouldy grain. In some cases, the mouldy grain could develop as full blown ergotism, and there do appear to have been some cases of that.¹¹⁸ In other cases, mould and mildew would result in less spectacular toxic illnesses.

All major types of disease, apart from cancer, tend to increase during famine as a result of undernourishment resulting in lower resistance to disease, and of insanitary conditions. As the famine developed, the GPU and the political authorities frequently reported the spread of infectious and other diseases. In the Central Volga

¹¹⁴ RGASPI, 17/3/933, 15, 47–48 (art. 73/53, dated October 22, approved by poll); GARE, 5446/1/471, 264–266 (art. 2323, dated October 25).

¹¹⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/935 (art. 67/48, dated November 23, 1933, approved by poll).

¹¹⁶ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 408–9 (Dnepropetrovsk GPU to Ukrainian GPU). See also *ibid.*, 405 (report by Khataevich dated March 3).

¹¹⁷ See, for example, *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 479–81 (report on Odessa region from information and sowing group of Ukrainian party central committee, dated April 1, 1933).

¹¹⁸ See Matossian (1939), 25; *Sovetskaya botanika*, 5, 1939, 77–87 (Vladimirskii).

region, cases of typhoid fever had already been reported in February.¹¹⁹ On March 12, Khataevich reported from Dnepropetrovsk region that 'the widespread development of all kinds of diseases, and of large-scale morbidity resulting from the increase of all kinds of epidemic diseases'.¹²⁰ In April, cases of typhus were reported from the Kiev region, and the growth of oedomatic diseases generally was reported from the Khar'kov region.¹²¹ In the same month, the regional party secretary in Vinnitsa region reported 'an explosion of epidemics in the region, which we have only limited resources to deal with'.¹²² Many cases of typhus, typhoid fever, smallpox and scurvy occurred in the Urals; these were 'to a considerable extent encouraged by undernourishment'.¹²³

In the years 1932–34, the largest rate of increase was recorded for typhus (see Table 49(a)). Typhus is spread by lice. In conditions of harvest failure and increased poverty, the number of lice is likely to increase, and the herding together of refugees at railway stations, on trains and elsewhere facilitates their spread. In 1933, the number of recorded cases was twenty times the 1929 level, which was the lowest number of cases ever recorded in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union until that year. The number of cases per head of population recorded in Ukraine in 1933 was naturally considerably higher than in the USSR as a whole (see Table 49(b)). Monthly figures for cases of typhus occurring on the railways show that Ukraine had a lower incidence than the USSR as a whole at the beginning of 1933, but by June of that year, the incidence in Ukraine had increased to nearly ten times the January level, and was higher than in the rest of the USSR taken as a whole (see Table 49(c)).

The rate of increase in other recorded disease, except smallpox, was lower than in the case of typhus (see Table 49(a) and (b)). The cholera epidemics which broke out in the summer of 1892 (see p. 403), and to a lesser extent in 1918–20, do not appear to have recurred during the 1930s.

Malaria was an exception to the general pattern. It is spread by mosquitoes. In the early 1930s, the huge decline in the number of

¹¹⁹ *Golodomor* (Kiev, 1995), 115 (Kondrashin).

¹²⁰ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 428 (report from the Dnepropetrovsk regional party committee to the Ukrainian central committee).

¹²¹ *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 485–6 (report of Kiev regional party committee, dated April 1); 487–8 (report from a district in the Khar'kov region, also dated April 1).

¹²² *Golod, 1932–1933* (Kiev, 1990), 491 (Chernyavskii to Kosior, dated April 16).

¹²³ OGPU report dated April 3, published in TSD, iii, 662–4.

livestock led certain kinds of mosquitoes that fed on both cattle and humans to feed more on humans. The malaria cycle takes a few years to develop, and in the Soviet Union the peak was reached in 1924, following the 1922 famine, and in 1934, following the 1932–33 famine.

Disease played a smaller role in the early 1930s than in the 1918–22 famines. The annual number of cases of typhus was about a quarter of those in 1918–22, cases of typhoid fever were less frequent, and the number of cases of relapsing fever was extremely small.

The lower incidence of disease during the 1932–33 famine seems to have been to a considerable extent a result of improved medical provision. By 1932, the number of doctors, hospital beds and other facilities serving the countryside, though still small by later standards, was much greater than in 1913, and very much greater than in the period of chaos during and after the civil war.¹²⁴ The lower incidence of disease during the famine also resulted from exogenous factors, such as the absence of a world pandemic of cholera, and from the reduction in the uncontrolled movement of refugees.

The outbreak of epidemics was a frequent topic on the agenda of the Politburo and Sovnarkom in the months after the famine. The first item on the agenda of the Politburo session of August 1, 1933, was 'Epidemic illnesses in the Urals'.¹²⁵ During the following months, doctors and quinine were despatched to the areas worst affected by malaria, and the Politburo authorised the import of quinine.¹²⁶ Throughout 1934 the Politburo adopted a number of decisions designed to prevent the spread of disease.

With respect to disease and epidemic illnesses, the 1932–33 famine thus followed the pattern of recent famines in other countries: sickness was less important than in earlier famines.

(E) CAUSES OF THE FAMINE

(i) Background

In the second half of the 1920s, the Soviet Union embarked on rapid industrialisation, enforced through the consolidation of the

¹²⁴ See *Sots. str.* (1934), 426–32.

¹²⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/927, 1.

¹²⁶ RGASPI, 17/2/929, 26 (art. 126/105), and RGASPI, 17/162/15, 14 (both adopted on August 26, 1933); RGASPI, 17/162/15, 99 (dated October 9); GARF, 5446/1/452, 158–160 (art. 2628/607s, dated December 5, 1933).

centralised planning system. In 1927, the first substantial increase in investment upset the delicate balance of the New Economic Policy – the market relationship between the state and the peasantry introduced in 1921 after the civil war. Peasants were unwilling to sell grain to the state at the prices offered; and in January 1928 the state used coercion to obtain the grain. Inflationary pressures originating primarily from the investment programme soon spread throughout the economy. To cope with them, the state reinforced price controls, and introduced rationing of food and industrial consumer goods.

The first five-year plan, approved by the party and government in the spring of 1929, sought to increase the production of food and consumer goods *pari passu* with the growth of capital goods. This would provide incentives for both peasants and workers. In agriculture, the increased production would enable both the peasants and the non-agricultural population to receive more food. This policy failed completely, as the example of grain illustrates (million tons):¹²⁷

	1927/28 <i>Actual</i>	1932/33 <i>Plan</i>	1932/33 <i>Actual</i> (from grain budget IV)	1932/33 <i>Actual</i> (from grain budget III)
Grain production	73	106	56.8	62.6
Extra-rural grain	8	20	15.2 ^a	15.4 ^a
Remainder in countryside	65	86	41.6 ^a	47.2 ^a

The amount retained by the peasants for food in 1932/33 was estimated from the grain-fodder budgets at between 20 million and 25 million tons, compared to 27 million tons in 1927/28.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Sources: 1927/28 Actual and 1932/33 Plan: *Pyatiletnei plan*, ii, i (1929), 133. 1932/33 Actual: see p. 447.

Note: ^a Grain collections plus sales on kolkhoz market amounted to 19.3 million tons (19.5 in grain budget III), but 4.1 million tons of this was returned to the countryside as seed and food loan, allocations to timber, peat and fisheries, and special allocations to agriculture.

¹²⁸ The grain budgets give grain consumed for food as 18.4 million tons (budget IV), or 22.5 million tons (budget III), but this figure excludes grain sent back to the countryside from the grain collections; the allocation of food grains to the food loan, allocations to timber, peat and fisheries, and special allocations to agriculture amounted to 2.7 million tons (estimated from data in the grain allocation report for 1932/33: RGAE, 8040/8/8, 572–576, dated December 29, 1933).

The lower figure is much more plausible, as is confirmed by the data on food consumption. The grain consumption per head of the rural population declined substantially; and the consumption per head of meat and dairy products declined even more rapidly.¹²⁹

The state also failed to secure adequate food for the towns. The five-year plan had proposed that, as a result of the increased availability of grain, extra-rural sales would double between 1927/28 and 1932/33. The additional 10 million tons in the hands of the state would be used for export (8 million tons) and for establishing reserve stocks (2 million tons). State grain collections in 1932/33 were less than double the collections in 1927/28, but did increase by about 7 million tons. But peasants in grain-deficit areas could no longer obtain grain on the market. As a result, in 1932/33 about 3.5 million tons of the state collections were returned to the countryside as food for the peasants, fodder for the animals, and seed for the 1933 harvest; a further 1.6 million tons were exported; and about half a million tons were allocated to reserve stocks.¹³⁰ The allocations to exports and stocks were far lower than the 8 million and 2 million tons proposed in the first five-year plan. The food grain available to feed the non-agricultural population in 1932/33 from central supplies amounted to about 8.3 million tons compared with 5 million tons in 1927/28, an increase of 66 per cent.¹³¹ But during this period the urban population had increased much more rapidly

¹²⁹ The famous table reproduced from the archives in Moshkov (1966), 136, shows average consumption per head per year by the agricultural population as follows (in kilograms):

	<i>Grain in grain equivalent</i>	<i>Potatoes</i>	<i>Meat and lard</i>	<i>Butter</i>
1928	250	141	25	1.55
1931	234	145	20	0.80
1932 (preliminary)	215	125	11	0.70

Figures revised by TsUNKhU show an even more disastrous position for grain:

1932	157
1933	192

Source: RGAE, 1562/3/147, 16; 1562/3/201, 8–9.

These figures do not show consumption at the height of the famine in the first six months of 1933; for this, see p. 416 and Tables 42 and 43.

¹³⁰ Estimated from data in Table 15. The size of the allocation to stocks in 1932/33 is rather a mystery; see p. 229.

¹³¹ Estimated from the results for 1932/33 shown in the grain allocation budget dated December 29, 1933 (see note 128 above).

than planned.¹³² Grain per head of urban population remained the same, or may even have declined, and the consumption of meat and dairy products greatly declined.¹³³

These are crude figures, and do not show the considerable regional disparities which we have examined elsewhere in this volume. But they show that the absolute lack of food was the background to the famine. Shortage of grain and other foods in the towns resulted in widespread malnourishment; the acute shortage of grain in the countryside resulted in widespread starvation.

(ii) Why did agricultural production decline so precipitately?

The fundamental cause of the deterioration of agriculture in 1928–33 was the unremitting state pressure on rural resources. Following the grain crisis in the winter of 1927–28, investment in industry, which already exceeded the pre-war level, approximately doubled between 1927/28 and 1930 (see vol. 3, p. 490). Simultaneously, state grain collections increased from 11 million tons after the 1927 harvest to 16 million tons after the 1929 harvest, even though the 1929 harvest was lower than the harvest of 1927

¹³² According to the five-year plan, the urban population would increase from 26 million in 1927/28 to about 32 million in 1932/33 (*Pyatiletñi plan*, ii, i (1929), 133); in fact, the urban population in 1932/33 reached about 38 million (the official estimate of the urban population on January 1, 1933 was 39.7 million (*Vtoroi*, i (1934), 427, but this assumed a figure for the total population which was far too high). The number of gainfully-employed people in the non-agricultural sector increased from 11.8 million in 1927/28 to about 20 million in 1933 (see vol. 4, p. 539).

¹³³ Moshkov's table shows the following consumption per urban person per year (in kilograms):

	<i>Grain in grain equivalent</i>	<i>Potatoes</i>	<i>Meat and lard</i>	<i>Butter</i>
1928	174	88	52	2.97
1931	208	144	27	1.79
1932 (preliminary)	211	110	17	1.75

(Moshkov (1966), 136).

Revised figures in the TsUNKhU archives show a more unfavourable situation with grain:

1931	190 ^a
1932	172 ^a /168 ^b
1933	169 ^b

Sources: ^a RGAE, 1562/3/148, 1–2.

^b RGAE, 1562/3/147, 16; 1562/3/201, 8–9.

(see vol. 1, pp. 419, 427). To obtain this increase, an elaborate system of coercion was established. The removal of grain from the countryside was a major factor in the decline in livestock, which began in 1929 and continued until 1933.

While there is no doubt that the investment plans of 1929–32 were far too ambitious, how far forced industrialisation was ‘necessary’ for the survival of the Soviet Union in a hostile capitalist world will always be a matter of controversy. In our opinion, rapid industrialisation, even at a more feasible pace, was bound to strain the relation between the state and the peasantry. In 1929, against the background of the tension between peasant and state, the Soviet authorities concluded that the implementation of the industrialisation programme would be impossible if agriculture was not brought under firm control. Mikoyan, who was responsible for the grain collections, declared, frankly and publicly, in June 1929: ‘If grain were abundant, we would not at the present time have set ourselves the problems of kolkhoz and sovkhoz construction in such a broad way.’¹³⁴

Collectivisation, coupled with dekulakisation, brought agriculture under state control. But its introduction brought with it enormous difficulties. These were partly inherent in the huge operation of moving 25 million individual peasant economies into a quarter of a million socialised collective farms. The difficulties were made worse by the inability of most communists, from Stalin to the party members sent into the countryside, to understand agriculture and the peasants, and offer sensible means of coping with the transformation of the countryside. In 1930, collectivisation proceeded at a break-neck pace, and impracticable schemes were enforced for the wholesale socialisation of livestock as well as grain. Even with a good harvest, the collective farmers were not guaranteed a minimum return for their work. Although some of the Utopian policies of 1930 were soon abandoned, in both 1931 and 1932 Stalin and the Politburo overestimated the harvest and imposed collection plans based on their misjudgment. Most agricultural difficulties were not attributed to mistakes in policy, or even treated as a necessary cost of industrialisation. Instead, the machinations of kulaks and other enemies of the regime were blamed for the troubles, and the solution was sought in a firmer organisation of agriculture by the state and its agencies.

¹³⁴ See vol. 1, p. 120.

The chaos in administration and in agriculture, and the demoralisation of many peasants, were the context in which grain production deteriorated.

The first five-year plan proposed to achieve the expansion of crop production, both by extending the sown area by 22.2 per cent and by a more intensive use of the sown area, which would increase yields by 25.4 per cent.

The plans for technical improvements which would raise yield aimed to introduce in the course of five years changes which had been introduced in Western Europe over five centuries. Some significant changes did take place. The use of artificial fertiliser supplied by industry increased; but it remained at quite a low level, and was far outweighed by the decline in the supply of manure caused by the reduction in livestock.

The one technological improvement that was more or less successful was the mass application of improved sorted seed. Within five years, the proportion of the area sown to grain which was sown with sorted seed had increased from 3 per cent to over 25 per cent, roughly as envisaged in the plans.¹³⁵ This was a remarkable achievement, resulting from a considerable effort to build special seed farms and to establish procedures to exchange seed on a mass scale. The basis for such operations had been laid down by the pre-revolutionary local authorities, and was extended in the 1920s before the onset of mass collectivisation. The subsequent developments had a firm base. But this achievement utterly failed to compensate for the agrotechnological failures.

Four groups of problems were ignored or underestimated by the political authorities, who assumed that technological improvements could easily be achieved.

(1) *Over-extension of the sown area* The sustained attempt to extend the sown area was a major factor in the deterioration of agricultural technology. The five-year plan intended to achieve part of the increase in grain output through the development of sovkhozy on virgin lands; and in terms of sown area a substantial increase was achieved.¹³⁶ This was part of a general trend. In 1929, 1930 and 1931, in the hope of increasing grain production, the sown area

¹³⁵ *Pyatiletnei plan*, ii, i (1929), 337; *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 367.

¹³⁶ See data in *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 715; this early virgin lands campaign is discussed in OI, 2, 1996, 55–7 (Zelenin).

was increased drastically, and fallow land reduced (see Table 5(a)). The intense pressure to increase the sown area added to the disruption of existing land arrangements brought about by the two collectivisation drives of 1930 and 1931, and by the retreat from collectivisation in the spring of 1930. Rational crop rotation disappeared in many villages and districts. In 1932, the spring-sown area was planned to increase further, but the plan was not fulfilled (see pp. 121–22). Nevertheless, the sown area in 1932 was still greater than in any previous year apart from 1931.

Ukraine was affected particularly badly by the expansion of the sown area. It already had a much lower level of uncropped arable than in all other regions of the USSR, with the exception of the highly commercial Leningrad region. According to the planning documents, the Ukrainian level of fallow was equal to 27.7 per cent of the sown area in 1927/28, and was projected to fall to 18.1 per cent in 1932/33.¹³⁷ The USSR average was 59.1 per cent, projected to fall to 41.7 per cent. An external factor considerably complicated the situation in Ukraine. Bad weather led to exceptionally large winter killings of the autumn sowings for both the 1928 and 1929 harvests, and, to compensate for these, spring sowing was considerably increased. By 1929, rational crop rotation had been seriously undermined; and the increase in the sown area in 1930 and 1931 squeezed the fallow land still further.

Throughout the USSR, the reorganisation of the land, and the expansion of the sown area, disrupted the traditional arrangements for the cultivation of the soil, but for several years they were not replaced by an improved cropping system.

It was not until the autumn of 1932 that the restoration of proper crop rotation received the strong support of the authorities (see pp. 231–4). Meanwhile, much damage had been done. Such a dramatic expansion of sown area and reduction of fallow, without improved crop rotation and the careful introduction of alternative means for rejuvenating the soil with fertilisers or manure, was bound to lead to the reduction of yields and an increased likelihood of crop diseases. By 1932, in many regions, and particularly in Ukraine, soil exhaustion and crop diseases were widespread.

(2) *Decline in draught power* Another major factor leading to poor cultivation was the very considerable reduction in the ‘draught

¹³⁷ *Pyatiletnii plan*, iii (1929), 556–7.

power' available to agriculture between 1928 and 1933. The grain collections removed both food from the peasantry and fodder from the animals.

According to the grain-fodder budgets, the supply of grain for fodder declined from 23.3 million tons in 1927/28 to only 10–12 million tons in 1932.¹³⁸ This decline, and the poor maintenance of the animals, were the main reasons for the reduction of the number of work horses and oxen from 29.7 million in 1928 to 18.8 million in 1932.¹³⁹ This was partly compensated by the rapid increase in tractor horse-power, from 0.28 million to about 2 million between 1928 and 1932.¹⁴⁰ One tractor horse-power provides more drawing power than one horse. Even so, in 1932, total draught power amounted to only some 23 million, compared with 30 million in 1928.

All the main agricultural operations are greatly affected by the availability of draught power: Table 9 shows that the ploughing up of fallow in preparation for the autumn sowing for the 1932 harvest, and the spring sowing of 1932, were delayed, and both reaping and threshing took place later than normal. These delays all tended to reduce the yield, and increase harvest losses.

(3) *Quality of cultivation* The quality of cultivation also deteriorated. Great efforts were made to fulfill the plan in spite of the inadequacy of draught power. But the peasants cultivating the soil were demoralised, and the drivers of the tractors and those concerned with their maintenance were inexperienced. Ploughing, sowing and harvesting were all carried out in a slipshod manner. Shallow ploughing was quicker and easier than deep ploughing, and was normally less effective. Sowing was quicker and easier if you did not waste time regulating the density of the spread of the seed and ensuring that corners of fields and inaccessible areas were covered. Harvesting would be less efficient if there was less concern about minimising harvesting losses. Additional draught power would have allowed all these operations to have been carried out more efficiently and at the most optimal time, resulting in larger yields and lower harvesting losses.

¹³⁸ For 1927/28, see *Pyatiletnii plan*, ii, i (1929), 333. In 1932/33, the amount of grain for fodder was recorded as 10.2 million tons in budget III and 12.3 million tons in budget IV (for these budgets, see p. 446).

¹³⁹ *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 519.

¹⁴⁰ *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 199.

The lack of horses carried with it other troubles. Both collective farmers and individual peasants had great difficulty in conveying the grain to the collection points. And fewer horses meant less manure and therefore poorer soil.

(4) *The poor weather* A further major factor in the poor harvests of 1931 and 1932 was the weather. We have shown that the harvest of 1932 was probably harmed by the weather as much as the harvest in the drought year of 1931 (see pp. 119, 128).

The fluctuations in the annual level of temperature and rainfall on the territory of the USSR are greater than in major grain-producing areas elsewhere in the world. The weather pattern is highly continental, and is complicated by the frequent but irregular dry winds (*sukhovei*) which blow from Central Asia across the Volga region, North Caucasus and Ukraine in the growing months of late spring and early summer. Moreover, the critical insufficiency of humidity makes a large territory particularly susceptible to drought, resulting in high temperatures and low rainfall. In normal times, changes in the weather are the main cause of the large annual fluctuations in yield per hectare.

In addition to general drought factors, the weather at the time of the flowering of the grain in late May and early June seems to be critical, and in this regard the hot weather in early June 1932, followed by high rainfall, appears to have been particularly damaging.

It is often assumed that good-weather years tend to cancel out bad-weather ones, so that over a five-year period fluctuations can be ignored, but this is not the case. The weather was largely responsible for the above-average yield over the whole five years 1909–13. In 1925–29 the weather was only slightly worse than average. But in 1930–34 the weather was poorer than usual over the five years, with particularly bad conditions in 1931 and 1932. This was a factor over which the Soviet government had no immediate control. But the attitude to the weather of the political leaders and the principal planning officials compounded what was already a serious problem. Although the inevitability of fluctuations in the weather from year to year was well known, every year the Soviet government gambled on good weather – and was often unlucky. Official optimism was reinforced by the events of 1930. In 1930, the year in which collectivisation was launched, the weather – and the harvest – were particularly favourable. The good harvest in a year of turmoil undoubtedly strengthened the illusion among the political leaders that agricultural difficulties would easily be overcome.

(iii) Coping with the famine crisis

Confronted by the poor harvest of 1932, the Soviet authorities were in great difficulty. Even before the harvest, their partial recognition of the parlous state of agriculture led in May 1932 to the introduction of the policies known as 'neo-Nep', including a reduction in the grain collections below the amount planned for 1931. At this time the Soviet leaders followed their usual practice of overestimating the harvest. But as early as the end of June 1932 they already conceded that it would amount to only about 75 million tons (see p. 126). This was far below the 90 million tons planned in January 1932, and still further below the five-year plan target of 106 million tons. This put the reduced collection plan of May 1932 in jeopardy. Our work has confirmed – if confirmation were needed – that the grain campaign in 1932/33 was unprecedentedly harsh and repressive. Within this dominant context, state policy was more ambiguous and confused than is generally believed. In response to pressure from the local authorities and the peasants, the Politburo reluctantly made large, though insufficient, reductions in planned collections between August 1932 and January 1933, amounting to as much as 4 million tons. Eventually, 5 million tons less than planned were collected.

The reduced collections were 4 million tons less than in the previous year, and this confronted the state with very considerable problems. The plan to increase grain stocks by nearly 3 million tons was largely abandoned. The annual export plan was reduced, though far from sufficiently. From the beginning of 1933, grain exports were curtailed drastically: in January–June 1933 far less grain was exported than in the same months in the previous three years.¹⁴¹

In spite of these cuts in planned distribution, the amount of grain available for internal use was still substantially less in 1932/33 than in the previous year. The Politburo decided that the grain must be concentrated on the hungry towns, and ruled firmly that no allocations from the state collections would be made available to the countryside for seed, food or fodder. But, in fact, in a very large number of piecemeal Politburo decisions, nearly 2 million tons were issued for these purposes, including 330,000 tons for food (about 194,000 tons of which was for Ukraine).

In spite of the reduction in the collections, and the issue of grain to the countryside, the grain available in Ukraine, the North Caucasus

¹⁴¹ In thousand tons: 1930: 1,412; 1931: 1,353; 1932: 613; 1933: 223.

and the Volga regions was not sufficient to prevent the deaths of several million people from famine. In 1891/92 and in 1921/22 the worst consequences of the grain shortage were avoided by publicising the famine: food assistance was obtained from other parts of the country, and especially from abroad. In 1933, this escape route was closed. The Soviet press was silent about, and even denied, the existence of the famine: an appeal for foreign help was by this time unthinkable (see pp. xiii–xiv).

Our study of the famine has led us to very different conclusions from Dr Conquest's. He holds that Stalin 'wanted a famine',¹⁴² that 'the Soviets did not want the famine to be coped with successfully',¹⁴³ and that the Ukrainian famine was 'deliberately inflicted for its own sake'.¹⁴⁴ This leads him to the sweeping conclusion: 'The main lesson seems to be that the Communist ideology provided the motivation for an unprecedented massacre of men, women and children.'¹⁴⁵

We do not at all absolve Stalin from responsibility for the famine. His policies towards the peasants were ruthless and brutal. But the story which has emerged in this book is of a Soviet leadership which was struggling with a famine crisis which had been caused partly by their wrongheaded policies, but was unexpected and undesirable. The background to the famine is not simply that Soviet agricultural policies were derived from Bolshevik ideology, though ideology played its part. They were also shaped by the Russian pre-revolutionary past, the experiences of the civil war, the international situation, the intransigent circumstances of geography and the weather, and the *modus operandi* of the Soviet system as it was established under Stalin. They were formulated by men with little formal education and limited knowledge of agriculture. Above all, they were a consequence of the decision to industrialise this peasant country at breakneck speed.

¹⁴² *Hearing* (1984), 45 (seminar at American Enterprise Institute).

¹⁴³ *Hearing* (1984), 61.

¹⁴⁴ Conquest (1986), 196.

¹⁴⁵ Conquest (1986), 344. In correspondence Dr Conquest has stated that it is not his opinion that 'Stalin purposely inflicted the 1933 famine. No. What I argue is that with resulting famine imminent, he could have prevented it, but put "Soviet interest" other than feeding the starving first – thus consciously abetting it' (September 2003).

APPENDIX: A NOTE ON THE GRAIN HARVESTS

The measurement of grain production is a difficult task in any country – and particularly in peasant countries. What do we mean by ‘the harvest’, or by ‘grain production’? The harvest standing in the field at the moment of optimum ripeness (the ‘biological’ harvest or the harvest ‘on the root’) is always much higher than the threshed harvest in the barn – the gap varies from year to year, but in pre-revolutionary Russia and the Soviet Union it could be 20 or 30 per cent. It is almost always the barn harvest with which we are concerned – or perhaps the barn harvest plus the small amount of grain which is actually consumed by the producers before the grain reaches the barn.

In assessing the harvest (that is, the barn harvest), the amount of grain marketed outside the village can be assessed fairly accurately. But, in peasant countries, most grain is consumed on farm as food or animal feed; and can be measured only indirectly through peasant budgets. The total harvest can be measured by taking samples in the fields, and then deducting losses between field and barn, or by the expert assessments of statisticians or agricultural specialists. The local assessments then have to be multiplied up to produce a national figure. An objective figure is difficult to obtain because peasants will often provide low estimates of their production in order to minimise the taxes they pay.¹

In the Soviet case, political factors have made objective assessment much more difficult, both for statisticians at the time and for historians today. In the 1920s, Gosplan strongly argued that grain was quite plentiful, and applied high ‘correction coefficients’ to the raw data from the peasants. The Gosplan estimates were opposed unsuccessfully by the Central Statistical Administration.² Then, at the end of

¹ For the various methods used to measure the Soviet harvest in the 1920s, see Wheatcroft (1980). For other papers on this topic by the present authors, see the bibliography in Davies, Harrison and Wheatcroft, eds (1994), 360–1, 373, and SS, xxi (1969–70), 314–29 (Davies).

² At this time an unwarrantedly high coefficient was also applied to pre-war data – though afterwards this was quietly dropped in order to show the superiority of Soviet performance (see SS, xxvi (1974), 157–80 (Wheatcroft)).

the 1920s and in the 1930s, grain collection agencies, supported by the Politburo, made generous harvest estimates in the belief, hope and pretence that the high level of grain collections imposed by the state was feasible. From 1929, this additional mark-up was added to any overestimate which had already appeared in the official harvest figures since the mid-1920s. A definite seasonal pattern appeared in the estimates. In every year, the preliminary estimates of the harvest made by the authorities were very high, and were used throughout the grain collection period (from the end of June to the end of the calendar years and the first months of the following year) to justify the state grain plan. The final figure for the harvest was later reduced considerably – without this reduction, the harvest in the following year would have looked very unsatisfactory. But the final figure still exceeded any reasonable estimate of the true figure.

In August 1929, the Central Statistical Administration estimated the harvest as 76.5 million tons, 5.8 per cent greater than in 1928. At this time, the non-party economists still felt able to challenge such high estimates behind the scenes. In September, Molotov publicly condemned the ‘Menshevik-SR influences’ in grain statistics, and in October, Groman, the principal dissident, was removed from all influence. Eventually, however, the August figure was revised to only 71.7 million tons, 2 per cent less than in 1928.³

In 1930, the harvest was at first announced as 88 million tons, and was still officially given as 87.4 million tons in December. But this figure, used to justify the record grain collections of 1930/31, was reduced by 1932 to 83.5 million tons. However, two unpublished grain-fodder budgets in the archives reveal that this figure included losses, which in one case reduced the harvest to 77.2 million tons, and in the other to only 74.6 million tons (see vol. 1, pp. 348–9, and Table on p. 447 below). Even the lower figure is still a substantial 3 million tons higher than the 1929 harvest; and there is no doubt that the 1930 harvest was a good one. But the increase was not large enough to justify the increase in state grain collections by over 6 million tons.

In 1931, in contrast, the harvest was very poor. The initial estimate which prevailed throughout the grain collections was 78 million tons. Even on the basis of this figure, the collections, which were slightly larger than in 1930/31, were a much heavier burden on the

³ See vol. 1, pp. 64–5, 71. The figure of 76.5 million tons, from the archives, appears in the 1989 reprint of this volume, but was not available for the original edition in 1980.

peasants.⁴ After the collections, the harvest figure was eventually reduced to 69.5 million tons. (See Table 1.)

The 1932 harvest has been the subject of the greatest controversy, both behind the scenes at the time, and among historians today. In July 1932, it was estimated at 76–78 million tons, considerably larger than the figure for the 1931 harvest, which was accepted by this time. At the height of the grain collections, in September, both TsUNKhU and Narkomzem reduced the estimate, giving a range of 67–71 million tons, only slightly greater than the prevailing figure for 1931. Although these estimates were, as usual, well above any objective estimate, the circulation by key official agencies of such relatively low estimates at the height of the grain collections indicated the pessimism and alarm which prevailed among knowledgeable officials. In the first few months of 1933 a very elaborate re-examination of the harvest estimates behind the scenes led to a range from 60–65 million tons (see p. 136 and Table 1). However, on September 23, 1933, the Politburo, officially approving a grain production figure for the first time, declared, with Stalin's backing, that the 1932 harvest had been 69.87 million tons, slightly larger than in 1931.

The enshrinement of this figure in party writ had the unfortunate result that it was always accepted by Soviet historians, even during the Khrushchev period, when the previous official account of collectivisation was under critical scrutiny. Even as late as 1995, Russian historians still firmly declared that the 1932 harvest was slightly higher than the 1931 harvest, citing the official figures of 69.48 and 69.87 million tons.⁵

This favourable view of the 1932 harvest was accepted by many Western historians. Robert Conquest, for example, wrote that 'the USSR's total crop of 1932' was 'no worse than that of 1931'.⁶ At the other extreme, Mark Tauger, on the basis of the unpublished kolkhoz reports for 1932, claimed that the harvest was only 50.06 million tons, and might have been even lower. Tauger's estimate is based on the mistaken assumption that the average kolkhoz yield for the USSR given in the reports, 5.4 tsemtners per hectare, was

⁴ In 1931, with the 1930 harvest estimated at 87 million tons, the grain remaining after the 1930/31 collections appeared to be 64 million tons, while only 54 million tons remained from the 1931 collections (78 million minus 24 million).

⁵ See, for example, *Golodomor v Ukraini* (Kiev, 1995), 36, 46 (Ivnitskii, Zelenin).

⁶ Conquest (1986), 264.

representative.⁷ In fact, however, regions with low yields tend to be over-represented in the reports, and regions with high yields to be under-represented. For example:

	<i>Percentage of kolkhozy covered by reports</i>	<i>Yield (tsentners per hectare)</i>
Moscow	22.2	8.5
Gor'kii (Nizhnii-Novgorod)	25.9	9.0
North Caucasus	86.6	3.9
Ukraine	47.3	5.1

When the regions are re-weighted in terms of total sown area, the average kolkhoz yield for the USSR rises to 5.8* tsentners per hectare instead of 5.4.⁸ If this figure is adjusted to allow for the higher yield outside the kolkhoz sector, it becomes 6.0 tsentners for the sown area as a whole. On the basis of the official figure for the sown area this would give a total harvest not of 50 but of 59.8* million tons.⁹ If we allow for some over-estimate of the sown area in the official figure, the total harvest emerging from the kolkhoz reports would be about 55–7 million tons.

The 1933 harvest has become notorious because it was the first to be measured in terms of the so-called 'normal economic harvest', which was taken to be the 'biological harvest' less a small amount (10 per cent) for permissible losses between field and barn. The approved figure used during the collections was as much as 100 million tons; the final figure, agreed as early as October 1933, was 89.8 million tons (see Table 1 and p. 248).

This figure, and comparable figures for later years, were always given in the official statistical handbooks in the same series as the official barn harvests for previous years. The harvest for 1933 was always stated to be 89.8 million tons until Khrushchev denounced the harvest estimates based on biological yield. The 1933 harvest was then reduced

⁷ SR, vol. 1 [50] (1991), 80–1 (Tauger). In 1970 Soviet historians pointed out that the kolkhoz reports before 1933 were likely to be unrepresentative (*Ezhegodnik 1965* (1970), 464–73 (Zelenin), 474–81 (Vyltsan)).

⁸ The detailed calculations are shown on the website for this volume: <http://www.soviet-archives-research.co.uk/hunger>.

⁹ 6.0×99.7 million hectares = 59.8 million tons (598 million tsentners).

* Note this is a corrected version. The original was based on a transcription error which indicated a larger yield of 6.2 tsentners per hectare instead of 5.8, which had to be compared with Tauger's figures of 5.4. The original grain production figure given was 58–60 million tons, which was compared with Tauger's figure of 50 million tons.

dramatically to a mere 68.4 million tons, and the figures for earlier years were left intact. This was certainly an error. It assumed that the figures for 1932 and earlier years were a true record of the barn harvest – but, as we have seen, they included an element of exaggeration which increased substantially between the mid-1920s and 1932. The 1933 harvest was certainly much better than the 1932 harvest; yet in the post-Stalin publications it was given as 1.4 million tons lower.

Given the information available, and the complex factors involved, it is not possible to establish firm ‘true’ harvest figures for these years. Instead, we suggest a range for each year, as a more accurate representation of our knowledge than any firm figure. Our suggested ranges are compared here with the two series of official figures:

	<i>Soviet series of 1930s^a</i>	<i>Revised Soviet series^b</i>	<i>Our suggested range^c</i>
1928	73.3	73.3	63–70
1929	71.7	71.7	62–69
1930	83.5	83.5	73–77
1931	69.5	69.5	57–65
1932	69.8	69.8	55–60
1933	89.8	68.4	70–77

Sources: ^a *Sots.str.* (1935), 361–2.

^b *Nar.khoz.v* 1957 (1958), 208, gives the 1933–37 (average); the annual figures for 1933 and later years may be estimated on the basis of the barn yield: biological yield ratios for the kolkhozy, given, for example in *Massovye* (1979), 219 (Moshkov).

^c We offer a range to reflect the real uncertainty that there has to be in these evaluations, given the changes in methods that were used and the political pressures that were applied to the statisticians. Our estimates are based on a range of different data that were accepted internally by the best experts of the time, and our own assessments of the reliability of these different data. See in particular the *post factum* grain-fodder budget data (p. 447 below). These balances have a surprisingly low level of *nevyazka* for 1931. This was the last evaluation to be made before the creation of TsUNKhU and an attempt to move towards more objective harvest evaluations. We know that it was a year of very severe drought and we assume that the true decline in production was not adequately incorporated even into these secret figures.

Neither of the Soviet official series corresponds to the true trend. The series published in the 1930s shows a harvest figure for 1932 which is far too high; and the revised post-Stalin series shows a figure for 1932 which is far too high, and a figure for 1933 which is far too low. Our suggested range, though rough, shows that there was a good harvest in 1930, poor harvests in 1931 and 1932, and a reasonably good harvest in 1933.

The grain harvests were also tackled from another angle by the Soviet statisticians in the 1920s and 1930s. The *post factum* grain-fodder

budget showed the distribution of the harvest (plus stocks in hand) for the agricultural year between different uses: seed, food and fodder consumed on farm, sales on the market, and the state grain collections. This provided a check of the harvest figure. In the 1930s, the authors of the grain budgets made valiant efforts to reconcile the official figures with their knowledge or assumptions about the different uses. But they were able to produce budgets which were at all realistic only by deducting various kinds of 'losses' from the official figure, plus an item known euphemistically as *nevyazka* (literally, 'not tied in'). Different attempts to compose the budgets produced the following results for net production (production less losses and *nevyazka*):

	1930/31	1931/32	1932/33	1933/34
Official figures	83.5	69.5	69.8	89.8
Series I	77.2	67.8	62.6	
Series II				83.1
Series III	74.6*	66.5	60.6	80.6
Series IV			56.8	73.2

Sources: Series I: RGAE, 1562/3/178, 51, 53. Another table in this file, on *list* 45, dealing with commodity grain in 1932/33, is dated March 15, 1934.

Series II: RGAE, 1562/3/239, 8, 10. This table is dated '19.vi', evidently June 19, 1934.

Series III: RGAE, 1562/3/237, 50. This is a single handwritten sheet.

Series IV: RGAE, 1562/19/38, 37, 30. This table also appears in RGAE, 1562/3/237, 32, and appears to have been prepared later than Series III in the same file.

Note: * Does not specifically include *nevyazka*, but has two items for losses: 'losses in storage and processing' and 'losses in harvesting'.

The various grain-fodder budgets are inadequately dated, but seem to have been prepared either soon after the harvest or soon after the agricultural year concerned. We have attempted to arrange them in rough chronological order. The revised estimates for grain production are, of course, still too high, apart from Series IV. But they show the trend very clearly: the good harvest of 1930, the poor harvest of 1931, the worse harvest of 1932, and the substantial improvement in 1933. This is the irreducible minimum statement which can be made about grain harvests in these years. These grain budgets can be compared legitimately with the official figures for the late 1920s: the grain budgets for those years show only quite small losses – e.g. 184,000 tons in 1928, and 289,000 tons in 1929, and do not make any deduction for *nevyazka*.¹⁰

¹⁰ Moshkov (1966), 230–1, reproducing the grain-fodder budgets from RGAE, 4372/30/881, 9. This includes a preliminary budget for 1932, which assumes the 1932 harvest was 67.1 million tons.

TABLES

The metric ton (tonne) is used throughout the volume. Minor discrepancies in totals are due to rounding.

Table 1. Grain production and collections, 1930–33 (million tons)

	<i>Production</i>	<i>Collections</i>	<i>Remainder</i>	<i>Collections as % of production</i>
<i>1930 harvest</i>				
July 1930	88.0	22.7	65.3	25.8
September 1930	88.0	24.6	63.4	28.0
December 1930 estimate	87.4	23.0	64.0	26.3
1932: official estimate	83.5	22.1	61.4	26.5
1932: archive estimate	77.2	22.1	55.1	28.6
Our estimate	73–77	22.1	51–55	30.2–28.7
<i>1931 harvest</i>				
November/December 1930 plan	98.6	32.7	65.9	33.2
January 1931 plan	97.0	30.7	66.3	31.6
June 1, 1931 estimate	85.2	30+	c.55	35.2+
July 15, 1931 estimate	79.2	26.5	52.7	33.5
October 31, 1931 estimate	78.0	24.3	53.7	31.2
July 1932 estimates				
(a) Narkomzem	70.3	22.8	47.5	32.4
(b) TsUNKhU	68.2	22.8	45.4	33.4
Final official estimate	69.5	22.8	46.7	32.8
Our estimate	57–65	22.8	34–42	40.0–35.1
<i>1932 harvest</i>				
January 1932 plan	90.7	29.5	61.2	32.5
July 1, 1932 estimates				
(a) Narkomzem	78.0	23.3	54.7	29.4
(b) TsUNKhU	76.0	23.3	52.7	30.7
September 1932 estimates				
(a) Narkomzem	71.1	22.8	48.3	32.1
(b) TsUNKhU	67.1	22.8	44.3	34.0
January 1933 estimates				
(a) Narkomzem	71.1	19.4	51.7	27.3
(b) TsUNKhU	69.9	19.4	50.5	27.8
Summer 1933: unofficial estimates				
(a) TsGK local commissions	60.0	18.5	41.5	30.8
(b) Regional plenipotentiaries	64.2	18.5	45.7	28.8
(c) TsUNKhU	65.1	18.5	46.6	28.4

Table 1. (Continued)

	<i>Production</i>	<i>Collections</i>	<i>Remainder</i>	<i>Collections as % of production</i>
September 23, 1933: Politburo	69.9	18.5	51.3	26.5
Our estimate	55–60	18.5	36.5–41.5	33.6–30.8
<i>1933 harvest</i>				
January 1933 plan	80.2	26.1	56.1	32.6
August 1933 TsGK estimate	100.0	24.3	75.7	24.3
October 1933 Sovnarkom	89.7	22.7	67.0	25.3
Our estimate	70–77	22.7	47.3–54.3	32.4–29.5

Sources: For 1930, see vol. 1, pp. 345 and 349, and tables 12 and 13, except for July 1930 collections plan and September 1930 plan, which are from RGASPI, 17/3/796, 5 (item 25) – Politburo decision of September 15, 1930 (this source was not available when vol. 1 was published).

For 1931, see text of chs 3 and 4 of the present volume.

For 1932, see text of chs 5 and 6 of the present volume.

For 1933, see text of chs 7 and 8 of the present volume.

For our 1930–33 harvest estimates, see Appendix of the present volume.

Table 2. Number of animals by social sector, 1931–34

(a) Absolute numbers (thousands; July 1 of each year)

	<i>Working horses</i>	<i>All horses</i>	<i>Cows</i>	<i>All cattle</i>	<i>Sheep and goats</i>	<i>Pigs</i>
<i>1930</i>						
Sovkhozy etc.	176	213	308	741	2649	190
Kolkhozy	3554	4437	1407	3568	5607	861
Collective farmers and individual peasants	16955	25372	24733	47812	100099	12458
Other	181	215	245	365	403	56
Total	20866	30237	26693	52486	108758	13559
<i>1931</i>						
Sovkhozy etc.	557	622	1204	2516	4845	1230
Kolkhozy	9259	12117	3003	8265	12346	2521
Including <i>fermy</i>	—	—	n.a.	1516	n.a.	396
Collective farmers and individual peasants	9297	15000	19743	36462	59831	10565
Other	430	447	463	673	670	127
Total	19543	26247	24413	47916	77692	14443

(Continued overleaf)

Table 2(a). (Continued)

	<i>Working horses</i>	<i>All horses</i>	<i>Cows</i>	<i>All cattle</i>	<i>Sheep and goats</i>	<i>Pigs</i>
<i>1932</i>						
Sovkhozy etc.	745	893	1716	3526	7221	1918
Kolkhozy	8799	10770	3042	10113	12084	3222
Including <i>fermy</i>	—	—	n.a.	6111	4535	2468
Collective farmers	260	363	8141	12698	14564	2902
Individual peasants	5640	6792	7539	13432	17715	2873
Other	736	820	590	882	556	696
Total	16180	19638	21028	40651	52140	11611
<i>1933</i>						
Sovkhozy etc.	640	816	1669	3689	7629	2536
Kolkhozy	8567	10123	2979	9174	12244	2971
Including <i>fermy</i>	—	—	2070	5459	7214	2214
Collective farmers	252	427	9001	14878	17276	3765
Individual peasants	3832	4374	5200	9621	12293	2181
Other	776	839	702	1018	784	615
Total	14067	16579	19551	38380	50226	12068
<i>1934</i>						
Sovkhozy etc.	728	956	1823	4435	8595	4192
Kolkhozy	8095	9934	3093	9855	14125	3696
Including <i>fermy</i>	—	—	2503	6608	9841	2930
Collective farmers	212	391	9145	17214	17510	5417
Individual peasants	2856	3367	4520	9325	10533	2733
Other	924	1016	974	1608	1196	1418
Total	12815	15664	19555	42437	51949	17456

Sources: *Sots. str.* (1935), 367, except:
fermy: 1931 and 1932: *Sots. str.* (1934), 238–40;
 1933 and 1935: *Sots. str.* (1935), 373.

Notes: ‘Sovkhozy’ includes *koopkhozy* and *Orsy*.
 ‘Cattle’ includes a small number of oxen. On July 1, 1933, the total was 2,420,000, including: sovkhozy etc. 212,000; kolkhozy 1,217,000; collective farmers 99,000; individual peasants 894,000 – *Sel.khoz. 1935* (1936), 534–6. (Sovkhozy etc. have been estimated from this source as a residual.)
 For an account of methods of estimating number of livestock, see Nifontov (1937), 102–3.

(b) Percentage decline in number of livestock
(as compared with July 1 of previous year; + = increase)

	<i>Horses</i>	<i>Cattle</i>	<i>Sheep</i>	<i>Pigs</i>
1929–30	13.7	29.8	25.8	32.6
1930–31	13.2	8.8	28.6	+6.5
1931–32	25.2	15.0	32.9	19.4
1932–33	15.3	5.2	3.6	+4.3
1933–34	5.5	+10.0	+3.4	+44.6

Table 3. Number of cattle by region, July 1928 and July 1933 (thousands)

	<i>1928</i>	<i>1933</i>	<i>1933:1928 (1928 = 100)</i>
Grain-deficit regions ^a	11960	9166	76.6
Central Black-Earth	3793	2055	54.2
Urals	3879	1983	51.1
Central Volga	2858	1409	49.3
Lower Volga	3471	1425	41.1
North Caucasus ^b	5944	2913	49.1
Siberia ^c	10264	4906	47.8
Kazakhstan	7681	1737	22.6
Other grain-surplus regions ^d	2252	1648	73.2
All RSFSR	52102	27242	52.3
Ukraine	8605	4446	51.7
Belorussia	2218	1566	70.7
Transcaucasus	3883	3163	81.4
Central Asia (including Kirgiz ASSR)	3733	1964	52.6
USSR	70542	38380	54.4

Source: *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 513–19.

Notes: ^a Includes Northern region, Karelian ASSR, Leningrad, Moscow, Ivanovo and Nizhnii-Novgorod regions.

^b Includes Dagestan ASSR.

^c Includes West and East Siberia, Far East and Buryat-Mongol ASSR. Buryat-Mongol ASSR has been calculated as a residual.

^d Bashkir and Tatar ASSRs and Crimean region.

Table 4. Production of fodder, 1928–33 (million tons)

	<i>Hay</i>	<i>Hay excluding Kazakhstan</i>	<i>Sown grasses</i>	<i>Root crops</i>
1928	67.54	63.12	10.3	6.5
1930	47.07	40.71	13.7	6.1
1931	51.09	41.11	17.0	8.0
1932	41.92	37.22	14.9	7.6
1933	41.66	38.93	11.9	8.8

Source: Calculated from data on sown area and yield in *Sel.khoz. 1935* (1936), 241, 487–8, 491.

Note: These figures exclude fodder made from grain, and nourishment obtained from feeding on pasture. The high total figure for hay in 1931 is because of an especially large and improbable figure for the area sown to hay in Kazakhstan in that year. Silage amounted to 10 million tons in 1931, 7.2 million in 1932 and 9.1 million in 1933.

Table 5. Area sown to all crops, 1928, 1930–33
(million hectares)

(a) By type of crop

	<i>1928</i>	<i>1930</i>	<i>1931</i>	<i>1932</i>	<i>1933</i>
Autumn-sown grain	30.7	38.9	38.8	37.9	36.2
Spring-sown grain	61.5	62.9	65.6	61.8	65.4
Total grain	92.2	101.8	104.4	99.7	101.6
Other food crops ^a	8.0	8.3	9.7	10.0	9.4
Industrial crops ^b	8.6	10.5	14.0	14.9	12.0
Grasses and silage	3.6	6.2	8.2	10.0	6.6
Other	0.6	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.2
Total for all crops	113.0	127.2	136.3	134.4	129.7
Of which, spring-sown	82.3	88.3	97.5	96.5	93.5

Source: *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 241.

Notes: ^a Includes vegetables (including potatoes), cucurbits and fodder root crops.

^b Includes sugar beet, sunflower, cotton and flax.

(b) By social sector

	1928	1930	1931	1932	1933
<i>Sovkhozy</i>					
Grain	1.1	2.9	8.1	9.2	10.8
Other	0.6	1.0	2.9	4.3	3.3
Total sovkhozy	1.7	3.9	11.0	13.5	14.1
<i>Kolkhozy</i>					
Grain	1.0	29.7	61.0	69.1	75.0
Other	0.4	8.4	18.0	22.4	18.6
Total kolkhozy	1.4	38.1	79.0	91.5	93.6
<i>Individual peasants</i>					
Grain	90.0	69.1	35.3	31.3	15.7
Other	19.9	16.1	11.1	8.2	6.2
Total individual peasants	109.2	85.2	46.4	29.5	21.9
<i>All sectors</i>					
Grain	92.1	101.8	104.4	99.7	101.6
Other	20.9	25.4	31.9	34.7	28.1
Total: all sectors	113.0	127.2	136.3	134.4	129.7

Source: *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 259.

Note: The sown area of collective-farm households on their household plots is included with the sown area of individual peasants.

Table 6. Sown area, yield, production and collections of food crops, 1913 and 1928–33

(a) Sugar beet

	1913	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
1. Sown area (thousand hectares) ¹							
Sovkhozy		202	217	202	184	198	101
Kolkhozy		12	26	386	855	1107	962
Individual peasants		555	528	448	354	233	148
Total	649	770	771	1036	1394	1538	1311
2. Yield (tsentners per hectare) ²	169	132	81	135	86	64 ^a	74
3. Gross harvest (million tons) ³	10.9	10.14	6.25	14.02	12.05	6.56	8.99
4. Collections (million tons) ^{4b}		9.37	6.04	13.24	10.44	6.12	8.20

Sources: ¹ *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 203.

² *Ibid.*, 249, except 1913: *ibid.* 212.

³ *Ibid.*, 450, except 1913: see vol. 1, p. 419.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 215.

Note: General note: For all crops, 'individual peasants' includes sowings by collective farmers on their household plots.

^a From actually harvested area: 1,025,000 hectares.

^b These figures refer to the agricultural years following the harvest; that is, 1928/29, 1929/30, 1930/31, etc. (see *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 1430).

(b) Potatoes

	1913	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
1. Sown area (million hectares) ¹							
Sovkhozy		0.4			0.28	0.38	0.51
Kolkhozy		0.3			2.32	2.82	2.75
Individual peasants		5.61			3.57	2.92	2.34
Total	3.93	5.68	5.69	5.73	6.17	6.11	5.60
2. Yield (tons per hectare) ²	7.61	8.18	8.92	8.63	7.27	7.06	8.71
3. Gross harvest (million tons) ³							
Sovkhozy		0.33	0.37	0.49	1.93	2.76	4.48
Kolkhozy		0.28	0.64	7.32	16.55	19.53	22.66
Individual peasants		45.83	44.62	41.64	26.37	20.83	22.11
Total	29.90	46.44	45.63	49.45	44.85	43.12	49.25
4. Centralised collections (million tons) ^{4a}			3.25	5.72	6.89	4.45	5.68

Sources: ¹ *Tekhnicheskie kul'tury*, ii (1936), 4, 8–16, except 1913; Gukhman (1925), 130–1, and 1928; *Sel. kh.1935* (1936), 468–9.

² *Sel. kh.1935* (1936), 470, except 1913; estimated from source in note 1.

³ *Sel. kh.1935* (1936), 467, except 1913; as note 1.

⁴ *Tekhnicheskie kul'tury*, ii (1936), 34.

Note: See General note under Table 6(a).

^a These figures refer to the agricultural years following the harvest; that is, 1929/30, 1930/31, etc. They are simply described as 'Collection' in the source in note 4, but *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 467, describes them as 'state collections' and adds 'only centralised collections are given'.

(c) Vegetables

	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
1. Sown area (thousand hectares) ¹						
Sovkhozy	8	9	41	306	355	400
Kolkhozy	8	19	360	755	997	773
Individual peasants	781	806	785	926	884	1146
Total	797	834	1183 ^b	1987	2236	2319
2. Yield (tons per hectare) ¹	13.2	12.7	11.7	8.5	7.9	9.4
3. Gross harvest (million tons) ¹						
Sovkhozy	114	121	401	2494	2952	3859
Kolkhozy	106	259	4126	6288	7966	7458
Individual peasants	10278	10245	9327	8066	6659	10452
Total	10498	10624	13854	16848	17576	21759 ^c

Table 6(c). (Continued)

	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
4. Centralised collections (thousand tons) ^{2a}			1491	1775	1400	1777

Sources: ¹ *Tekhnicheskie kul'tury*, ii(1936), 85, 93.

² *Tekhnicheskie kul'tury*, ii(1936), 174.

Notes: See General note under Table 6(a).

^a These figures refer to the agricultural years following the harvest, that is, 1930/31, 1931/32, etc. They are described as 'Collection' in the source in note 2, but *Sel. kh. VI-VII* (1935), 260, describes them as 'centralised collections'.

^b Adds to 1186; 1183 in original.

^c Adds to 21769; 21759 in original.

(d) Melons and other cucurbits

	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
1. Sown area (thousand hectares) ¹						
Sovkhozy			5	45	69	91
Kolkhozy			537	561	596	437
Individual peasants			516	297	203	172
Total			1058	903	868	700
2. Yield (tons per hectare) ¹			7.67	7.84	8.20	6.31
3. Gross harvest (million tons) ²	5.50	6.09	8.11	7.08	7.12	4.42

Sources: ¹ *Sel. kh. VI-VII* (1935), 261.

² As in note 1, except for 1928 and 1929; derived by subtracting vegetable harvest (Table (c) above) from total harvest of vegetables and cucurbits, given in RGAE, 4372/30/881, 11 as 15.74 and 16.71 million tons, respectively. But note that this source gives somewhat higher figures for 1930 and 1932 than those in the above Tables.

Note: See General note under Table 6(a).

(e) Vegetable oil seeds^a

	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
<i>Sunflower</i> ¹						
Sown area (thousand hectares)	3905	3620	3386	4575	5306	3897
Yield (tsentners per hectare)	5.4	4.9	4.8	5.5	4.3	6.0

(Continued overleaf)

Table 6(e). (Continued)

	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
Gross harvest (thousand tons)	2127	1764	1629	2506	2268	2354
Collections (thousand tons)	1072	809	748	1351	563	797
<i>Flax</i> ²						
Sown area (thousand hectares) ^b	1736	2054	2249	3138	3155	2711
Yield (tsentners per hectare)	3.5	3.5	3.2	2.7	2.5	2.7
Gross harvest (thousand tons)	602	713	717	844	797	744
Collections (thousand tons)	220	322	230	313	267	253
<i>Hemp</i> ³						
Gross harvest (thousand tons)	561	409	366	320	284	277

Sources: ¹ *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 326.

² *Ibid.*, 422.

³ *Ibid.*, 442.

Notes: See General note under Table 6(a).

^a The gross harvest of all vegetable oil seeds was given as 2,554,000 tons in 1913 and 3,401,000 tons in 1927/28 (*Pyatiletnii plan*, i (1930), 144).

^b This is the total sown area for flax, including flax planted mainly for fibre, and therefore overlaps with the sown area for flax in Table 7(b) below.

Table 7. Sown area, yield, gross harvest and collections of industrial crops, 1928–33

(a) Raw cotton

	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
1. Sown area (thousand hectares) ¹						
Irrigated	969	1045	1436	1783	1743	1666
Non-irrigated	2	11	146	354	430	385
Total	971	1056	1583	2137	2172	2052
2. Yield (tsentners per hectare) ²						
Irrigated	8.5	8.3	7.7	6.8	6.9	7.8
Non-irrigated	0.5	1.4	0.6	1.9	1.6	0.9
On all sown area	8.5	8.3	7.0	6.0	5.9	6.4
3. Gross harvest (thousand tons) ³						
Irrigated	821	863	1104	1212	1203	1294
Non-irrigated	0	2	9	78	68	21
Total	821	864	1113	1290	1271	1315

Table 7(a). (Continued)

	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
4. Collections (thousand tons) ⁴						
Sovkhozy				59	41	41
Kolkhozy				860	973	1061
Individual peasants				352	190	132
Total	788	825	1074	1270	1203	1291 ^a

Sources: ¹ *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 400.

² *Ibid.*, 401.

³ *Ibid.*, 402.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 215–6.

Note: General note: for all crops, 'individual peasants' includes sowings by collective farmers on their household plots.

^a 57,000 tons have not been included in the breakdown by sectors.

(b) Flax

	1909–13 (average)	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
1. Sown area: flax for fibre (thousand hectares)	923	1364	1631	1749	2391	2510	2395
2. Yield (tsentners per hectare)	3.63	2.4	2.2	2.5	2.3	2.0	2.3
3. Gross harvest: fibre (thousand tons)							
Sovkhozy		1	1	4	10	11	2
Kolkhozy		2	7	63	282	320	404
Individual peasants		321	354	368	260	167	142
Total	335	324	361	436	553	498	548
4. Collections: fibre (thousand tons)		172	227	183	256	287	255

Source: All from *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 422 (breakdown by social sector estimated by us from percentages), except 1909–13; *Sel. kh. VI–VII* (1935), 158.

Note: See General note under Table 7(a).

Table 8. Ten-daily average temperature and accumulated rainfall,
Kiev (Ukraine) and Saratov (Lower Volga), March to August, 1930–33
(a) Kiev

1926–34 (average)		Deviations from 1926–34 average			
		1930	1931	1932	1933
Temperature (°C)					
March 1–10	−1.2	5.5	−1.4	−2.8	−2.1
March 11–20	−3.0	2.8	−1.8	−3.0	1.8
March 20–31	0.4	3.2	−1.5	−4.3	1.4
April 1–10	8.1	1.2	−5.1	2.7	0.5
April 11–20	7.2	4.3	−4.1	1.6	−4.5
April 20–30	16.1	1.9	0.7	−4.2	−6.4
May 1–10	15.9	−1.2	2.1	−0.3	−0.3
May 10–20	17.5	−1.6	−0.5	−0.4	−1.0
May 20–31	22.8	0.8	3.4	4.1	−5.4
June 1–10	15.1	−2.6	1.8	2.4	−6.4
June 11–20	22.0	1.4	0.0	−0.6	−0.6
June 21–30	21.2	2.7	0.9	0.1	−1.7
July 1–10	22.4	−2.6	2.2	1.2	−3.3
July 11–20	25.3	−2.0	2.0	2.1	−0.1
July 21–31	26.6	−0.7	2.6	0.5	0.0
August 1–10	22.5	1.9	2.4	0.1	−0.4
Rainfall (millimetres)					
March 1–10	16.3	−16	14	14	5
March 11–20	10.9	21	−3	−5	−11
March 20–31	13.7	6	2	−13	−6
April 1–10	13.9	−5	−10	5	21
April 11–20	24.1	−8	31	−12	2
April 20–30	20.8	−18	18	34	15
May 1–10	21.8	−7	11	−2	−15
May 10–20	24.9	30	−14	21	21
May 20–31	17.1	−12	8	−16	0
June 1–10	29.6	−24	−1	28	33
June 11–20	48.6	−45	−31	74	3
June 21–30	22.8	5	4	36	−8
July 1–10	21.6	11	−14	−21	76
July 11–20	18.4	17	−17	7	−14
July 21–31	23.1	−18	1	24	−12
August 1–10	20.7	−5	−8	4	−16

(b) Saratov (Lower Volga)

1926-34		Deviations from 1926-34 average			
		1930	1931	1932	1933
<i>Temperature (°C)</i>					
March 1-10	-3.5	7.9	1.0	-1.3	-7.5
March 11-20	-1.3	6.3	-1.5	-0.9	2.4
March 20-31	1.0	6.4	3.5	0.5	3.9
April 1-10	5.4	6.8	-3.3	0.8	6.0
April 11-20	9.7	6.0	-0.2	2.3	2.2
April 20-30	11.5	0.2	2.4	0.8	-0.3
May 1-10	10.3	-3.2	3.2	4.1	-2.4
May 10-20	21.0	4.0	-3.0	1.4	-0.4
May 20-31	20.8	1.3	1.3	-0.5	0.0
June 1-10	13.1	-5.0	0.3	3.0	0.4
June 11-20	17.8	-2.3	0.4	5.4	1.9
June 21-30	17.9	-3.8	5.8	2.4	-1.0
July 1-10	5.3	-2.1	7.1	-0.9	-0.9
July 11-20	22.4	-1.6	4.7	-0.2	4.4
July 21-31	23.9	-0.7	6.0	1.2	1.1
<i>Rainfall (millimetres)</i>					
March 1-10	11.9	-4.9	21.4	-4.9	-4.3
March 11-20	13.5	5.1	6.4	2.3	-8.3
March 20-31	4.1	-3.0	0.7	2.9	-3.3
April 1-10	1.2	-0.8	-0.6	-0.1	0.3
April 11-20	2.0	-1.6	-1.0	-1.4	1.4
April 20-30	1.3	-1.1	-1.2	0.3	1.8
May 1-10	2.0	3.9	-1.4	-1.8	-1.7
May 10-20	1.0	-0.9	0.6	-0.7	-0.9
May 20-31	5.5	-5.3	-2.6	-3.3	-4.4
June 1-10	3.6	2.0	-1.8	-0.8	-1.9
June 11-20	5.7	-5.0	-5.3	-3.3	-4.0
June 21-30	6.7	-5.2	-5.3	-3.4	-3.3
July 1-10	5.8	1.3	-2.9	-4.7	-2.0
July 11-20	2.3	-1.4	-1.7	-0.9	-2.2
July 21-31	2.9	-2.6	-2.6	-2.7	-2.2

Source: The data are for Kiev and for Oktyabrskii gorodok, near Saratov, and were prepared by the University of Melbourne-Russian GIS Research Project (Wheatcroft, Zerger, O'Connor). The base series of meteorological data were provided by D. P. Kaiser, the Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Centre, Oak Ridge National Laboratory. The Russian sources were provided by V. N. Razuvaev, E. B. Apasova and R. A. Marluganov of the All-Russian Research Institute of Hydrometeorological Information World Data Centre, Obninsk, Russia.

Table 9. Main agricultural operations by five-daily periods, 1931–33 harvests (cumulative totals in thousand hectares)

(a) Autumn sowing: all crops*

		1930	1931	1932	1933
Plan		43000	43000	40948 ^a	38010
August	10		80	254	
	15		654	96	1078
	20	1434	2306	866	3704
	25	3612	5763	2780	7697
September	1	7045	10000	6633	11764
	5	10340	14739	11082	14957
	10	14027	19930	15208	17553
	15	18266	22938	18258	20516
	20	21817	25823	20979	22412
	25	25156	27866	23815	24823
October	1	27830	29680	26476	27054
	5	29637	31037	28861	28758
	10	31972	32423	30538	30333
	15	33921	33555	31956	31739
	20	35318	34920	33469	33070
	25	36732	35624	34606	
November	1	37726	36547	35398	
	5	38181	37422	36001	
	10	38916	37606	36308	
	15	39222	38332	36597	
	20	39403	38487	36782	
	25	39514	38606	36927	
December	1	39609	38663	37054	
	5	39735	38848	37140	
	10	39899	39247		
	15	40169	39649		
Total for year ¹		40169	39649	37212	37190

* Note that the autumn sowing is harvested in the following year (e.g. 1931 sowing is for 1932 harvest).

Source and Notes: See page 464.

(b) Autumn ploughing all crops**

		1930	1931	1932	1933
Plan		60000	42000	43000	36500
August	10		550		230
	15		1051	219	318
	20		1515	318	471
	25		2789	528	696

Table 9(b). (Continued)

		1930	1931	1932	1933
September	1		3762	794	1075
	5		4560	1227	1592
	10		5932	1704	2719
	15		7314	2198	3917
	20		8918	4284	5529
	25		10664	5476	7039
October	1	5572	13243	7021	8670
	5	6550	15207	8680	10288
	10	7819	17365	10717	12451
	15	8973	19788	12754	14657
	20	10135	22628	14935	16779
	25	11974	25177	16891	19265
November	1	14763	27800	18962	21978 ²
	5	16449	29490	21297	
	10	18585	31193	22605	
	15	20528	32492	23929	27560 ²
	20	22129	33919	24474	
	25	22580	34374	25175	
December	1	23156	34553	25448	
	5	23526	34657	26351	
	10	24080	36716		
Total for year ²		23965	35266	24186	30402

** Note that the autumn ploughing is for the spring sowing in the following year (e.g. 1931 ploughing is for 1932 harvest).

(c) Spring sowing: all crops

		1930	1931	1932	1933
Plan		93044	100000	102350	95000
March	15	523	14	154	344
	20	1485	46	231	578
	25	2935	57	531	964
	25	2935	57	531	964
April	1	6185	237	845	1897
	5	7449	888	1368	3829
	10	11341	1150	2089	6827
	15	15333	1703	3358/3358 ³	10363
	20	20552	3318	6443	13851
	25	27518	6796	9994	18671
	1	33083	13652	14976/14833 ³	25320
	5	37627	24557	21632	33915
May	10	44036	35760	31727	42498
	15	50519	46166	43781/43181 ³	53075

(Continued overleaf)

Table 9(c). (Continued)

		1930	1931	1932	1933
June	20	56870	56591	54791	63120
	25	64063	66733	64811	71299
	1	70263	75959	75132/73261 ³	78864/78864 ³
	5	74045	84672	82437	83760
	10	81258	90020	87717	87901
	15	83815	93379	91962	90653
	20	87537	96303	94493	91876
	25	88329	97486	96500	93109
Total for year ³		88329	97486	93359 ^b	90860 ^b

(d) Spring and summer ploughing of fallow:^c all crops ***

		1931	1932	1933
Annual plan				
May	5	20	30	
	10	30	48	318
	15	33	59	558
	20	190	106	771
	25	426	223	1266
June	1	859	453	2374
	5	1334	770	3898
	10	2122	1230	6048
	15	3031	1621	8907
	20	5582	3530	11619
July	25	6333	4039	14163
	1	9304	6199	16518
	5	10066	7273	18047
	10	12284	10483	19445
	20	15392	14391	21619
August	25	16591	15350	22212
	1	17789	16309	22804
	5	18579	16845	23032
	10	19369	17380	23259
	15	20335	18034	23429
September	20	21300	18687	23598
	25		18942	
	1		19197	
Total for year ⁴		21300 ^d	19197 ^e	23598 ^f

*** Note that the spring and summer ploughing is for the autumn and spring sowing for the crop of the following year.

(e) Reaping grain crops

		1931	1932	1933
Plan		88988	82316	83431
June	20			65
	25			179
July	1			233
	5			333
	10	2331	2473	643
	15	6916	5987	2135
	20	16389	12738	5945
	25	29090	19690	12140
August	1	39027	30664	22092
	5	49915	38186	33338
	10	57046	44933	47500
	15	62089	51445	55476
	20	65523	56274	62071
	25	68274	61002	66104
September	1	71657	64693	70251
	5	74488	66901	73256
	10	77344	69992	75531
	15	79656	71729	77674
	20	81414	73729	79479
	25		75375	80681
October	1		77453	
Total for year			82961 ⁵	82562 ⁵

(f) Stacking: grain crops

		1931	1932	1933
July	10		174	18
	15		530	222
	20		1322	683
	25		2841	1645
August	1		5775	2976
	5		9828	5827
	10	10802	16475	11238
	15	17779	22132	17602
	20	21620	28527	23877
September	1	30969	39794	34272
	5	33269	43407	47880
	10	33643	48569	54426
	15	34155	51942	61151
	20	45098	55130	66047
	25		57526	69223
October	1		58736	71957
	5		60706	73132
	10		64230	75854
Total for year			77488 ⁶	80669 ⁶

(g) Threshing: grain crops

		1931	1932	1933
July	10		62	72
	15		117	274
	20		645	541
	25		1446	1209
August	1		2313	2267
	5		3576	4106
	10	11406	5939	8665
	15	13698	7959	12487
	20	20083	12637	17738
	25	24314	16871	22032
September	1	28072	19431	26412
	5	29618	24266	31646
	10	33107	28292	35231
	15	36846	31580	41827
	20	42294	34604	46205
	25	44416	37701	49699
October	1	46433	39045	53105
	5	47425	41342	55294
	10	50633	53942	57325
	15	52112		60571
	20	54111		63089
	25	55277		
November	1	62102		
	5	62107		
	10	62559		
	15	62749		
Total for year			77470 ⁶	80707 ⁶

Sources: Except where stated otherwise, RGAE, 4372/52/617a ('Khod osnovnykh sel'skokhozyaistvennykh kampanii za 1930–34gg', prepared by Narkomzem).

¹ *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 347.

² *Ibid.*, 332. Why the annual totals in 1930–32 are smaller than the cumulative totals is not explained, but it indicates that by 1935 it was believed that the real level of autumn ploughing in these years was somewhat lower than had been reported earlier.

³ *Ibid.*, 352.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 329.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 381.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 382.

Notes: General note: Most of these figures appeared in the daily newspapers a few days after the date concerned. While these figures are referred to as five-day totals, the final period for months which have 31 days is a 6-day period. The cumulative totals for the year were given in a later statistical handbook, and include operations after the final date in the five-day totals (see, however, note 2 above).

Table 9(g). (*Note continued*)

- ^a Decision of Politburo on August 1, 1932, gave the plan as 41,795, including 1,005 non-grain (RGASPI, 17/3/894, 16–17).
- ^b Excludes area sown to grass in previous years, included in the five-daily figures.
- ^c *Parovaya vspashka*. This was 'mainly ploughing for winter crops but partly for spring crops' (*Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 1430). In 1930, 12,052,000 hectares were ploughed for winter crops, plus 6,052,000 hectares for spring crops.
- ^d In addition, 1,450,000 hectares were ploughed for spring crops.
- ^e Includes 1,948,000 for spring crops (see *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 1430).
- ^f Includes spring crops; separate data not available.

Table 10. Some agronomic and technical indicators in 1932 and 1933 compared

(a) Traction power

	1932	1933
Number of working horses (spring; million) ¹	16.18	14.21
Tractor horse-power (January 1; million) ²	1.85	2.23
Tractors repaired (January–March; thousands) ³	80.50	102.90
Tractors: average number of hours per day working (April–September) ⁴	6.47	7.48
Total traction power (January 1): version A ^a	18.96	17.55
Total traction power (January 1): version B ^b	19.88	18.66

Sources: ¹ *Osnovnye pokazateli*, 1933, 85.

² *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 199.

³ *Osnovnye pokazateli*, January–March, 1933, 40.

⁴ *Osnovnye pokazateli*, 1933, 67.

Notes: ^a Estimated by us on assumption that 1 tractor h.p. = 1.5 animal h.p.

^b Estimated by us on assumption that 1 tractor h.p. = 2 animal h.p.

(b) Seed

	1932	1933
Seed available in kolkhozy by April 1 (thousand tons) ¹	4273	5198 ^a
Seed cleaned (thousand tons) ²	3101	4560
Seed treated (thousand tons) ²	2380	3158
Sown with improved seed (% of sown area) ³	27.5	27.6

Sources: ¹ *Osnovnye pokazateli*, January–March, 1933, 40.

² *Osnovnye pokazateli*, 1933, 77.

³ *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 367.

Note: ^a Includes insurance funds (218,000 tons).

(c) Preparation of land

	1932	1933
Ploughed in previous autumn (million hectares) ¹	35.3	25.2
Fallow raised in spring (million hectares) ²	19.2	23.6
Grain area weeded (million hectares) ²		34.7
Chemical fertiliser used, January–March (thousand tons) ³	575	438

Sources: ¹ See Table 9(b) and (d).

² *Osnovnye pokazateli*, 1933, 70.

³ *Osnovnye pokazateli*, January–March, 1933, 41.

Table 11. Capital investment in socialised sector of agriculture,
by sector, 1930–33 (million rubles at current prices)

	1930	1931	1932	1933
Sovkhozy and <i>koopkhozy</i>	1258	2054	2194	1814
MTS	113	405	589	827
Kolkhozy	874	1034	1377	2090
Other	440	417	272	111
Total	2685	3910	4432	4842

Source: *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 196.

Table 12. Allocations to agriculture from Union budget, by sector, 1931–33
(million rubles at current prices)

	1929/30	1931	1932	1933
State sector	499	1787	2668	2308
Traktorotsentr	37	153	396	1236
Kolkhozy and cooperatives	n.a.	20	49	7
Other	176	213	51	32
Total	712	2173	3164	3583

Sources: 1929/30 and 1931: *Otchet ... 1931* (1932), 188–9.

1932: *Otchet ... 1932* (1933), 181–7.

1933: *Otchet ... 1933* (1934), 182–8.

Note: The figures for 1929/30 and 1931 do not include a substantial sum (1001 million rubles in 1931) allocated to cover losses; but those for 1932 and 1933 include 573 million rubles for working capital in 1932 and 995 million in 1933, most (or nearly all) of which was to cover losses. See p. 336 above.

Table 13. Stock of machinery in agriculture, by social sector
(January 1 of each year)

	1931	1932	1933	1934
(a) Tractors (thousand h.p.)				
Grain sovkhozy	251	474	511	598
Other sovkhozy	232	418	532	797
Total sovkhozy	483	892	1043	1395
MTS	401	789	1144	1774
Kolkhozy and other	120	169	38	40
Total	1004	1850	2225	3209
(b) Combine harvesters (number)				
Grain sovkhozy	n.a.	6339	11477	12343
Other sovkhozy	n.a.	4	409	1091
Total sovkhozy	1741	6343	11886	13434
MTS	7	109	2244	10531
Total	1748	6452	14130	23965

Sources: Grain sovkhozy *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 758–63.

All other estimated from data in *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 199–200, 655, 715, 725.

Table 14. Grain collections, 1930/31–1933/34
(thousand tons of grain-equivalent units)

(a) By type of grain

	1930/31	1931/32	1932/33	1933/34
Rye	5708	7543	6296	6533
Wheat	9000	8183	5823	8934
Total food grains	14708	15725	12119	15467
Other grains	7431	7114	6398	7249
Total grains	22139	22839	18517	22716

Source: Striliver *et al.* (1935), 168.

Note: General note: In 1933/34 collections (zagotovki) from kolkhozy and individual peasants were replaced by compulsory deliveries (obyazatel'nye postavki).

(b) By social sector

	<i>1930/31</i>	<i>1931/32</i>	<i>1932/33</i>	<i>1933/34</i>
Sovkhozy	1274	1774	1623	1906
Kolkhozy	6708	13990	12238	16626 ^b
Individual peasants	11933	5373	2641	2290
Return of seed loan	0	164	786	504
Milling levy	2224	1521	1230	1390
Total	22139	22839 ^a	18517	22717

Source: Striliver *et al.* (1935), 167–8.

Notes: General note – see under Table 14(a).

^a Includes 17,000 tons of which origin not known.

^b Includes 2,712,000 tons payment in kind for MTS services.

(c) By months

	<i>Collections</i>	<i>1930/31</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Collections</i>	<i>1931/32</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Collections</i>	<i>1932/33</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Collections</i>	<i>1933/34</i>	<i>Total</i>
		<i>Milling</i>			<i>Milling</i>			<i>Milling</i>			<i>Milling</i>	
		<i>levy</i>			<i>levy</i>			<i>levy</i>			<i>levy</i>	
July	339	89	425	875	74	949	424	47	471	1126	31	1156
August	2701	214	2915	5080	153	5233	3051	140	3191	8686	142	8828
September	4698	246	4944	4887	186	5073	4480	149	4629	6272	160	6432
First quarter	7737	547	8284	10843	412	11255	7955	336	8291	16083	333	16416
October	6274	248	6522	3716	159	3875	3148	146	3294	3336	168	3504
November	3688	228	3916	3267	159	3425	3186	137	3323	1504	149	1653
December	1262	291	1553	2318	254	2572	2288	163	2452	330	203	532
Second quarter	11224	767	11991	9301	572	9872	8621	446	9068	5170	520	5690
January	279	182	461	792	137	929	587	131	718			
February	286	174	460	234	123	357	82	108	190			
March	169	172	341	50	124	175	17	90	187			
Third quarter	733	528	1261	1076	385	1461	686	329	1015			
April	34	102	136	68	55	123	23	51	74			
May	63	135	198	16	45	61	0	28	29			
June	125	145	230	14	52	66	1	39	40			
Fourth quarter	221	382	603	99	152	251	24	119	142			
Total for year	19916	2224	22139	21318	1521	22839	17287	1230	18517	21327 ^a	1390 ^a	22717 ^a

Sources: 1930/31: *Ezhagodnik khlebooborota*, iv–v (1932), 92, 96; and see vol. 1, p. 429.

1931/32: *Ezhagodnik khlebooborota*, [vi] (1934), 5.

1932/33: *Ibid.*, 15, 17.

1933/34: *Ibid.*, 26, 30, except total Striliver *et al.* (1935), 169.

Note: General note – see under Table 14(a).

^a Monthly figures for January–June 1934 have not been traced. The total for the six months may be calculated as a residual:

Collections 74 *Milling levy* 538 *Total* 612

(d) By area supplying grain

	1930/31 ^c	1931/32	1932/33	1933/34
1. RSFSR				
Grain-deficit regions ^a	1355	1777	1630	2254
Central Black-Earth	2013	2394	2024	2044
Urals	1314	777	1051	1150
Central Volga	1419	1255	1593	1598
Lower Volga	1614	1401	1436	1475
North Caucasus	2310	3286	1916	2340
West Siberia	1335	1071	1484	1859
East Siberia	473	592	490	540 ^d
Far East	123	184	117	185
Kazakhstan	763	774	728	586
Other grain-surplus regions ^b	1060	1336	1262	1670
Total RSFSR	13779	14847	13731	15701
2. Ukraine	7675	7253	4234	6261
3. Belorussia	167	173	133	252
4. Trans-Caucasus	128	106	57	122
5. Central Asia	392	460	362	382
Total USSR	22139	22839	18517	22717

Source: Striliver *et al.* (1935), 169.

Notes: General note – see under Table 14(a).

^a Northern, Leningrad, Western, Moscow, Ivanovo and Nizhnii-Novgorod regions.

^b Bashkir, Tatar and Crimean ASSRs.

^c There are minor discrepancies between these figures and those in vol. 1, Table 8(c).

^d Includes Yakut ASSR.

Table 15. Grain allocation, 1930/31–1933/34
(thousand tons of grain equivalent)

(a) All planned allocations by main uses

	1930/ 31	1931/ 32	1932/ 33A	1932/ 33B	1933/34 (December 1933 estimate) ^f	1933/ 34 (final)
1. Supply of population (including fodder)						
General	9085 ^a	9776 ^b	8306	8778 ^d	8376 ^g	7736 ^h
Special purpose	2930	3506	2759	2979	4933	5157
Deductions from milling levy	126	63	28			157

Table 15(a). (Continued)

	1930/ 31	1931/ 32	1932/ 33A	1932/ 33B	1933/34 (December 1933 estimate) ^f	1933/ 34 (final)
Other decentralised			81			849 ^j
Total supply of population	12141	13345	11174	11757	13309	13899
2. Army, industry, etc.						
Army and OGPU	?	(818) ^c	(814)	814	1073	1160
Gulag and special settlers	?	(254) ^c	(216)	216	255	234
Vodka and beer industries	820	1032	1203	1199	1441	1489
Other industries	419	569	597	532	796	668
Total army, industry, etc.	1239+	(2673)	(2830)	2761	3565	3551
3. Seed and food				1871 ^c		
Seed help and loans	452	1267	1274		855	1343
Food help and loans		107	330		406	598 ^k
Total seed and food	452	1374	1604		1261	1941
4. Exports	5832	4786	1607	1441	2129	2319
Total (1-4)	19664+	22178	17215	17830	20264	21750 ^k
Addition to (+) or deduction from (-) stocks	+248	-972	+637	+663	+2372	-366 ^m
All Collections	22139	22839	18517	18517	22717	22717
Unidentified gap (losses)	2227	1633	665	24	81	1333
Unidentified gap as percent of all collections	10.1	7.2	3.6	0.1	0.4	5.9

Sources: See after Table (b)

Notes: Table 15(a):

General Note: The last three lines show that these planned allocations and stock change data are up to 10 per cent lower than reported grain collections in the good harvest year of 1930/31 and significantly less in 1932/33 and 1933/34. The difference is presumably accounted for by grain losses in the allocation mechanism, which are not otherwise listed, or by omitted items (especially army, OGPU and Gulag in 1930/31. The presumption that losses were reduced to less than 1 per cent in 1932/33 seems highly unrealistic.

^a 8754 thousand tons; +331 to urban population of Central Asia.

^b Includes 820 for horse transport (guzehvoi transport), apparently included in 'General supply' in 1930/31.

(Continued overleaf)

Table 15(a). (*Note continued*)

- ^c Preliminary figures from grain budget of March 23, 1932 (RGAE, 8040/1/92, 72–82).
- ^d Includes horse transport (464) plus supply of groats and kasha (manka).
- ^e Given as total – seed and food not given separately.
- ^f As in memorandum of December 29, 1933. These figures underestimate the allocation of grain and considerably overestimate the addition to stocks by July 1, 1934.
- ^g Includes horse transport (491).
- ^h Includes: ‘food and fodder needs (6216); supply of transport (916); supply of water transport workers (146); supply of resorts (68); Soyuznarpit (public catering) (391).
- ^j Includes ‘2 per cent deduction for [rural] teachers and medical personnel’ (193), ‘deductions from [state] purchases (zakupki)’ (203) and ‘deductions from extra collections’ (452).
- ^k Includes fodder loans and help.
- ^l Centralised allocation (excluding ‘other decentralised’) amounted to 20,755. The total 21,750 also includes an unallocated item.
- ^m In the original table in the archives, this item is given as ‘From Funds’ (i.e. from ‘Untouchable Fund’ and ‘State Fund’), and illegitimately included in decentralised collections.

(b) Allocations to the population for special purposes

	1930/ 31	1931/ 32	1932/ 33A	1932/ 33B	1933/34 (December 1933 estimate) ^c	1933/ 34 (final)
1. Industries and commerce						
Timber cutting and floating	1265	1149	685	622	717	
Peat		79	76	62	61	1019
Fisheries		184	165	129	139	
Gold and non-ferrous metals	115	200	326	285	346	345
Distant areas/Far North		117	194	252	265	103
Torgsin			?	193	210	295
Commercial sales			?	115	1638	1619
Total industry and commerce	1380	1729	1446	1658	3376	3381
2. Special agricultural purposes						
Fodder for livestock and poultry	336	715	388	378	328	606
Cotton	728 ^a	524	582			
Flax and hemp	153	196	142			
Fats and milk	62	68	31			
Meat		91	12			

Table 15(b). (Continued)

	1930/ 31	1931/ 32	1932/ 33A	1932/ 33B	1933/34 (December 1933 estimate) ^c	1933/ 34 (final)
Wool		19	9			
Other	271 ^b	164	149	943	1229	1170
Total special agricultural	1550	1777	1313	1321	1557	1776
Total all special purposes	2930	3506	2759	2979	4933	5157

Sources: *Tables 15(a) and (b)*: 1930/31: See vol. 1, Tables 9 (a) and (b).
 1931/32: *Ezhëgodnik po khleboborotu*, [vi] (1934), 70–1, except: change in stocks, estimated from *ibid.*, 64; exports, *ibid.*, 65. See also note c.
 1932/33A: *Ibid.*, 120–1, except: change in stocks, estimated from *ibid.*, 64; exports, *ibid.*, 67. Army and OGPU, and Gulag and special settlers, taken from 1932/33B.
 1932/33B and 1933/34 (preliminary): RGAE, 8040/8/8, 572–576 (memorandum from Chernov to Stalin, Kaganovich, Molotov and Kuibyshev dated December 29, 1933).
 1933/34 (final): RGAE, 1562/12/2118, 141–146 (n.d.).

Notes: *Table (b)*: ^a Includes 637 Central Asia; 91 other areas.

^b Includes 69 Central Asia, to stimulate agriculture other than cotton growing.

^c As in memorandum of December 29, 1933. See also note f to Table (a).

^d The first three items are evidently grouped as the single item 'For industry and processing' (1,019 thousand tons). The individual items for timber, peat, fisheries and gold in the source for 1932/33B, amounting to 1,252 thousand tons, are obviously grouped as 'For industry and processing' in RGAE, 1562/12/2118, 147 – also 1,252 thousand tons. In the 1933/34 source, gold is given as a separate item.

Table 16. State collections of livestock and dairy products, 1928–34
(thousand tons)

	<i>Animals and meat</i>		<i>Dairy products</i>	
	<i>in terms of live weight</i>	<i>in terms of carcass weight^c</i>	<i>Milk and butter in terms of milk</i>	<i>Milk and butter in terms of butter</i>
1928	1778	954	1938	82.1
1929	2625 ^a	1067 ^a	1835	77.8
1930	1729 ^a	1030 ^a	974	41.0
1931	2819 ^a	934 ^a	1967	81.3
1932	1211	375	1934	68.0
1933	818 ^b	401	3515	119.3 ^d
1934	1068 ^b		3772	129.5 ^d

Source: *Sovetskaya trgovlya v 1935* (1936), 32, except animals and meat in terms of carcass weight (Nifontov (1937), 81); and milk and butter in terms of milk (RGAE, 8040/3/24, 32).

Notes: ^a Includes animals allocated to socialist sector. In terms of live weight, these amounted to 434,000 tons in 1930 and 705,000 tons in 1931 (Nifontov (1932), 298–9).

^b In addition, decentralised collections amounted to 138,000 tons in 1933 and 178,000 tons in 1934 (*Sovetskaya trgovlya v 1935* (1936), 33).

^c Agricultural year (e.g. 1928 = 1928/29).

^d In addition, decentralised collections amounted to 2,300 tons in 1933 and 3,100 tons in 1934 (*Sovetskaya trgovlya v 1935* (1936), 33).

Table 17. Collections of wool, hides and skins, 1928–34

	<i>Wool^a</i> (thousand tons)	<i>Hides (millions)</i>		<i>Pigskins</i> (millions)
		<i>Large</i>	<i>Small</i>	
1928	41.0	11.5	21.4	0.0 ^c
1929	45.7	16.1	25.8	0.4
1930	50.5	15.9	34.1	1.2
1931	50.4	13.0	38.4	3.5
1932	40.6	11.9	26.5	4.1
1933	38.3 ^b	8.4	27.7	5.3
1934	42.2 ^b	6.9	26.4	7.8

Source: Wool: Nifontov (1937), 87.

Hides and skins: *Sovetskaya trgovlya v 1935* (1936), 32.

Notes: ^a Sheep, goats and camels.

^b Includes state purchases.

^c 18,000.

Table 18. Grain collections, 1931/32 (thousand tons)
(a) By social sector

	<i>November 13, 1930</i> ¹	<i>February 1931</i> ²	<i>June 25, 1931</i> ³	<i>July 15, 1931</i> ⁴	<i>August 23, 1931</i> ⁵	<i>October 25, 1931</i> ^{6d}	<i>Final plan, November? 1931</i> ^{7e}	<i>Fulfilment</i> ⁸
Sovkhozy	4628	4930	4518	2990	2667	2667	2190	1774
Kolkhozy	11657	15055	11840	15587	14703	14183	13675	13990
Including: MTS-kolkhozy					5762	5333	5332	6185
Individual peasants and other sources	(13200)	(11250)	(11721)	(7966)	(9010)	(6780)	(6300)	5373
Milling levy	not included	included above	not included?	included above	2348	2348	2110	1521 ^f
Total	29485 ^a	31235 ^b	28079	26543 ^c	26380	25798	24275	22839 ^g

Sources: ¹ RGAE, 5240/9/499, 2–17.

² RGAE, 1562/1/663, 93.

³ RGAE, 8043/1/510, 17.

⁴ RGAE, 1562/1/663, 144, 'estimated by data up to July 15'.

⁵ RGAE, 8043/1/510, 5.

⁶ RGASPI, 17/3/856, 14–17.

⁷ RGAE, 8043/1/509, 7, n.d.

⁸ *Ezhegodnik khleboborota*, [vi] (1934), 12.

Notes: ^a Excludes milling levy and improved seed Fund. Total including these and milling levy would be approximately 33 million tons.

^b 'Commodity production', so includes sales on market, estimated at only 590,000 tons. Obviously includes all milling levy. Later columns include only 90 per cent, except where otherwise stated.

^c 'Orienting estimate'.

^d Politburo decision.

^e Based on central committee plenum decision of October 31, 1931.

^f 100 per cent of milling levy.

^g Includes 164 000 tons returned grain loans, and 17 000 tons of other grain not given by social sector.

(b) By area supplying grain

	<i>Narkomsnab plan, June 25, 1931^{1,a}</i>	<i>Narkomsnab plan, July 1931^{2,b}</i>	<i>Politburo plan, October 25, 1931^{3,c}</i>	<i>Central committee plenum, October 31, 1931^{4,c}</i>	<i>Fulfilment^{5,d}</i>
1. RSFSR					
Grain-deficit zone	1543	1603	1623	1802	1777
Central Black-Earth	2150	2375	2375	2457	2394
Urals	1732	1556	1310	901	777
Central Volga	2420	2375	1638	1278	1255
Lower Volga	1989	2375	1966	1441	1401
North Caucasus	3409	3114	3139	3301	3286
Siberia (including Far East)	3211	2392	2146	1852	1847
Kazakhstan ASSR	1428	1310	1065	901	774
Other grain-surplus regions	1467	1539	1540	1339	1336
Total RSFSR	19349	18639	16802	15272	14847
2. Ukrainian SSR	8000	8355	8355	8355	7253
3. Belorussian SSR	144	172	172	172	172
4. Transcaucasian SSR	135	82	82	82	106
5. Central Asia	457	527	388	401	460
Total for USSR	28079	27682	25798	24282	22839

Sources: ¹ RGAE, 8043/1/ 510, 17.

² RGAE, 8043/1/510, 189.

³ RGASPI, 17/3/856, 14–17.

⁴ RGASPI, 17/2/484, 61.

⁵ *Ezhegodnik khlebooborota*, [vi], (1934), 7.

Notes: ^a Evidently excludes milling levy, amounting to about 2.5 million tons. Individual items add up to 28,085.

^b Includes milling levy (presumably 90 per cent). Individual items add up to 27,775.

^c Includes milling levy (presumably 90 per cent).

^d Includes 100 per cent of milling levy.

Table 19. Grain collections, 1931: Politburo and Sovnarkom decisions

	<i>Region or Republic</i>	<i>Amount</i>	
		<i>million puds</i>	<i>000 tons</i>
June 27 ¹	Central Asia ^a		372
June 28 ²	North Caucasus ^b	190	3152
June 30 ³	Ukraine ^c	510	8135
July 4 ⁴	Transcaucasus	5	82
	Crimea	16	262
July 10 ⁵	Central Black-Earth	145	2375
	Central Volga	145	2375
	Lower Volga	145	2375
	Kazakhstan	80	1278
	Bashkiria	48	786
July 24 ⁶	Tatar'ASSR	30	491
	Urals	95 ^d	1556
	Lower Volga	125 ^e	2048
	West Siberia	100	1638
July 30 ⁷	Kazakhstan	65	1065
August 8 ⁸	Urals	80	1310
August 25 ⁹	Central Volga	100	1638
	West Siberia	85	1392
October 25	See Table 18(b)		
October 31	See Table 18(b)		

- Sources:* ¹ RGASPI, 17/3/833, 6.
² RGASPI, 17/3/833, 7.
³ RGASPI, 17/3/833, 4.
⁴ GARF, 5446/1/461, 208, art. 514s.
⁵ RGASPI, 17/3/835, 2.
⁶ RGASPI, 17/162/10, 128–129.
⁷ RGASPI, 17/3/839, 5.
⁸ RGASPI, 17/6/10, 153.
⁹ RGASPI, 17/162/10, 170–171.

Notes: All these items include 90 per cent of milling levy and return to the State Seed Fund unless stated otherwise.

^a Excludes rice and milling levy; given in tons in original.

^b To be increased if maize harvest is good.

^c Evidently excludes milling levy and may exclude State Seed Fund.

^d Given as 90 million puds (1,556,000 tons) in GARF, 5446/1/460, 110, art. 140s, dated July 24.

^e Given as 120 million puds (1,966,000 tons) in GARF, 5446/1/455, 126, art. 152s, dated July 26.

Table 20. Grain collections from the 1932 harvest: plans by social sector (thousand tons)

	<i>Peasant sector</i>	<i>Sovkhozy</i>	<i>Milling levy</i>	<i>Return of seed and food loans</i>	<i>Total</i>
1. Plans					
May/July 1932	18067	2490	1638	1310	23505
August 17	17412	2490	1638	1310	22951
September 1	17412	2602	1638	1310	23063
September 17	17363	2602	1638	1213	22816
September 29	16921	2438	1638	1213	22210
October 2	16898	2395	1638	1213	22144
October 6	16898	2395	1638	935	21866
October 30	15958	2197	1638	935	20720
November 3	15695	2033	1638	935	20294
November 29	15629	2033	1638	902	20195
December 9	15514	2033	1638	902	20057
January 12, 1933	15455	2033	1638	902	19585
2. Actual collections	14878	1623	1230	786	18517

Sources: See text of Chapter 6.

Table 21. Grain collections, peasant sector,^a July 1932–June 1933 (thousand tons)

	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>North Caucasus</i>	<i>Central Volga</i>	<i>Lower Volga</i>	<i>Central Black-Earth</i>	<i>West Siberia</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
1931/32 Plan	7109	2522	1736	1638	2097	1212	6077	22391
1931/32 Actual	6471	2506	1045	1138	2091	898	5227	19376
1932/33 Plan (May 6 1932)	5831	2228	1179	1261	1900	1016	4652	18067
Main revisions to plan by Politburo:								
August 17	5171							
September 17							4663	
September 29		1786					4640	
October 30	4223							
November 3		1589						
November 29				1195			4574	
December 8					1785			
January 12 1933	3766	1556						
1932/33 Actual	3584	1593	1159	1185	1797	1054	4506	14878

Sources: 1931/32 Plan (as on July 15): see source in Table 18(a).

1931/32 Actual: see source in Table 18(b).

1932/33 Plan: see text of Chapter 6.

1932/33 Actual: *Ezhegodnik khlebooborota*, [vi], (1934), 24.

Note: ^a Kolkhozy and individual peasants.

Table 22. State seed loans and aid, February–July 1933 (thousand tons)

	<i>North Caucasus</i>	<i>Lower Volga</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Comment</i>
February 11	233					RGASPI, 17/ 162/14, 62–63	LOAN For needy kolkhozy and sovkhozy
February 18	251					GARF, 5446/ 1/468, 73–74 (art. 243/43s)	LOAN Not clear if this is same as February 11, which appears in another Sovnarkom decree of February 13 (5446/57/23, 52–3)
February 18			267			RGASPI, 17/ 162/14, 73	Estimated as residual; decision states division by regions and grains
March 2		146		90		RGASPI, 17/ 162/14, 77	Central Volga, 20; Kazakhstan, 70
March 3				210		RGASPI, 17/ 162/14, 78	Urals, 131; Far East, 54; Central Black-Earth, 25
March 13				40		GARF, 5446/ 1/468, 151–152 (art. 468/80ss)	LOAN From state stocks. Kazakhstan, 25; Bashkiria, 15
March 18			15			RGASPI, 17/ 162/14, 101	For Kiev sugar districts; includes 1.6 oats
March 20	16					GARF, 5446/ 1/468, 176 (art. 519/94ss)	LOAN 50% wheat; 50% oats
March 20			4.9			GARF, 5446/ 1/468, 181 (art. 522/96ss)	LOAN 3.3 oats; 1.6 beans

Table 22. (Continued)

	<i>North Caucasus</i>	<i>Lower Volga</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Comment</i>
April 20			3.3			RGASPI, 17/162/14, 125	For Dnepropetrovsk region
May 5				13.1		GARF, 5446/1/469, 57 (art. 884/175ss)	LOAN to Urals; but 8.2 of Urals insurance fund to be used for food help to Trans-Urals kolkhozy
May 25			5.2			RGASPI, 17/162/14, 145	LOAN from Committee of Reserves (includes beans 1.7)
June–July							NONE RECORDED
Total allocations	267?	146	295.4	353	1161?		
Actual total	291	138	325	510	1274		<i>Ezhegodnik khlebooborota</i> , [vi], (1934), 120–21, 128–31

Table 23. State food loans and aid, February–July 1933 (thousand tons)

	<i>North Caucasus</i>	<i>Lower Volga</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>Other^b</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Comment</i>
February 7	4.9		6.6			RGASPI, 17/162/14, 60	Rye 'for food needs of workers of sovkhozy, MTS, MTM and also for party and non-party <i>aktiv</i> of needy kolkhozy'; Ukraine: Odessa 3.3, Dnepr 3.3
February 11	8.2					RGASPI, 17/162/14, 62–63	For needy kolkhozy; 50% rye, 50% maize
February 18			37.7			RGASPI, 17/162/14, 64, 74	Rye and maize 'during the period of spring field work, with intention to deliver them before the thaw': Dnepropetrovsk 16.4; Odessa 13.1; Khar'kov 4.9; reserve 3.3
February 18	33					RGASPI, 17/162/14, 66, 73	'For period of spring field work'; MTS, Zernotrest etc. to get extra 2.75 monthly from March
March 11			49			RGASPI, 17/162/14, 97	Rye. Special state fund in Odessa and Dnepr regions
March 18			9.8			<i>Golod 1932–33</i> (1990), 469	Kiev region. Not traced in Politburo or Sovnarkom decisions
March 26		8.2				RGASPI, 17/162/14, 106	3.2 millet (proso); 3.2 maize; 1.6 rye as food help to kolkhozy
March 27				0.5		RGASPI, 17/162/14, 107	Urals food help to needy kolkhozy
April 1	1.6		5			RGASPI, 17/162/14, 109	Kiev 2.5; Khar'kov 2.5. For individual peasants. Overall total given as 8.2
April 10				16		GARF, 5446/1/468, 252	Millet for Kazakhstan; 'danger of mass epidemics': nomad Kazakhs 6 children 20 ^c

Table 23. (Continued)

	<i>North Caucasus</i>	<i>Lower Volga</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>Other^b</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Comment</i>
April 15				0.6		GARE, 5446/1/468, art. 739/139s	Millet for nomad Kazakhs outside Kazakhstan
April 19	0.7					RGASPI, 17/ 162/14, 124	Rye to Veshenskii district 'for food help to needy collective farmers and working individual peasants from the especially needy' – note that Stalin received Sholokhov's first letter April 15
April 20			3.3			RGASPI, 162/ 17/14, 125	Dnepr region – 'food help to collective farmers from among the especially needy'
April 20	25					RGASPI, 162/ 17/14, 125	LOAN 'For food help to collective farmers'. 'This quantity brings to an end the help in grain for the region ... [regional party committee] is required to use food help with greater correctness and expediently among the districts until the new harvest'
April 22	2					RGASPI, 162/ 17/14, 126	Veshenskii district 1.3; Upper Don 0.7. Stalin 'just received' Sholokhov's second letter on April 22 asking for 2.0 thousand tons for Veshenskii, 0.7 for Upper Don
April 26			21.2			RGASPI, 162/ 17/14, 133–134	Sugar-beet kolkhozy and individual peasants 11.9; sugar-beet sovkhozy 2; Kiev region from unused seed loan 1.6; all in rye. Food help Odessa region 1.6; Donetsk region 1.6; Vinnitsa region 2.5. To come from Committee of Reserves

May 5			8.2	GARF, 5446/1/469, 57 (art. 884/175ss)	Trans-Urals kolkhozy for ‘particularly needy districts’; transferred from seed loan to Urals
May 5			4.9	GARF, 5446/1/469, 58 (art. 885/176ss)	For Central Volga: millet to collective farmers during weeding period
May 20			0.15	RGASPI, 17/162/14, 142	Crimea: ‘needy children and aged invalids’
May 26			1.3	RGASPI, 17/162/14, 148	For Central Black-Earth region: Rye for ‘needy kolkhozy and sovkhozy’
May 28	8.2	5.7	1.3	GARF, 5446/ 1/469, 126–129 (arts. 1081-4/ 226-9ss)	For kolkhozy: Lower Volga in millet and rye, North Caucasus in maize Bashkiria 1 in rye
May 29			11.5	GARF, 5446/1/469, 135 (art. 1096/235ss)	Rye: Odessa 4.9; Dnepropetrovsk 4.9; Donetsk 1.6
May 31			8.2	GARF, 5446/1/469, 140 (art. 1105/240ss)	Rye: Khar’kov 3.3; Vinnitsa 2.2; Kiev 2.2; Chernigov 0.5
May 31			1.6	GARF, 5446/1/469, 141 (art. 1106/241s)	Turkmenia in 1933–34 (<i>sic</i>) ‘for supplying particularly needy nomad cattle raisers’
June 1			0.5	RGASPI, 17/162/14, 141	For Moldavian kolkhozy for weeding campaign from Committee of Reserves
June 2			2.9	GARF, 5446/1/469, 147 (art. 1119/245ss)	For kolkhozy ‘and also part for individual peasants’ 1.7; Starobel’schina 1.2
June 13			14.7	RGASPI, 17/162/14, 159	Rye: Khar’kov region 2.9; Kiev 2.9; Vinnitsa 2.9; Odessa 2.5; Dnepr 2.5; Chernigov 0.7; Moldavian ASSR 0.3

Table 23. (Continued)

	<i>North Caucasus</i>	<i>Lower Volga</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>Other^b</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Comment</i>
June 23	4.9					GARF, 5446/ 1/469, 205 (art. 1286/288ss)	For harvest campaign
June 23				2.9		GARF, 5446/ 1/469, 205 (art. 1275/287ss)	Central Black-Earth region For weeding period
June 23				0.5		RGASPI, 17/162/14, 164	Rye for kolkhozy of frontier and partisan districts in Far East, from Committee of Reserves
June 29			0.8			GARF, 5446/ 1/469, 231 (art. 1320/296ss)	Rye for Dnepropetrovsk; to be repaid from 1934 harvest
June 29				1.5		GARF, 5446/ 1/469, 232 (art. 1321/297ss)	Rye: for Central Volga region
July 4			4.5			RGASPI, 17/162/15, 1	Sugar-beet kolkhozy: Rye: Vinnitsa 2; Kiev 2.5
July 16		1.6				GARF, 5446/ 1/470, 43 (art. 1504/330ss)	For kolkhozy
July 20			0.8			GARF, 5446/1/470, 46 (art. 1537/333s)	Rye: for Khar'kov region 'needy kolkhozy'; to be returned by August 10
Total ^a	88.5	15.5	176.2	39.8	320		

Notes: ^a Total given as 330,000 tons, of which 117,000 tons in main food grains (wheat and rye) in *Ezhegodnik khlebooborota*, vi (1934), 120–1.

^b Kazakhstan had already been allocated 16.3 thousand tons (see *Nasil'stvennaya* (Almaty, 1998), 205).

^c Children had already been allocated 40,000 thousand tons from central supply.

Table 24. State fodder loans and aid, February–July 1933 (thousand tons)

	<i>North Caucasus</i>	<i>Lower Volga</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Comment</i>
February 11	8.2					RGASPI, 17/162/14, 62–3	LOAN For needy kolkhozy and sovkhozy
March 13			15.6			<i>Golod, 1932–33</i> (1990), 429 RGASPI, 17/162/14, 101	For Kiev sugar districts
March 18			3.0				
March 27				2.0		RGASPI, 17/162/14, 107	Urals horses: mill and elevator otkhody
April 20	4.9		4.9			RGASPI, 17/162/14, 125	Oats – from state fund in Western region
April 20	6.6					RGASPI, 17/162/14, 125	LOAN
April 26			29.5			RGASPI, 17/162/14, 133–134	LOAN. From Western region
May 12			29.8			RGASPI, 17/162/14, 141	Hay. From Committee of Reserves for CASH.
June–July Total	19.7	0	82.8	2.0	104.5		NONE RECORDED

Table 25. Grain collection plans and results for the 1933 harvest (thousand tons)

	<i>Kolkhozy</i>	<i>Individual peasants</i>	<i>Kolkhozy plus individual peasants</i>	<i>Payment in kind (for MTS)</i>	<i>Total: Peasant sector</i>	<i>Sovkhozy</i>	<i>Return of loan</i>	<i>Milling levy</i>	<i>Total</i>
December 5, 1932 ¹									24080
January 5, 1932 ²	16167	1851		2785/4095	(20803/22113)				
January 14, 1933 ³	14414	1966	16380						
January 21, 1933 ⁴	14431	2129	16560						
July 4, 1933 ⁵			17166	2129	19295	1802	819	1474	23391
August 1, 1933 ⁶						2660			(24249)
August 10, 1933 ⁷			(17166)	2785	(19951)	(2660)	(819)	(1474)	(24835)
October 3, 1933 ⁸			17035	2696	(19731)	2490	(819)	1250	24000
December 29, 1933 ⁹									22700
Actual ¹⁰	13914	2290	(16204)	2712	(18916)	1906	504	1390	22717

Sources: ¹ Zagotzerno estimate: RGAE, 8040/6/242, 8–9.

² Chernov proposal based on decision of grain collection commission: GARF, 5446/27/29, 59–55; and see RGAE, 8040/8/23, 15 (Bagdasarov document dated January 3).

³ Chernov draft of Sovnarkom decree: GARF, 5446/27/29, 81–80.

⁴ GARF 5446/1/468, 19–26 (Sovnarkom decree, art. 75/14s).

⁵ Government decision reported by Chernov: RGAE, 8040/8/7, 306.

⁶ Reported by Chernov: RGAE, 8040/8/7, 395–397. The regional breakdown is in published Sovnarkom decrees: SZ, 1933, art. 251 (dated July 13 – for southern regions); SZ, 1933, art. 300 (dated August 10 – for central and eastern regions).

⁷ RGASPI, 17/3/928, 25 (art. 105/91 – Politburo decision by poll).

⁸ Plan reported to Stalin by Kaganovich: SKP, 373–4.

⁹ RGAE, 8040/8/8, 572–576.

¹⁰ See Table 14.

Notes: Nearly all the plan figures are converted from puds; minor differences in figures are therefore not significant. The milling levy is generally 90 per cent of the total, the rest being used by the local authorities. The Actual figure is for 100 per cent of the milling levy.

Table 26. Number of households collectivised, 1928–33 (thousands)

June 1, 1929	1008	May 1, 1931	12054
January 1, 1930	5000?	May 10, 1931	12454
March 10, 1930	14980	May 20, 1931	12819
September 1, 1930	5495	June 1, 1931	13033
January 1, 1931	6609/6657	June 10, 1931	13268
January 10, 1931	6777	June 20, 1931	13499
January 20, 1931	6986	July 1, 1931	13595
February 1, 1931	7315	August 1, 1931	14281
February 20, 1931	8196	September 1, 1931	14744
March 1, 1931	8836/8816	October 1, 1931	15022
March 10, 1931	9343	January 1, 1932	15428
March 20, 1931	9950	April 1, 1932	15106/15144
April 1, 1931	10515	June 1, 1932	14891
April 10, 1931	11188	January 1, 1933	14708
April 20, 1931	11672	April 1, 1933	15014

Sources: June 1, 1929–January 1, 1931: see vol. 1, p. 441.

January 1, 1931 (6,657), and subsequent figures for the first of the month to June 1, 1932: *Ezhgodnik po sel. kh. 1931* (1933), 442–3.

Intermediate dates: from same date of SZe and Sots. str. as in Table 27.

April 1, 1932 (15,144), January 1 and April 1, 1933: *Osnovnye pokazateli*, January–March, 1933, 48–9.

Table 27. Percentage of households collectivised, in selected regions, January 1931–June 1933

	1931														1932		1933
	<i>Jan. 1</i>	<i>Feb. 1</i>	<i>Feb. 10</i>	<i>Feb. 20</i>	<i>Mar. 1</i>	<i>Mar. 10</i>	<i>Mar. 20</i>	<i>Apr. 1</i>	<i>Apr. 10</i>	<i>Apr. 20</i>	<i>May 1</i>	<i>May 10</i>	<i>June 1</i>	<i>July 1</i>	<i>Jan. 1</i>	<i>June 1</i>	<i>June 1</i>
USSR	25.9	28.8	30.7	32.6	35.3	37.5	39.6	42.0	45.2	47.1	48.6	50.4	52.7	56.2	63.7	61.5	64.4
RSFSR	24.4	28.2			34.1			40.6			47.0		51.6	54.2	62.6	60.3	64.5
Including:																	
Western	8.6	10.3	11.9	13.4	14.7	17.0	19.3	25.7	31.7	35.2	35.7	37.2	40.2	42.0	51.2	49.5	55.3
Moscow	8.2	9.4	10.2	11.3	12.4	13.7	16.2	20.6	26.6	29.9	31.8	34.0	36.4	39.4	50.4	48.0	63.7
Ivanovo-																	
industrial	6.8	10.3	11.8	12.1	15.5	17.4	19.5	22.7	25.7	27.2	29.1	31.7	34.1	39.2	45.0	43.8	65.6
Central	?	26.1	30.4	34.6	39.4	42.7	45.0	46.9	48.5	49.6	51.1	52.6	55.1	59.2	70.2	68.0	74.2
Black-Earth																	
Ural	33.3	35.5	37.4	38.6	40.2	44.5	45.9	47.8	48.9	50.0	52.1	56.3	60.6	63.8	66.6	64.3	68.2
Central	26.7	33.1	36.5	40.0	43.6	47.4	51.2	56.0	60.0	61.4	62.9	63.7	64.6	65.8	82.6	78.5	70.6
Volga																	
Lower Volga	57.5	60.9	62.5	64.2	65.3	67.1	69.4	74.6	77.3	78.8	80.5	82.1	81.9	82.1	82.9	76.3	76.9
North	60.0	64.1	67.2	72.3	76.0	77.1	77.4	78.1	80.6	81.2	81.6	81.6	82.0	82.2	81.6	76.6 ^a	77.4
Caucasus																	
West Siberia	22.6	24.3	25.3	26.5	27.7	31.1	33.3	34.9	36.5	37.9	39.4	40.3	43.9	53.2	60.9	58.1	68.9
East Siberia	19.0	20.9	21.8	22.8	23.5	24.8	25.8	27.4	28.6	30.2	31.7	33.8	37.3	40.1	48.0	49.8	51.5
Far East	25.5	27.7	28.3	27.8	27.9	28.3	29.3	32.5	34.5	37.2	38.7	50.2	55.4	56.2	55.8	59.4	56.6
Kazakhstan	37.0	37.8	38.2	38.8	41.0	42.1	43.1	43.7	45.2	47.0	48.8	50.1	53.8	51.8	57.7	73.1	?
Ukraine	33.1	37.0	39.2	41.9	45.7	48.5	51.3	54.7	58.4	61.0	62.2	63.5	64.7	65.6	69.2	69.0	69.5
Uzbekistan	37.5	37.2	37.3	37.5	51.1	52.2	52.6	56.0	56.4	58.2	60.8	60.9	64.2	64.4	75.7	82.6	73.2

Sources: Percentages for the RSFSR as a whole were calculated from data in *Ezhegodnik po sel. kh. 1931* (1933), 442–3, using estimate of the number of households on May 1, 1931 (see below).

January 1, 1931: see vol. 1, Table 17; the figures for the regions which do not appear in that table were calculated by the same method.

February 1, 1931: SZe, February 6, 1931.

February 10, 1931: SZe, February 15, 1931.

February 20, 1931: SZe, February 25, 1931.

March 1, 1931: SZe, March 5, 1931.

March 10, 1931: SZe, March 15, 1931.

March 20, 1931: SZe, March 25, 1931.

April 1, 1931: SZe, April 5, 1931.

April 10, 1931: SZe, April 15, 1931.

April 20, 1931: SZe, April 25, 1931.

May 1, 1931: SZe, May 6, 1931.

May 10, 1931: SZe, May 15, 1931.

June 1, 1931: SZe, June 6, 1931.

July 1, 1931 and January 1, 1932: based on absolute data in *Ezhegodnik po sel. kh. 1931* (1933), 442–5, applied to the number of households in each region or republic on May 1, 1931 (see below).

June 1, 1932: *Sots. str.* (1934), 159.

June 1, 1933: *Sots. str.* (1935), 317–9.

Notes: ^a Misprinted in source as 70.6.

General note: The data for households collectivised in SZe for the period March 20 to June 20 are given in absolute numbers as well as percentages. From these data the total number of households in each region used by the compilers of the table may be estimated. For the USSR as a whole, the number amounted to about 24.9 million on March 20, falling to 24.7 million on June 1. The data for June 1, 1932 and June 1, 1933, assume that the number of households was 24.2 million. In our calculations above, we have used an estimate for the number of households in each region based on the data for May 1, 1931.

The source states that the total number of households was revised downwards in certain regions, as follows:

Central and Lower Volga regions, from February 1;

Ukraine, from February 10;

North Caucasus, from February 20;

Central Black-Earth region, from March 1.

As a result, the increase in the percentage of households collectivised is overestimated before these dates in the above table, by at most 1–2 per cent.

On the other hand, the number of households in the Far Eastern region was revised upwards from February 20. The Table shows an increase in the percentage of households collectivised from 27.8 on February 10 to 28.3 on February 20. But in fact the number of households collectivised did not change between these two dates.

These changes were obviously intended to adjust the series to the change in the number of households. But these changes are likely to be underestimated. Many households were dissolved in these years because of dekulakisation, departure for towns, and famine (especially in Kazakhstan).

The ten-daily reports in SZe also include information on seed and fodder collection, on the allocation of sowing plans, and on the progress of the contracts campaign.

Table 28. Number of households exiled in Category II, 1930–31 (thousands)
(a) By republics and regions from which exiled

	<i>Total in 1930–31</i> ^{1,a}	<i>Exiled by December 10, 1930</i> ²	<i>Exiled after December 10, 1930</i> ^{3,b}
Northern	3061	61	3000
Leningrad	8604	600	8004
Western	7308	0	7308
Moscow	10813	0	10813
Ivanovo-industrial	3655	0	3655
Nizhnii Novgorod	9169	0	9169
Central Black-Earth	26006	8237	17769
Urals	28394	14179	14215
Central Volga	23006	5873	17133
Lower Volga	30933	7931	23002
North Caucasus	38404	10595	27809
Siberia ^c	68159	16025	52134
Far East	2922	447	2475
Kazakhstan	6765	1265	5500
Bashkiria	12820	0	12820
Tatar ASSR	9424	1605	7819
Crimean ASSR	4325	3179	1146
Ukrainian SSR	63720	31593	32127
Belorussian SSR	15724	11079	4645
Transcaucasian SSR	870	0	870
Central Asia	6944	159	6785
Total	381026	112828	268198

Sources: ¹ GARF, 9479/1/89, 202, dated January 11, 1932.

² TsAFSB, 2/8/329, 274, dated December 10, 1930, published in TSD, ii (2000), 745–6.

³ Residual.

Notes: ^a From internal evidence in the table cited, this column evidently excludes 97 households exiled to Yakutia from Ukraine and 50 exiled from Nizhnii Novgorod region to Kazakhstan, which we have included in Table 28(b).

^b An alternative series appears in GARF, 374/28/4055, 47, a document of September 1931 (cited in Ivnitskii (2000), 169–70). This is specifically for households exiled in 1931. The total given is 265,795. Nearly all the figures are the same. The main differences are: Nizhnii Novgorod: 8,657; Urals: 12,000; Far East: 2,808.

^c In the first column, West Siberia is given as 52,091, and East Siberia as 16,068. Data in the source for column 2 are not divided, because in 1930 Siberia was all one region. But the source referred to in note ^b gives (for 1931) 43,057 for West Siberia and 9,077 for East Siberia, a total of 52,134.

(b) By republics and regions to which exiled

	<i>Total, 1930–1</i>	<i>From within region, 1930–1</i>	<i>From outside region, 1930–1</i>	<i>Total, 1930</i>	<i>From within region, 1930</i>	<i>From outside region, 1930</i>	<i>Total, 1931</i>	<i>From within region, 1931</i>	<i>From outside region, 1931</i>
Northern	58271	3061	55210	46623	61	46562	11648	3000	8648
Leningrad	6884	5344	1540	2140	600	1540	4744	4744	0
Nizhnii-Novgorod	1497	1497	0	0	0	0	1497	1497	0
Urals	128233	26854	101379	30474	13855	16619	97759	12999	84760
Central Volga	2500	2500	0	0	0	0	2500	2500	0
North Caucasus	14622	12409	2213	0	0	0	14622	12409	2213
Siberia ^a	97968	68159	29809	27924	16025	11899	70044	52134	17910
Far East	9697	2922	6775	4243 ^b	447	3796	5454	2475	2979
Kazakhstan	50929	6765	44164	1424	1265	159	49505	5500	44005
Bashkiria	6000	6000	0	0	0	0	6000	6000	0
Ukraine	3444	3444	0	0	0	0	3444	3444	0
Central Asia	1128	1128	0	0	0	0	1128	1128	0
Total	381173	140083	241090	112828	32253	80575	268345	107830	160515

Sources: 1930–1: GARF, 9479/1/89, 202 (dated January 11, 1932).

1930: TsAFSB, 2/8/329, 275 (dated December 10, 1930), published in TSD, ii (2000), 747–8.

1931: Residual.

Notes: ^a The two Siberian regions are not listed separately for the individual years, but the numbers are as follows for 1930–1:

	<i>Total</i>	<i>From within region</i>	<i>From outside region</i>
West Siberia	69950	52091	17859
East Siberia	28018	16068	11950

Yakutia has been included in Siberia (East Siberia) throughout.

^b This figure is misprinted as 4,223 in the original.

Table 29. Number of households exiled in Category II, by sub-periods, 1931 (thousands)

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Beyond region</i>	<i>Within region</i>
1930–1 ¹	381173	241090	140083
1930 ^{1a}	112828	80575	32253
1931 ^{1b}	268345	160515	107830
January–April, 1931 ²	35467	28938	6529
May 1–July 8, 1931 ²	160836	99562	61274
July 9–December 31, 1931 ³	72042	32015	40027

Sources: ¹ See Table 28.

² TsAFSB, 2/9/539, 226–227 (dated July 1931).

³ Residual.

Notes: General note: The figure for the whole of 1930 is given in TsAFSB, 2/9/539, 226–227, as 113,013 (32,248 from within region, 80,575 from outside region); and as 115,231 in GARF, 9479/1/89, 205. For 1931, the total for January–May is given as 44,464 in TsAFSB, 2/9/20, 41; and for January–September as 265,795, of which 103,208 were exiled within their region (hence 162,587 were exiled beyond their region), in TsAFSB, 2/7/79.2, dated September 30, 1931.

^a To December 10, 1930.

^b From December 10, 1930.

Alternative series

1930–1 (1931 incomplete)	240757
Mar 20–Apr 25, May 10–Sept 18 1931	162962
1930	77795

Source of alternative series: Memorandum from Yagoda to Stalin, dated October 12, 1931, cited in Ivnikskii (1994), 181; the separate figure for 1930 is also given in *ibid.*, 137. The memorandum stated that these figures were for the exiling of kulaks ‘from districts of comprehensive collectivisation’; 1,158,986 persons had been exiled in 1930–1 and 787,241 in these dates of 1931 (hence 371,745 were exiled in 1930). It did not state specifically that the figures excluded exiling within the same region, but that seems to be the obvious explanation for the difference between the two sets of figures.

The availability of these two sets of figures appears to settle the long-standing controversy between Ivnikskii, and Abramov and Kocharli, about the number of exiled kulaks (see vol. 1, pp. 248n and 447n); the lower total for 1930–1 excludes intra-regional exiling, while the higher figure includes it.

Table 30. Sovkhoz three-year plan of 1931, and performance, 1931–33

	1930 (actual)	1931 (plan)	1931 (actual)	1932 (plan)	1932 (actual)	1933 (plan)	1933 (actual)
Sown area (m.h.) ^a	3.9	9.5	11.0	14.0	13.4	19.0	14.1
Grain production (m.t.)	2.6		4.73		6.66		9.19
Grain to state (m.t.)	1.33	3.11–3.19	1.80	4.75	1.70	6.53	2.06
Cattle (stock) (m.) ^b	1.2	2.8	2.4	5.0	2.1	7.0	2.3
Pigs (stock) (m.) ^c	0.2	1.9	0.9	4.5	0.9	6.3	1.3
Sheep (stock) (m.) ^d	2.7	4.4	4.5	9.0	4.1	15.0	4.2
Meat (th.t.) ^c	36	98–106	121	328	171	737	129
Sugar beet (m.t.) ^f	3.16	3.77	1.80	5.24	1.00	6.55	0.74
Raw cotton (th.t.) ^f	34	33–41	58	74	41	106	43
Wool (th.t.) ^g	5.2	6.5	7.9	10.6	10.0	21.2	9.1

Sources: Plans: Resolution of VI congress of soviets, March 12, 1931: *Direktivny*, ii (1957), 254–5.

Actual: *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 203, 216, 715–16, 723, 724.

Notes: General notes: In principle ‘marketed production’ and ‘production supplied to state (sdacha)’ (or state collections) are supposed to be identical in case of sovkhozy. (m.h. = million hectares; m.t. = million tons; m. = millions, th.t. = thousand tons)

^a All crops.

^b Plan: Skotovod; date in year not stated.

Actual: dairy and meat sovkhozy of Narkomsovkhozov at end of year.

^c Plan: Svinovod; date in year not stated.

Actual: pig sovkhozy of Narkomsovkhozov at end of year.

^d Plan: Ovtsevod; date in year not stated.

Actual: sheep sovkhozy of Narkomsovkhozov at end of year.

^e Plan: marketed production.

Actual: Narkomsovkhozov and equivalent enterprises for period before formation of Narkomsovkhozov. Production supplied to state.

^f Plan: marketed production.

Actual: state collections.

^g Plan: marketed production.

Actual: delivery to state from sheep sovkhozy of Narkomsovkhozov.

Table 31. Sovkhoz grain production and collections, 1930–33 (million tons)

	<i>Production: all sectors (amount)</i>	<i>Production: all sovkhozy (amount)</i>	<i>Collections: all sovkhozy</i>		<i>Production: grain sovkhozy (amount)</i>	<i>Collections: grain sovkhozy</i>	
			<i>(amount)</i>	<i>(percentage of their production)</i>		<i>(amount)</i>	<i>(percentage of their production)</i>
1930	83.5	2.589	1.335	51.6	0.773	0.475	61.4
1931	69.5	4.726	1.798	38.0	1.263	1.056	83.6
1932	69.9	6.641	1.699	25.6	1.361	1.204	88.5
1933	89.8	9.160	2.063	20.8	1.619	0.992	61.3

Source: *Sel. kh. 1935* (1936), 213–4, 716.

Notes: Grain collections exclude milling levy and include grain loans repaid to state. The figures for collections are slightly higher than those in Table 14 (b), presumably because of different coverage.

Production figures are the official figures and are too high throughout (see Appendix).

Table 32. Money income and expenditure per household of individual peasants and collective farmers, July 1930–June 1931 (rubles)

(a) Income

	<i>Individual peasants</i>	<i>Collective farmers</i>
1. Sale of agricultural goods to state and cooperative agencies		
Grain	40.1	39.8
Industrial crops	15.9	9.4
Livestock and meat	7.7	6.6
Dairy products	11.2	7.2
Eggs	2.0	3.9
Other	48.6	38.0
Total	125.5	104.9
2. Sale of agricultural products on private market		
Grain	14.8	11.4
Industrial crops	13.5	11.3
Livestock and meat	16.7	22.7
Dairy products	48.9	40.8
Eggs	5.1	7.9
Other	113.9	112.1
Total	212.9	206.2

Table 32(a). (Continued)

	<i>Individual peasants</i>	<i>Collective farmers</i>
3. Received from kolkhoz		83.9
4. Non-agricultural income		
Wages	78.4	58.1
Sent from town	21.4	19.7
Timber and cartage	65.3	24.1
Artisan	45.1	27.9
Loans, etc.	5.9	7.5
Other	50.5	46.7
Total	266.5	184.0
Total money income	604.9	579.0

(b) Expenditure

	<i>Individual peasants</i>	<i>Collective farmers</i>
1. Obligatory payments		
Agricultural tax	19.9	10.6
'Self-taxation'	14.4	8.2
Cultural levy	15.4	6.6
Insurance	15.1	10.9
Other	2.5	2.2
Total	67.3	38.5
2. Voluntary payments		
Fees (pai) to cooperatives, etc.	17.0	26.4
Savings bank deposits	1.1	5.1
State loans	16.7	23.0
Other	20.5	23.3
Total	55.3	77.7
3. Other payments		
Repayment of loans	4.9	4.1
Fines	4.9	2.0
Other	23.1	31.4
Total	32.9	37.5
4. Purchase of industrial goods		
From state and cooperative agencies	111.6	159.2
On private market	114.2	88.1
Total	225.8	247.3

(Continued overleaf)

Table 32(b). (Continued)

	<i>Individual peasant</i>	<i>Collective farmers</i>
5. Purchase of agricultural goods		
From state and cooperative agencies	12.9	10.6
On private market	92.6	69.0
Total	105.5	79.6
6. Repair of buildings, implements, etc.	21.6	16.6
7. Non-material expenditure	22.6	22.3
Total money expenditure	531.0	519.5
(Net accumulation)	(73.9)	(59.5)

Source: *Denezhnye dokhody* (1932), 70–1 (income), 92–5 (expenditure).

Note: This was a sample survey by Narkomfin covering seven regions, and the Belorussian and Ukrainian republics.

Table 33. Money income and expenditure of kolkhozy, 1930–32
(million rubles at current prices)

(a) Income

	<i>1930</i>	<i>1931</i>	<i>1932</i>
1. Total sales	1260	2400	4600
Planned sales ^a	1230	2250	2000
Unplanned sales ^b	30	150	2600
2. Total from collective farmers	30	189	218
Entrance fees	20	117	33
Other	10	72	185
3. Total from financial system	560	392	380 ^c
Bank loans	?	365	325
Budget allocations	?	27	55
4. Non-agricultural income	180	580	1250
5. Interest on current account		10	14
6. Insurance receipts	17	80	215
7. Other income		40	100
Total income	2047	3691 ^d	6778
Income per household ^c	341	285	443

(b) Expenditure

	1930	1931	1932
1. Total obligatory payments	57	230	390
Agricultural tax	24	90	135
Insurance payments	19	138	255
Self-taxation	8	2	
2. Total voluntary payments	97	204	205
Shares of Traktorotsentr	20	130	100
Vehicle shares	33	30	
Long-term production credit	18	40	50
Other voluntary payments	25	4	55
3. Loans: interest and repayment	225	334	335
4. Total productive investment	600	735	800
Kolkhoz resources	40	343	423
Other	560	392	367
5. Total productive outlays	187	440	870
Payments to MTS	50	140	420
Other	137	300	450
6. Administration and management	22	85	150
7. Total to Funds, etc.	479	1127	1250
Indivisible Fund	219	648	1000
Deduction for socialised property (5 per cent)	150	179	—
Other	110	300	250
Total (1.–7.)	1661 ^g	3155 ^g	4000 ^g
Plus – Allocated to collective farmers for labour days ^f	402	1105	3230(!)

Source: RGAE, 7733/12/194, n.d. (?early 1933).

Notes: These are estimates made in Narkomfin.

The figures for 1932 are evidently preliminary, and from other sources are evidently too high (see Table 34).

^a i.e. state collections.

^b i.e. sales on market.

^c Estimated by us on assumption that there were 6 million collective-farm households in 1930, 13 million in 1931, and 15 million in 1932 (as stated in original table).

^d Given as 3,891 in original.

^e Given as 377 in original.

^f Appears to be derived as residual, so is very inaccurate if the total figures given in the original for expenditure are arithmetical errors.

^g Original gives the following totals: 1930–1,645; 1931–2,786; 1932–3,550.

Table 34. Money income per household of kolkhozy, 1932 and 1933 (rubles)

	1932	1933
1. Sale of agricultural produce:		
to state	64	84
on market	91	101
Total sale of agricultural produce	155	185
2. Sale of livestock and products:		
to state	57	72
on market	18	17
Total sale of livestock and products	75	89
Sale of all farming produce (1 + 2):		
to state	121	156
on market	109	118
Total sale of all farming produce	230	274
Other income	128	106
Total income	358	380

Source: RGAE, 1562/77/70, 75, 77, 81 (data for 12 regions of RSFSR, 7 regions of Ukraine, and Belorussia).

Note: *Kolkhozy v vtoroi* (1938), 117–18, gives 311 rubles as a comprehensive figure for USSR in 1932. Table 33 implies 443 rubles for 1932, but this is evidently a preliminary figure and is far too high.

Table 35. Money income per household of collective farmers, 1930/31–1933 (rubles)

	1930/31	1931/32	1933
1. Sales to state and cooperative agencies ^a	95.2	41.8	98.0 ^f
2. Sales on market	137.7	246.8	405.9
3. From kolkhoz:			
for labour days	?	136.8 ^c	93.7 ^c
5 per cent deduction ^b	?	2.5	—
other	?	30.9 ^d	32.8 ^d
Total from kolkhoz	90.4	170.2	126.5
4. Non-agricultural:			
wages living in village	45.7	148.2	84.0
artisan activities	27.5	28.3	? ^g
timber and cartage	23.9	11.7	? ^g
sent from town	11.9	11.3	10.5
other	48.5	94.8 ^e	184.4
Total non-agricultural	157.5	294.5	278.9
Total	480.8	753.3	909.2

Table 35. (*Continued*)

Sources: 1930/31 and 1931/32: RGAE, 7733/11/512, 37, 85, 88, 96.
1933: RGAE, 1562/3/249, 22.

- Notes:* 1930/31 and 1931/32 are only roughly comparable with 1933.
1930/31 and 1931/32: based on data from Narkomfin survey covering Moscow, North-Caucasus, Central Volga, Lower Volga and Ural regions, and Belorussian and Ukrainian republics.
1933: estimated by us from gross data for whole USSR, assuming that there were 15,259,000 collective-farm households on average in 1933.
- ^a State and decentralised collections, etc.
 - ^b Amount paid to collective farm household based on the capital it contributed to the kolkhoz on joining (see Vol. 2, p. 143).
 - ^c The authoritative report from Kraval' to Sovnarkom gives lower figures for the whole USSR: 88 rubles in 1932 and 103 rubles in 1933 (GARF, 5446/82/31, 11–24).
 - ^d Primarily back payments from previous harvests.
 - ^e Consists of: sale of domestic items 41.6; fishing and hunting 36.4; state loans, etc. 4.8; private loans 5.5; pensions 3.3; cartage of building materials 3.4.
 - ^f Includes: compulsory deliveries from household plot 30.5; decentralised collections and state purchases (zakupki) 67.5.
 - ^g These items are evidently included in 'other' below.

Table 36. Money expenditure per person of collective farmers,
1933: sample survey of seven regions (rubles)

	<i>From state and cooperative agencies</i>	<i>On market</i>	<i>Total</i>
1. Purchases			
Industrial goods	32.40	24.31	56.71
Agricultural products	10.38	69.10	79.48
Livestock and livestock products	3.43	23.50	26.93
Other purchases	0.30	2.23	2.53
Total purchases	46.51	119.16	165.67
2. Services	0.89	4.09	4.96
3. Payments to kolkhoz	?	?	0.61
4. Payments to state, etc.	?	?	17.54
5. Other expenditure	?	?	5.42
Total expenditure	?	?	194.20

Source: Estimated from data in RGAE, 1562/77/5a, Tables 27a, 27b and 30.

Notes: This survey by TsUNKhU included the Leningrad, Moscow, Central Black-Earth, Central Volga, Kiev and Odessa regions and the Belorussian SSR. The survey reports that there were as many as 5.3–5.4 persons per household (see Tables 1 and 14 of source), while other surveys at this time report only about 4.2 persons per household. However, the other surveys cover

Table 36. (*Note continued*)

only those present in the household, but the above survey covers: 'Members of the family of the collective farmer, both those living in the household, and those absent but maintaining a regular link with the family (living part of the time in the family, or regularly sending money). The number of persons also includes all members of the family who are [away] studying or in the Red Army.' It is probably safe to assume that the above figures should be multiplied by about 4.5 to obtain the expenditure per household.

Table 37. Non-agricultural money income per household of agricultural population, 1930/31 and 1931/32 (rubles)

	1930/31		1931/32	
	<i>Collective farmers</i>	<i>Individual peasants</i>	<i>Collective farmers</i>	<i>Individual peasants</i>
Wages while living in village	45.7	77.7	148.2	172.1
Artisan earnings	27.5	46.8	28.3	27.8
Timber (including carting)	23.9	68.1	11.7	68.2
Sent from town	11.9	15.8	11.3	14.5
Other ^a	48.5	55.2	94.8	133.7
Total	157.5	263.6	294.5	416.6

Source: RGAE, 7733/11/512, 85.

Note: ^a The breakdown of 'other' is given in *ibid.*, 88, for 1931/32 as follows:

	<i>Collective farmers</i>	<i>Individual peasants</i>
Cartage of building materials	3.4	18.6
Sale of domestic items	41.6	51.2
Fishing, hunting, etc.	36.4	48.2
Loans, etc.	4.8	3.9
Private loans	5.5	9.5
Pensions	3.1	4.3
Total	94.8	133.7*

* The last column actually adds up to 135.7.

It will be observed that none of these items, except the first, forms part of *otkhodnichestvo*.

Table 38. Number of labour days per collective farmer per year recorded in kolkhoz reports, 1931-33

<i>Region</i>	<i>1931</i>	<i>1932A</i>	<i>1932B</i>	<i>1933</i>
Leningrad	115	133	130	175
Moscow	85	98	102	125
Lower Volga	111	104	140 ^a	183
North Caucasus	133	144	n.a.	157

Table 38. (Continued)

<i>Region</i>	<i>1931</i>	<i>1932A</i>	<i>1932B</i>	<i>1933</i>
West Siberia	146	151	162	197
East Siberia	140	180	n.a.	n.a.
Ukraine	112	113	115	144
Belorussia	103	165	156	199
USSR ^b	n.a.	n.a.	120	148

Sources: Except where otherwise stated:

1931 and 1932A: RGAE, 1562/76/158, 10, 10ob.

1932B and 1933: RGAE, 1562/77/70, 29–30.

1933 (North Caucasus): *Sel. khoz. 1935* (1936), 653.

Notes: ^a Stalingrad region.

^b Alternative figures for USSR: 1932 116; 1933 156; (1934: 179): GARF, 5446/82/31, 11–24.

Table 39. Percentage of able-bodied collective farmers engaged in otkhodnichestvo, by regions, 1930–33

	<i>1930</i> ¹ (<i>end of year</i>)	<i>1931</i> ² (<i>by spring sowing</i>)	<i>1931</i> ¹ (<i>end of year</i>)	<i>1932</i> ³ (<i>end of year</i>)	<i>1933</i> ⁴ (<i>end of year</i>)
Leningrad	7.4	17.7	15.3	14.7	17.7
Western	n.a.	15.9	15.3	7.6	16.5
Moscow	12.1	23.6	23.1	13.7	22.1
Nizhnii-Novgorod	14.2	16.4	n.a.	8.0	11.8
Central Black-Earth	9.9	12.8	n.a.	10.6	16.4
Central Volga	3.9	9.5	n.a.	10.9	13.7
Lower Volga	4.5	8.8	20.2	14.6	7.6
West Siberia	3.4	11.7	11.0	11.1	8.3
North Caucasus	1.2	n.a.	7.9	6.6	n.a.
Ukraine	2.5	8.6	14.4	11.5 ^a	n.a. ^b
Belorussia	1.2	8.5	9.0	5.3	7.1
All USSR	n.a.	10.9	n.a.	10.4	n.a.

Sources: ¹ RGAE/76/158, 7ob-8 (document entitled *Dinamika kolkhozov za 1930–1932* (1934), covering 6.6 million hectares in 1932).

² *Kolkhozy vesnoi 1931 goda* (1932), 107–9 (covers two-thirds of kolkhoz households).

³ *Kolkhozy v 1932g* (1934), 8 (covers 6.77 million hectares in 1932).

⁴ RGAE, 1562/77/69, 10, 24, 37, 48 (document entitled *Dinamika khozyaistvennogo sostoyaniya kolkhozov 1932 i 1933*, iii (n.d.))

Notes: These figures were compiled by the Soviet statisticians from the annual or seasonal reports submitted by kolkhozy. They are only roughly comparable

Table 39. (*Note continued*)

between years, as the regions covered, and the proportion of households covered within each region, vary considerably. But they all cover a substantial proportion of kolkhoz households, and indicate the general trend.

^a The following percentages are given for different regions: Kiev 13.8; Vinnitsa 8.3; Dnepropetrovsk 7.4.

^b The following percentages are given for different regions: Kiev 16.0; Vinnitsa 9.5; Dnepropetrovsk 9.6.

Table 40. Distribution of kolkhoz grain as percentage of gross harvest, 1931–33

	<i>To state</i>	<i>To MTS</i>	<i>Return of seed and fodder loans</i>	<i>Seed and Insurance Funds^d</i>	<i>Other uses^e</i>	<i>Fodder Fund</i>	<i>To collective farmers</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Yield (tsentners per hectare)</i>
<i>Moscow</i>									
1931	23.1	—	0.4	25.8	—	11.9	30.8	100.0	8.0
1932A	14.6	—	1.2	32.3	—	10.1	41.8	100.0	8.5
1932B	17.4	—	0.9	25.4	3.8	11.1	41.4	100.0	7.7
1933	19.6	1.7	1.3	23.8	2.5	12.1	39.0	100.0	8.4
<i>North Caucasus</i>									
1931	55.3	—	0.2	16.6	—	9.5	18.4	100.0	7.0
1932A	60.7	—	0.8	22.1	—	6.4	10.0	100.0	3.9
1932B ^a	61.3	—	0.7	17.9	3.8	6.9	13.6	100.0	3.6
1933 ^a	41.8	13.0	0.3	16.8	3.9	7.5	19.2	100.0	6.2
<i>West Siberia</i>									
1931	45.1	—	1.8	8.2	—	21.1	23.8	100.0	3.7
1932A	32.6	—	3.3	21.8	—	11.0	31.3	100.0	7.7
1932B	32.9	—	3.3	17.9	1.7	11.3	32.9	100.0	7.7
1933	29.1	6.9	0.8	16.8	1.7	13.9	30.8	100.0	8.0
<i>Ukraine</i>									
1931	56.4	—	0.2	18.1	—	8.7	16.6	100.0	6.7
1932A	38.8	—	2.9	37.0	—	7.8	13.7	100.0	5.1
1932B ^b	51.1	—	1.9	18.6	3.3	7.3	17.8	100.0	5.0
1933 ^b	33.6	9.6	0.5	16.8	2.5	10.4	25.6	100.0	8.1
<i>All USSR^c</i>									
1932B	43.5	—	1.6	18.7	3.0	9.1	24.1	100.0	5.1
1933	33.4	7.8	0.9	18.0	2.5	10.6	26.8	100.0	6.6

Sources: 1931 and 1932A: RGAE, 1562/76/158, 21ob, 22.

1932B and 1933: RGAE, 1562/77/70, 84–85, and for yield ll. 39–40.

Notes: These figures are stated to refer to barn harvest.

^a Azov–Black Sea region.

^b Excludes Moldavian ASSR.

^c Data for USSR in 1931 and 1932A not given in source.

^d For 1931 and 1932A: estimated by us as a residual, so includes ‘other uses’.

^e Includes allocations to other Funds and sales on kolkhoz market.

Table 41. Grain issued by kolkhoz per able-bodied collective farmer, 1931–33 (kilograms in year)

	1930	1931	1932A	1932B	1933
Leningrad	180	230	280	270	350
Moscow	110	270	310	300	370
Lower-Volga	260	190	240	280 ^a	390 ^a
North Caucasus	210	360	190	190 ^b	460 ^b
West Siberia	210	240	610	660	720
East Siberia	230	330	440		
Ukraine	370	180	170	180	470
Belorussia	210	200	260	260	330
USSR			240	282	
USSR (B)				260	469

Sources: 1930, 1931, 1932A: RGAE, 1562/76/158, 23, 23ob, except 1932A for USSR, which is from *Kolkhozy v 1932* (1934), Table 20 (which gives same regional figures for 1932).

1932B, 1933: RGAE, 1562/77/70, 95–96, except USSR (B): GARF, 5446/82/31, 11–24.

Notes: These figures include ‘public catering’ (meals served by the kolkhoz).

^a Stalingrad region.

^b Azov–Black Sea region.

Table 42. Grain received and consumed per adult person, by region: sample survey of seven regions, 1933–34 (kilograms)

(a) Received from all sources

	<i>Jan.–June</i> 1933	<i>July–Dec.</i> 1933	<i>All 1933</i>	<i>Jan.–June</i> 1934	<i>July–Dec.</i> 1934	<i>All 1934</i>
Leningrad	82.6	150.2	232.8	62.8	168.3	231.1
Moscow	58.7	159.6	218.3	76.4	158.7	235.1
Central Black-Earth	25.5	129.2	154.7	41.4	140.7	182.1
Central Volga	43.0	203.6	247.6	47.4	230.9	278.3
Kiev	21.0	184.0	205.0	52.2	162.1	214.3
Odessa	17.0	207.0	224.0	94.3	75.4	169.7
Belorussia	54.0	120.6	174.6	55.7	143.9	199.6
All 7 regions	40.2	159.8	200.0	56.4	160.6	217.0

(b) Used for personal consumption

	<i>Jan.-June</i> 1933	<i>July-Dec.</i> 1933	<i>All 1933</i>	<i>Jan.-June</i> 1934	<i>July-Dec.</i> 1934	<i>All 1934</i>
Leningrad	92.2	87.4	179.6	87.4	90.8	178.2
Moscow	85.7	82.7	168.4	87.4	85.2	172.6
Central Black-Earth	57.0	58.2	115.2	72.8	68.8	141.6
Central Volga	74.8	77.3	152.1	85.6	82.7	168.3
Kiev	38.2	75.7	113.9	86.6	76.8	163.4
Odessa	29.7	76.1	105.8	94.6	74.6	169.2
Belorussia	54.3	57.8	121.1	64.8	64.3	129.1
All 7 regions	64.2	71.4	135.6	81.1	76.8	157.9

Source: RGAE, 1562/77/5a, Tables 17a and 17b.

Notes: In order to obtain number of grams consumed per day, the figures in Table 42(b) should be divided by 0.183 for the six-month periods, and by 0.365 for the year. Thus the consumption per day in all seven regions averaged 372 in 1933 and 432 in 1934. This average consumption has been calculated per adult, using coefficients to convert babies and children into the equivalent adults (see *Cahiers du Monde russe*, xxxviii (October–December 1997), 530–2, 539 (Wheatcroft)). The grain was received mainly in the form of flour; one gram of flour yields 1.4–1.5 grams of bread.

Table 43. Agricultural products per person received and utilised by collective-farm households: sample survey of seven regions, 1933

(a) Entering households

	<i>Jan.-June 1933</i>	<i>July-Dec. 1933</i>	<i>All 1933</i>
1. Grain (kg) ^a			
From kolkhoz	30.3	132.6	162.9
From household plot	0	16.6	16.6
Other sources	9.9	10.6	20.5
Total	40.2	159.8	200.0
2. Potatoes (kg)			
From kolkhoz	9.2	116.1	125.1
From household plot	0	197.6	197.6
Other sources	8.6	2.5	11.1
Total	17.8	316.2	334.0
3. Vegetables (kg)			
From kolkhoz	0.1	20.8	20.9
From household plot	0.6	53.7	54.3
Other sources	0.7	5.1	5.8
Total	1.4	79.6	81.0

Table 43(a). (Continued)

	<i>Jan.-June 1933</i>	<i>July-Dec. 1933</i>	<i>All 1933</i>
4. Meat and fat (kg)			
From kolkhoz	0.1	0.2	0.3
From household plot	2.6	4.7	7.3
Other sources	0.4	0.4	0.8
Total	3.1	5.3	8.4
5. Milk and dairy products (litres) ^b			
From kolkhoz	0.6	0.8	1.4
From household plot	67.8	73.2	141.0
Other sources	0.7	1.0	1.7
Total	69.1	75.0	144.1

(b) Utilised by households

	<i>Jan.-June 1933</i>	<i>July-Dec. 1933</i>	<i>All 1933</i>
1. Grain (kg) ^a			
Personal consumption	64.2	71.4	135.6
Fodder	2.5	2.1	4.6
Sales	3.2	3.0	6.2
Other	11.0	12.5	23.5
Total	80.7	89.0	169.7
2. Potatoes (kg)			
Personal consumption	87.5	106.3	193.8
Fodder	20.0	21.5	41.5
Sales	8.8	7.9	16.7
State collections	0.9	23.4	24.3
Other	25.9	3.7	29.6
Total	143.1	162.8	305.9
3. Vegetables (kg)			
Personal consumption	22.1	29.7	51.8
Fodder	1.2	0.9	2.1
Sales	3.0	8.0	11.0
Other	2.5	0.7	3.2
Total	28.8	39.3	68.1
4. Meat and fat (kg)			
Personal consumption	3.7	3.0	6.7
Sales	0.6	0.6	1.2
Other	0.2	0	0.2
Total	4.5	3.6	8.1

(Continued overleaf)

Table 43(b). (Continued)

	<i>Jan.-June 1933</i>	<i>July-Dec. 1933</i>	<i>All 1933</i>
5. Milk and dairy products (litres) ^b			
Personal consumption	46.0	60.0	106.0
Fodder	5.5	0.7	6.2
Sales	6.6	8.1	14.7
State collections	10.1	5.8	15.9
Other	0.8	0.4	1.2
Total	69.0	75.0	144.0

Source: RGAE, 1562/77/5a, Tables 17a and 17b.

Note: General note: These are representative sample households from seven regions (Leningrad, Moscow, Central Black-Earth, Central Volga, Belorussian SSR, Kiev and Odessa). The survey covered 5,740 households.

'Other sources' received by households include purchases from state and cooperative organisations and on the market, and received in exchange.

Arable produce is harvested from July, so the amount entering households in July—December will be much larger than the amount entering in January—June. Hence there is a large surplus in July—December above the amount utilised. This provides a carry over for January—June before the next harvest.

^a Grain is included 'in the form in which it entered the household of the collective farmer or was consumed by him' (usually in the form of flour). It does not include bran and husks.

^b Dairy products have been converted into milk equivalent.

Table 44. Food consumption per collective farmer per day in Odessa region, September and December 1932

	<i>Calories</i>	<i>Fats (grams)</i>	<i>Protein (grams)</i>
<i>September 1932</i>			
1. Vegetables			
Grain	1736	7.3	50.0
Potatoes	162	0.3	2.8
Other vegetables	320	7.1	6.9
Total vegetables	2218	14.7	59.7
2. Animal products			
Dairy products	142	11.2	5.3
Eggs	94	6.9	7.1
Meat and other animal products	41	1.8	4.7
Total animal products	277	19.9	17.1
Total food consumption	2495	34.6	76.8

Table 44. (Continued)

	<i>Calories</i>	<i>Fats (grams)</i>	<i>Protein (grams)</i>
<i>December 1932</i>			
1. Vegetables			
Grain	801	3.9	23.8
Potatoes	97	0.1	1.6
Other vegetables	163	4.6	3.0
Total vegetables	1061	8.6	28.4
2. Animal products			
Dairy products	79	5.2	3.9
Eggs	1	0.1	0.1
Meat and other animal products	35	2.3	2.8
Total animal products	115	7.6	6.8
Total food consumption	1176	16.1	35.1

Source: September 1932: RGAE, 1562/77/18, 28.

December 1932: *ibid.*, 31.

Note: For similar figures for the Donetsk region, see RGAE, 1562/76/17, 28 (July 1932), 23 (December 1932).

Table 45. Officials of politotdely of MTS, by number and type of official, 1933^a

(a) Education

	<i>Higher</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Total number covered</i>
Heads	824	819	162	1805
Deputy: political work	762	779	392	1926
Deputy: OGPU	21	573	1354	1948
Assistant: Komsomol	125	674	750	1549
Assistant: women	379	396	741	1516
Assistant: education	257	292	256	805
Total	2368	3533	3532	9556

(b) Year of joining party

	<i>Before 1917</i>	<i>1917-20</i>	<i>1921-23</i>	<i>1926-28</i>	<i>1929+</i>	<i>Total</i>
Heads	60	1894	218	290	1	2463
Deputy: political work	8	891	241	1268	22	2430
Deputy: OGPU	3	684	134	1209	317	2347
Assistant: Komsomol	0	2	2	1019	1451	2474
Assistant: women	4	418	110	969	154	1655
Assistant: education	0	76	34	575	137	822
Total	75	3965	739	5342	2082	12203

Source: *Materialy MTS* (1934), 205-8.

Notes: The source also contains information on: previous posts, which were mainly as party officials or in education. 203 of the 2328 heads of politotdely were army commissars; social position: of the 12,281 covered, 6,961 had been manual workers, 1,806 peasants and 3,445 white-collar.

^a There are arithmetical discrepancies in the original tables.

Table 46. Dismissals from MTS and kolkhozy, 1933

(a) From MTS by occupation

	<i>Number of officials covered</i>	<i>Percentage removed^a</i>
Heads of production sections	3213	45.6
Bookkeepers	5418	36.8
Mechanics	4946	33.5
Agronomists	5613	30.6
Brigade leaders (tractor brigades)	8070	27.1
Repair workers	18622	19.6

(b) From kolkhozy by occupation and region
(percentage of total number of persons in numbered group)

	<i>Moscow</i>	<i>Central Volga</i>	<i>Lower Volga</i>	<i>North Caucasus</i>	<i>Vinnitsa</i>	<i>Odessa</i>	<i>All Ukraine</i>	<i>All USSR</i>
1. Tractor drivers: total ^a	13.5	11.5	14.8	15.7	17.9	14.4	n.a	13.2
2. Kolkhoz chairs:								
of which, class-alien	8.7	14.3	21.9	26.5	n.a.	22.8	n.a	14.2
of which, unsuitable	27.7	50.1	n.a.	57.3	n.a.	38.9	n.a	35.8
Total	36.4	64.4	n.a.	83.8	n.a.	61.7	53.3	50.0

Table 46(b). (Continued)

	<i>Moscow</i>	<i>Central Volga</i>	<i>Lower Volga</i>	<i>North Caucasus</i>	<i>Vinnitsa</i>	<i>Odessa</i>	<i>All Ukraine</i>	<i>All USSR</i>
3. Brigade leaders:								
of which, class-alien	n.a.	9.1	16.7	15.7	n.a.	10.8	n.a.	8.6
of which, unsuitable	n.a.	30.4	n.a.	24.4	n.a.	20.6	n.a.	22.6
Total	n.a.	39.5	n.a.	40.1	n.a.	31.4	23.5	31.2
4. Heads of farm sectors: total ^a	28.0	55.7	83.0	68.2	59.0	n.a.	51.1	47.3
5. Book keepers: total ^a	20.6	38.4	49.6	30.6	27.1	n.a.	23.2	25.0
6. Store keepers: total ^a	23.7	38.6	63.5	48.8	43.8	n.a.	39.5	34.4
7. Record keepers: ^b total ^a	n.a.	n.a.	44.0	32.9	n.a.	23.9	17.2	23.7
8. Grooms:								
of which, class-alien	5.0	n.a.	11.5	11.2	6.8	12.6	n.a.	6.8
of which, unsuitable	11.9	23.9	37.0	20.4	20.0	16.2	n.a.	17.6
Total	16.9	n.a.	48.5	31.6	26.8	28.8	20.0	24.4

Sources: All data are from *Materialy MTS* (1934), except for Ukraine as whole: Vasil'ev and Shapoval (2001), 143.

Table (a): p. 6.

Table (b):

Item 1: p. 18; item 2: pp. 40, 43; item 3: pp. 40, 44; items 4–6: pp. 51–2; item 7: pp. 70; item 8: p. 87.

Notes: General note – These data were derived by the source from the annual political reports of the politotdely, and covered the period January–November 1933. The reports covered a total of 2,650 MTS, but data were usually available for only a minority of MTS (the total number of politotdely increased from 1,253 on April 1, 1933 to 2,655 on January 1, 1934, on which date the total number of MTS was 2,856 – *Materialy MTS* (1934), 204).

Table (a) contains data from 1,023 MTS in 24 regions and republics.

Table (b) data base varies considerably by item. The fullest data are for tractor drivers, for kolkhozy served by 1,023 MTS, and a population of 86,231 drivers. The number of MTS returning data for the other items vary from 594 to 938.

The two categories of dismissals are defined as follows (*Materialy MTS* (1934), 6, 8):

‘*Class alien*’: ‘purging of class-alien elements’.

Examples given cover both alleged origin and alleged wrecking, often both. They include ‘wrecking repairs; torturer in White Army’; ‘son of landlord; destroyed finances of MTS’; ‘served in White Army; concealed spare parts’; ‘wrecker’; ‘kulak’; ‘son of [tsarist] policeman’; ‘policeman’.

‘*Unsuitable*’: ‘removal of those unsuitable for work due to their business qualities’.

^a Includes both ‘class-alien’ and ‘unsuitable’.

^b Refers to record keepers (uchetchiki) of labour days.

Table 47. Bazaar prices for rye flour, by region, 1926/27, 1929–34
(rubles per kilogram)

	<i>Moscow</i>	<i>Ivanovo</i>	<i>Dnepropetrovsk</i>	<i>Kiev</i>	<i>Penza</i> (<i>Central</i> <i>Black-Earth</i>)	<i>Stalingrad</i> (<i>Central Volga</i>)	<i>Sverdlovsk</i> (<i>Urals</i>)	<i>Novosibirsk</i>	<i>Irkutsk</i>
1926–27 (average)	0.12	0.10	0.09	0.10	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.05	0.06
1929 December	0.75	0.67	0.24	0.42	0.28	0.55	0.61	0.42	0.58
1930 December		0.88		0.56	0.95	1.1	1.1	0.62	0.69
1931 March		2.0	2.0	1.3	0.57	1.6	1.1	0.81	0.94
June	1.2	1.4	1.6	1.6		2.2	1.2	0.94	0.63
September		0.97	1.5	2.1	0.71	1.8	2.0	1.6	0.89
December		1.2	2.1	1.9	1.1	2.0	2.8	2.1	1.1
1932 March		1.8	5.2	4.2	2.4	4.0	4.2	3.7	2.5
June	3.4	2.3	5.8	6.0	2.4	3.5	4.5	4.1	3.4
September		2.5	6.1	6.3	2.4	3.8	4.3	3.0	7.0
December	4.6	4.0		7.5	2.9	4.0	5.6	3.8	
1933 March	6.9	6.3	8.8	13.5	9.1	—	8.6	4.5	16
June	7.6	6.9	12.2	13.1	10.8	8.0	9.8	4.7	12.5
1934 March	3.7	3.0	1.7	3.0	2.1	2.2	3.0	1.7	4.4
June	3.7	3.0	3.7	4.1	3.1	2.9	3.5	2.4	4.0

Source: RGAE, 1562/12/1918, 2–3.

Note: 1926–27 = average of eight quarterly figures.

Table 48. Registered rural annualised monthly crude death rate, by region, 1932-34 (per 1,000 of population)

	<i>All RSFSR¹</i>	<i>Moscow²</i>	<i>Lower Volga³</i>	<i>Central Volga⁴</i>	<i>Central Black-Earth⁵</i>	<i>North Caucasus⁶</i>	<i>All Ukraine⁷</i>	<i>Kiev⁸</i>	<i>Khar'kov⁹</i>
1932									
January	17.9	16.5	11.8	17.4	15.2	16.4	15.1	16.1	15.0
February	20.6	19.9	12.9	20.1	18.2	16.5	18.1	19.6	18.4
March	20.4	19.3	13.7	19.9	18.0	16.1	20.6	24.1	20.5
April	20.0	17.2	15.2	18.9	18.6	16.7	23.0	29.8	22.3
May	17.0	13.6	15.3	15.9	15.2	15.7	24.1	35.6	24.5
June	15.7	13.5	17.6	15.1	13.9	14.6	27.4	44.2	27.6
July	19.1	15.8	21.0	18.4	17.2	18.3	25.2	35.3	24.6
August	25.1	20.2	17.9	22.0	17.6	22.1	22.9	28.0	25.1
September	20.2	16.2	17.7	17.2	15.5	30.4	21.4	25.3	23.1
October	17.1	14.6	14.9	14.6	15.7	29.2	22.4	27.5	22.0
November	16.7	15.4	13.2	13.9	16.5	25.4	19.1	20.1	19.7
December	16.5	15.7	12.9	14.4	16.5	22.7	16.6	17.5	18.0
1933									
January	22.6	19.7	21.9	20.0	21.1	28.1	22.4	27.2	25.4
February	30.9	24.0	31.0	29.7	24.0	44.1	35.5	49.0	41.2
March	35.6	27.4	47.1	29.2	29.4	61.7	72.4	102.2	91.6
April	35.6	20.9	71.2	24.4	27.4	97.3	103.5	135.1	142.2
May	38.5	20.4	106.0	25.4	37.1	95.5	145.1	208.9	214.9
June	44.3	19.8	133.1	32.4	64.8	92.1	196.2	316.0	264.6
July	47.5	24.5	125.3	55.2	76.1	65.7	133.0	206.0	140.1
August	43.6	25.5	75.2	63.6	46.0	56.9	43.7	49.3	61.3
September	32.1	19.5	46.8	44.9	26.6	52.3	23.3	22.0	33.2
October	25.0	17.6	32.5	33.1	19.5	38.9	13.1	12.6	12.2
November	21.3	17.3	26.5	24.3	17.4	27.4	11.6	12.5	10.5
December	22.5	20.1	29.7	23.4	18.5	27.8	12.5	13.2	11.7
1934									
January	20.9	19.2	18.1	20.4	18.4	26.9	17.4	15.5	16.9
February	21.5	20.2	14.6	22.3	17.1	25.8	15.3	16.6	15.1
March	21.7	21.3	15.7	22.5	17.3	21.8	18.6	18.1	14.2
April	21.2	18.2	15.8	22.9	17.3	19.2	15.6	15.7	13.4
May	18.3	15.9	15.4	18.8	14.6	15.2	13.6	14.5	11.2
June	18.7	16.4	14.7	20.3	15.1	13.5	15.0	15.4	11.3
July	24.3	18.4	17.5	26.3	17.4	16.5	15.7	13.2	13.6
August	29.2	18.8	20.5	33.4	21.1	25.4	21.9	22.9	17.5
September	27.0	21.1	23.2	32.4	20.4	24.8	25.1	27.6	18.2
October	20.5	18.9	20.6	24.3	18.3	20.4	23.1	25.7	16.5
November	18.4	16.1	15.8	19.5	17.1	15.2	14.6	14.4	11.8
December	20.5	16.3	16.9	21.5	19.3	16.4	15.5	16.7	12.3

Source: All figures are from RGAE, 1562/20/41, *listy*: ¹ 15; ² 23; ³ 37; ⁴ 31; ⁵ 36; ⁶ 33; ⁷ 16; ⁸ 39; ⁹ 40.

(Continued overleaf)

Table 48. (*Note continued*)

Note: These figures are all underestimates (see text of Chapter 13); but they convey the trend. 'Annualised' monthly rates show the annual death rate as it would be if the rate for the month continued through the whole year (i.e. the monthly rate is roughly one-twelfth of the above figures). For urban crude death rates, see <http://www.soviet-archives-research.co.uk/hunger>

Table 49. Incidence of disease

(a) Cases of infectious diseases in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, 1913, 1918–22, 1929–36 (thousands)

	<i>Typhus</i>	<i>Typhoid fever</i>	<i>Relapsing fever</i>	<i>Smallpox</i>	<i>Malaria</i>
1913	120	424	30	67	3600
1918–22 (5-year average)	1300	293	639	106	2940 ^b
1929	40	170	6	8	3000
1930	60	190	5	10	2700
1931	80	260	4	30	3200
1932	220	300	12	80	4500
1933	800	210	12	38	6500
1934	410	200	10	16	9477
1930–34 (5-year average)	314	232	9	35	5295
1935	120	140	6	4	9924
1936	100	120 ^a	3	0.5	6500

Source: Estimated from graphs in Baroyan (1968), 49–143.

Notes: ^a 1937.

^b The highest incidence in this period was in 1923: 5,700,000 cases; and 1924: 5,900,000 cases.

(b) Cases of infectious diseases in Ukraine, 1933–36 (thousands)

	1933		1934		1935		1936	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage of all USSR</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage of all USSR</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage of all USSR</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage of all USSR</i>
Typhus	213	26.6	66	16.1	14	11.7	12	12.0
Typhoid fever	51	24.3	65	32.5	31	22.1	16	13.3
Dysentery ^a	30	19.0	15	33.3	26	11.5	21	6.7
Malaria	767	11.8	1995	21.1	1837	18.5	1430	14.4

Table 49(b). (*Continued*)

Source: Total USSR, except dysentery: from Table (a) above.

Ukraine, and all figures for dysentery: RGAE, 1562/329/108, 5.

Notes: The population of Ukraine was approximately 19 per cent of the total population of the USSR.

^a The total figures for dysentery are for the RSFSR, Ukraine and Belorussia. The Ukrainian population was 21.6 per cent of the total population of the three republics.

(c) Monthly incidence of cases of typhus on the railways, 1933–34

	<i>Number of cases USSR</i>	<i>Number of cases per 10,000 population</i>		
		<i>RSFSR</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>Belorussia</i>
1933				
January	3121	2.3	1.0	2.2
February	5823	3.3	1.8	3.4
March	9481	5.3	3.3	5.4
April	14050	7.1	6.1	7.5
May	12522	8.1	8.8	8.5
June	8545	6.1	9.6	6.8
July	4901	2.6	7.7	3.7
August	1177	0.9	4.2	1.5
September	1194	1.0	4.0	1.6
October	1951	1.9	5.7	2.5
November	2915	3.3	6.5	3.8
December	5186	5.0	7.7	5.3
1934				
January	5672	6.0	6.8	6.0
February	3993	5.0	4.2	4.8
March	2710	4.1	2.8	3.8
April	2261	3.2	2.5	3.1
May	1659	2.6	1.6	2.4
June	944	1.4	0.7	1.2
July	493	0.7	0.4	0.6
August	264	0.4	0.2	0.3
September	274	0.4	0.2	0.3
October	461	0.6	0.2	0.5
November	736	0.9	0.3	0.7
December	982	1.3	0.5	1.1

Source: RGAE, 1562/329/114, 103, 110, 111, 109 (letter and corrected tables from deputy head of Chief Sanitary Department of Narkomput' to head of department of population and health statistics of TsUNKhU, dated April 3, 1936).

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN TEXT

aktiv	activists [politically active members of a community]
ARA	American Relief Association
art.	article (stat'ya)
ASSR	Avtonomnaya Sovetskaya Sotsialisticheskaya Respublika (Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic)
aul	village units (in Kazakhstan)
bai	rich peasants (in Kazakhstan)
besprizornye	orphans and abandoned children
brigada (pl. brigady)	brigade [form of labour organization in a kolkhoz]
brigady-dvorki	territorial brigades based on contiguous households
CC	Central Committee [of Communist Party] (Tsentral'nyi komitet)
CCC	Central Control Commission [of Communist Party] (Tsentral'naya kontrol'naya komissiya – TsKK) [joint staff with Rabkrin]
cde.	comrade
chastnik (pl. chastniki)	private dealer
Chekist	Operative of the 'Cheka' (Chrezvychnaya komissiya) (Extra ordinary Commission [political police])
chistka	purge
corr.	correspondent
dekkany	peasants (in Kazakhstan)
Donbass	Donetskii ugol'nyi bassein (Donetsk coal basin)
Eksportkhleb	(State Grain Exporting Agency)
FAD	Food availability decline
ferma (pl. fermy)	farms
gigantomania	a policy of pursuing larger and larger units

glubinki	remote areas
gosfond	gosudarstvennyi fond (state fund) [reserves]
Gosplan	Gosudarstvennaya planovaya komisiya (State Planning Commission)
Goszemtrest	Gosudarstvennyi zemledelnyi trest (State Land Trust)
GPU	Gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie (State Political Administration [Before 1924, all political police, thereafter a regional section of OGPU])
Gulag	Glavnoe upravlenie lagerei OGPU SSSR (Chief Administration of [Labour] Camps of OGPU USSR)
kanton	a low-level territorial administrative unit
Khlebzhivtsentr <i>or</i> Khlebzhivotnovodtsentr	Vsesoyuznyi tsentr sel'skokhozyaistvennoi kooperatsii po kontraktatsii, zagotovke i pererabotke produktov zernovoi i zhivotnovodcheskoi otraslei sel'skogo khozyaistvo (All-Union Centre for Agricultural Cooperatives, for the contracting, collection and processing of products of the grain and livestock sectors of agriculture)
khozraschet	cost accounting
kishlak	village unit (in Kazakhstan)
kolkhoz	kollektivnoe khozyaistvo (collective farm)
kolkhoznyy rynek	collective-farm market
Kolkhozttsentr	Vsesoyuznyi soyuz sel'skokhozyaistvennykh kollektivov (All-Union Union of Agricultural Collectives)
kolkhozsoyuz	Soyuz sel'skokhozyaistvennykh kollektivov (Union of Agricultural Collectives)
Komsomol	Kommunisticheskii soyuz molodezhi (Communist League of Youth)
Komzag	Komitet po zagotovkam sel'skokhozyaistvennykh produktov (Committee for the Collection of Agricultural Products [attached to STO and then SNK])

koopkhozy	auxiliary farms in the retail cooperatives
kopek	1/100 ruble
kos'ba	reaping
metrovka	square frames for measuring yield of grain standing in fields
mobfond	mobilizatsionnyi fond (mobilisation stocks or reserves)
MTS	Mashino-traktornaya stantsiya (Machine-Tractor Station)
nachsostav	nachal'stvuyushchii sostav (commanding staff)
Narkomfin	Narodnyi komissariat finansov (Peoples' Commissariat of Finance)
Narkomprod	Narodnyi komissariat prodoval'stviya (Peoples' Commissariat of Food)
Narkomsnab	Narodnyi komissariat snabzheniya (People's Commissariat of [Food] Supply)
Narkomsovkhozov	Narodnyi komissariat zernovykh i zhivotnovodcheskikh sovkhozov (Peoples' Commissariat of Grain and Livestock State Farms)
Narkomtorg	Narodnyi komissariat trgovli (People's Commissariat of Trade)
Narkomtrud	Narodnyi komissariat trud (People's Commissariat of Labour)
Narkomvneshtorg	Narodnyi komissariat vneshnei trgovli (Peoples' Commissariat for Foreign Trade)
Narkomzdrav	Narodnyi komissariat zdravookhraneniya RSFSR (People's Commissariat of Health of the RSFSR)
Narkomzem	Narodnyi komissariat zemledeliya SSSR (People's Commissariat of Agriculture of USSR)
naryady	production instructions
naturoplata	payment in kind [for MTS services]
NEP	Novaya ekonomicheskaya politika (New Economic Policy)
nepfond	neprikosnovennyi fond (Untouchable Fund) [of foodstuffs, reserves]

NISI	Nauchno-issledovatel'skii sel'skokhozyaistvennyi institut (All-Union Research Institute for Agriculture)
NKVD	Narodnyi komissariat vnutrennikhh del (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs)
obmolot'ba	threshing
Obshchepit	Obshchestvennoe pitanie (Public Catering Administration)
obyazatel'naya postavka	compulsory delivery
OGPU	Ob"edinennoe gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie (Unified State Political Administration [Political Police])
omach	traditional digging instrument in Kazakhstan
orgnabor	organizovannyi nabor (organized recruitment [of peasants for work in industry, etc.])
Osoaviakhim	Obshchestvo sodeistviya oborone, aviatsionnomu i khimicheskomu stroitel'stvu (Society to Support Defence, Aviation and Chemical Construction)
osobyie papki	special files
otkhod, otkhodnichestvo	'going away' to seasonal work outside one's own village or district
peregiby	excesses
politotdel (pl. politodely)	politicheskii otdel (political department)
posevnye svodki	sown area reports
pud	0.01638 tons
Rabkrin	Narodnyi komissariat raboche-krest'yan-skoii inspektsii (People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection) [joint staff with Central Control Commission]
Raikoopkolkhozsoyuz	Raionnyi soyuz kollektivnykh i kooperativnykh khozyaistv (District Union of Collective and Cooperative Households)
razverstka	centralised quota

RPK	Raionnyi partiinyi komitet (District Party Committee)
RSK	Raion sploshnoi kollektivizatsyi (District of Comprehensive Collectivisation)
samotek	spontaneous flow
skirdovanie	binding and stacking the reaped crop
smychka	alliance [between town and country]
SNK	<i>see</i> Sovnarkom
sokha	wooden plough
sovkhoz	sovetskoe khozyaistvo (Soviet [i.e. state] farm)
Sovnarkom (SNK)	Sovet narodnykh komissarov (Council of People's Commissars)
Soyuzkhleb	Vsesoyuznoe ob"edinenie khlebnoi promyshlennosti (All-Union Corporation for Grain Industry [Grain collection agency of Narkomsnab])
Soyuzsakhhar	Vsesoyuznoe ob"edinenie sakharnoi promyshlennosti (All-Union Corporation for Sugar Industry [Sugar collection agency of Narkomsnab])
Soyuzzagotplodovoshch	Vsesoyuznoe ob"edinenie plodnoi i ovoshchnoi promyshlennosti (All-Union Corporation for Fruit and Vegetables)
SR	Sotsialist-revolutsioner (Socialist Revolutionary)
stanitsa	(large) village or settlement in North Caucasus
STO	Sovet truda i oborony (Council of Labour and Defence [Economic sub-committee of Sovnarkom])
strakhovka	insurance [safety margin]
sukhovei	dry scorching winds that produced drought
supryagi	informal work teams
tabor	temporary overnight work camp
tovarnye fermy	commodity units [farms]
tovarnyi khleb	commodity or marketed grain
TOZ	Tovarishchestvo po sovmestnoi obrabotke zemli (Association

	for Mutual Working of Land) [Collective farm with lowest form of socialisation]
Traktorotsentr	Vsesoyuznyi tsentr mashinno- traktornykh stantsii (All-Union Centre of Machine Tractor Stations)
troika	committee or group of three persons
Tsentroplodovoshch'	Vsesoyuznyi tsentr sel'skokhozyaistven- noi kooperatsii po kontraktatsii, zagotovke i pererabotke plodov i ovoshchei (All-Union Centre for Agricultural Cooperation for the Contracting, Collection and Processing of Fruit and Vegetables)
Tsentrosoyuz	Vsesoyuznyi tsentral'nyi soyuz potrebitel'skikh obshchestv (All-Union Central Union of Consumers' [Cooperative] Societies)
TsGK	Tsentral'naya gosudarstvennaya komis- siya po opredeleniyu urozhainosti i razmerov valovogo sbora zernovykh kul'tur (Central State Commission for Determining Yields and the Size of the Gross Harvest of Grain Crops [of SNK])
TsIK	Tsentral'nyi Iсполnitel'nyi Komitet (Central Executive Committee [of Soviets of USSR])
TsUNKhU	Tsentral'noe upravlenie narod- nokhozyaistvennogo ucheta (Central Administration of National- Economic Records [statistical agency, formed in December 1931, attached to Gosplan])
Turksib	Turkestano-Sibirskaya zheleznaya doroga (Turkestan-Siberian Railway)
usad'ba	household plot
uchastki	parcels [of land]
VATO	Vsesoyuznoe ob"edinenie avto-trak- tornoï promyshlennosti (All-Union

	Corporation of the Automobile and Tractor Industry)
Vesenkha (VSNKh)	Vysshii sovetskiy narodnogo khozyaistva (Supreme Council of National Economy [in charge of industry]) [until January 1932]
VKP(b)	Vsesoyuznaya Kommunisticheskaya Partiya (bol'shevikov) (All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks))
VMN	Vysshaya mera nakazaniya (highest degree of punishment) [the death penalty]
vnederevenskii oborot	extra-rural marketing
Vneshtorg	<i>see</i> Narkomvneshtorg
VSNKh	<i>see</i> Vesenkha
zagotovka	[state] collection (usually of agricultural products)
Zagotzerno	Vsesoyuznoe ob"edinenie po zagotovke zernovykh, bobovykh, krupyanykh, maslichnykh i furazhnykh kul'tur (All-Union Corporation for the Collection of Grain, Beans, Groats, Oil-seeds and Fodder)
Zagotskot	Vsesoyuznoe ob"edinenie po zagotovke skota (All-Union Corporation for the [state] Collection of Livestock)
zagotpunkt	zagotovitel'nyi punkt (collection point)
zagraditel'nye otryady	detachments to prevent grain reaching the market
zakaz	state order
zakupki	purchases (state purchases of grain and other agricultural products)
zemleukazaniya	land indications [a simplified form of land consolidation]
zemleustroistvo	land consolidation
Zernotrest	Gosudarstvennoe ob"edinenie zernovykh sovet'skikh khozyaistv (State Corporation for Grain State Farms) [of Narkomzem]
zhatva	drying and ripening the reaped grain
zven'ya	links [sub-units below brigade]

ABBREVIATIONS OF TITLES OF BOOKS AND PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS, ETC., USED IN FOOTNOTES

(For full titles, see appropriate section of Bibliography; items listed below are periodical publications unless stated otherwise.)

B	<i>Bol'shevik</i>
BDFA	<i>British Documents on Foreign Affairs</i>
BP	<i>Byulleten' ekonomicheskogo kabineta</i> <i>prof. S. N. Prokopovicha</i>
EAS	<i>Europe-Asia Studies</i> (formerly <i>Soviet Studies</i>)
EZh	<i>Ekonomicheskaya zhizn'</i>
I	<i>Izvestiya</i>
IZ	<i>Istoricheskie zapiski</i>
KPSS v rez.	<i>Kommunisticheskaya partiya Sovetskogo Soyuza v</i> <i>rezolyutsiakh</i> (books)
NAF	<i>Na agrarnom fronte</i>
NFK	<i>Na fronte kollektivizatsii</i>
NP	<i>Nizhnee Povol'zhe</i>
OI	<i>Otechestvennaya istoriya</i>
P	<i>Pravda</i>
Sel.khoz. 1935	<i>Sel'skoe khozyaistvo SSSR: ezhegodnik 1935</i> (book)
SKhIB	<i>Sel'skokhozyaistvennyi informatsionnyi byulleten'</i>
SKP	<i>Khlevnyuk et al., eds Stalin i Kaganovich:</i> <i>perepiska</i> (book)
SO	<i>Statisticheskoe obozrenie</i>
Sots. str.	<i>Sotsialisticheskoe stroitel'stvo SSSR</i> (books)
SPR	<i>Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika</i> (series of books)
SP VSNKh	<i>Sbornik postanovlenii i prikazov</i> (VSNKh)
SR	<i>Slavic Review</i>
SRSKh	<i>Sotsialisticheskaya rekonstruktsiya sel'skogo khozyaistva</i>
SS	<i>Soviet Studies</i> (later – <i>Europe-Asia Studies</i>)
ST	<i>Sovetskaya trgovlya</i>
SU	<i>Sobranie zakonov</i>
SV	<i>Sotsialisticheskii vestnik</i>
SZ	<i>Sobranie zakonov</i>
SZe	<i>Sotsialisticheskoe zemledelie</i>
SZo	<i>Sotsialisticheskoe zemleustroistvo</i>
TSD	<i>Tragediya sovetskoi derevni</i>
VIK	<i>Voprosy istorii KPSS</i>

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Letters used as abbreviations for items in the bibliography are listed on p. 521. All other books are referred to in the text footnotes either by their author or editor, or by an abbreviated title (always including the first word or syllable) when there is no author or editor, and by date of publication. The names of authors of articles in edited volumes and periodicals are given in brackets.

Place of publication is Moscow or Moscow–Leningrad, unless stated otherwise.

Only items referred to in the text are included in the bibliography.

SECTION 1 ARCHIVES, THESES AND OTHER UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS

Russian and Ukrainian archives

(Referred to in footnotes by name of archive, followed by fond/opis'/delo, list.)

Derzhavnii arkhiv Vinnits'koi oblasti (DAVO)

- fond P-43 Voronovit'skii raikom KP(b)U
- fond P-45 Gainsinskii raikom KP(b)U
- fond P-51 Zhmerin'skii raikom KP(b)U
- fond P-87 Vinnits'kii mis'kii komitet KP(b)U

Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF, formerly TsGAOR)¹

- fond 374 (Narodnyi komissariat raboche-krest'yanskoi inspek-tsii SSSR)
- fond 5446 (Sovet Narodnykh Komissarov SSSR)
- fond 7589 (Tsentral'naya gosudarstvennaya komissiya po opredeleniyu urozhainosti i razmerov valovogo sbora zernovykh kul'tur pri Sovnarkome SSSR, 1932–1937)

¹ In Russian sources, *fondy* of the former USSR archive are given with the prefix R. This has been omitted in these volumes. *Fondy* of former RSFSR archives have been indicated specifically.

- fond 9414 (Glavnoe upravlenie mest zaklyucheniya Ministerstva vnutrennikh del SSSR, 1930–1960)
- fond 9479 (4-i spetsotdel Ministerstva vnutrennikh del SSSR, 1931–1959)

Rossiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv ekonomiki (RGAE, formerly TsGANKh)

- fond 260 (Vsesoyuznyi nauchno-issledovatel'skii institut ekonomiki sel'skogo khozyaistva (VNIIESKh)) [including NISI]
- fond 1562 (Tsentral'noe statisticheskoe upravlenie (TsSU) pri Sovete Ministrov SSSR) [including TsUNKhU]
- fond 1884 (Ministerstvo putei soobshcheniya SSSR (MPS)) [including Narkomput']
- fond 3429 (Vysshie sovety narodnogo khozyaistva (VSNKh) RSFSR i SSSR)
- fond 4109 (Vsesoyuznyi tsentr sel'skokhozyaistvennoi kooperatsii)
- fond 4372 (Gosudarstvennyi planovyi komitet SSSR (Gosplan SSSR) Soveta Ministrov SSSR) [including Gosudarstvennaya planovaya komissiya]
- fond 5240 (Narodnyi komissariat vneshnei i vnutrennoi torgovli (Narkomtorg) SSSR)
- fond 7446 (Vsesoyuznyi soyuz sel'skokhozyaistvennykh kooperativov SSSR i RSFSR (Kolkhoztsestr SSSR i RSFSR))
- fond 7486 (Ministerstvo sel'skogo khozyaistva SSSR (Minsel'khoz SSSR)) [includes Narkomzem SSSR]
- fond 7733 (Ministerstvo finansov SSSR (Minfin SSSR)) [includes Narkomfin SSSR]
- fond 8040 (Ministerstvo khleboproduktov SSSR) [includes Komzag]
- fond 8043 (Narodnyi komissariat snabzheniya SSSR (Narkomsnab SSSR))

Rossiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI, formerly RTsKhIDNI, formerly TsPA)

- fond 17 (Tsentral'nyi komitet KPSS (TsK KPSS))
- fond 79 (Kuibyshev Valerian Vladimirovich (1888–1935))
- fond 81 (Kaganovich Lazar Moiseevich (1893–1991))
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- fond 108 (Fraktsiya VKP(b) v TsK Vserossiskogo soyuza rabotnikov mashinno-traktornykh stantsii i batrachestva (1931–1934))
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Cambridge Journal of Economics (Cambridge)

Ekonomicheskaya zhizn'

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Istoricheskii arkhiv

Izvestiya

Molot

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Na fronte kollektivizatsii

Na fronte zagotovok

Nizhnee Povolzh'e (Saratov)

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