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ARTICLES

Springtime for the *Politotdel*: Local Party Organization in Crisis*

Nobuo Shimotomai

Introduction

The year 1932–33 was one of the important turning points in the Soviet history. Forced character of collectivization resulted in the setback of the agricultual production and eventually in the famine in the south of the USSR. Superindustrialization in favor of the heavy industry had to be slightly modified; military buildup had to be strengthened lest Japanese militarism should intervene in the Far East. These measures were not consistent each other and severe situation emerged both economically and politically.

Particularly in the rural areas the situation deteriorated swiftly; kolkhoz agriculture by the end of 1932 faced a serious crisis. Harvest was extremely low; the coercive methods of taking grains were fierce. Part of the kolkhzniks began to move to the towns, abandoning the rural life. Kolkhoz agriculture came near to collapsing, especially in the grain producing areas. The reasons which led the countryside to this situation were various; the inconsistent economic policies, coupled with the sudden changes, caused a lot of troubles. Forced collectivization and high rate of state procurement deprived the masses of incentives to work. The authorities could not afford to provide with the necessity goods and even seeds because of the war scare in the Far East. Neither horses nor tractors were available because fodders and fuel were in short supply. Minor reforms like the introduction of free (kolkhoz) trade was followed by ruthless campaign of grain collections, accompanied with the decree of the protection of the socialist property, which could impose death penalty for those who had stolen kolkhoz property. All these resulted in the emergency and even famine in the rural areas of the USSR, which was in part discussed in my previous work on the Kuban affair.[1]

This paper describes the change in the local party organizations and party policy over the agricultural crisis and especially the grain collection crisis at the end of 1932–1933. Attention is paid particularly to the south of Soviet Russia; the North Caucasus, the Lower Volga and the Central Black Earth region. As was already pointed out in my previous article, the crisis of kolkhoz agriculture in the grain growing areas of the Soviet Union once again gave rise to a problem of local control by the district (*raion*) party

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committees. After collectivization these district committees had taken over wider responsibilities in agricultural production as well as in local administration. The January joint plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission was the turning point in this respect, when new policies for agricultural and administration were adopted. First, the kolkhoz center (*tsentr*) system was abolished and incorporated into the People's Commissariat of Agriculture. Second, the grain collection system was changed from the contract system (*kontraktatsia*) to the obligatory procurement system, which was a kind of tax. Third, an internal passport system was introduced to the effect that peasants were deprived of the right to move to the city. Work outside the village (*otkhodnichestvo*) was restrained in March 1933.

These new approaches were not restricted to the economic arena. On the political side there was a purge of the whole party. The Politburo decision of December 10, 1932 to organize the purge in the spring of 1933 was approved by the January party plenum and this apparently followed the local purge of the Kuban and other areas in the end of 1932. The last oppositionist move against Stalin was revealed and condemned at this joint plenum. It was allegedly organized by Smirnov (candidate of the Orgburo), Eismont and Tolmachev. As a result of this activity Tomskii and especially Rykov were given warning.

The introduction of *politotdels* in the MTS can be seen as a measure to cope with the crisis in the countryside, which had produced a famine in the south of the USSR. The *politotdels* as extraordinary organization were set up by the January plenum. They had existed before as tools of party control over the Red Army during the civil war ; and were thus an indication of the presence of a critical situation in some rural areas in the south of Soviet Russia.[2] In this paper, the author attempts to see the response of the local party organizations to the work of the *politotdels*.[3] Special attention will be focused on European Russia ; North Caucasus, the Lower Volga, where the crises were severe and Moscow and Ivanovo regions, where the crises were mild, and the Central Black Earth Region, where they fell in between.[4]

1. Party Leadership Structure in the Spring Agriculture Campaign

At the January joint plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission (hereafter January plenum), Stalin made a speech on "work in the rural districts" in which he listed the following reasons for the crisis : first, the underestimation of the dangers of the kolkhoz trade ; second, the neglect of the increasing responsibilities of the party leadership over the kolkhoz ; third, the overestimation of the kolkhoz system, and neglect of the infiltration of the counter-revolutionary elements in it ; fourth, overlooking the changing tactics of the class enemies which had taken on a mask ; and fifth, the failure of communists in the countryside to realize their responsibilities.[5] This speech, which was characterized by Kaganovich as a "programmatic" indicated that the main theme that "kto kogo" problems had been decisively solved in the countryside was proved to be false—that is, class enemies or kulaks were never eliminated.[6] The more difficult was the task of enforcing the grain collection in the Autumn of 1932, the harder the attack became on the "kulaks" which was "basically eliminated but never totally beaten." The kolkhoz, as a model of new agriculture, was also criticized. Stalin's

speech went even further when he pointed out that kolkhoz which "we do not lead" is guided by anti-Soviet elements.[7] This pessimistic and negative attitude towards the kolkhozniks lay behind the preparation for the spring agricultural campaign, which had began in the winter of 1932–33.

To get rid of the so-called "counter-revolutionary" character of the kolkhozes and incorporate them into new alignment, new organizational weapons had to be introduced at the local level. Kaganovich said that a kolkhoz cannot be kolkhoz without "Communists."[8] The *politotdels* were introduced to meet such demands and above all to complete the spring agricultural works. The introduction of *politotdels* also led to the re-moulding of the rural party hierarchy, which had assumed the main role in managing the rural administration and economy. It would be useful here to outline the party structure on the countryside. Below the Central Committee was the regional committee (obkom or kraikom) which, in its turn, control the district committee (raikom). Communist forces below the district committees were organized either on the productive line (kolhoz, sovkhoz or MTS) or on the territorial base (village soviet). However, communist organizations like *partorg* were rather exceptional and lowest local production units were mainly beyond the direct control of the communists. This system functioned rather poorly and Stalin claimed that the regional party organization did not know the real situation in the countryside and that his source of the "real" information came not via the district (*raion*) committees but via the Central Committee members.[9] According to Kaganovich, Stalin criticized some regional party organizations or *oblast*, *krai* and the Central Committee of the national republics party in this plenum.[10] The Central Committee and eleven instructor-information groups in the organization-instructor department, each of which constantly investigated two or three regions, reported the local situation directly to the Secretariat and the Politburo.[11]

The interventionist tendency of the Central Committee over the regional (*oblast, krai*) organizations in this period was witnessed in Kazakstan, the North Caucasus, the Lower Volga and the Ukraine, and others. The Central Committee sent a delegation to Rostov-on-the-Don, head by Kaganovich, at the beginning of November 1932, to investigate the "sabotage of the kulaks" in the Kuban.[12] The purge conducted by Shkiriatov in the Kuban became the model for those in 1933. As in the case of Kazakstan, the Central Committee made a resolution condemning Goloshchekin's leadership which was accused of damaging the livestock by "administrative method and order."[13] A special sub-committee, headed by Kaganovich, was appointed at the suggestion of Stalin, which made a decision to give special aids in this area. By February 1933 the leadership was changed and Mirzoian, who was recommended by All-Union Party Central Committee, was appointed the first secretary of the Kazakstan regional Committee. Special attention was paid to the Ukraine : Kharkov, Odessa and Dnepropetrovsk regions. On January 24 the Republican Central Committee made a special decision, by which Postyshev (No. 3 man of the All-Union Secretariat) was appointed the first secretary of Kharkov region, as well as the second secretary of the Ukraine. The plenary session of the Republic Central Committee finally accepted this appointment, which involved the replacement of Terekhov.[14] Khataevich, who had been the first secretary of the Middle Volga, was at the same time moved to the position of the first

secretary of Dnepropetrovsk and Veger was appointed secretry in Odessa.

The Lower Volga had the same problem, although the level of the central intervention was milder than in the North Caucasus, Ukraine, and Kazakstan. The Central Committee sent Postyshev at the end of December 1932 to promote the grain collection and to tighten the screw on the local district organizations as well as on Ptukha, the first secretary of the Lower Volga.[15] On December 30, the Central Committee made a decision on the Nizhine-Chirskii district and Koterpnikovskii district, whose leaders were accused of causing harvest losses and failures in the grain collection.[16] Even Ptukha was reprimanded in public. The Central Control Commission also warned the district control organization.[17] Needless to say, these decisions were aimed at the leadership of the districts in the region. Postyshev in his speech at the conference of the regional activists of the agricultural administration, asked for "concrete and operative" leadership over the kolkhozes instead of a "paper" one. As a consequence of these pressures from above, the planned level of collection (though lowered) was completed by the beginning of January.[18]

The preparation for the spring sowing campaing, however, were delayed significantly in this region. This was due to delays in the collection of seed. The joint plenum of the regional committee and regional control commission, after hearing Ptukha's report, decided to learn the "lessons" given by the Central Committee decision on combating the pettybourgeois relaxation and imposing the iron discipline.[19] In February, however, not all the district organizations drew the appropriate "lessons" from the Nizhine-Chirskii district. The bureau of the regional committee made a decision concerning the Kalmyk autonomous region, where insuffcient party activities were noted. Another district was also warned of neglecting the Central Committee decision.[20] The twenty-three districts that were slowest in the collection of seed were reported in the black list (*chernaia doska*) with punishment announced.[21] The Central Committee again made a decision secretly stating that the Lower Volga organization had not made a self-criticism in the Bolshevik manner and had not clearly admitted that the error was pointed out by the Central Committee itself in the January regional plenum.[22] Ptukha made a self-criticial speech in front of the activists to the effect that severe measures should be adopted.

On the other hand, there were regions, like the Central Black Earth region, where central control was less significant.[23] Nevertheless, leaders of Tymskii district were deprived of the party card because they were allegedly following the "kulak sabotage."[24] One reprimanded party secretary had appealed claiming that the collection plan was unfeasible, after February difficulties occurred in this region in relation to the seed collection and food situation. The chairman of the district soviet was purged and district party secretary was warned in public. Another district also lost its secretary due to the regional intervention and *partorg* groups were sent out from Voronezh.[25] These decisions were made clear at the regional level and were apparently a warning to other district leaders. The first secretary of this region, I. Vareikis, cited the lesson of Kuban in March.[26]

In this spring campaign, the organisation-instruction department of the Central Committee played an important role. Its head, V. I. Polonskii, underlined the situation in the party organization on the kolkhoz and rural areas at the speech of the communists

delegations of the First Shock-Brigade Congress.[27] Special attention was paid to the poor organizational activities of the district (*raion*) committee.

A new organizational development was introduced in the central party structure as a consequence of the deepening crisis. The Central Committee set up the agricultural department, headed by Kaganovich, to cope with the agricultural-political control over the countryside by January 1933.[28] This organizational setup was not in line with the so-called "*funktsionalka*" or "functional principle" of the party structure. This department was the real headquarters of the *politotdels*, although its activity and composition was less known.[29] At the end of March the agricultural department convened a meeting of the *politotdel* activists, where Kaganovich, Iakovlev (People's Commissariat for Agriculture). Ezhov, Krinitskii (Chief of the Political Administration department of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture-nominal headquarters of *politotdels*), Kosarev (komsomol), Soms (People's Commissariat of the state farm, chief of the *politotdels* of the state farm) attended.[30] The agricultural department was also structured at the regional level. In the North Caucasus, for instance, secretary Putnin was appointed chief of this department.[31]

The direct concern of the Central Committee over the agricultural sphere was accompanied by a criticism of the People's commissariat of Agriculture. Kaganovich pointed to the weak leadership of this commissariat.[32] Some high officials, including a deputy commissar, were shot because of their "counter-revolutionary" activities. The Central Committee also organized a sub-committee on the repairs of tractors, which again pointed to the weakness of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture.[33]

The January plenum also made an attack on the anti-party group of A. Smirnov, Eismont, and Tolmachev — the last oppositionists' move against Stalinist policy. Initially the Politburo and the Presidium of the Central Control Commission decided to oust Smirnov from the Central Committee, and the two others from the party.[34] These groups were allegedly recommending a change in the industrial course and especially in the agricultural policy, the disbanding of the kolkhoz system as well as the restoration of the kulak in particular. It should be noted that this "troika" was engaged with the agricultural policy in the government and was presumably moved by the misery in the Caucasus and Ukraine. Smirnov had been the Commissar of Agriculture of the Russian Republic until 1928, and Tolmachev had been a deputy chairman of the North Caucasus soviet, where crisis was most severe; Eismont was a high-ranking official in charge of trade and supply. Their former chief, Rykov, was warned about associating with this group, as were V. Shmidt and Tomskii.[35]

It is conceivable that the idea of this group received some support among the party ranks. In Uzbekistan, for instance, a certain Bunin made a platform speech in which he criticized the "excess" of industrialization and the error of collectivization, resulting in the peasants' hunger from the over-investment on cotton. Poliakov made the same argument in the discussion of the January plenum.[36] One Romakin, secretary of the Institute for Socialist Agriculture of Uzbekistan, warned against the flight of the kolkhozniks and over-ambitious plans for sowing. These individuals were severely punished and the bureau of Romakin's Institute party cell was disbanded. In one cell of Stalinskii district in Moscow, one communist named Straus criticized the work of the

January plenum because it led to "the degradation of agriculture and to an unprofitable situation in the kolkhoz."[37]

Other party members might have searched for another solution. At the Shock-Brigade Congress in February, Stalin criticized those who searched for a "third way" between the party line and "restoring capitalism."[38]

2. *The Regional and the District Party Committees in the Spring Campaign*

After the January plenum of the Central Committee, the regional party committee as well as the district party committee were obliged to follow the new line. In the North Caucasus a joint plenum of the regional party and control commission was held from January 26, where Sheboldaev made a reporting speech. He underlined the defects of the district-level leadership as well as the lack of self-criticism.[39] In the Lower Volga region, Ptukha made a self-critical speech, although as we have noted the Central Committee was not satisfied with it and later it had to be corrected. A similar conference was also held in the Central Black Earth region, as well as in Moscow, where Kaganovich made a speech to the aktivs. However, the Ivanovo region held no such plenum, although Nosov, first secretary, made a short speech to an "atktivsts" meeting.[40] Every party organization held a "Party Day" where the decision of the plenum as well as the "programatic indication of Stalin" were discussed. There was such an organization in Moscow, where special three-week courses were held for the district secretaries in February.[41]

At the campaign, all the local party apparata were more or less involved ; the key role to mobilize the forces was taken, although not totally effective, by the organization-instructors department, (i.e. department responsible for the lower party organization), at each level of the party organization. In the Lower Volga, for instance, this department held a conference to investigate the preparation of the spring campaign, which was attended by *politotdels*, chiefs of the organization department of the district committee, and editors of the papers.[42] Chief of the local organization paid special attention to the extreme shortage of the active." Ptukha attended this conference and criticized "the incorrect line of several comrades." In Moscow, 90 percent of time of workers in the organization-instructors department was reported to be directed towards strengthening the rural party apparatus. The fourth plenum of the Ivanovo regional party decided to dispatch 70 party officials as organization-instructors.[43] Such department as the agitation-mass activity department, and the cultural-propaganda department, were also given a new alignment. In the Central Black Earth region, there were three propaganda groups organized by the Central Committee of the Komsomols, six organized by the Central Committee and twenty-one organized by the regional committee.[44] In some areas agitational collectives and group-collectives were organized.[45]

It was also significant that secretaries of the district party committees were blamed and purged. The Kuban area of the North Caucasus had been the focus of the whole campaign of purges. A secretary of the Usti-Labinskii district was deprived, with others, of his party card at the beginning of 1933.[46] In the Lower Volga, the effects of the preceding decision of the Central Committee was strongly felt. The Moscow committee

also decided to demote one secretary to the rank of candidate for having been too "liberal" to the "Kulak sabotage". Kaganovich disgraced him twice , not only the buro decision but also by the plenum decision.[47] Leningrad organization also changed three secretaries.[48]

Among the turmoil of the rural areas, the Central Committee paid special attention to the district level party organizations. Because of the abolition of *okrug* the district or *raion* became the pivotal linkage between the center and locality. The number of the district in the USSR was 2,591, and the population of the average district of the Russian Republic was 52,848.[49] As was clearly stated by Postyshev at the Orgburo conference in June 1931, a district level organization was regarded as instrumental in fulfilling the agricultural campaign and controlling local production. However, the district level party organization was paralyzed, especially in the south of the USSR, as was noted by Kaganovich at the January joint plenum and the Shock Brigade Congress of February.[51]

Some new patterns have developed to control the district committees and local organizations. First, to cope with the situation, various kinds of plenipotentiaries were sent from the central or regional level in the autumn of 1932. In the North Caucasus, this system was reintroduced in June 1932 to collect grains – a system which had never used after the spring of 1930.[52] In 1933 this system was used on a much wider scale.

These mobilized men were given specific tasks and ordered to stay on the spot or "attached" (*prikreplennye*) to certain districts or villages until the completion of the task. The Moscow committee decided to send 2,000 district officials—or active Communists—in the spring campaign.[53] They were ordered to stay in kolkhozes for more than twenty days and were obligated to report to the agitation-mass department of the district committee. The January joint plenum of the North Caucasus regional committee and control commission also sent 830 members from the city as permanent and leading workers, and also for the re-educating of local activists.[54] In the Lower Volga, the regional committee dispatched more than 1,000 members as permanent workers, alongside 2,500 part-time workers.[55] Every district committee in the region also sent more than 100 members to help the work in the countryside. In all 9,500 party organizers, or *partorgs*, worked in the spring campaign.[56] The scale of dispatched workers was by no means small compared with the full membership of this region, which was approximately 60,000 in April 1932. The Central Black Earth region sent at least 1,790 members until May and one quarter of these became secretaries of the rural organization.[57] Ivanovo organization, where results were good, also "attached" 1,000 members to the local district by the middle of April.[58] Leningrad party committee also dispatched some 5,000 members in the spring of 1933.[59]

Second, along with the plenipotentiary system which had again been used in the summer of 1932, an *orgpart gruppa* was also sent from the region to remould the district level organization. It should be noted that this had been mainly used earlier to give "aid" to industrial organizations from above. The first case of using it to purge rural organizations seems to be in North Caucasus at the end of 1932.[60] The January regional plenum decided to strengthen this system. However, this system turned out to replace the formal institutions or collided with them.[61] In one district in the Central Black Earth region, the *orgpart gruppa* consisting of 15 members were sent where top officials had been reprimanded. These mobilized men, as well as the permanent cadres of the rural

institutions, were watched and controlled by instructors. To increase their numbers the Moscow committee's plenum in February made it clear to send some 150 instructors to the rural areas. This instructor system would be used more extensively in 1934.[62]

Third, in order to organize the campaign, special commissions were set up together with the normal organizational hierarchy. Sometimes extraordinary powers were also used. In the North Caucausus, where the situation was worse, the spring sowing commission was institutionalized with Sheboldaev (first secretary of this region) as chairman and with representatives from the Soviet, OGPU, People's Commissariat of the State Farms and the regional party.[63] The decision of this commission were supreme according to the decision of the Central Committee and the Council of People's Commissars, which had set up this commission. In the Lower Volga a sowing commission was set up, under the regional party committee, which was empowered to mobilize the communists and Komsomols at the district level, including the mobilization of 2,500 urban communists.[64] In this region, the local soviets had the competence to order the population, including women, to carry out compulsory work. In the Ukraine, every district had a sowing "troika", consisting of a secretary of the district committee, a plenipotentiary of the center and a leader of the GPU. The chief of the *militsia*, the procuracy and the district party control commission, could take part. These bodies purged or dispersed the rural soviets or party cells. Their work was often accompanied by "naked administrative methods" of leadership.[65]

These centralizing tendencies were also observed in the district level organizations. We can refer to the Lower Volga regional party secretariat decision at the end of March on the "Improvement of leadership towards the kolkhoz cells, sovkhoz cells and the *partgruppas* and *partorgs* of the Brigades," as a typical instance. This decision was mainly addressed to the districts where *politotdels* were not organized.[66] According to this decision, each district committee was ordered to set up a special organizers' group in the organization department, consisting of 3 or 4 persons from this department, who were to give effective instructions to the cells and *partgruppas*. Members of the organization department were to be devoted to instruction work and were not to be sent out as plenipotentiaries. In the district where *politotdels* existed, special workers were to be assigned to instruction tasks. At the regional level a commission for reviewing the kolkhoz cells was created under the organization-instructor department at this time. The chief of the district organization department and *politotdels* was instructed to make regular reports. One article which commented on this decision argued that the district committee had rather neglected organizational work, pointing out that plenipotentiaries of the region should help the chief of the district organization department and the *politotdel* to promote mass-political activities through the cells.[67]

Each regional and district party organization carefully watched the progress of the spring agricultural campaign, i. e. collecting seeds, weeding and repair of tractors. Districts and kolkhozes, where results were undesirable, were kept under strict control. Tension developed particularly on the issue of seed collection, which was carried out by the coercive method of grain procurement. Kolkhozniks suffering from hunger resisted fiercely. Although the authorities had stated that they should not lend seed, the Council of People's Commissars eventually relented to let the North Caucasus and the Ukraine

have some seed loan.[68] This decision had an affect on the Lower Volga and the Central Black Earth regions, where aids of seeds and food were also given by the state as well as by the neighboring kolkhozes. In reality, however, the lending of seed depended on the contribution of the leadership to the spring campaign, slow districts were listed on the black board (*chernaia doska*) and deprived of seed, food, and goods. In consequence, there occurred such misery as the Vesenskii case in the North Caucasus.[69] Thirty districts of the North Caucasus and twenty-three of the Lower Volga were "blacklisted."

Vareikis, first secretary of the Central Black Earth region, also warned against the 30 districts where the preparations for the spring campaign was very slow despite the seed loans.[70] Nizhine-Chirskii district, which the Central Committee had already criticized, was asked to check the brigade system and to purge themselves of "kulaks" in March. However, no change was brought about. The regional committee again took note of the underestimation of the *partorg* system in this district on April 11.[71] However, the *partorg* did not respond. The regional party decision of May 3 " On the Process of Sowing" mentioned six tardy district committees, the secretary of one was purged and another was reprimanded. The Secretariat of the Lower Volga planned to strengthen the district organization by giving lectures to the chiefs of the agitation-mass department, *politotdels* and editors of district papers in June.[72] The other district officials also were offered such re-education.

As oppressive measures were felt from above, and the campaigns began to rely on "administrative and command method," it was inevitable that district-local leadership would perform "excesses of the leftist type." In the Ivanovo region, one district bureau was disbanded and the secretary purged because they had arrested kolkhozniks and confiscated the property of the poor peasants.[73] In the Central Black Earth region, Pichaevskii district had the same problem.[74] Most famous among them was the Veshenskii district in the North Caucasus, referred to above, where one secretary of regional committee, as well as the secretary of Rostov city committee were purged in the spring 1933.[75] It can be guessed that these criticisms against the "excess" of the local apparatchiki resulted in the famous secret decree on May 1933, "To All Party Soviet Officials and All Organs of OGPU, Court and Procuracy Authorities," which condemned many regional officials who did not understand the new circumstances and were continuing to live "in the past," or older methods of coercion.[76] This secret decree aimed at relaxing the local tensions "condemning administrative-chekist operation."

On the other hand, however, it would be erroneous to conclude that this was a new approach of reconciliation towards the rural peasants. In Moscow, for instance, one district leadership was reprimanded because (probably as a result of this instruction) they had overlooked the "kulak" leadership of one kolkhoz. This was followed by the dispatch of officials from the regional level.[77] In the Central Black Earth region, district party leaders and judicial officials were dismissed because they lacked the revolutionary vigilance against the "kulak" action.[78] The Lower Volga leadership dismissed one district official because he had been supporting the "class-alien elements" in June.[79]

These instances were typical of each region and there might have been other cases, even after the appeal of May. From the middle of the same year further national purges of the party followed, but these will not be referred to further here.

3. *The Political Leadership of the Rural Organization in the Countryside*

Throughout the spring campaign of 1933, an authoritarian reorganization of the kolkhoz cells was carried out. According to "the Statute of the Party Cell in the Kolkhozes" issued in May 1931, the basic form of the party in the countryside was "kolkhoz cells."[80] The party cell controlled the production plot brigades through the *partgruppas* or *partorg*. However, in reality, the local communists were very scarce and their fluidity very high, and they were organized on the territorial basis or interkolkhoz organizations. The *stankom* of the North Caucasus was also based on this principle.[81] In the crises at the end of 1932, the rural communists gave precedence to "local interests" over "national interests" and became the tool of the "kulaks," or the central authority pretended to believe. Following this recognition, the central leadership forced the dismissal of these party members, (or kulaks' accomplices) with "party card in their pocket" and attempted to remould the party ranks which had been severely depleted.

On March 22, just before coping with the sowing the Central Committee heard a report from two kolkhozes and made a decision, "On the Cell Activities of the 'Iskra' Kolkhoz and 'Vpered' Kolkhoz," (hereafter "Iskra" decision) on a guideline for the reorganization.[82] Here some details of the "Iskra" kolkhoz will be analyzed. Located in the Sontsevskii district of the Central Black Earth region, the kolkhoz consisted of 454 households with 2,373 hectares—rather large for this region. One should note that this district suffered a serious "excess" in the spring of 1930 with regard to collectivization and the anti-religious campaign.[83] The cell itself consisted of 13 members with a Nesvetaev as chairman. However, no party member was engaged directly in agriculture, while five were engaged on administrative work. The harvest and collection was 40 percent below the regional level. Although some party members took part in the seed collection, no other campaigns were taken seriously. The Central Committee strongly urged the purging of the "kulaks" from the kolkhoz and the direct engagement of communists in the fieldwork.[84]

However, this Central Committee's instruction was treated passively in the following campaign. The "Lenin's way" (*Leninskii put'*) organ of the regional party committee admitted that the "Iskra" cell never realized the great significance of this instruction.[85] After receiving the instruction, the cell decided to oust 27 "kulaks"; however, the influence of the "kulaks" was not eliminated. With the aid of the communists from the district committee, 15 members were put into field and *partorgs* were allocated to the eleven brigades. However, the kolkhozniks began work at ten o'clock and half of the day was taken only in allocating plots. This is an indication of the lack of authority in the kolkhoz.[86] Even the communists attached to the brigades did not know their role in the field and a secretary fined five party members as five labor-day units (*trudodeni*). The district committee also paid little attention to this decision and only warned against the "Iskra" cell secretary, Nesbetaev. Even the *politotdel* failed to participate. The immobilization of the rural party organization began to be felt in other districts. The regional party committee made a decision, "On the Strengthening of the Party Organization Activities in Connection with the Spring Sowing," in which 75 percent of cell members should work directly in the brigade and do battle with the "kulaks."[87]

Special stress was laid on the sending of the *partorg* into the brigades; as a result the

rate of brigades who had *partorg* in this region was very high (67.3 percent against the average of 18.5 percent).[88] Only after May were two-thirds of the members of the "Iskra" cell (total=24 members) deployed in the kolkhoz production directly.[89]

However, this was only half of the story. The regional leadership in the speech of the organization-instructors department condemned the Sontsevskii district committee because it never maintained the position of the Central committee and the regional committee.[90] This warning also had little effect : the secretary never worked in the field, the cell itself was isolated from production, and there was no strengthening of labor discipline. The regional leadership went further by suggesting applying the decree on the "Protection of the Socialist (Public) Property," which took a severe stance towards the "Enemy of the People." Eventually, this was accompanied by mass arrests and other harsh methods. In September the district committee was vulnerable to criticism from the opposite direction that it had been relying on the "old method." Three months after the Central Committee decision, one article of the central organ on the agricultural leadership noticed in the "Iskra" party cell that local communists were playing only a "secondary role" and that the *partorg*, sent from the district itself, was replacing not only the brigades but also the kolkhoz management and the bureau of the party cell.[91] The kolkhozniks were devoting themselves mainly to their personal plots two hectares each. The story on the "Iskra" cell tells of the deep alienation between the rural society, the local communists, and the central authority. Under pressure from the central authorities a deep gulf widened between the authority and its agents on the one hand and the rural community on the other. The local communists were divided by the pressures from all directions.

The severe problem in the Central Black Earth region as with others was the high turnover (*tekuchesti*) of local cadres. Among the 141 district secretaries (excluding city district secretary), 117 had been secretaries for more than three years. At first glance this figure looks favorable, but detailed data show it is not the case : 30 secretaries had been in their present position for less than six months, 15 members for less than one year, and 70 members from 1 to 2 years. So it was concluded that the work in the present positions were "not favorable."[92] With regard to the heads of departmental district committees, things were worse still. Among the 125 chiefs of the organization-instructors department, 53 had been engaged less than six months, while none had occupied their posts for more than two years. In some districts the composition of the district committee bureau had been renewed several times, especially among the non-leadership members, since the last district conference.[93]

On the lower level of the rural organization the situation was even worse. Of the 1,409 secretaries (including 851 kolkhoz secretaries) one-quarter had occupied their present positions for less than three months, 27 percent for 3 to 6 months and 34 percent for 6 to 12 months. On the other hand, a little over five percent had their positions for more than two years. This indicates how secretaries of the rural organizations were influenced by the crises of 1932–33. More than 60 percent were classified as peasants. Among the 852 cells investigated, 952 secretaries had been changed in 1932 ; this included 830 secretaryships that had been changed once in a year and 115 twice a year. In a large number of cells, secretaries had been reshufled several times. One cell in the

Medvedenskii district had six secretaries resigned for different reasons in 1932. Even in the more important cells, 110 secretaries had been changed once, 48 twice and 12 as many as three times.

At the October 1932 plenum of this regional committee, Vareikis had underlined that secretaries should remain at one position for three years ; however, this turned out to be an impossible request. In fact, among 852 secretary posts investigated, 262 had been secretaries dismissed, 77 purged and 362 replaced and transferred to another position in a year. There were those who were reprimanded 2 to 4 times. The reason for this high fluidity (turnover) was given to be the poor solution of the cadres, the lack of a reserve of secretaries and administrative and repressive measures against them.[94]

So far we have paid particular attention to the rural party organizations and party policy over them in the Central Black Earth regions. Similar patterns were discernible everywhere. Between April 1932 and April 1933, 49.4 percent of the district cadres changed their work, according to the data of 16 regions (30,000 persons). Especially high turnover was witnessed among the secretaries of district komsomol (70.4 percent) and the heads of the organization department of district committees (62.7 percent). The turnover rate of the secretary of the district committee was on average 49.7 percent.[95] In 80 percent of the cases vacant posts were filled by persons from the same district, the remainder from the city and center of the region. In the North Caucasus the June plenum of the regional party committee decided to send 1,500 communists as secretaries to rural party organizations, although many had already been sent before.[96] One head of *politotdel* asserted that "to choose the leaders of kolkhozes and cells adequately" was a prerequisite for the completion of the grain collection and the crushing of "kulak sabotage."[97] Despite Stalin's speech at the January plenum and the Central Committee's decision concerning the "Iskra" cells, almost all the rural cells were organized on territorial lines, not on recommended productive principle. In one district of Ivanovo region, only one among thirteen kolkhoz cells had a substantial content.[98] Here 11 secretaries had been dismissed or purged. In the Lower Volga region each organization was instructed to discuss the "Iskra" decision on the "Party Day" and to report its implementation to be regional committee.[99] Some district bureau decided to settle the local problem on the spot at special sessions in the kolkhoz.[100] The regional organization sent an open letter to the communists of "Red Partisan" kolkhoz, which was allegedly under the influence of "kulaks."[101] The shortcomings of the *partorg* system were severely pointed out in April. Ptukha himself attended the meeting of the *partorg* of the brigade to instruct them on method of leadership.[102]

The end of the spring sowing campaign, and especially the appearance of the new secret decree of the beginning of May, suggested a changing method of leadership in the countryside. Kolkhoz cells were instructed to emphasize the mass-organizational way. The "*Pravda*" editorial of May 11 stressed the party cell's organizing role in contrast to the "old" administrative methods.[103] However, it is dubious whether this was a real turn in the party leadership style. Communists were found in the administrative offices, though the authorities instructed them to work in the fields. In the Lower Volga, for instance, among 12,220 members of the kolkhoz cells in 36 districts, 57.3 percent were reported to be directly engaged in the productive work.[104] The main form of leadership

was to dispatch *partorgs* to the brigades. More than 9,500 were sent out in the spring campaign in this region.[105] But their efforts were sometimes proved to be in vain ; still lots of brigades were without communists. The June plenum of this region made clear in its decision, "On Activities of the Kolkhoz Cells," a repeated attempt to strengthen the works of *partgruppas* and *partorgs*. Their activities were more administrative in nature although they did work out in the fields.[106] These tendencies were crystalized into the decision of the Central Committee on June 15, which were to remould the rural organization on the production principle under the hegemony of the *politotdel*. This is a topic which will be discussed in the next section.

4. The Process of the Introduction of Politotdel

In the process of the polarization between the regime, and the rural community and the party organization in the countryside, began to disintegrate, and the authorities responded by introducing the *politotdel* to cope with the reestablishment of order. This was a controlling apparatus that had earlier been used in the military during the civil war. In the January joint plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission, Kaganovich's report on "the Aim and Task of the *Politotdel* of the Machine-Tractor Station, or MTS, and the State Farms (Sovkhoz)," made it clear that *politotdel* should be instituted.[107] It is said that Stalin's initiative to create this machine was decisive. It was to be a significant para-militaristic method to cope with the crises. This was already abundantly clear from the fact that the Kaganovich commission to the Kuban had as its members Garmarnik, deputy Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs and Chief of the Political Section of the Red Army, and G. Iagoda, First Deputy Chairman of OGPU.[108] Gaistel's *Pravda* article on December 27 stressed the political role of the MTS and the fact it was to be staffed by "adequate political organizers."[109] One article, "On the Agrarian Front," issued at the end of 1932, also argued for the creation of a special and strong political apparatus, staffed with selected and guaranteed political leaders with experience.[110] The Central Committee formed a commission in December, consisting of Postyshev (Chairman), Garmarnik, Ezhov, Iakovlev (People's Commisar for Agriculture) and Markevich (Deputy Commissar for Agriculture) to choose the head of *politotdel*, and 1,000 heads and 2,000 deputy heads were individually selected.[111]

The aim of this machine was made clear in the resolution of the January plenum when it pointed out that the anti-soviet and anti-kolkhoz elements were taking advantage of the lack of consciousness on the part of some kolkhozniks, who were allowing the rehabilitation of the landed class and kulak power. The *politotdels* who were to be attached to the MTS and the state farms would enhance the authority and the political influence of the party. The *politotdels* were regarded as "envoys" from the proletarian cities to the kolkhozniks and to the depth of the countryside, where anti-soviet elements were allegedly increasing their influence. They were intended to implant the views of the "Bolsheviks" and "Proletariat." They had a wide function of political and para-militaristic character as "party eyes," and had competence to use administrative judicial and punitive methods, including Stalin's decree on the "Protection of the Public Property." As Kaganovich declared, "it would cope with the problems from the political point of view."[112] In contrast with the plenipotentiary system, however, its aims were not

specified; its orders were made on the spot and documents were not necessary.

Usually the *politotdel* consisted of four or more persons; one head, who was also deputy director of the MTS, two deputies, one from the OGPU or political police, the other who specialized on the party mass-organization, and the fourth from the Komsomol. Sometimes there were other staff, covering activity among women, editors of papers, or plenipotentiaries, or special informers attached to it.[113] Formally *politotdels* were subordinated to the Political Administration Department within the People's Commissariat for Agriculture and its local agent, the political sector of the regional (district) land department. However, it was actually under the direct jurisdiction of the newly-created agriculture department of the Central Committee with Kaganovich at its head. The heads of the *politotdel* were on the *nomenklatura* of the Central Committee and their nomination and dismissal was conducted only by the Central Committee. The heads of the *politotdels* were elected at the same time as members of the bureau of the district committees.

Thier composition as well as circumstances of their establishment suggests the extraordinary character of these organs. The party statute had no provision on the *politotdels* and it was only described at the 17th Congress (January 1934) in expost facto.[114] Also it was modelled on the military experience, as described by Voroshilov, Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs, who visited one kolkhoz of the North Caucasus at the end of 1932.[115] More than 300 military men were mobilized to the North Caucasus and the Ukraine to take up jobs in the *politotdels*. Some 30 percent of the *politotdel*s of the North Caucasus were occupied by men with a political/military career.[116]

There were two kinds of recruitment to the staff of the *politotdel*. In the first case the Central Committee made individual selections among workers from Moscow and Leningrad, or along with those selected from the Red Army. By the end of 1932 the Postyshev commission had selected some 3,000 members, and this work was taken over by the Agricultural Department under Kaganovich. The proportion of those who were recruited centrally (Moscow, Leningrad, and the Red Army) was about 58 percent.

However, there were also locally recruited members. It is useful to consider the case of the Central Black Earth region, where Vareikis sent a telegram to the Politburo asking for the formation of 40 to 50 *politotdels* in the south of the region in the beginning of February.[117] At the same time a commission was organized, under the chairmanship of Malinov, third secretary of this region, to select candidates to be recommended to the Central Committee. Here 92 MTS out of 209 had *politotdels* by April. By the following November more than 90 percent had *politotdels*. Over half (53 percent) of the heads and 83 percent of deputy heads of *politotdel* for the party-mass activities were of local origin.

As Table 1 indicates, the proportion of the centrally dispatched members was especially high in the regions, where there had been serious difficulties at the end of 1932. In the Far East region, where Japan's threat was another factor, 98 percent of the *politotdels* heads were centrally selected while in East Siberia about 90 percent were from the center.

In Kazakstan, 250 members were of central recruitment, while 75 were selected by the Kazakstan Committee. Most of them did not speak the Kazakh language, and there were "huge difficulties" in reconstructing the party organizations.[118] It should be noted

TABLE 1. *The Rate of Those Who Were Mobilized from Moscow, Leningrad and the Red Army to Become Politotdel Workers*

	Head of *Politotdel*	Deputy head on Party-Mass work
	%	%
Ukraine	56	30
North Caucasus	68	43
Lower Volga	65	53
Middle Volga	71	21
Western Siberia	62	50
Eastern Siberia	90	43
Far East	98	55
Kazakstan	45	42
Central Black Earth	47	17

Source : *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS za 1933 g., (M. 1934), p.102.*

TABLE 2. *The Tempo of the Introduction of Politotdels*

	1 April 1933		1 August 1933		1 January 1934		The numder of district
	MTS	Politotdel	MTS	Politotdel	MTS	Politotdel	Nov. 1931
Ukraine	590	375	646	545	655	645	374
North Caucasus	299	249	327	257	326	324	114
Lower Volga	190	139	209	172	209	207	90
Central Black	209	92	205	181	225	207	155
Kazakstan	82	34	92	71	106	82	121

Source : *Ibid. p.204.*

that despite the crisis, 35 percent of the heads and 47 percent of the deputy heads for the party mass activity in the Lower Volga were recruited locally. Ptukha, in his speech at the joint plenum of the regional party noted the list of candidate *politotdel* members.[119] As regards to the heads of *politotdels* (2,328) the largest group (33.9 percent) came from the education institutes, followed by the economic and management positions, and the third group came from party komsomol and control commission work. 203 members, or 8.1 percent, came from the military/political work. Almost the same pattern was recorded for the deputy heads of *politotdels* for party-mass work, though military/political workers were non-existent. On the other hand, almost 83.5 percent of the deputy heads of the OGPU came from the economic/management section, presumably from the special depertment (*osobyi otdel*) of enterprises.[120]

The tempo and density of the introduction of the *politotdels* in each region also

reflected the extent of the agricultural crisis as well as the importance of each region. It was the Ukraine, the North Caucaus, the Lower Volga and the Far East where *politotdels* were systematically established in the early period of 1933. In these regions almost two-thirds of the MTS had *politotdels* by April : each district had two or three *politotdels* on average. On the other hand, in regions such as Moscow, Ivanovo, and Leningrad, *politotdels* were not so intensely organized. At the end of 1933 there were 77 *politotdels* in Moscow, 37 in Ivanovo, and 44 in Leningrad, which was sufficient for less than one *politotdel* for every two districts.[121] In the Northern region only 7 out of 53 districts had *politotdels*. In one district only 7 kolkhozes out of 136 were covered by *politotdels* according to the memoir of one *politotdel* worker.[122]

5. *The Activities of Politotdels in the Countryside*

The *politotdels* were formed from January/February in the places, where the crises were severe and during the period of preparation, or the spring sowing campaign in the places, where crises were milder. The authorities paid the most attention to the collection of seed, weeding, repairing of tractors and the care of horses and livestock. Before their formation labor and productive organizations had to be overhauled. Above all, the core of the rural system—the party cells in countryside—had to be reshuffled. Taking one example of the Lower Volga, on the February 10 the head of *politotdel* appeared in the village and carried an inspection for a week.[123] Then he conferred with the secretaries of the cells, chairmen of the kolkhozes, chairmen of the soviets, as well as the directors of the MTS. From the next day he began to check the cadres in the kolkhozes with the avowed object of "combating kulak elements." On the 25th a meeting of local communists took place. The same pattern was observed in the North Caucasus. The first events which the *politotdel* organized in one brigade was the disemination of Stalin's and Kaganovich's important speeches between January and February, propaganda for the "International Women's Day" and "The Day of the Red Army," and the campaign within the MTS on the meaning of the seed loan to the North Caucasus, and Sheboldaev's speech to the joint plenum of the regional party committee and the control commission.[124]

The Usti-Labinskii district *politotdel* became widely known as a model *politotdel.* Its first activity was aimed at the inspection and reorganization of the local cadres.[125] After arresting some district leaders, the head of the *politotdel* forced the district party committee to reorganize the kolkhoz cells into productive principle in March. Also in the Veselokutskaia MTS in Odessa the *politotdel* first discovered wreckers, right-opportunists and those who "relied on the administrative methods, which encouraged the class enemies." Some of these were sent to court.[126]

These *politotdels* had the task of watching how local communists and officials were carrying out the task given by the government, especially at the time of the spring sowing. Those who could not bear the burden were ruthlessly ousted from office or, in the worst cases, sent to court as counter-revolutionaries. However, the task of unmasking the "class enemy" (Stalin), who came on the sky (*tikhoi sapoi*) was complicated and sometimes arbitrary because "the enemy" was not clearly defined. Those who were classified as "enemy" were not only "kulaks," the "right-oppositionists" who support "kulaks," "kulaks who have party cards in their pockets," but "also crude pseudo-leftists," who apply

"harmful super-administrative methods" excessively. The list was further increased by those who appeared after the criticism of the "pseudo-leftist excess" and "who proposed replacing him by kulaks." This is what happened in the case of Malo-Serdoblinskii district in the Lower Volga.[127] In a totally fluid situation, when even the communists were in doubt, only the determination and judgement of the *politotdels* had the legitimate authority. The raison d'être of the *politotdels* leadership was their concreteness and "on-the-spot" decisions, in contrast with "from the coach" approach of the district committee.[128] However, it would have been impossible to avoid arbitrariness and accidents given the scarce strata and uneven allocation of staff. One plenipotentiary of the *politotdel* in a district of Moscow oblast, for example, was assigned two out of 80 kolkhozes, according to his memoirs.[129] He met with the deputy head of *politotdel* in charge of the OGPU on the "kulak" problem once in the spring campaign. The head of the *politotdel* phoned him several times urging the dismissal of the chairman of a kolkhoz ; however, he only twice visited the kolkhoz.

Through the shake-up of the local communists and their organizations, the *politotdels* were establishing control over the party organizations in the countryside. The January joint plenum asked the *politotdels* to cooperate with the district party committees to give aid to the rural party organizations. In reality local communists organizations were disintegrating. In the villages, no institution, except the *politotdels*, held any authority. The Central Committee decision on the "Iskra" kolkhoz cells instructed the *politotdels* that they, along with the district commmittee, were to evaluate the control that each party cell had over kolkhoz production and the fulfilment of governmental tasks, just as "communists and cells in the civil war were judged according to military discipline."[130] Among the *politotdels* many were discontent with the territorial party organization in the countryside.

In the North Caucasus they had been organized in *stankom* or large village organizations. The joint January plenum of the regional committee and control commission decided to abolish them, except the large ones, because "they were making a fuss about nothing and using an administrative method."[131] Workers were ordered to go to the kolkhozes. However, the disputes and conflicts among the *politotdels* and *stankom* did not stop and many *stankom* were disbanded by the *politotdels*. In the Usti-Labinskii district there was a dispute between the *politotdels* and the district committee, in which the former argued for the production-kolkhoz cells.[132] The *politotdel* in this district ordered the communists and komsomol members to be attached to a particular kolkhoz or its brigades in order to rally the *aktivs* and shock-brigades.[133] Local communist organizations were tightly connected with the productive activities. In one party conference in the North Caucasus, Sheboldaev highly estimated the role played by the *politotdels* in the re-education of the rural communist organization and fulfillment of the task.[134]

What is apparent from the above is that *politotdels* paid special attention to the establishment of central authority at the local level. For that purpose, *partorgs* were sent to the brigades or links (*zveno*). This was particularly true in such areas as the North Caucasus and the Lower Volga. After the June reorganization the allocation of the communists per 100 kolkhozes in each region was as follows : North Caucasus, 91.8, the Lower Volga 83.4, the Central Black Earth Region 40.2, while in Moscow, Leningrad and

Ivanovo it was less than 20 percent.[135] It must be taken into account that the latter regions were characterized by a small size of kolkhoz. In regions like Dnepropetrovsk, Kharkov, the Central Black Earth region and Leningrad, there were significant increases in rural communists from June to November. In Ivanovo alone the number increased seven times.[136] This highlights in its turn the scarcity of the rural communists in these regions. The fact that *politotdels* paid attention to the distribution of the communist personnnel is also registered in the memoirs of *politotdel* workers. In the Krym MTS of the North Caucasus the *politotdel* organized *partorgs* in the brigades to conduct "socialist competition." These tasks were checked every three days. In the North Region *politotdels* sent the brigades to the regional committee and students of the Agricultural Institute to strengthen the kolkhozes, which were almost "on the point of collapse."[137] However, almost all of dispatched workers were of city origin and were only sent out for short periods. There were very few who actively responded to the appeal from the authority.[138] The secretaries of the rural communists organizations were almost all sent from the city or factory : in the North Caucasus 77.3 percent and in the Lower Volga 55.2 percent.[139] Some thought that it was a "punishment" to be sent from the urban areas.[140] In this situation communist power in the countryside inevitably appeared as the "power," "the master (*khoziain*)" and "the head" (*nachal'stvo*). It was also common for the *politotdels* to directly command the masses by "administrative method."[141] The *politotdel* held a dominant role over the plenipotentiaries of the various kinds.

6. *Politotdels vs. the District Party Committees*

So long as the introduction of the *politotdel* meant a further centralization of leadership against the organizational lineup of the party structure, it was anticipated that there might be conflicts between the *politotdels* and the other party organization, especially the district party committee. At the January joint plenum Kaganovich asked the district committee to give real aid to the *politotdels* "instead of discussing the competence and relationship between the two bodies."[142] However, with the formation of the *politotdels* and their relationship with the kolkhoz cells becoming institutionalized after the decision of "Iskra," the position began to deteriorate. This trend was further hastened by the secret May decision on the halting of mass repression, because this decision underlined the importance of the normal party-mass organization. The problem of the leadership over the kolkhoz cells or rural organization came to the foreground. At the end of April, head the Political Administration Department of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture, criticized the district committee for the lack of concreteness of their leadership.[143] Krinitskii's speech in the Urals was followed by another one by Iakovlev, in which strengthening of the party cell and necessity for revolutionary vigilance were stressed once again.

The main reason for the sharp conflict between the *politotdels* and the district committee lay in the leadership over the kolkhoz cells. This became clear in the case of Krasnokhormskii district, which was regarded by the Moscow party bureau as a typical case. The secretary of this district was criticized because he not only allowed the publication of a slanderous article on the activities of the *politotdels* in the district newspaper, but also because he interrupted the work of the conference of the secretaries

of cells which was convened by the *politotdel.* He also disrupted the radio contact between the *politotdel* and the cell secretaries. However, the result of the spring sowing, as well as the results of the collection in this district were reasonable, so he escaped dismissal. This decision of the Moscow party bureau was sent all districts who had MTS and *politotdels,* and urged public discussion.[144] The case clearly indicates the sharp confrontation between the two bodies, even in places where agricultural crises were not so severe. In such a critical area as the North Caucasus, the secretary of Urvanskii district (Kabardino-Balkar auto-region), one Narichikov argued that because the *politotdels* were economic organs and hegemony over the kolkhoz cells should belong to the district committee.[145] He even threatened to arrest *politotdel* members. Despite being warned in the editorial of *Pravda* on June 12 he continued his threats in the bureau meeting of the district committee, until he was purged on June 18.

In the period from May to June this problem became more serious everywhere, to the effect that party punishments were carried out. In Uzbekistan, the secretary of the Mirza-Chul'skii district committee was punished by a special decision of the Central Committee because he had descended to "the position of the right opportunism" on the problem of the *politotdel.*[146] In this republic, two officials including the leading cadre of the Andizhan city committee were purged, and four others were reprimanded because they had maligned the credit of the *politotdels.* In the Ivanovo region the secretary of the Gavilovo-Iamskii district committee complained that work was falling behind after the arrival the *politotdels* and asked for the *politotdel* to be made subordinate to the authority of the district committee.[147] He was purged by the decision of the regional committee. The first secretary of the region, Nosov, complained that there were people in some districts who wanted to lead "autonomously" (po-upravski) and to divide power in the district.[148] Postyshev also was discontented in a report of the Cenral Committee of the Ukraine that the district committee did not realize the great role of the *politotdels* and that they regarded the *politotdels* as "pretenders for power."[149] In these coflicts it always appeared to be the district committees who were punished.

The most significant and widest conflicts were observed in the North Caucasus and, to a lesser degree, in the Lower Volga. The North Caucasus regional committee's decision of June 9, "On the Distortions of the Party Decisions by the *Politotdels,*" stated that "there had been crude distortions of the party line against the *politotdels* in many district committees" and that these had turned into an "anti-party struggle" in such districts as Miasnikovskii and Bliukhovetskii.[150] Three other district leaderships were criticized for their discreditable attitude against the *politotdels'* workers. One secretary and one instructor of the regional committee were also dismissed. Important districts, like Armavir, Veshenskii and Eiskii, were also warned about their lack of co-operation with the *politotdels.* Workers of the *politotdels* sometimes went without food because of the hostile attitudes of the district leadership. This committee cancelled the resolution of the Kushchevsky district committee because it had dismissed a *politotdel* worker; only the Central Committee had the right to take such action. Shteingart, the head of the *politotdels* in this region and deputy head in the *politotdel* headquarters, warned the Central Committee and the regional committee that some district committees in the North Caucasus had engaged in anti-party activities.[151] In June the regional committee held a

conference on the relationship between the *politotdels* and the district committees at the department of the organization-instructors. Shteingart also made a report to the June joint plenum of the regional committee and control commission on the activities of the *politotdels*, when he warned against an "incorrect understanding" and hostilities on the side of the district committee and threatened them with purges.[152]

In the Lower Volga similar troubles occurred. In the Rudnianskii district the secretary of the committee attacked the *politotdels* in a "kulak" or "anti-pary" way. At the beginning of June, Ptukha criticized the district leadership.[153] Anti-party feelings were also observed in the Preobrazhenskii district, where a hegemonic oligarchy of the district secretary and the chairman of the district control commission "sided with the kulaks," and failed to accept the criticism of the *politotdel.*[154] Even the plenipotentiary from the region was reprimanded because he overlooked the matter. In the Leningrad region the head of the political administration department, Solokin, enumerated the districts where there had been abnormal relations between the *politotdels* and the district committee.[155]

It is not certain how the regional leaders reacted to the formation of the *politotdel.* In this respect the fragmentary statements of two regional leaders might be worthy of note. Kirov, in his speech at the Leningrad party plenum in January, suggested that the *politotdels* would not last more than two years. As far as the author is aware, this statement was never repeated by any other leader.[156] Also Vareikis, in his speech at the June plenum of the regional committee, asked for moderation and replied to the request of the *politotdels* to purge some district secretary and chairman of the soviets : "We should not be in a hurry to displace or change personnel." We must take into account that we have few cadre workers in the Central Black Earth region."[157] Although in this region there were cases of trouble, and part of the accusation of the "leftist excess" of the secretary of the Pichaevskii district was ascribed to "the conflict with the *politotdels,*" no further disciplinary action was taken in this case.[158]

7. The Reorganization of the Rural Party Cells on the "Productive" Principle

The supremacy of *politotdels* over the district committee on controlling rural organizations was declared by the decision of the Central Committee on June 15, "On the Activities of the *Politotdels* on the Kolkhoz Cells and on the Mutual Relationship between the *Politotdels* and the District Committee."

> new conditions of work in the countryside as well as the concrete approach to the problems of the kolkhoz construction require that strong productive cells should be organized in the kolkhoz, which are closely connected to the kolkhoz masses, which directly participate in production and are capable of daily leadership over the productive life of kolkhozes.[159]

The former kolkhoz cells which had been built on the territorial principle were isolated from the production.[160] The reason for the "anti-party" attitude of the district committee towards the *politotdels* was claimed to be as a result of the territorial principle of organization. Arguing along these lines the resolution made two important points clear. First, kolkhoz cells organized on the principle of the production should be the basic

form ; second, the leadership over the kolkhoz cells in those case where the MTS provided services should be assumed by the *politotdels*. In those kolkhozes with insufficient communists, candidate-groups or communists-candidate core (*kommunist-komsomol iadro*) instead of cells were to be formed. In those places where lacking "sympathizer groups" were to be formed. Control from the cell to the brigades was to be effected through party-groups, consisting of three members or attached *partorg*. An important change was made on the competence of *politotdel* over cells : in January only questions of aid and inspection by the *politotdels* had been mentioned, although in reality they had already gone further ; at this stage the *politotdels* had effectively the power to dismiss or displace rural secretaries. The district committee was therefore left with the purely administrative of the cell and the leadership of the territorial cells. In these districts where MTS did not serve their formal status was the same as *politotdels*. Only the communists working outside the kolkhoz system were to be organized in the territorial cells. Even the communistactives, who were sent by the regional committee and the district committee had to follow the instructions of the *politotdels*.[161] In a sense the *politotdel*-style of leadership in the kolkhozes and brigades became universal as well as supreme.

Already after the "Iskra" party decision in March, the tendency of direct control by the *politotdels* over the kolkhozes and their party cells had been apparent. For instance, the decision of the Central Black Earth region on the spring sowing campaign, which was referred to earlier, asked that party workers should be engaged directly in the field.[162] Apparently under the auspices of the *politotdels*, the cells were forced to get rid of the "kulaks," "class-aliens," the "lazy grabber" (*rvach*), "plunder" (*raskhiticher*). Another instruction on the allocation of the party foces in the spring campaign also asked for the direct involvement of the cells in production.[163]

In order for reorganization to be completed before harvesting, it was immediately implemented.[164] For this purpose lots of party activs were sent from the regional committee as well as from the cities and from the district level. The Central Black Earth region sent 963 members to strengthen the kolkhozes and brigades, while the district committees sent almost 2,000 in five months, one quarter of which became secretaries.[165] The Lower Volga regional committee also decided to send some 200 to 300 from the cities as secretaries or *partorgs*, while the regional committee and district committees were instructed to dispatch 400 to 500 members.[166] This number should not be confused with 500 to 700 *partorgs* who were sent as part-timers to promote threshing in June/July. These workers were expected to work under the guidance of the *polititdels*. In the case of Moscow, the July joint plenum of the MK and Moscow city committee required that the district committee and *politotdels* would choose those who would work as secretary, leader of the candidate-group and party-komsomol core and the organizer of the "sympathizer" carefully and they should be confirmed by the bureau of the district committee. Every *politotdel* was to run regular courses for the lower kolkhoz-party workers. In Tula, Kalinin, and three other places the inter-district courses for secretaries of the kolkhoz cells were opened in the winter.[167] To ensure the leadership of the cell-secretary, a regular consultant office was held within the organizer-instruction department of the Lower Volga regional committee with six staff, who were to give

personal "advice" in the form of a letter.[168]

Take the concrete example of the reorganization in the Belgorod district in the Central Black Earth Region.[169] There had been 29 party cells in the countryside ; after the decision to reorganize, 25 activs were sent from the district committee to help the *politotdels*.[170] Another 80 were also dispatched for two to four months to give aid. As a result of reorganization, twelve territorial cells and 19 kolkhoz cells emerged, together with the organization of 41 candidate-groups and 26 "sympathizer" groups. In all 69 groups were organized in the territory cells, 332 were under the kolkhoz cells, i. e. *politotdels*. The district committee decision asked that the number of plenipotentiaries directing for the village soviets and kolkhoz should be cut in order to increase the workers "attached" to kolkhozes.

As was predictable, this reorganization was faced with the passive resistance of the district committees, which were, or pretended to be, "afraid of dissipating of forces." In the Ivanovo region, one district committee sent the *politotdel* two members instead of forty requested.[171] Some district committees preferred to organize a territorial party organization. In the North Caucasus, Armianskii decided to set up a bureau of the party collective (*partkollektiv*), that is, a kind of inter-kolkhoz cell (*mezhkolkhoz-nye iacheika*)[172]

This kind of neglect of new reorganization or, "bureaucratic, and formal approach towards the reorganization" was also felt elsewhere. The complaint that leadership of the *partorg* was left in the hands of the district or inter-kolkhoz cells was also popular among *politotdels*. Some cells were criticial towards the interference by the district committee, when the latter sent *partorg* to the brigades. One report from the Lower Volga stated that "the result of the reorganization, so far, is not convincing."[173] Massin, secretary of Nizhnedevitskii district, Central Black Earth region, openly said "we must wait some time to reorganize the party constitution because reorganization of the village cell now will produce nothing but harm."[174] The Central Black Earth regional committee recommended joint decisions or appeals from the district committee and the *politotdels* should be used more frequently.[175] There were also problems on the part of the *politotdels*. In the North Caucasus *politotdels* often neglected the cells, forcing communists to follow their instruction. The *politotdel's Materialy*, which was compiled by the Political Administration of MTS, also warned that "many *politotdels* are still leading the kolkhozes without leaning on party cells or communists." They are carrying out their leadership by-passing party cells and communists in the kolkhozes.[177] In the Ivanovo region the *politotdel* failed to organize a "party-komsomol core" although they had been ordered to do this.[178] The *politotdel's* assistant on komsomol matters was apt to run away, as Shteingart, head of the *politotdels* in the North Caucasus, warned in June.[179]

The results of the reorganization are summarized in the *Materialy*. According to the data of twelve regional political sectors (Table 3), or 744 MTSs, the organizational network (*set'*) was more than doubled.[180] Instead of 4,872 territorial and inter-kolkhoz cells, 11,284 productive cells and groups were formed. The structure of the party network was also drastically changed. Formerly, the dominant form of the organization was the party cells (71.8 percent). Now their significance fell to 38.9 percent. Instead, candidate group and party-komsomol core occupied about 30 percent each. The number of individual communists (*odinochek*) who worked as *partorg* in the kolkhoz or brigades had

TABLE 3. *Changes in the Party Network.* (12 Political Sectors of MTS)

	MTS		Party Cells		Cand. Group		Part-Kom. Group		All Cells & Groups		Single Communists	
	Total	Counted	June 15	Nov. 1	June 15	Nov. 1	June 15	Nov. 1	June 15	Nov. 1	June 15	Nov. 1
Dnepropetrovsk	107	95	434	673	98	702	0	398	532	1,773	?	?
Donets	71	65	359	506	51	131	29	177	439	814	97	247
Kharkov	100	95	430	658	137	471	37	397	604	1,526	289	685
Kiev	100	83	653	318	267	449	59	371	979	1,738	292	585
Lower Volga	107	120	523	588	94	269	0	230	617	1,087	652	711
Middle Volga	171	30	211	245	54	137	–	76	265	458	28	74
Central Black Earth	207	107	388	897	103	692	307	652	798	2,241	697	1,555
Bashkir	45	30	84	156	45	167	2	162	131	485	98	210
Ivanovo	38	33	75	175	22	166	0	351	97	692	–	679
Leningrad	46	41	112	99	40	136	0	220	152	455	250	655
Belorussiia	62	14	24	51	3	5	0	140	27	196	?	?
Kazakstan	82	31	147	179	84	185	0	55	231	419	?	?
TOTAL	1,236	744	3,440	4,545	998	3,510	434	3,229	4,872	11,284	–	–

Source : *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS v 1933 g., p.102.*

TABLE 4. *Communists' Networks in 100 Kolkhozes*

	Party Cells	Candidate Groups	Partorgs Kom. Group
All the 24 regions	17.9	11.6	11.6
North Caucasus	63.3	17.3	11.2
Lower Volga	50.3	23.3	9.8
Central Black Earth	20.3	13.1	6.8
Moscow	5.3	6.0	7.6
Leningrad	2.7	3.6	5.9

Source : *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS za 1933 g., p.105.*

increased by a factor of two and a half. Some 18.5 percent of kolkhoz had this *partorg* system. The coverage of communists in kolkhozes varied significantly in different regions. In Moscow, Leningrad, and Ivanovo, more than half of the kolkhozes, served by MTS, had no communists even after the reorganization, while in the Middle Volga, Lower Volga, and North Caucasus, almost all the kolkhozes had communists ; this was partly due to the large size of the kolkhoz and partly due to the efforts of the regime to send in communists from outside.[181] (Table 4). On the average of the 24 regions

investigated, 37 percent of the kolkhozes had no communists in their ranks. The percentage of the kolkhoz that had neither communists nor komsomols also varied. In Moscow it was 42.4 percent, in Leningrad 54 percent, in the Central Black Earth region 41 percent, while in the North Caucasus 3.9 percent and the Middle Volga, 1.2 percent. As a consequence of the reorganization the coverage of the cells and candidate-groups rose to 30 percent, while those covered by all kinds of communist influences, cells, candidate-groups, party komsomol-groups and *partorg* were more than 60 percent.

The increasing number of communists in the kolkhozes was also significant. As indicated above, the regional and district organization sent its activs through the *politodels* to become the secretaries or *partorgs*. In the data for 631 MTSs in 10 regions, the number of communists rose from 44,057 in June to 65,723 in November.[182] In this respect the most drastic increase was observed in the Lower Volga (101.7 percent) the Central Black Earth region (102.2 percent) and the Ivanovo region (118.1 percent) (Table 5.)

TABLE 5. *Number of MTSs and Communists by Regions*

	All	Counted	June 15	November 1
Lower Volga	207	160	9,712	19,591
Middle Volga	198	30	3,091	3,627
Central Black Earth	207	165	3,915	7,915
Leningrad	46	41	2,212	3,045
Ivanovo	69	33	1,141	3,077
In all 10 regions	1,077	631	40,057	65,723

Source : *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS za 1933 g., p.108.*

The social background of those who were mobilized to go cells as chairman, secretary or *partorg* is not known for certain, although most were presumably recruited from the city aktivists as well as being "promoted" (*vydvizhenets*) from kolkhoz activs. Although the party statutes required more than a three-year party career for a party cell secretary and two years for a *partorg*, some did not satisfy these requirements. Some 15 percent of the new secretaries had less than two years party career, and a quarter of the leaders of the candidate-groups and party-komsomol groups had a similar amount of experience. Twenty percent of the party-komsomol groups were only candidate groups. In some regions, e. g. the Urals and the West region this figure rose to 40 percent or more.[183]

Most of the rural communists were directed to production or brigades. The May Central Committee decision to send most of the communists into the fields, which had never been carried out, was referred to again.[184] After the reorganization there was some improvement in this respect. In the North Caucasus, 72.1 percent of the kolkhoz cells were allegedly engaged in the productive-brigades. Some 70 percent of the chairmen of kolkhozes and 16.5 percent of brigades were classified as communists.[185] There had been few communist forces before the reorganization in this region. Needless

to say, most of them were recruited from the cities or higher apparata. In rather hostile surroundings they had to play two kinds of roles as the lowest agent of the regime, who bore the responsibility of the district committee and the *politotdels*, as well as the organizers of the kolkhozniks. As the *Materialy* points out, "in the past chairman of kolkhoz and *brigadir* appeared in the eyes of kolkhoz as 'administrators.'" Under the leadership of the *politotdels* in the MTS they are brought up and taught to work as organizer and political leaders. However, a significant part of the kolkhoz cells still only made a first step towards reorganization. Where the party allocation of the party cells was finished, these cells were replaced by economic managers. The method of "administration and commandment" still survived in these cells.[186]

However, it is less well known whether the *politotdel* method of leadership in the countryside was the same as it had been in the spring. The resolution of the North Caucasus regional committee on "The Work of the Kolkhoz Cells" in November required that *politotdels* refrain from bypassing the cells or go over the head in leading the *partorgs* and that individual communists should get rid of the shortcomings of the candidate-groups by the method of "administrative command" and "naked pressure."[187]

Although the reorganization itself was not totally completed untill the end of 1933, the change to the "productive" principle, under the initiative and hegemony of *politotdels*, had been achieved. All the sphere of agriculture in the kolkhoz system was controlled, in principle, by the *politotdels*, through kolkhoz cells, leaders of the communist-komsomol cores, and candidate-groups and *partorgs*. The "productive"-*politotdel* line of command from the agricultural department of the Central Committee, through *politotdels* at the regional and district level, down the kolkhoz fields were formulated. Vareikis claimed that Stalin had described, at one regional confernce of the south USSR, that the formation of the *politotdels* and the kolkhoz productive cells was the final stage of the economic division of districts (*raionirovanie*).[188]

The centralizing tendency at the cost of the districts was also confirmed by the strengthening relation of the regional leadership over the kolkhozes. For instance, the decision of the Moscow committee and Moscow city committee "On the Practical Measures on the Strengthening of the Leadership over the Kolkhozes" indicated that regional bureau should keep regular contact with 1,000 kolkhozes.[189] The same was true of the North Caucasus and the Black Earth region; the former department of the organization-instructors was directly watching over 1,000 kolkhoz cells, the latter also selected at least 500 kolkhozes over which it had direct connection to control.[190]

The same trend was also felt by the reduction in the competence of the district control commission. In July the Central Control Commission decided that the case concerning the errors by the head of *politotdels* should be considered by the regional level control commission, not by the district level control commission. The case had to be reported to the Central Control Commission.[191] The new line, from January, setting up the *politotdels* to cope with the crisis in the countryside, had become crytstalized by this June decision. The party conference held in June confirmed the system of para-military methods of controlling the countryside. In the North Caucasus the June plenum was attended by the head of the *politotdels*, the secretaries of districts, the chairmen of cotrol commissions and plenipotentiaries and other leaders. Kaganovich, who had visited here

eight months earlier, made a report. In some regions *politotdel* officials advanced up the party hierarchy. In the Lower Volga eleven men were co-opted onto the regional committee, nine of whom were related to *politotdels*. The boss of *politotdel* in this region, Iakovlev, was recruited in the bureau of the regional committee.[192]

Conclusion

The introduction of the *politotdels* also raised a theoretical problem. To whom were the coercive methods directed in the situation where "kulaks" had been almost liquidated? In this respect a very interesting controversy arose on the 50th anniversary of the death of Karl Marx in March, 1933. In his article in *Pravda*, Vareikis argued against the idealization of the "kolkhoz" in the situation where "remnants of kulaks" trying to dominate them. He emphasized the necessity of the "reform and the re-education of men," to say nothing of the reform of the productive relations. He further argued that the re-education of the kolkhozniks as "a new form of the class struggle."[193] Against him one Gorovanevskii wrote in the organ of the Central Black Earth region, *Lenin's Way*, questioning whether there could possibly be a class struggle between the proletariat and kolkhoz peasant, or was the union of the workers with the peasants itself a form of the class struggle.[194] This was a logical question, because on the one hand Stalin condemned the "remnants" of liquidated "kulaks" as the main source of disturbance and difficulties. However, at the same time, Stalin and other leaders were arguing that kolkhozes which had no communists could also be "counter-revolutionary." Vareikis answered that although the "main" form of the struggle now was that against the "remnants of the kulaks"; however, he argued that there could be a "struggle between the proletariat and kolkhoz peasants."

And in reality the social conflict in the rural areas in the USSR could be nothing but "a class struggle between the proletariat and kolkhozniks," because in theory the "kulaks" were almost totally liquidated in the south of the USSR. When the rural conflicts in the Ukraine and the North Caucasus spread into other regions, the authority had to struggle with the peasants as a whole. The passport system, and especially the introduction of *politotdels*, symbolized the Soviet power's confrontation with the peasantry. The *politotdel*'s method was a weapon to struggle with the class "enemy" by the method of re-education of kolkhozniks in the "severest school."

In this situation of tention, the rural communist organization had to be reorganized by the pressures from above ; that is *politotdels*. The scale and the depth of the social upheavals of 1932–33, in comparison with those of the beginning of the wholesale collectivization can be seen from the following figures supplied by Kaganovich, who reported that the Central Committee of the communist party sent about 45,000 communists to the local area between the 16th and the 17th Congresses. By comparison, the number sent between the 15th and the 16th Party Congresses was 10,000.[195] These figures may roughly indicate the "scale of class struggle with the kolkhozniks" by contrast with the "struggle with the kulaks." Although the *politotdels* were to be abolished at the end of 1934, Soviet leaders' images of the kolkhozniks implicitly remained the same until at least the death of Stalin.

Notes

1 *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, 1, (1982), 39–56. In the Japanese historiography, K. Uchida in *Slavic Studies*, 29, (1982), 71–121, deals with the governmental structure in this period and T. Takeshi refers to the process of grain collection in 1932–33 in *Rekishigaku Kenkyu*, No. 505, (1982), 1–18. British historian D. Thorniley's forthcoming work also discusses this topic.

2 In reality in the countryside there were rumors of civil war, or war scare at that time. The authorities categorically denied it as "kulaks" rumor (the case in the North Caucasus, see M. Karavai, *Politotdel*, 1934, p. 36). In the Lower Volga, one "kulak" claimed in 1933 that there would be a war and communists would not survive. One *politotdel* man, when suggesting (or threatening) to arrest an old man who refused to sow in the fields in Kirmskii district in Moscow, was told : "We will undoubtedly bind you when the Soviet power goes to ruin" (*Nizhine-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, organ of the regional committee of the Lower Volga, No. 7–8, 1933, p. 34 : Al. Zavalishin, *Svezhaia vorogda*, 1934, pp. 43–44). Sheboldaev also suggested that there was a situation the insurrection in the Kuban when he said, "tens of thousands of organized counter-revolutionaries and wreckers were stopped by the OGPU from going into action." (B. P. Sheboldaev, *Doklad na pervoi kraevoi Azovo-Chernomorskoi partkonferenstii* (Rostov-na-Dony, 1934), p. 17.

3 The basis of the western research on this topic was made by Zelenin's article in the *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 76, (1965), 42–61. However, his articles tend to emphasize the conflicting aspects of the party machine and the *politotdels* and ascribe all the excess to the *politotdel*, in particular its OGPU. In this article I want to focus primarily on the role played by the *politotdels* in the re-organization of the party apparatus from the Central Committee Agricultural Department to the *partorg* in the brigades. So the other aspects of *politotdels*, such as its function on the MTS or kolkhoz as a whole, will not be covered.

4 Among the regions referred to, three regions were each sub-divided into smaller regions in 1934. The North Caucasus into the Azovo-Chernomorskoi region (secretary, Sheboldaev) and the North Caucasus (secretary, Evdokimov, former head of OGPU), the Central Black Earth region into Voronezh (Vareikis) and Kursk (Ivanov), the Lower Volga into Saratov (secretary, Shteinart, former head of *politotdel* of the North Caucasus) and Stalingrad (Ptukha).

5 I. Stalin, *Sochineniia*, 13, (1951), pp. 220–31.

6 *Pravda*, January 20, 1933; *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, 1 (1983), 49–52.

7 I. Stalin, *Sochineniia*, 13, p. 195.

8 *Pravda*, January 18, 1933.

9 I. Stalin, *Sochineniia*, 13, (1951), p. 224.

10 *XVII s"ezd vsesoiuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (b): stenograficheskii otchet* (M. 1934), p. 561. However, Stalin's *Sochineniia* has no corresonding sentences. This may indicate that his speech was not completely published. Vareikis also reported at the regional plenum that the Central Committee took severe measures towards the regional committees. I. M. Vareikis, *Ob itogakh ianvarskogo ob"edinnenogo plenuma TsK i TsKK VKP/b i zadachakh partorganizatsii TsCho* (Voronezh, 1933), p. 27.

11 *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vyp. 8, 1934, p. 289. For example, one such Instructor-Information Group had been watching the North Caucasus, Zakavkazie and the Black Central Earth region and included one responsible instructor, three guiding infor-

mers and an assistant for the head of the cadre department. The group dealing with Moscow and Ivanovo had the same composition. However, the group for the Middle Volga, the Lower Volga and Tartar republic etc. had two guiding informers.

12 *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva v SSSR, puti, formy i dostizheniia* (M. 1982), p. 274, *Seikei hogaku*, 18, (1982), chap. 3 ; *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, 1. (1983), p. 46.

13 *Shestoi plenum kazakhskogo kraevogo komiteta VKP (b), stenograficheskii otchet* (Alma Ata, 1936), v ; *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva Kazakhstana*, ch. l, (Alma Ata, 1967), pp. 538–39 ; *XVII s"ezd vsesoiuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (b)*, p. 89 ; Okuda Hiroshi, "Yuboku kara kolkhoz e," Okada, ed. *Gendai kokka no shiteki genryu* (Tokyo, 1982), pp. 257–89.

14 *Pravda*, January 15, 1933, M. Postyshev, *Ot XVI do XVII s"ezda, stat'i i rechi*, (M., 1934), p. 195. Postyshev's criticial view of Stalin's speech at the January joint plenum cited in *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 76, (1965), p. 53. His speech at this plenum was not made public. However, Iaroslavskii made a reference in the theoretical journal, *Bol'shevik*, No. 6, (1933), p. 27.

15 *Nizhine-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 5–6, 1933, pp. 1–2.

16 *Pravda*, December 31, 1932 ; *Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 3–4, 1933, p. 2.

17 *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vyp 8, 1934, pp. 850–51.

18 *Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 3–4, 1933, p. 2. Although it is not certain whether such a sanction as the Kuban "blackboard system" existed in this region, one village soviet in the Uriupinskii district certainly operated in it.

19 *Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No.1–2, 1933, p. 33.

20 *Ibid.*, No. 3–4, 1933, pp. 42–43.

21 *Pravda*, February 9, 1933.

22 *Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 3–4, 1933, pp. 1–2.

23 *Pravda*, February 15, 1933.

24 *Leninskii put', ezhemesiachnyi zhurnal obkoma VKP (b) TsCho*, No. 1. 1933, p. 56.

25 *Ibid.* No. 2, 1933, pp. 56–58 ; *Itogi vesennogo seva i zadachi partorganizatskii TsCho* (Voronezh, 1933), p. 25.

26 I. Vareikis, *O razvitii kolkhoznogo khoziaistva TsCho i zadachakh vesennei kampanii 1933 goda* (Voronezh, 1933),p. 38.

27 *Sputnik kommunista v derevne*, organ TsK I MK VKP (b), No. 5, 1933, pp. 18–19, 23 ; *Bol'shevik*, No. 1–2, 1933, p. 29.

28 Krinitskii was appointed as Deputy Commissar of Agriculture on December 21, 1932 and it is likely that the agricultual department was instituted at that time (SZ, ot del 2, No. 25, (1932), 354. The formation of the agricultural department was a departure from the "functional" principle decided at the beginning of 1930 and an advance to the "production" principle at the 17th Congress. This was a landmrak in the party apparatus' involvement in the production and administration of agriculture. Kaganovich commented on it as "a unity of the economic leadership and political one." However, if we look at the local party organization carefully, we can see that the turn to the production principle was not made sharply. The transformation had taken place carefully and slowly. After the abolition of *Okrug*, the regional committee or Republic Central Committee made a sector for each production peculiarities including 10 to 20 districts.

In the department for organization and instructors, it was directly subordinate to the Secretariat. In Georgia there were four agricultural sectors (cotton, technical products, field-farming, and gardening) with pomoshchinik or assistant on information and on leadership. *Za bystreishuiu perestroiku nizovykh sel'skikh partorganizatsii po proiz-*

vodstvennomu priznaku (Tiflis, 1931), pp. 75–79. This tendency towards a specification of production in the party apparatus was made clear in the decision of May 1932 — "the Structure of the Central Committee Department" where there was instituted a sector for the party activity in the enterprise. The *de facto* production principle was infiltrated in the party apparata (Uchida, p. 83 : *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika, vyp*, 8, 1934, pp. 288–289).

29 The competence of the agricultural department was not confined to narrow rural matters. The ball-bearing factory named after Kaganovich (Moscow) was instructed by the decision of this department to produce ball-bearings for tractors, despite the skepticism of the People's Commissar of Agriculture and State Farms, *IV Moskovskaia oblastnaia i III gorodskaia konferentsiia VKP (b)* (M.1934), p. 87.

30 *Pravda*, March 24, 1933.

31 *Partrabotnik Severnogo Kavkaza*, No. 4, 1933, p. 29.

32 *Pravda*, March 27, 1933.

33 *III Sessiia TsIK SSSR VI sozyva, Biulleten'*, No. 18, 1933, p. 47.

34 Vareikis, *Ob itogakh ianvarpskogo...*, p. 57.

35 *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vyp. 8, 1934, pp. 241–42.

36 *Materialy k otchety TsKK VI kudultaia KP (b) Uz*, (Tashkent, 1934), pp. 18–20. Bunin argued that it was impossible to construct without counting the resources available. a criticism similar to that of Bukharin some years before. He also said that the tempo adopted was impossible (neposil'nyi). The collectivization was carried by a faulty economic and political exercise of power. Romakin also warned against the disproportional level of industrialization which was incomparable with the production of necessary goods. He also complained that self-criticism was not conducted beyond the district level. One Iunsov also supported the right opposition by claiming the preparation was necessary before the collectivization (*ibid.* p. 20.)

37 *Materialy k otchetu Stalinskogo raikoma i RKK VKP (b)* (M., 1934), p. 14.

38 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, 13, (1941), p. 241.

39 B. Sheboldaev, *Stat'i i rechi* (Rostov-na-Donu 1934), p. 101.

40 *Na Leninskom puti (organ of regional committee VKP (b) Ivanovsk region)*, No. 1–2, 1933, p. 25.

41 *Sbornik vazhneishikh postanovlenii MK i MGK VKP (b)* (M., 1934), pp. 557, 569.

42 *Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 5–6, 1933, p. 30.

43 *Na Leninskom puti*, No. 5–6, 1933, p. 10.

44 *Leninskii put'*, No. 3, 1933, p. 42.

45 *Nizhine-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 5–6, 1933, p. 44.

46 *Partrabotnik Severnogo Kavkaza*, No. 4, 1933, p. 39.

47 *Sbornik vazhneishikh postanovlenii*, pp. 524–25 R. Medvedev, *All Stalin's Men* (Oxford, 1983), p. 122.

48 *Biulleten' ob"edinennii V oblastnoi i III gorodskoi Leningradskoi konferentsii VKP (b)*, No. 3, 1934, p. 44.

49 *Administrativno-territorial'noe naselenie soiuza SSR* (M., 1931), p. vi.

50 *Za bystreishuiu perestroiku, p. 107.*

51 *Pravda*, February 16, 1933.

52 *Partrabotnik Severnogo Kavkaza*, No. 7–8, 1933, p. 15.

53 *Sbornik vazhneishikh postanoblenii* , p. 212.

54 *Partrabotnik Severnogo Kavkaza*, No. 4, 1933, p. 34.

55 *Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 5–6, 1933, p. 2.

56 *Ibid.*, No. 11–12, 1933, p. 29.
57 *Kollektivizatstiia sel'skogo khoziaistva v TsCho* (Voronezh, 1978), p. 209, 304; *Leninskii put'*, No. 6, 1933, p. 16.
58 *Na Leninskom puti*, No. 5–6, 1933, p. 10.
59 *Biulieten' ob"edinennoi V oblastnoi, No. 3*, 1933, p. 44.
60 B. Kudriavtsev *et al.*, *Za ukreplenie sel'skikh partorganizatsii* (Rostov-na-Donu 1932), p. 53
61 *Partrabotnik Severnogo Kavkaza*, No. 4, 1933, p. 34.
62 *Leninskii put'*, No. 2, 1933, p. 56 ; *Partiinoe stroitel'stvo*, No. 20, 1934, p. 15.
63 *Vazhneishie resheniia po sel'skomu khoziastvu dlia politotdelov MTS i Sovkhozov* (M., 1933), p. 72.
64 *Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 5–6, 1933, pp. 42, 63.
65 Postyshev, *Ot XVI do XVII s"ezda*, p. 40 ; *XVII s"ezd VKP (b)* (M., 1934), p. 67.
66 *Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 5–6, 1933, p. 4.
67 *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.
68 *Vazhneishie resheniia po sel'skomu khoziaistvu* (M., 1933), pp. 195–6, 393.
69 *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, 1, (1983), 54.
70 Vareikis, *O razvitii sel'skogo khoziaistva*, p. 43.
71 *Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 7–8, 1933, pp. 24, 26.
72 *Ibid.* p. 54.
73 *Na Leninskom puti*, No. 10, 1933, p. 37.
74 *Leninskii put'*, No. 6, 1933, pp. 5–6.
75 *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, 1, 1983, 54.
76 *Ibid.* p. 54.
77 *Sbornik vazhneishikh*, pp. 200–2.
78 *Leninskii put'*, No. 9–10, 1933, p. 38 ; Smolensk Archives, WKP, p.178.
79 *Nizhne Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 11–12, (1933), pp. 63–64
80 *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, pp. 656–61.
81 *Acta Slavonica Iaponica*, (1983), p.41.
82 *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, pp. 669–73.
83 My article, "The Local Party Organization in the Wholesale Collectivization—the Case of the Central Black Earth region,"*Seikei Hogaku*, 21, (1983), 85–169.
84 The average harvest per hectare was 4.2 centners in this kolkhoz. *Leniskii put'*, No. 4, 1933, p. 2.
85 *Leniskii put'*, No. 4, 1933, pp. 2,4.
86 *Sputnuk komminista v derevne*, No. 8, 1933, p. 9.
87 *Leninskii put'*, No. 4, 1933, p. 10. This journal changed its character to correspond with the party mass membership in the countryside.
88 *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS za 1933 g.* (M., 1934), p. 114. However, this figure was referred to November, after the reconstruction of the party.
89 *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva v TsCho*, p. 19.
90 *Leninskii put'*, No. 5, 1933, p. 69. In September the regional leadership condemned the district leader for not appreciating the new situation, relying on the "old method" and neglecting "revolutionary legality." As a consequence the secretary of the district commission, as well as the procurator, was dismissed.
91 *Sputnik kommunista v derevne*, No. 12, 1933, p. 30.
92 *Leninskii put'*, No. 6, 1933, p. 13.
93 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

94 *Ibid.*, p. 16.
95 *Partiinoe stroitel'stvo*, No. 19, 1933, p. 41.
96 *Partrabotnik Severnogo Kavkaza*, No.12–14, 1933, p. 63. In the Lower Volga it was also decided at this time to send 200 to 300 members from the cities by the regional committee (*Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 12–13, 1933, p. 31.
97 Karavai, p. 35.
98 *Na Leninskom puti*, No. 3–4, 1933, p. 39.
99 *Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 5–6, 1933, p. 8.
100 *Ibid.*, No. 9–10, 1933, p. 5.
101 *Ibid.*, No. 7–8, 1933, p. 14.
102 *Ibid.*, p. 13.
103 *Pravda*, May 11, 1933.
104 *Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 9–10, 1933, p. 4.
105 *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS za 1933 g.*, p. 114.
106 *Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 12–13, 1933, p. 29.
107 *KPSS v rezoliutsiakh...*, 5, (1971), pp. 78–89. With regard to the length of the period of existence of this apparatus, Kirov said that the party should concentrate on *politotdels* for "1–1 $\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 years." S. M. Kirov, *Stat'i i rech* (M., 1934), p. 328. At the XVII Congress (January, 1934) Kaganovich argued that the abolition of *politotdels* was harmful. However, the party workers' conference of July, conducted by the Central Committee, decided to abolish them within the year, and the November plenum formally decided to disband them. XVII s"ezd VKP (b) (M. 1934), p. 560 ; *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No. 8, 1982, p. 52.
108 *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, 1 (1933), p. 46.
109 *Pravda*, December 27, 1932.
110 *Na agrarnom fronte*, No. 3, 1932, p. 121.
111 *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 76 (1965), 45.
112 *Pravda*, February 16, 1933.
113 *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS Moskovskoi oblasti* (M., 1934), p. 7.
114 *KPSS v rezoliutsiiakh...*, 5 (M., 1971), p. 167.
115 *Pravda*, January 25, 1933.
116 *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS za 1933 g.*, p. 205 ; *Partrabotnik Severnogo Kavkaza*, No. 12–14, 1933, p. 15.
117 *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva v TsCho*, p. 210.
118 *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva Kazakhstana*, ch. 2, (Alma-Ata, 1967), p. 46 ; *Shestoi plenum Kazakhskogo kraevogo komiteta VKP (b)* (M., 1936), p. 392.
119 *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS za 1933 g.*, p. 205 ; Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik, No. 3–4, 1933, p. 33.
120 *Materlaly o rabote politotdelov MTS za 1933 g.*, p. 208.
121 *Ibid.*, p. 181 ; *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS Moskovskoi oblasti* : *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva tsentral'nogo promyshlennogo raiona* (Riazan', 1971), p. 634. The Moscow region had 142 districts, 96 MTSs and 37 *politotdels*, while in Leningrad region there were 95 districts, 46 MTSs and 40 *politotdels* respectively.
122 V. Frolov, *God bor'by poltitotdelov* (Arkhangel'sk, 1934), pp. 7–8.
123 *Nizhne-Volzhiskii partrabotnik*, No.5–6, 1933, p. 25.
124 *Partrabotnik Severnogo Kavkaza*, No. 5, 1933, p. 27.
125 Karavai, p. 20.
126 *MTS i ee politotdel, opyt raboty Veselokutskoi MTS* (M., 1934), pp. 54–60.

127 *Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik,* No. 5–6, 1933, p. 4.
128 *MTS i ee politodel,* p. 32.
129 Al. Zavalishin, pp. 34, 55, 231 *passim* : *Pravda,* May 19, 1933.
130 *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika,* vyp. 8, p. 672.
131 *Partrabotnik Severnogo Kavkaza,* No. 4, 1933, p. 33.
132 Karavai, p. 21. It should be noted that this was made before the decision of "Iskra."
133 Karavai, p. 25 *passim.*
134 B. Sheboldaev, *Stat'i i rechi* (Rostov-na-Donu, 1934), p. 122.
135 *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS za 1933 g.,* p. 103. (I was unable to find data on the earlier position).
136 *Ibid.,* p. 102.
137 Al Zvenigorodskii, *Politotdel vedet k zazhitochinoi zhizni* (Piatigorsk, 1934), p. 8.
138 Frolov, pp. 8–9
139 *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS za 1933 g.,* p. 120.
140 Karavai, p. 29.
141 *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS za 1933 g.,* p. 116.
142 *Materialy ob"edinennogo plenuma TsK i TsKK VKP (b)* (M., 1933), p. 164. Here we shall introduce the case of conflicts between the *politotdels* and the local communist organizations on the issue of the dismissal of a kolkhoz chairman. In May the *politotedels* had proposed to dismiss Petrov, who had been chairman of the kolkhoz of Kimrskii district in Moscow since February 1933, because the results of the collection were disappointing, although he was not "bad" in the eyes of the peasants. The plenipotentiary of the *politotdel* in this village, with the direct aid of the head of *politotdel,* applied pressure on him. However, other officials, including the secretary of MTS were reluctant to dismiss him. There was little support for the *politotdel* to purge him (Zavalishin, p. 132). Sometime later the proposal of the plenipotentiary to release Petrov was opposed by the communists of the locality, who argued that the harvest failure was due to lack of aid from the district soviets. The MTS secretary even informed the district committee secretary that the plenipotentiary was not linked with the locality. At the communist conference, Petrov was reprimanded, his punishment was entrusted to the *politotdel.* The head of *politotdel* dismissed Petrov and replaced him by Kotov but Kotov categorically refused the post, insisting "I cannot, it would ruin me." At the next meeting of the kolkhoz, in the absence of the Chairman, the plenipotentiary forced Petrov to resign, recommending Kotov, who again positively declined. Another chairman of the kolkhoz also wanted to resign but the plenipotentiary would not allow it. Eventually this plenipotentiary realized that peasants had their "own logic, or philosophy" with regard to sowing and duly informed the head of *politotdel* (*Ibid.* p. 231).
143 *Bol'shevik,* No. 9, 1933, pp. 11–15;P. A. Iakovlev, *Voprosy organizatsii sotsialisticheskogo sel'skogo khoziaistva* (M., 1933), p. 28.
144 *Sbornik vazneishikh,* pp. 554–5.
145 *Pravda,* June 12, 1933; *Acta Slavica Iaponica,* 1 (1933), 55. More details, see *Seikei Hogaku,* 19 (1982), 49.
146 *Materialy k otchetu TsKK KP/Uz,* (Tashkent, 1934), pp. 58–59.
147 *Na Leninskom puti,* No. 11, 1933, p. 43.
148 *Ibid.,* No. 12, 1933, p. 8.
149 *Pravda,* June 22, 1933.
150 *Patrabotnik Severnogo Kavkaza,* No. 9–11, 1933, p. 59.

151 *Ibid.*, No. 12–14, 1933, pp. 22, 59, 64.
152 *Ibid.*, No.9–11, 1933, p. 62.
153 *Nizhne–Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No.11–12, 1933, pp. 4–11 ; *Izvestiia Nizhne–Volzhskogo kraiispolkoma*, No.5–6, 1933, p. 6.
154 *Nizhne–Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No.12–14, (1933), p. 16.
155 *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva v Severno–Zapadnom raione, 1927–1937 gg.*, (Leningrad, 1970), p. 324.
156 See Note above 104.
157 I., Vareikis, *Itogi vesennogo seva i zadachi patroganizatsii TsCho* (Voronezh, 1933), p. 27.
158 *Leninskii put'*, No. 6, 1933, pp. 4–7.
159 *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vyp, 8, p. 673.
160 One official named Ia. Ksenofontov characterized the territorial principle of the cell as the remnant of the period when individul peasants were prevalent (*Sputnik kommunista v derevne*, No. 12, 1933, p. 9.)
161 *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vyp. 8, p. 674.
162 *Leninskii put'*, No. 4, (1933), pp. 62–3.
163 *Ibid.*, p. 65.
164 *Partrabotnik Severnogo Kavkaza*, No. 12–14, (1933), p. 6. Report by Shteingart.
165 *Leninskii put'*, No. 11, 1933, p. 14.
166 *Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 11–12, 1933, p. 31.
167 *Sbornik postanoblenii MK i MGK* (M., 1934), p. 527.
168 *Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 15–16, 1933, p. 67.
169 *Kollektivizatsia sel'skogo khoziaistva v TsCho*, p. 213.
170 *Leninskii put'*, No. 7–8, 1933,p 49.
171 *Na Leninskom puti*, No. 15, 1933, pp. 40–41.
172 *Partrabotnik Severnogo Kavkaza*, No. 12–14, 1933, p. 30.
173 *Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No. 13–14, 1933, p. 29.
174 *Leninskii put'*, No.7–8, 1933, p. 48.
175 *Ibid.*, p. 39.
176 *Partrabotnik Severnogo Kavkaza*, No. 15–16, (1933), p. 27.
177 *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS za 1933 g.*, p. 116.
178 *Na Leninskom puti*, No. 14, 1933, pp. 40–41.
179 *Partrabotnik Severnogo Kavkaza*, No. 12–14, 1933, p. 17.
180 *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS za 1933 g.*, p. 103.
181 *Ibid.*, p. 105.
182 *Ibid.*, p. 107.
183 *Ibid.*, p. 119.
184 *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vyp. 8, p. 607.
185 *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS za 1933 g.*, p. 103.
186 *Ibid.*, p. 116.
187 *Partrabotnik Severnogo Kavkaza*, No. 15–16, 1933, p. 27.
188 Vareikis, *Itogi vesennogo*, p. 52. However, the author could not trace another reference on Stalin's own speech.
189 *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva tsentral'nogo promyshlennogo raiona*, p. 615.
190 *Partrabotnik Severnogo Kavkaza*, No. 15–16, 1933, pp. 25–27 ; *Leinskii put'*, No. 7–8, 1933, p. 91.
191 *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vyp. 8, p. 862.

192 *Nizhne-Volzhskii partrabotnik*, No.11–12, 1933, p. 4.

193 *Pravda*, March 12, 1933.

194 *Leninskii put'*, No.4, (1933), pp. 19–24.

195 The number of communists sent by the Central Committee to each region may indicate the importance of each region as well as the extent of the crisis in each region : Ukraine 5,581, the North Caucasus 3,198, the Lower Volga 2,140, the Central Black Earth region 1,788. This number surely included those who were sent as *politotdel* members. *XVII s"ezd VKP (b), stenograficheskii otchet*, p. 539.