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THE KOMITETY NEZAMOZHNYKH SEL'YAN AND THE STRUCTURE OF SOVIET RULE IN THE UKRAINIAN COUNTRYSIDE, 1920-1933

By JAMES E. MACE

If we are to explain how the famine of 1933 was possible, we must look to the mechanism of extraction which was able to take so much produce out of the village. If we are to understand how Soviet rule in the Ukrainian countryside differed from Soviet rule in the Russian countryside, we must look to the structural differences in that rule. The solution to both these problems is found in the peculiarly Ukrainian institution, the *komitety nezamozhnykh sel'yan* (*komnezamy*, KNS, committees of non-wealthy peasants).

After the *komitety bednoty* (*kombedy*, committees of the village poor) were abolished in both the Ukraine and Russia, they were revived with only minor changes in the Ukraine and continued to function there until 1933. Until mid-1925 the *komnezamy* were the mainstay of Soviet rule in the Ukrainian countryside, and even afterward they remained the most important support organisation the state possessed in the village. They were expected to take part in all campaigns proclaimed by the regime. They physically expropriated the 'kulaks' and helped to organize and run the early collective farms, and the famine of 1933 is a measure of their success in what was euphemistically referred to as 'the struggle for grain procurements'. They are thus of central importance to the history of the Ukrainian village.

The KNS Under War Communism

The *komnezamy* were basically a continuation of the *kombedy*, and their history properly begins with the introduction of the *kombedy* in the Ukraine by the Bolsheviks at the beginning of 1919. One of the first decrees issued by the Soviet Ukrainian government known as the *Pyatakovshchyna* was its 'Provisional Regulation on the Organization of the Worker-Peasant State on the Local Level'. The Regulation provided for the establishment of local soviets only after the rudiments of law and order had been attained, and, outside a few large cities, the *Pyatakovshchyna* was never able to achieve this. Meanwhile, Military-Revolutionary Committees were to exercise all political authority in the towns, and the *kombedy* were to do likewise in the villages. *Kombedy* were to be organized by party members, and only pro-Soviet poor peasants were to participate in them. *Kombedy* were to include a military section, a section for struggle against counter-revolution, and a requisitions section, a breakdown corresponding to their primary functions. Particular care was to be exercised so as to prevent 'kulaks' from exerting any influence over the *kombedy*.¹

The notion of 'kulak' (*kurkul* in Ukrainian) was never precisely defined.² The term

originally meant village money-lender, but Lenin extended it to the entire upper stratum of the village so that any more or less successful peasant farmer was considered a kulak. Since virtually anyone who tills the soil would like to make a decent living at it, the peasants—particularly the so-called middle peasants whom the Bolsheviks talked so much about attracting to their side—were far more interested in becoming kulaks than in fighting them. The idea that the poorest farmers were somehow more worthy than their more successful neighbours seemed rather ludicrous. A Soviet journal of the late 1920's quoted the middle peasant as often saying: 'How can we learn from the *bednota* when they cannot even make their own *borshch*? Just think: are we idiots?'³ With the least competent farmers set in power over them, requisitioning their produce for a Russian government which at the time tended to show hostility toward any manifestation of Ukrainian national identity, the number of peasant risings increased from month to month under the *Pyatakovshchyna*.⁴ Even the early Soviet historian Ravich-Cherkassky had to admit that the Ukrainian villages formed a united front against the Bolsheviks, one not broken in left bank Ukraine until the autumn of 1920.⁵ Clearly, an organization designed to include all pro-Soviet elements in the village was likely to include only a small minority of the villagers.

The fact that all power in the Ukrainian villages was exercised by the *kombedy* highlights an important difference between Bolshevik policies in the Russian and Ukrainian countryside even at this early juncture. In Russia the *kombedy* and village soviets coexisted and shared power in the village. In the Ukraine there were no village soviets (*sil'rady*), and the *kombedy* functioned as completely independent organs of political and economic power.⁶ Recent Soviet accounts seem to indicate that the regime was able to impose *kombedy* on most villages in the area of the Red Army's sway. No one knows precisely how many *kombedy* were set up under the *Pyatakovshchyna*, but one Soviet historian maintains that in the summer of 1919, out of 20,804 Ukrainian villages, at least 15,110 had *kombedy*.⁷ Other estimates are somewhat lower.

While the abolition of the *kombedy* meant the return of limited, guided self-rule in the Russian countryside through the village soviets, the bolsheviks did not feel secure enough to allow anything of the sort in the Ukrainian villages. A resolution of the Fourth KP(b)U Conference, held in March 1920, complained that such soviets as did exist in the Ukrainian villages had been infiltrated by class enemies and that it was therefore necessary to establish 'militant class organisations' to fight the kulak.⁸ At first the party envisaged these organizations as trade unions, but on April 15, 1920, a KP(b)U Central Committee plenum decided that the new organizations should be called *komitety nezamozhnykh selyan* and should function similarly to the old *kombedy*.⁹ On May 9, the Ukrainian Soviet government adopted the law which established the *komnezamy* and defined their functions. According to this law, the *komnezamy* were to differ from the old *kombedy* only in that they were to include not only poor peasants but also the least well-to-do middle peasants. Their functions were defined so as to be virtually identical to those of the *kombedy*: they were to 'defend the interests of the poor and middle peasants' by parcelling out gentry and kulak land and property to landless and smallholding peasants, by requisitioning agricultural produce, fighting the enemies of Soviet power, especially the kulaks, and combating illiteracy. Membership was open to those peasants who were eligible to receive parcelled land, were exempt from requisitions owing to poverty, were entitled to

draw food from the village store, or whose farms were too small to be self-sufficient. Those who had been excluded from the vote on the Soviet Constitution were specifically excluded from the *komnezamy*. The *komnezamy* had the right to denounce any measure taken by *sil'rady* to higher authorities, to expel members of a *sil'rada* executive, or to dissolve a *sil'rada* executive and call new elections. Subordinate to the Commissariat of Internal Affairs (and to Narkomprod, the requisitions commissariat, in matters concerning requisitions), the *komnezamy* were clearly designed to control *sil'rady* where the latter existed and to carry out their functions where they did not.¹⁰

Both the Fourth KP(b)U Conference and the April plenum emphasized that the establishment of *komnezamy* was necessitated by the unreliability of the *sil'rady*. This theme was further elaborated in a Central Committee circular letter sent out shortly after the adoption of the May 9 law. The letter complained that 'in the Ukrainian village power really resides in the hands of the wealthy peasants, kulaks, who by their nature are implacable foes of the proletarian revolution'. The letter portrayed the village poor as terrorized by kulaks who were 'organized and armed to the teeth'. The goal was to organise the village poor 'to defend their interests, disarm the kulaks, and eliminate banditism'. The new committees were to be organizations of the *nezamozhni* peasants because the Ukrainian peasant understood the term to mean both the poor peasants and the less well-to-do middle peasant 'whose support Soviet power needs'. The *komnezamy* were to take advantage of the Ukrainian peasant's 'practicality' by distributing land and property seized from 'class enemies' and by keeping 10–20% of all agricultural produce it requisitioned. It was hoped that this would in turn foster class differentiation in the village and isolate the kulaks.¹¹

An instruction from the Commissariat of Internal Affairs, dated June 6, 1920, declared that the goal of the May 9 law was 'to liquidate kulak property', strengthen soviet power in the village, and carry out all official policies directed against landlords, capitalists, and kulaks. Eligibility for membership of the *komnezamy* was further limited to landless and smallholding peasants with no more than three desyatinas of land (one desyatina=2·7 acres), whose farms were not large enough to be entirely self-sufficient, and who had to rely on state aid for sowing. Specifically declared ineligible were any who hired labour or derived income from capital, speculators and traders who sold food or alcohol, churchmen, former landlords and capitalists, former police officers and agents, convicted criminals, and the mentally ill. Those who joined in violation of these rules were subject to arrest. All Soviet organizations were to give all possible aid to the *komnezamy* and see to it that they were established. The *komnezamy* were given the following rights and obligations: to carry out all Soviet laws and decrees, to prevent ineligible persons from voting in elections, to help requisition foodstuffs, and to carry out cultural and educational work.¹²

The state took vigorous steps to organize *komnezamy*. By the end of 1920, the central, *guberniya*, and *uezd* committees of the KP(b)U sent a total of 847 of their responsible workers as plenipotentiaries. The Kharkiv *gubkom* alone sent half its members, 200 additional communists from the city organization, and over 3000 trade union members to organize *komnezamy*. By November 10, at least 9599 *komnezamy* were functioning.¹³ Another source claims that in November there were almost 13,000 of them with 790,812 members.¹⁴ However, the former figure is probably closer to the truth, since it is taken from official computations of the day.

The First All-Ukrainian *KNS* Congress was held in October 1920, and the resolutions passed by it summarize the tasks the *komnezamy* were supposed to face. Although the Civil War proper was drawing to a close, guerilla warfare ('kulak banditism' in the official jargon) would continue to drag on for years. The Congress therefore resolved 'to call upon the *nezamozhni* peasants of the Ukraine to join the internal security forces. Every *uezd* must provide one company (*sotnya*) of cavalry on kulak horses and kulak saddles for internal military service against the bandits'. These units were also to be equipped with arms seized by the *KNS*. A resolution on land distribution declared:

... kulak farming must be liquidated just like that of the gentry. The kulak's land must be seized, his house taken for social needs, his equipment transferred to lending points, his pedigree livestock taken to a breeding station or transferred to the poorest peasants, and the kulak himself must be driven from the countryside just as the landlord was driven from his estate.

This resolution went on to demand that all matters concerning agricultural cooperation be placed exclusively in *KNS* hands. The third major problem facing the *komnezamy*, requisitions, was also the subject of a resolution which stated: 'All surpluses of agricultural produce beyond that norm which by law must be left to the producer must be given over for distribution by the Soviet power', except, of course, for 10–25% reserved for the *nezamozhni* peasants themselves.¹⁵

How did the early *komnezamy* actually work? What do they tell us about the structure of Soviet rule in the Ukrainian countryside? There is evidence that early on the *komnezamy* came into conflict with such *sil'rady* as did exist. For example, a September 1920 resolution of the Chernihiv *povit KNS* congress states:

the *komnezamy* must be given all power in agricultural and economic matters in the village, and its decisions must not be subject to alteration or contradiction by *sil'rada* authorities. In exceptional cases they are subject to appeal to the *povit ispolkom*, which in cases of illegal *komnezam* actions may investigate the matter locally.¹⁶

It is unlikely that such a specific resolution protesting against interference would have been adopted if such interference had not actually been attempted.

The best testimony on how the early *komnezamy* functioned comes from a 1923 discussion of *KNS* activity in Kiev province. The author, S. Kagan, makes it clear that the *komnezamy* rapidly became omnipotent in the village:

The *komnezamy* were the revolutionary force in the village which broke all rural principles of property, of course, by using expropriation to increase their material well-being.

In addition, in order to safeguard their complete freedom of revolutionary activity, the *komnezamy* had to seize all power in their own hands. And, in fact, in 1920 power in the village was almost completely concentrated in the *komnezamy*, such that in practice it was hard to differentiate between the power of the *Ispolkom* and the power of the *komnezam*.

The *komnezamy* spontaneously transformed themselves into the administrative centres of the villages: they decided "land affairs", requisitioned foodstuffs, recruited for the Red Army, administered school affairs, hospitals, social security, and so on and so forth.¹⁷

Later Soviet historiography may well tend to overemphasize the degree to which Bolshevik policies of 'fostering class differentiation in the countryside' were successful, but we

have no reason to doubt the specific information presented on how the *komnezamy* served the regime by organizing collective farms, requisitioning foodstuffs, seizing land and horses, and fighting what these sources call 'kulak banditism'.¹⁸ According to one post-Stalinist account, the KNS confiscated fifteen million desyatinas of land from the gentry and landlords, plus an additional eight million from 'kulaks'.¹⁹ Another account reveals that during the famine of 1921 the Central Commission of *Nezamozhni* Peasants (*TsKNS*, the KNS directing body on the republic level, headed by Petrov's'kyi) ordered half the KNS grain reserve of eighteen million poods (one pood = 36 lbs.) to be sent out of the Ukraine as famine relief to the Volga basin and that as late as January 1922 *komnezamy* continued to export grain from such famine stricken regions of the Ukrainian steppe as Mykolaiv province.²⁰ Given the fact that this was at a time when according to Soviet figures four million were starving in the Ukraine, a time of widespread death from starvation and outbreaks of cannibalism, one could hardly have better testimony regarding the effectiveness of the KNS in providing a framework for one group of hungry peasants to loot their somewhat less hungry neighbours.²¹ It thus becomes clear that the *komnezamy* represented an organized minority in the villages which the regime could use against the village as a whole for extraction, expropriation, and control. Committees of a rural minority which the regime could use against the rural majority, the *komnezamy* could perhaps best be described as an anti-peasant peasant organization.

So long as the *komnezamy* continued to provide the state with resources and a framework for ruling the countryside, the regime seemed content to leave them to their own devices. Kagan described the situation this way:

Who directed the work of the *komnezamy*? Formally the activities of the village and *volost'* *komnezamy* were regulated by *uezd* and province *komnezam* sub-sections which were in turn subject to the proper sections of the *Ispolkom* administration.

In fact, the komnezamy were left on their own and were guided in all their activity by their own "revolutionary" self-consciousness.

From time to time *uezd* and province congresses of *komnezamy* fulfilled the functions of an instructing and regulating *apparat*. This, of course, was insufficient.

Party organizations were also extremely hesitant to look into the *komnezamy*.

At this time membership of the "all-powerful" and "omnipotent" *komnezam* provided real benefits and advantages.²²

As well it should. After all, the *komnezam* decided who was a kulak and who was not, whose property should be seized and who should receive it, and the person who requisitioned grain was able to keep as much as one-fourth of it, no small incentive in a time of famine.

The KNS Under the New Economic Policy

At the root of War Communism there was an inherent flaw which the regime never explicitly admitted but the recognition of which was implicit in the very adoption of the NEP: a policy which encouraged those peasants who could not support themselves to plunder their neighbours who produced the surplus which provided the sole source of food for the cities removed any incentive for farmers to produce anything beyond what the law

allowed them for their own subsistence. Why should anyone try to be a better farmer if success could only mean being declared a kulak and facing the whole might of the Soviet state? The only rural beneficiaries of War Communism were those who received expropriated kulak property or a share of requisitioned foodstuffs. There was thus a disincentive for any but subsistence farming but a strong incentive for becoming as poor a farmer as possible and joining the *komnezam*.

We would thus expect more and more peasants to join the *KNS*, and this, as Kagan tells us, is precisely what happened during the final months of War Communism:

The middle peasant, and partially also the kulak, began to "feel" the benefits of komnezam membership: they spontaneously began to seek komnezam cards, and the komnezamy grew swollen as more and more of the peasant masses joined them.

As a result, quantity sharply altered the quality of the *komnezamy*. Already in 1921 part of the *komnezamy* were transformed from revolutionary class organizations in the village into organizations containing dubious elements, which on the one hand paralyzed revolutionary work and on the other exploded the very basis of the *komnezamy*.²³

We might not be certain whether and to what extent this actually took place, but at least we know that it was *perceived* to be taking place. Since the tripartite division of the rural population into poor peasants, middle peasants, and kulaks was at bottom an arbitrary distinction made by the regime and never precisely defined by it, this is perhaps all that is knowable in principle.

The Bolsheviks, ever suspicious of the peasantry's 'petit-bourgeois proprietary instincts', were alert from the start to the danger that 'alien elements' would infiltrate the *KNS* just as they had allegedly taken over the *sil'rady*. As early as October 8, 1920, the Ukrainian Commissar of Internal Affairs issued an instruction to local officials, ordering them to guard against the danger of kulaks taking over local *komnezamy* so as to 'transform them into organs of kulak self-defence against Soviet power'.²⁴ Shortly before implementation of the NEP, the Soviet Ukrainian government, on July 30, 1921, ordered a re-registration (that is, purge) of the *komnezamy* in order to eliminate 'kulaks, speculators, deserters, and bandit elements'.²⁵ The first purge took place from the autumn of 1921 to April 1922, a second in the autumn of 1922, and a third from January to May 1923. As a result, out of 1,357,333 *KNS* members in the autumn of 1921, the first two purges excluded 461,032 and the third an additional 379,287.²⁶

The considerations which led to the adoption of the NEP are too well-known to justify repetition. What we seek here is how the village was treated differently in the Ukraine and Russia. Two things are worth noting in this respect. First, since the Ukraine had provided only 40% of the grain supposed to be requisitioned in the first three months of 1921, the introduction of the New Economic Policy was delayed for several months until the desired amount could be extracted.²⁷ Second, the *KNS* were retained with only minor alterations.

Immediately after the adoption of the NEP and in the wake of the concomitant mass exodus from the collective farms, there was much sentiment favouring outright abolition of the *komnezamy*, even among state servants and party activists.²⁸ After all, the *KNS* embodied the feature of War Communism which the peasants found most obnoxious and which had already been abolished in Russia, the *kombed*. These hopes were disappointed.

A new *KNS* law was adopted on April 13, 1921, officially proclaiming the *komnezamy*

‘organs of state significance’ and giving them new powers. The *komnezamy* now had the power to seize all lands and property from kulaks, landlords, bandits and members of their families, deserters, and other enemies of Soviet power, to resettle them, redistribute their property, arrest and send to concentration camps those kulaks and others considered to be particularly criminal, and to organize local forced labour. The following month a special *KP(b)U* conference (*narada*), called to discuss the *KNS* and implementation of the NEP, decided to make the *komnezamy* even stronger, praised them for fostering social equality in the village, and empowered them to grant tax exemptions and aid to poor peasants on their own authority.²⁹ A *KP(b)U* Central Committee circular letter dated October 24 emphasized that strengthening the *KNS* remained a primary task facing party organizations because, as the letter put it, ‘only through the *komnezamy* shall we extend our influence and take under our leadership the entire peasant mass’.³⁰

Despite the fact that the March 1921 law on the tax in kind also guaranteed peasants the right to use and possess their land for ten years, as well as the fact that the May 1921 *KP(b)U* resolution ordered the *komnezamy* to complete dekulakization by September 15 of that year, the first wave of dekulakization, that is, the summary seizure and redistribution of ‘kulak’ land and property, did not actually end until mid-1923, officially on January 1, 1924.³¹ As we might expect, most of the land and work stock seized by the *komnezamy* went to *komnezam* members, such that, while the percentage of *KNS* members without workstock dropped from 63% in 1917 to 59.9% in 1920 and to 53.9% in 1924, the percentage of all Ukrainian peasants without workstock rose from 23.8% in 1917 to 41.6% in 1924. Of all the land seized by *komnezamy*, 31% went to *komnezam* members (a small fraction of even the poor peasantry), 24.3% to non-members, the rest being transferred to collective farms or reserved for other social uses.³² The average size of a *KNS* member’s farm grew from 2.8 desyatinas in 1920 to 4.33 desyatinas in 1923 and 5.5 in 1925.³³ Thus, in 1925 the average *KNS* member had almost twice as much land as the maximum amount he could hold and still be eligible for membership in 1920. Obviously, the organization had succeeded in making use of some peasants’ ‘practicality’, and Kagan’s telling statement that membership offered real advantages continued to hold true.

The reason this was so becomes evident from the type of guidance village *komnezamy* received from their superiors. Kagan quotes a May 1922 instruction of a *volost’ KNS* official to the head of a village *komnezam* as typical:

... if the kulak counter-revolution meddles in your work—arrest for 15 days, if they do not repent and again interfere—shoot them, but if they want to live with you, then live peaceably with them.³⁴

One can easily imagine life in a village where the *komnezam* head was thus encouraged to function as judge, jury, and executioner. In practice, the situation varied considerably from village to village. As Kagan admitted, sometimes the *komnezamy* were run by ‘village *derzhimordy* who carry out their activities under the systematic influence of moonshine (*sistematicheskoe vliyanie samogona*) and terrorize the village’ and there were cases where the *komnezamy* did nothing.³⁵ Official documents tell us more about the latter than the former. For example, a September 1922 report on *KNS* activity in *P’yatkovs’ka volost’*, *Zhytomyr povit*, undoubtedly selected for publication because of the relatively positive picture it portrays, shows that out of thirteen village *komnezamy*, four were completely

inactive, and one other operated in a sluggish and disorganized fashion.³⁶ The picture presented the following month at a *volost'* KNS congress in Katerynoslav province shows work on both the *volost'* and village level disorganized, although a few individual members were praised for having done a great deal.³⁷

As time passed efforts were made to diminish the rough and ready nature of the *komnezamy* and foster the development of a more normalized regime in the countryside. The resolutions of the Second KNS Congress (February 20–24, 1922) contained the now familiar demand that the organization be strengthened, but also cautioned ‘all *komnezamy* against setting themselves in opposition to the rest of the village masses’ and demanded that they ‘combat arbitrariness and illegality’ in their work. While KNS members were granted immunity for past actions which had become illegal under the NEP, they were ordered to work within Soviet organs in order to strengthen their influence and combat any attempt by kulaks to sway them, to be responsible for education and social security in the village, and to organize collective farms. Dekulakization was to be carried out only in conformity with the land law, that is, only illegally held land was to be seized.³⁸ A new KNS law, adopted on May 27, 1922, was clearly aimed at fostering a division of power in the village between the *komnezam* and the *sil'rada*. The *komnezamy* were to have exclusive authority in all matters affecting land, agriculture, education, and sanitation, while powers not explicitly given to the *komnezamy* were reserved to the *sil'rady*.³⁹ Clearly, the *komnezamy* were being urged to learn the arts of peace as part of a general attempt at normalization in the countryside.

This policy of normalization does not seem to have worked out very well at all. The countryside was still far from peaceful, and in 1923–24 liquidating the remnants of ‘kulak banditism’, was, along with establishing *sil'rady*, the primary task facing the KNS.⁴⁰ Such *sil'rady* as did exist were often hardly functional, and their heads were sometimes paid as little as six *karbovantsi* (\$3.06 at the then prevailing rate of exchange) a month.⁴¹ In addition, the fact that fully half the membership of the *sil'rady* were *komnezam* members ensured that the latter would dominate the former.⁴² The old problem of lack of supervision from above also remained, and an October 31, 1923 KP(b)U Central Committee plenum resolution declared: ‘The almost total lack of supervision of KNS work could not help but produce some deviations in the activity of the committees on the local level’, deviations which included ‘a certain reticence’ toward the poor peasantry as a whole, misunderstanding the role of the middle peasant, and doing very little about the fact that 35% of KNS members were illiterate. Still, the resolution recognized the KNS as ‘the main arm carrying out the policies of Soviet power in the village’.⁴³

The question then arises as to why the Soviet government continued to rely on this less than ideal expedient. The reason, as Kagan made clear, was the lack of effective counterparts to the organizations upon which the Communists relied in the Russian countryside, particularly the agricultural trade union, which in the Ukraine was conceded by all to be extremely weak. This left no alternative other than reliance on the *komnezamy*.⁴⁴

Not everyone in the Party agreed with Kagan. In May 1924 the XIII All-Union Party Congress mandated various concessions to the peasantry, among them the transformation of the Ukrainian *komnezamy* from an organ of state significance into one primarily concerned with production.⁴⁵ By the end of the year there was a great deal of pressure to

liquidate them completely. The historian Nikolai Popov, himself a member of the Ukrainian Central Committee and advocate of liquidation, explained that the uprising in Georgia and *de facto* boycott of soviet elections in many areas had created a panic among party leaders throughout the USSR which led them to consider all sorts of concessions to the middle peasants. In the Ukraine it was widely recognized that *KNS* rule was the most important factor alienating the middle peasant and that ending it was absolutely necessary if he was to be placated. As Popov described the situation, 'In many cases in 1924–25 the *KNS*, just as in 1920–21 . . . were still *de facto* organs of power, and soviets, where the middle peasant was allowed to have them, were powerless over [the *komnezamy*]' . The leadership was sharply divided, with some members favouring complete abolition of this 'anti-middle peasant structure' and others opposing any change whatsoever.⁴⁶

The *KNS* issue was debated at three *KP(b)U* Central Committee plenums in January, April, and July 1925. The January plenum produced a compromise resolution which affirmed the need to preserve the *KNS* in some form, while criticizing the organization for often employing a style of action left over from the Civil War: reliance on administrative measures, arbitrary denial of the right to vote, exclusion of middle peasants from active participation, as well as imposing candidates of its choosing on soviets, cooperatives, and other social organizations. Immediately thereafter the issue became a subject of discussion in the press. Khvylya, Popov, and Kornysushyn favoured abolishing the *komnezamy* as vestiges of War Communism. Petrovs'kyi, Lebed', and Postyshev favoured their transformation into voluntary social organizations. Shlikhter wanted to remodel them along trade union lines. Skrypnyk and Chubar also favoured retaining them, but in what form is unclear. On March 27 *KP(b)U* First Secretary Lazar Kaganovich suggested in the press that they be either transformed into basically economic organizations or merged with rural mutual aid societies. His ideas, further developed in an unpublished document circulated within the Central Committee, were framed in such a way that those who favoured outright abolition of the *KNS* could find little difference between his ideas and theirs. At the April plenum any definite solution was put off, and a compromise resolution stated that it was necessary to prepare for yet another plenum which would discuss the issue. This final plenum was held on July 23–25, and during it Kaganovich and Petrovs'kyi left for Moscow to consult Stalin on the matter. Stalin declared that it was necessary to retain the *KNS*, and the two Central Committee members returned to the plenum in Kharkiv. Kaganovich now declared that he had never favoured outright abolition and assumed the role of Stalin's spokesman. In conformity with his position, the plenum appointed a commission to work out a new *KNS* statute which would preserve the *KNS* structure, yet take all political and administrative power from it.⁴⁷

While the XIII Congress had called for the *KNS* to be transformed into a primarily economic organization, the July *KP(b)U* plenum settled on calling it a 'voluntary social organization'.⁴⁸ In August 1925 *TsKNS* issued an instruction to local *komnezamy*, spelling out what the change would mean. The instruction reiterated the main points of the party's criticisms and defined the main tasks the *KNS* was now to perform as either economic or politically subordinate to the *sil'rada*. From now on the main tasks of the *KNS* were to strengthen the *sil'rada* by participating and encouraging participation by the poor peasantry as a whole, to foster collectivization and agricultural cooperation, and to give material aid to its members in order to raise the productivity of their farms.⁴⁹ A new *KNS* law was

adopted on November 16, 1925, making the change official, and three days later a model *KNS* statute was issued.⁵⁰ In October the *KNS* reorganization was also officially adopted by the All-Union Central Committee as the model to be followed in reorganizing the *koshchi*, somewhat similar organizations in Moslem areas of the Eastern USSR.⁵¹ While the *komnezamy* were still supposed to oppose the kulak, they no longer had any power over him, and they were now supposed to foster friendly relations with the middle peasantry. Their main functions were supposed to be economic: raising the productivity of agriculture and fostering its development along lines favoured by the regime. Their sole political role was to strengthen the *sil'rady* by participating in them.

The transformation of the *KNS* into a 'voluntary social organization' has led to confusion in Western scholarship. Moshe Lewin has even mistakenly asserted that the change was tantamount to abolishing them, presumably because peasants no longer had to belong.⁵² Actually, membership in the *komnezamy* was always voluntary, even when acceptance of their decisions was not. What their reorganization into voluntary social organizations meant was that they no longer exercised state power. They certainly continued to exist, and two years later the *KP(b)U* Congress once again stated that the party viewed the *KNS* as its main arm in the village, one on which it relied to attract as many poor peasants as possible to the regime's side, to oppose the kulaks, and to foster agricultural cooperation and collectivization.⁵³

Nevertheless, the 1925 reorganization dealt the *KNS* a severe blow. According to a September 20, 1926 report on the results of reorganization, in mid-1925 the Ukraine had 9388 village *komnezamy* with 1,297,747 members; after the completion of the reorganization there were 10,088 *komnezamy* but only 585,360 members. Thus, while the number of village *komnezamy* rose by 14%, membership dropped by 54.9%.⁵⁴ However, it soon began to recover, and by the end of 1926 exceeded 800,000.

The reorganized *KNS* was never really effective in the economic sphere or in increasing the base of support for the regime among the peasantry as a whole. In December 1926 the *KP(b)U* Politbureau felt it necessary to remind the organization that its members now had no greater right to state aid than non-members and to criticize the organization for inadequate work in the socio-economic sphere, its occasional hesitance to cooperate with state organs, its continued hostility to the middle peasant, and its reluctance to reach out to the poor peasantry as a whole.⁵⁵ This is hardly surprising, since most villagers seem to have had nothing but contempt for those who were associated with the regime in any fashion, even as peasant correspondents who occasionally contributed articles on village life to Soviet newspapers.⁵⁶ They thus remained a sort of fifth column in the village, despised by their neighbours but potentially useful to the regime if ever it were to decide on a new offensive against the peasantry as a whole. In the meantime, the structure was kept in place, participating in the *sil'rady*, organizing cooperatives and collective farms, taking part in whatever campaigns the state proclaimed in the village, and agitating against the kulaks.

The KNS, Forced Collectivization, and the Famine of 1933

The *komnezamy* came back into their own with the procurements crisis of 1927–28. The crisis itself was largely the product of official actions taken in 1926–27: new discriminatory

policies against the so-called kulaks who produced most of the grain available to the market, a drastic lowering of the price the state paid for grain, as well as the return to requisitioning and confiscation which began once the crisis became apparent.⁵⁷ Thousands of urban workers were sent into the countryside to procure grain by force, but they could hardly be expected to get grain in sufficient quantity without the support of some element in the village itself. In Russia the regime had to recreate committees of poor peasants, the *komsody*, to aid these newly arrived outsiders in seizing foodstuffs.⁵⁸ In Ukraine the *komnezamy* were pressed into service for the same purpose, and by the end of 1927 *KNS* activists were once again being killed on a fairly large scale, a negative but nonetheless informative indicator of their renewed activity.⁵⁹ In mid-1928 the *komnezamy* established special commissions for 'bringing to light grain surpluses'.⁶⁰ As one newspaper report put

Kulak sabotage of the grain procurements . . . served as a signal for the *nezamozhne* peasantry. The *komnezamy* threw themselves into a decisive offensive against the kulaks, showing heroic initiative during important economic and political campaigns in the village.⁶¹

Actually, the picture was somewhat more complicated than such a portrayal would indicate. The March 1928 *KP(b)U* joint plenum congratulated the *KNS* as a great help in procuring grain, but added that 'part of the *KNS* showed confusion, some of them failed to prove themselves as organizers of the poor peasants, and some, having elements foreign to the village poor in their ranks, at times even sided with the kulaks'.⁶²

In the months preceding mass dekulakization and forced collectivization of agriculture, the regime seemed to alternate between browbeating and bribing the *KNS*. For every press account praising *KNS* work in carrying out the party's policies, one can find another denouncing local *komnezamy* for failing to do so. In March 1928, before the final anti-kulak offensive but well into the period when many farmers were being expropriated for non-payment of ever mounting obligations to the state, a new law was passed reaffirming the right of local *komnezamy* to transfer property other than land seized from kulaks to individual members.⁶³

The *komnezamy* also played an important role in collectivization. According to a September 1928 report of the Sumy *okrug KNS*, from October 1927 to mid-July 1928 the *komnezamy* of the region had met an average of three times each to discuss various aspects of collectivization and organized three artels, eighteen *SOZy* (Societies for Working the Land in Common, the loosest form of *kolkhoz*) and 34 Machine Tractor Societies; by the end of the period in question 57% of the organization's membership had joined collective farms.⁶⁴ It is doubtful whether other regions had such positive records. If they had, it is unlikely that the countryside would have been flooded by the various plenipotentiaries, workers' brigades, and 'thousanders' so familiar to students of the period.

The November 1928 *TsKNS* plenum called upon all *komnezamy* to take the initiative in collectivization and the struggle against the kulaks.⁶⁵ The following month, the Sixth *KNS* Congress definitely pressed the organization, now 1.2 million strong, into the 'socialist offensive', calling itself 'the main defender and executor of the actions of the Communist Party and Soviet state in the village'.⁶⁶ In April 1929 the Second *KP(b)U narada* also once again called for stronger *KNS*.⁶⁷ By the end of the year the *KNS* had nearly 1.5 million members, fully 20% of whom had joined collective farms.⁶⁸

At this point the All-Union Central Committee stepped in, and its November 1929 plenum passed a special resolution on Ukrainian agriculture and work in the village. Point 14 of the resolution dealt specifically with the *komnezamy* and, in conformity with the general anti-middle peasant tenor of decisions taken before Stalin's March 1930 'Dizziness from Success' speech, essentially ordered them to drop all pretence of being anything other than what they had been created to be—*kombedy* of Civil War vintage. The broader concept of *nezamozhne* peasantry was replaced by the older one of *bednota*, and the *KNS* was called their basic organization. According to the Russian leadership, the organisation had suffered from the fact that it had organized only half the *bednota* and that there were cases where 'kulak elements' had infiltrated the leadership. The *KP(b)U* Central Committee was ordered to improve *KNS* work, make sure that only *bednyaki* held leadership posts, thoroughly purge the *KNS* and turn it into 'a real fighting organization of the *bednota*', capable of defending the interests of the village poor in all organs and of carrying collectivization forward.⁶⁹

Through the months of January and February 1930 the village *komnezamy* held meetings at which resolutions were passed calling for the liquidation of the kulaks (the word *kurkul'* was usually replaced at this juncture by the even stronger *hlytai*) as a class and total collectivization of agriculture. Indicative of the enthusiasm with which the village poor joined the collective farm is the fact that one *komnezam* resolution contains the injunction that 'all *KNS* members are to watch so that those who enter the collective farm do not destroy their property'.⁷⁰

At this juncture the *KNS* provided the framework, if not the real leadership, for mass collectivization. Thousands of commissions to foster collectivization and dekulakization were organized by and as part of the *KNS*. However, the inclusion of the 'thousanders' and other urban collectivizers 'safeguarded proletarian-party leadership and provided organization in carrying out dekulakization', that is, they directed it.⁷¹ Still, the *komnezamy* once again became by far the strongest of those organizations which the regime had imposed on the village, far overshadowing the *sil'rady*. In fact, cases of outright liquidation of *sil'rady* became so common that they had to be regularly denounced in the press. The *sil'rady*, however, were almost completely dominated by the *komnezamy* to the point that in 1931 fully 80% of *sil'rada* heads were *KNS* members.⁷²

The collective farms were also largely run by the *KNS* through the organization in them of farmhand-*nezamozhnyk* groups (*naimyts'ko-nezamozhnyts'ki hrupy*) which were officially part of the local *KNS* and subject to its decisions.⁷³ Party spokesmen once again waxed enthusiastic about the *komnezamy*, and a May 1930 listing of the tasks facing the organization made it abundantly clear that the regime saw them as its primary means of control in the village and *kolkhoz*. The *KNS* was

to strengthen what has been attained in *kolkhoz* construction by organizing and leading farmhand-*nezamozhnyk* groups in the *kolkhozy*; to raise the productivity of labour in the *kolkhozy*; to work actively and explain to farmhands and poor peasants why they should join the *KNS* and also to strengthen work among *nezamozhni* peasants of the village by explaining to them their role in the socialist reconstruction of the village; to purge the *KNS* and the *kolkhozy* of kulaks (*hlytai*) and other hostile elements and to verify *KNS* and *kolkhoz* work daily; to liquidate both general and political illiteracy by setting up 'liquidate illiteracy' (*liknep*) circles in the village which provide opportunities to defeat the class enemy, overcome difficulties, and carry out the party line;

to insist that the preparation of cadres of workers for soviet, social, and cooperative organs be carried out so as to include *nezamozhnyky*, to insist upon the assignment of *nezamozhnyky* to various courses, etc; to aid the *sil'rada* in carrying out various political campaigns and also in its everyday work by carrying out the directives of the party and state; to extend this aid by safeguarding proletarian, farmhand, *bednyak* influence in *sil'rada* work; to single out the most active comrades for advancement . . . to aid agricultural trade union organizations in their work; to strengthen work among village youth and women.⁷⁴

From this it becomes clear that the *KNS* was responsible for seeing to it that practically everything the regime wanted done in the village was in fact done.

The final campaign in which the *komnezamy* took part was what Soviet sources refer to as the 'struggle for grain procurements' in 1932–33, what Ukrainians refer to as *shtuchnyi holod*, the artificial famine.⁷⁵ The various 'thousanders', plenipotentiaries, and others (mainly non-Ukrainians) sent from the cities could not have swept the villages clean of all foodstuffs had they not had helpers in the village, and these helpers were the *komnezamy*. There are numerous eyewitness accounts of how this campaign which claimed millions of lives was carried out, both published and in the files of the Harvard University Refugee Interview Project. The *komnezamy* often distinguished themselves both by their brutality and by finding ways to outrage the sensibilities of their neighbours. For example, one village *komnezam* picked (orthodox) Christmas Eve (5th January 1933) to order the population to go to the village granary and take part in a 'red convoy' of wagons loaded with the grain that had been taken from them to the nearest town twenty versts away. When they arrived, they had to spend two or three days queuing, waiting to deliver their own grain.⁷⁶ The published Soviet sources are more laconic on the subject. One March 1932 document lists the villages in one raion which were 'taken in tow' by *KNS* brigades. These brigades carried out the 'struggle for bread' by conducting house to house searches.⁷⁷ A December 1932 Kharkiv oblast *KNS* order directed local *komnezamy* to carry on a 'decisive struggle for complete fulfilment of the grain procurement plan and against the kulak and his sub-kulak (*pidkurkul'nyk*) agent'. They were 'to bring to bear the full fury of the masses against those who hesitate, who deviate from giving bread over to the state'. They were reminded that 'the grain procurement is not a narrowly economic campaign but must be seen in relation to all our socialist construction . . .'.⁷⁸ One of the last documents of *TsKNS*, dated February 13, 1933, gave examples of the effectiveness of *KNS* grain procurement brigades in their work 'to liquidate the gap in grain procurements' by 'uncovering kulak pits', stating

KNS members took the lead in procuring bread for the state, exposed and fought mercilessly the manoeuvres of kulaks and counter-revolutionaries to undermine the grain procurements, organized the *kolkhoz* and poor middle peasant masses for the onslaught against the kulak-zamozhni upper stratum of the village in order to demolish kulak sabotage of the grain procurements.⁷⁹

The euphemisms about 'kulak grain pits' and 'kulak sabotage' become intelligible only when we remember that any peasant who could with any degree of plausibility be considered a 'kulak' had been expropriated a full two years earlier and exiled not long thereafter. The 'kulaks' against whom the *KNS* are portrayed as having struggled so valiantly were the peasants who remained in the village after dekulakization. The *KNS*

leadership was therefore praising the local *komnezamy* for their effectiveness as peasant organizations which the regime had been able to use against the peasantry as a whole.

The *KNS* may be said to have been a victim of its very success in performing this final service for the Soviet state, for a few days after issuing this document *TsKNS* proclaimed the organization liquidated, a decision which the Ukrainian Soviet government approved on March 8.⁸⁰ According to official Soviet Ukrainian historiography, this step was taken because

With the unification of the farmhand, poor peasant, and middle peasant masses in the collective farms, the need for a special organization of the village poor like the *komitety nezamozhnykh selyan* ceased to exist.⁸¹

In truth, the *KNS* members were by then of little further use to the regime they had served. No special provision was made for their support, and once the state had obtained what it could from the village—as numerous eyewitnesses report—the *nezamozhnyky* died of starvation alongside those they had helped to despoil.⁸²

The retention of the *komnezamy* in the Ukrainian countryside right up to the famine of 1933 points out an important structural difference between the regimes in the Ukrainian and Russian countryside. The *KNS*, like the *koshchi* in Muslim areas, were never much more than an attempt to broaden the old *kombedy* of the civil war. As such they were far more isolated in the village and far more responsive to the regime than were *sil'rady* elected by all but the top economic stratum of the village. They represented a structure set against the majority of the villagers, manned by the least successful, least respected, and most isolated stratum of the village population. They may thus be described as an anti-peasant peasant organization through which the regime could maintain an organized minority of supporters which could be turned against the village as a whole.

The *KNS* was at best a rough and ready expedient, just as the *kombed* had been earlier. The retention of such a mechanism long after its abandonment in Russia is an indication of the greater insecurity the regime felt in areas where it approached the countryside not only as a product of the town but also as a product of a foreign nation.

The attempt at normalizing village politics embodied in the *KNS* reorganization of 1925 meant temporarily consigning the *komnezamy* to the background, because any attempt to turn them into productive organizations capable of reaching out to the village as a whole was bound to flounder on the very isolation upon which the regime had earlier been able to depend. An organization of the village outcasts could be expected to feed upon the resentments of its membership when called upon to extract, impose, and expropriate, but a membership of low status became an insuperable obstacle to attempts to educate and persuade the village as a whole. This meant that the *KNS* was essentially kept in abeyance until the procurements crisis, forced collectivization, and dekulakization once again provided it with tasks more befitting its nature. Once total collectivization was achieved and the famine of 1933 destroyed the Ukrainian peasantry (and nation, for that matter) as a political factor and social organism, the regime had stronger mechanisms upon which it could rely for controlling the countryside, the collective farm and the political section of the machine-tractor station. The *KNS*, its members starving, thus became superfluous, and the regime abandoned its erstwhile supporters to their fate.

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¹ *Sobranie uzakonenii i rasporyazhenii raboche-krest'yanskogo pravitel'stva Ukrainy*, no. 1, January 1–14, 1919, pp. 10–12.

² As Moshe Lewin rightly points out, 'notions like "rural capitalism", "kulak" and "rural capitalist", had no commonly agreed content, no more before than after the revolution'. M. Lewin, 'Who Was the Soviet Kulak?' *Soviet Studies*, vol. XVIII, 1966, pp. 189–90.

³ *Na agrarnom fronte*, 1928, no. 1, p. 93, as cited by M. Lewin, *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power: A Study of Collectivization* (New York, 1968), p. 28.

⁴ According to the head of the Soviet Ukrainian state, 93 'counter-revolutionary manifestations' took place in the Ukrainian countryside in April 1919, 217 during the first twenty days of July. K. G. Rakovsky, *Bor'ba za osvobozhdenie derevni* (Kharkiv, 1920), pp. 37–38.

⁵ M. Ravich-Cherkassky, *Istoriya Kommunisticheskoi partii (b—ov) Ukrainy* (Kharkiv, 1923), p. 170.

⁶ P. S. Zahors'kyi and P. K. Stoyan, *Narysy istorii komitetiv nezamozhnykh selyan* (Kiev, 1960), pp. 16–17.

⁷ H. V. Bondarenko, 'Pro kil'kist' kombidiv na Ukraini', *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1980, no. 6, p. 110.

Earlier, lower estimates are also cited in this article.

⁸ Zahors'kyi and Stoyan, *Narysy istorii KNS*, p. 22. *Komitety nezamozhnykh selyan Ukrainy (1920–1933): Zbirnyk dokumentiv i materialiv* (Kiev, 1968), pp. 5–6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 7–9.

¹¹ 'Z istorii utvorennia komitetiv nezamozhnykh selyan na Ukraini v 1920', *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1958, no. 4, pp. 117–119.

¹² *Komitety nezamozhnykh selyan Ukrainy*, pp. 9–14.

¹³ M. I. Kulichenko, *Bor'ba Kommunisticheskoi partii za reshenie natsional'nogo voprosa v 1918–1920 godakh* (Kharkiv, 1963), p. 400.

¹⁴ V. P. Yubkin, 'Zdiisnennia prodovol'choi polityky na Ukraini (hruden' 1919–1920)', *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1961, no. 1, p. 24.

¹⁵ Pavlo Popov, 'Shlyakh KNS', *Bil'shovyk Ukrainy*, 1927, no. 2, pp. 42–3.

¹⁶ *Komitety nezamozhnykh selyan Ukrainy*, p. 38.

¹⁷ S. Kagan, *Agrarnaya revoliutsiia na Kievshchine: K voprosu o sotsial'nykh i politicheskikh protsessakh na sele* (Kiev, 1923), p. 14. Original emphasis.

¹⁸ Zahors'kyi and Stoyan, *Narysy istorii KNS*, pp. 34–44.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

²⁰ M. A. Zhurbe, Diyal'nist' hromads'kykh orhanizatsii Radyans'koho sela po internatsional'nomu vykhovanniu trudyashchykh', *Arkhivy Ukrainy*, 1982, no. 1, p. 54.

²¹ Zahors'kyi and Stoyan, *Narysy istorii KNS*, p. 54. Ivan Herasymovych, *Holod na Ukraini* (Berlin, 1922), pp. 152–60. H. H. Fisher, *The Famine in Soviet Russia, 1919–1923: The Operations of the American Relief Administration* (Stanford, 1927), pp. 98, 434–6. See also Charles M. Edmonson, 'The Politics of Hunger: The Soviet Response to Famine, 1921', *Soviet Studies*, vol. XXIX, 1977), pp. 506–518.

²² Kagan, *Agrarnaya revoliutsiia na Kievshchine*, p. 15. Original emphasis.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 16. Original emphasis.

²⁴ *Komitety nezamozhnykh selyan Ukrainy*, p. 18.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 143–8.

²⁷ Yu. I. Tereshchenko, 'Polityka "voiennoho kommunizmu" na Ukraini', *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1980, no. 10, p. 85.

²⁸ N. D. Berezovchuk, 'Rol' komnezamov Ukrainy v provedenii kollektivizatsii sel'skogo khoziaistva', in *Iz istorii bor'by Kommunisticheskoi partii Ukrainy za sotsialisticheskoe pereustroistvo sel'skogo khoziaistva* (Kiev, 1961), p. 9.

²⁹ *Komitety nezamozhnykh selyan Ukrainy*, pp. 119–131, 134–135.

³⁰ *Istoriya selyanstva Ukrains'koi RSR* (Kiev, 1967), vol. 2, p. 100.

³¹ *Komitety nezamozhnykh selyan Ukrainy*, pp. 132–133. Popov, 'Shlyakh KNS', *Bil'shovyk Ukrainy*, 1927, no. 2, p. 45.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 41–2.

³³ *Istoriya selyanstva Ukrains'koi RSR*, vol. 2, p. 106.

³⁴ Kagan, *Agrarnaya revoliutsiia na Kievshchine*, p. 14.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³⁶ *Komitety nezamozhnykh selyan Ukrainy*, pp. 262–3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 265–6.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 249–54.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 157–67.

- ⁴⁰ Popov, 'Shlyakh KNS', *Bil'shovyk Ukrainy*, 1927, no. 2, p. 45.
- ⁴¹ Butsenko, 'Radyans'ke budivnytstvo', *Visty VUTsVK*, April 12, 1924, p. 2.
- ⁴² 'VI-i Vseukrains'kyi z'izd Nezamozhnykh Selyan', *Visty VUTsVK*, January 27, 1924, p. 2. *Komitety nezamozhnykh selyan Ukrainy*, p. 182.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 182.
- ⁴⁴ Kagan, *Agrarnaya revoliutsiya na Kievshchine*, pp. 31–2.
- ⁴⁵ *Komitety nezamozhnykh selyan Ukrainy*, p. 196.
- ⁴⁶ M. M. Popov, *Narysy istorii Komunistychnoi partii (bil'shovykiv) Ukrainy* (Kharkiv, 1928), pp. 284–6. Quotation pp. 285–6.
- ⁴⁷ M. D. Berezovchuk, 'Zahody Komunistychnoi partii Ukrainy po orhanizatsiino-politychnomu zmitsnennyu komnezamiv (1925) r.', *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1964, no. 1, pp. 65–67. Zahors'kyi and Stoyan, *Narysy istorii KNS*, pp. 89–90.
- ⁴⁸ *Komitety nezamozhnykh selyan Ukrainy*, pp. 196–7.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 358–60.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 202–4, 362–6.
- ⁵¹ M. D. Berezovchuk, 'Zahody . . .', p. 68.
- ⁵² M. Lewin, *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power: A Study in Collectivization* (New York, 1975), p. 54.
- ⁵³ *Komitety nezamozhnykh selyan Ukrainy*, p. 381.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 414.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 375–6.
- ⁵⁶ This is clear from Zatsons'kyi's 1926 remarks to a group of peasant correspondents: 'But you are a minority. We know it is difficult to work so actively in the villages as peasant correspondents. We are well aware of the attitude toward you that is expressed by the kulaks and even by some disgraceful representatives of Soviet power'. V. Zatsons'kyi, *Leninovyim shlyakhom (Promova na poshyrenii naradi selkoriv 'Radyans'ke selo')* (Kharkiv, 1926), p. 21.
- ⁵⁷ Vladimir P. Timoshenko, *Agricultural Russia and the Wheat Problem* (Stanford, 1932), pp. 173, 177–8, 186, 451–2.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 454. G. Konyukhov, *KPSS v bor'be s khlebnymi zatrudnieniyami v strane (1928–1929)* (Moscow, 1960), pp. 135–137.
- ⁵⁹ Zahors'kyi and Stoyan, *Narysy istorii KNS*, pp. 116–7.
- ⁶⁰ I. F. Ganzha, I. I. Slin'ko, P. V. Shostak, 'Ukrainskoe selo na puti k sotsializmu', in V. Danilov, ed., *Ocherki istorii kollektivizatsii sel'skogo khoziaistva v soyuznykh respublikakh* (Moscow, 1963), p. 174.
- ⁶¹ O. Fesenko, '10 rokiv roboty i borot'by KNS', *Visti VUTsVK*, May 9, 1930, p. 5.
- ⁶² *Komitety nezamozhnykh selyan Ukrainy*, p. 393.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 384–6.
- ⁶⁴ *Istoriya kolektyvizatsii sil's'koho hospodarstva Ukrain's'koi RSR: Zbirnyk dokumentiv i materialiv* (Kiev, 1962, 1965, 1971), vol. 2, pp. 116–117.
- ⁶⁵ *Komitety nezamozhnykh selyan Ukrainy*, pp. 481–483.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 484.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 388.
- ⁶⁸ Zahors'kyi and Stoyan, *Narysy istorii KNS*, p. 130.
- ⁶⁹ *Istoriya kolektyvizatsii sil's'koho hospodarstva URSR*, vol. 2, p. 222.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 417.
- ⁷¹ I. I. Slyn'ko, *Sotsialistychna perebudova i tekhnichna rekonstruktsiya sil's'koho hospodarstva Ukrainy (1927–1932 rr.)* (Kiev, 1961), p. 187.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 244.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 246. *Istoriya selyanstva Ukrain's'koi RSR*, vol. 2, p. 158.
- ⁷⁴ Ya. Pats', 'Uchast komnezamiv u sotsialistychnii perebudovi sela', *Visti VUTsVK*, May 9, 1930, p. 4.
- ⁷⁵ The famine of 1933 was limited geographically to the Ukraine, the North Caucasus *krai*, and the Volga basin, probably because Stalin was most eager to minimize any possible 'security threat' from the Ukrainians, Don and Kuban Cossacks, and Volga Germans. I develop this argument in 'The Ukrainian Problem and How Stalin Tried to Solve It', *Russia: A Quarterly Review of Contemporary Soviet Issues*, No. 5–6, (Fall, 1982), pp. 15–34. Western accounts of the famine are surveyed in Dana Dalrymple, 'The Soviet Famine of 1932–1934', *Soviet Studies*, vol. XV, (January 1964), pp. 250–84 and vol. XVI, (April 1965), pp. 471–4. Soviet sources are surveyed in Janusz Radziejowski, 'Collectivization in Ukraine in Light of Soviet Historiography', *Journal of Ukrainian Studies*, no. 9, 1980, pp. 3–17.
- ⁷⁶ V. Takhtai-Tarlei, 'Selo Khmeliv na Poltavshchyni', in Yur. Semenko, ed., *Holod 1933 roku v Ukraini: Svidchennya pro vynyshuvannya Moskoynu ukrains'koho selyanstva* (Munich, 1963), p. 45.
- ⁷⁷ *Komitety nezamozhnykh selyan Ukrainy*, p. 564.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 568.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 573–4, 580–2.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 585–92, 395–7.

⁸¹ *Istoriya selyanstva ukrains'koi RSR*, vol. 2, p. 168.

⁸² See, for example, Olexa Woropay, *The Ninth Circle: In Commemoration of the Victims of the Famine of 1933*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1983) p. 34. Harvard University Refugee Interview Project, A Schedule, Case 1434, p. 13.