The Carl Beck Papers
in Russian and East European Studies

No. 301

GOVERNMENT IN THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE IN THE STALINIST THIRTIES

The Case of Belyi *Raion* in 1937

Roberta T. Manning

Center for Russian and East European Studies
University of Pittsburgh

Roberta Manning received her Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1975 and is an Associate Professor of History at Boston College. She is the author of *The Crisis of the Old Order in Russia: Gentry and Government* (Princeton University Press, 1982) and numerous articles. She is presently Managing Editor of *Russian History/Histoire Russe*. This article is part of her on-going research into local government administration in the USSR on the eve of World War II.

October 1984

ISSN 0889-275X

Submissions to *The Carl Beck Papers* are welcome. Manuscripts must be in English, double-spaced throughout, and less than 70 pages in length. Acceptance is based on anonymous review. Mail submissions to: Editor, *The Carl Beck Papers*, Center for Russian and East European Studies, 4E23 Forbes Quadrangle, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pa., 15260.

INTRODUCTION

The Soviet political system of the 1930s is generally regarded as a personal dictatorship *par excellence*, presided over by a ruler with historically unprecedented powers to control events and shape society to suit his political ambitions and personal whims. Focusing almost exclusively upon the *persona* of Joseph Stalin as the prime mover in the Soviet system, mainstream Western scholarship on the thirties has tended to attribute Stalin's power to a consciously fostered personality cult and the indiscriminate use of political terror. Laws, institutions, the policymaking process, the economy, the population at large, and other political leaders, both local and national, are usually dismissed by scholars as passive tools or victims in the hands of the all-powerful Stalin. None of these factors are deemed capable of serving as independent historical forces or agencies in their own right.[1] An entire epoch of Russian history has been reduced essentially to biography.

Such an approach to the thirties reflects the lingering force of the cult of Stalin's personality, long ago repudiated in the USSR, which continues to flourish in Western scholarship. Indeed, the scholarly cult of Stalin tends inexorably to reinforce itself by covering areas of Soviet life about which pitifully little is known with the figleaf of Stalins' omnipotence. Further inquiry into these areas is inhibited, since Stalin provides a convenient, all-embracing explanation for everything that transpired. As a result, many critical aspects of life and government in the thirties remain unexplored, including the social history of that decade, bureaucratic politics and policymaking processes in specific policy areas, and the changing relationship between local and central government.[2] Least of all is known about government at the grassroots, in the

depths of the countryside where two-thirds of the Soviet populace resided on the eve of World War II.[3] Yet prevailing scholarly notions about Stalin and his power over Soviet society rest heavily upon hitherto not fully verified assumptions about the relationship between central and local government in the USSR of Stalin's time.

Sources that can cast some light upon local government in the 1930s have long been available to Western scholars through the Smolensk Archive, the local Communist Party archives captured by the Germans in the Second World War, which fell into American hands at the end of the war.[4] This archive was utilized by Merle Fainsod to write his well-known *Smolensk Under Soviet Rule*, a study of local government in the first two decades of Soviet power. Like most pioneering works, however, *Smolensk Under Soviet Rule*, is more comprehensive than complete and by no means exhausts the possibilities of the Smolensk Archive. Fainsod approached the archive from a purely qualitative and impressionistic perspective and appears to have succumbed to the temptation to impose a model of government, worked out for Soviet society immediately *after* World War II, to *pre-war* Smolensk with scarcely any modifications.[5] Like many political scientists, Fainsod's interests were narrowly political, overly abstract, and unduly concerned with questions of power. In the process, the human fabric of government, changes over time, and the interaction of government with local society and geography were neglected.

The materials in the Smolensk Archive most valuable for a study of local government in the late thirties come from Belyi *raion*, a heavily rural administrative district to the northwest of Moscow, then part of the Western *oblast'*, a large territorial unit of ninety-one *raions*, with its capital in Smolensk. The archival materials from Belyi *raion* include minutes for all of the 1937 *raion* party

conferences, plenary sessions of the party *raikom* (*raion* party committee) and meetings of the *raikom* bureau, the executive organ of the local party organization that usually met several times a week throughout the year.[6] In addition, other material from Belyi *raion* in the mid-to-late thirties exist in the archive, including files of letters of complaint of local citizens against party and government officials and the response of the local party organization to these complaints.[7] More archival materials are available for Belyi *raion* in 1937 in the Smolensk Archive than for any other *raion* in any other year. The diversity of these materials allows a many-sided view of the dynamics of local government in Belyi *raion* at this time.

Of course, neither Belyi *raion* nor 1937 can be regarded without reservation as a time and place that were "typical" of Soviet society in the 1930s. The size and ethnic diverstiy of the USSR alone should make us wary of applying the label "typical" to any given *raion*, and the social-economic structures of Belyi were unique to a significant degree. The local party organization appears to have been one of the weaker, at least among the centrally located *raions* of the Russian republic (RSFSR) in close proximity to the two capitals, Moscow and Leningrad. Yet this weakness appears to have been shared by many other overwhelmingly rural *raions*. Given the predominantly rural nature of Soviet society in the 1930s, the political experiences of *raions* like Belyi are likely to be more characteristic of much of the nation at large than are the experiences of the far stronger party organizations of the major industrial centers, like Moscow, Leningrad, Ivanovo, and the Donbas. A study of Belyi can contribute to our knowledge of the range of political variation possible in the supposedly "monolithic Stalinist system" of the 1930s. The Belyi materials also allow us to view "from the bottom up" events, developments and methods

of government, which have only been hitherto studied from the vantage point of the apex of the political system, often from the perspective of Stalin himself.

The year of 1937, however, was certainly not a time of "business as usual" in the USSR. The year opened in the wake of one of the major Russian crop failures of the century, possibly the lowest harvest on record save in times of war or immediately after a war, and clearly the worst crop since the onset of collectivization. (See Table 1.) Even *Pravda* was compelled to recognize the extent of the harvest disaster. In an article that characteristically stressed the excellent sugar beet harvest of 1936, the party newspaper admitted that average precipitation rates in 1936 in many regions of the country were *lower* than in 1891, the year of the Great Famine, and that the grain harvest was "no better than could be expected under the circumstances."[8] The following year, 1937, produced a bumper crop, the best yet on record, a harvest only exceeded in the Khrushchev era, after a significant expansion of the amount of land under cultivation. Nonetheless, food was in short supply throughout the first seven months of 1937, particularly in the cities.[9] Average collective farm labor day (*trudoden*) payments for the 1936 agricultural year, which had to feed collective farm families until the new harvest came in, ran *lower* than in the famine year of 1932-- 1.6 kilograms of grain per *trudoden* in 1936, compared to 2.3 kilograms per *trudoden* in 1932.[10] Famine, however, was warded off, because the Soviet goverment managed to cope with the crop failure of 1936 significantly better than it or its tsarist predecessor had dealt with earlier periods of short harvests and acute food shortages, like 1891, 1905-1906, 1921-1922 and 1932-1933. Exports of food and fodder were curbed at the start of 1937.[11] The government delved into its now sufficient food reserves in the fall of 1936 and the spring of 1937 to provide famine relief on a massive

Table 1: Grain Production in Russia and the USSR 1909-1955

[Based on actual harvests, *not* the biological yields frequently utilized in the 1930s]

Year	Grain Harvested (millions of metric tons)
1909-1913 (average)	72.5
1913	86
1928	73
1929	72
1930	84
1931	66
1932	63
1933	67
1934	67
1935	*69*
1936	60
1937	*97*
1938	71
1940	96
1945	47
1946	40
1947	66
1948	67
1949	70
1950	81
1952	92
1953	83
1955	104

Source: Moshe Lewin, "Taking Grain: Soviet Politics of Agricultural Procurements before the War," in C. Abramsky (ed.) *Essays in Honor of E. H. Carr* (Hamden, CT, 1974), 308; Harry G. Shaffer, *Soviet Agriculture: An Assessment of its Contributions to Economic Development* (New York/London, 1977), 25.

scale, mainly in the form of foods loans on generous terms to collective farmers. In the case of Belyi *raion*, these loans amounted to 8,700 tons of grain, 741.1 kilograms for every collective farm family in the *raion*.[12]

Nineteen thirty-seven also witnessed the extension of the Great Purges to the localities, striking *oblast'* and *raion* leaders with devastating force in the second half of the year. Significantly, the purges began among the local leadership throughout much of the country in June, at the very time that the food shortages of the 1936 crop failure reached their zenith, on the eve of the new harvest.[13] The year we are studying, then, is one of crisis, extremes and excess. But then crisis and extremes were endemic throughout the thirties, and, as Stephen Cohen has pointed out, "Excesses were the essence of historical Stalinism."[14]

BELYI *RAION*: GOVERNMENT IN A PROVINCIAL BACKWATER

In the 1930s, Belyi *raion* was an isolated and sparsely populated agricultural district in the northern timber and lake zones of Western Great Russia, with a *raion* capital located some thirty kilometers from the nearest railway line.[15] Sharing borders with what used to be Pskov and Tver provinces, Belyi had been progressively reduced in territory by the repeated administrative reorganizations of the early Soviet period to less than a third the size of pre-revolutionary Belyi *uezd* (Smolensk *gubernia*).[16] Half the land area of the *raion* was occupied by forests and bogs, rendering transportation and communications difficult and making the lumber business the major local industry, along with several food processing plants and flax mills.[17] The population of the *raion* was almost completely rural. Less than

10% of the *raion*'s 67,268 inhabitants in 1937 resided in Belyi, the only town worthy of the name in the district.[18] The Soviet industrialization drive of the thirties, which was accompanied by the highest rates of urbanization yet experienced by any nation, did little to alter the urban-rural balance here. Indeed, the population of the town grew only slightly in the course of the thirties, from 5,841 inhabitants in 1931 to 6,318 in 1937.[19]

Economic development, however, had not passed the *raion* by. Belyi *raion* was a major center of dairy farming and one of the three leading flax producing *raions* in the Western *oblast'*, which specialized in "intensive flax production" on the *oblast'* level. The *raion* was an important flax producer before the revolution, and Soviet authorities sought actively to expand the area sown with this crop. Flax became one of the nation's few remaining agricultural export crops by the mid to late thirties, as grain exports dwindled after the 1932 famine. By 1935-1937, 21-23% of the arable land in Belyi *raion* was planted in flax, and the *raion*'s high productivity rates for this crop won local party and soviet leaders a state prize in 1935, an achievement which the *raion* leadership would have increasing difficulty repeating.[20]

The agricultural population of the raion in 1937 was nominally united in 210 collective farms and 34 rural soviets. But the populace actually lived scattered about, among the bogs, forests, lakes, and rivers in hundreds of tiny settlements and thousands of isolated farmsteads or *khutora*. In the course of the Stolypin Land Reform of 1906-1916 and in the 1920s, when local authorities once again strongly promoted the consolidation of peasant landholdings,[21] 75% of the *raion*'s peasant households left the land commune and moved out of their native villages onto consolidated farms. In contrast, only 1% of the peasant households nationwide and 40% within the boun-

daries of pre-revolutionary Smolensk *gubernii a* occupied consolidated farmsteads on the eve of collectivization.[22] As late as 1937, when 85.6% of the peasant households in Belyi *raion* were members of collective farms, most *khutoriane* (owners of *khutora*) continued to live isolated on their farmsteads. The costs of resettlement ran high, as much as 2,000 rubles per household, and the new collective farms, the state, and the peasants themselves lacked the resources to finance such moves on the scale necessary.[23] The existence of so many *khutora* greatly complicated the problems of collective farm administration and political administration in general, especially as declining horse herds rendered communications in the countryside ever more difficult as the thirties progressed.[24] The nation's industry did not yet produce enough bicycles, tractors, trucks and automobiles to compensate for the loss of horses.

At the center of goverment in Belyi stood the local party organization, consisting of 239 members and candidates in 1937. Communists occupied all the main positions of power in the *raion*. They presided over the *raion* soviet executive committee, the town soviet, local industrial establishments, trade and financial institutions, the procurement organs, and the local affiliates of the central government commissariats. But Communists represented only an extremely small proportion of the population at large, with one Communist for every 283.4 residents of the *raion* in 1937,[25] up from 661 inhabitants for every Communist in 1925.[26] Party saturation rates in the *raion* stood far below the representation of officials among the general population in Western European nations, even before the advent of the modern welfare state. In 1910, for example, France possessed one official for every 57 residents; Belgium, one for every fifty; Germany, one for every 78 inhabitants; and England, one official for every 137 citizens.[27] Only in the town of Belyi did party saturation rates

Table 2: Party Saturation of Selected Town-Based Government Institutions in Belyi *Raion* in 1937

Institution	Employees	Party Members & Candidates	Komsomols	Sympathizers
Raion Land Department (*raizo*)	61	6	0	0
Belyi Town Soviet	14[1]	9	0	5
NKVD	8[2]	6	1	0
Raion Militia/ Passport Desk	23	5	5	4
Fire Command	15	2	3	0
Teaching Staff, Belyi Technicum for the Mechanization of Agriculture	15	1	9	0
Procurement Organs[3]	224	10	12	2
Procurement Organs[4]	45	8	n.d.	2

1. Number of members of the Soviet.

2. At least one member of the NKVD was a buildings inspector and did no police work. At least one more NKVD employee was probably a secretary. The NKVD also served as local fire safety and labor inspectors. WKP 176, 172.

3. If the cheese factory, the cattle haulers, and the workers in the butter industry are included.

4. If we limit ourselves to administrative personnel, omitting the cheese factory's labor force, the cattle haulers, and the non-office personnel of the butter industry (who were mainly workers at separators and at receiving points).

Source: WKP 101, 4-10; WKP 285, 355-385.

Table 3: Social Origins of the Belyi *Raion* Party Organization

[As of January 1, 1937]

	Workers		Peasants		Employees		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Town Members	39	39.4	46	46.5	14	14.4	99	100
Town Candidates	11	32.4	21	61.8	2	5.9	34	100
Rural Members	20	40.8	29	59.2	0	0	49	100
Rural Candidates	6	10.5	50	87.5	1	1.8	57	100
Total Members and Candidates	76	31.8	146	61.1	17	7.1	239	100

Source: WKP 321, 139.

match or exceed these figures, with one urban-based Communist for every 47.5 residents of the town in 1937.[28]

Among local officeholders, Communists represented a surprisingly thin stratum, as Table 2 indicates, although most party members and candidates were government officials at this time.[29] The situation is little improved when one takes Komsomols (Young Communist League members) or "sympathizers" into account as well. The party's inability to staff all the administrative positions at its disposal was compounded by the relative youth and political inexperience of Belyi Communists and their chronic lack of adequate education. As Tables 3-6 indicate, the *raion* party organization in 1937 consisted overwhelmingly of former peasants (61.1%) and workers (31.8%). Approximately 80% of all party members and candidates were under the age of forty, and in all likelihood, a majority were probably under the age of thirty-five.[30] Less than a third of the *raion* party

Table 4: Age Structure of the Belyi *Raion* Party Organization

[As of January 1, 1937]

	25-30	30-40	40-50	50 and older	Total
Town Members	11	66	18	4	99
Town Candidates	15	18	1	0	34
Rural Members	6	30	11	2	49
Rural Candidates	14	30	10	3	57
Total Members	17	96	29	6	148
Total Candidates	29	48	11	3	91
Total Members and Candidates	46	144	40	9	239
As a Percentage of the Party	19.6	60.3	16.7	3.8	100

Source: WKP 321, 139.

organization had joined the party before the onset of the Stalin (or cultural) revolution of 1928-1932.[31] Indeed, most members and candidates-- 68.6% of the *raion* party organization in Belyi-- were obvious products of that turbulent era, having become Communists between 1928 and 1932.

Not a single Belyi Communist in 1937 possessed a higher education, and only 7.1% had gone beyond primary school (first through third grade). Any party member in the *raion* with six to seven years of schooling was deemed "a specialist," but the local party possessed only five such "specialists" among its membership in 1936-1937.[32] F. M. Shitov, who served briefly in 1937 as chairman of the *raion* soviet executive committee, the highest government

Table 5: Date at Which Members of the Belyi *Raion* Party Organization Joined the Communist Party

[Members and candidate members as of January 1, 1937]

	1904-1917	1918-1922	1923-1928	1928-1932	1936	TOTAL
Town Members	3	17	35	44	0	99
Town Candidates	0	0	0	32	2	34
Rural Members	3	4	10	32	0	49
Rural Candidates	0	0	0	56	1	57
Total Members	6	21	45	76	0	148
Total Candidates	0	0	0	88	3	91
Total Members and Candidates	6	21	45	164	3	239
As a Percentage of the Party	2.5	8.8	18.8	68.6	1.3	100

Source: WKP 321, 139.

position in the *raion*, never even managed to complete third grade, having been forced to drop out of school to help his peasant family with the field work. When asked why he signed, as executive committee chairman, a collective farm charter (*ustav*) allowing private plots as large as ten hectares-- ten times greater than the maximum norm assigned the *raion* by the national government-- Shitov maintained that he, was after all, "no specialist" and could not be expected to tend so closely to details.[33] Yet Shitov was far from the most ill-educated local Communist. Close to 30% of party members and candidates in 1936 were classified as functional illiterates or "educationally weak" (*malogramotnyi*) and assigned to study groups

Table 6: Educational Attainments of the Belyi *Raion* Organization

[Highest level of education reached as of January 1, 1937]

	GENERAL EDUCATION				SUPPLEMENTARY PARTY EDUCATION		
	Primary	Middle	Higher	*Komvuz*[1]	Soviet Party School Degree 1st	Soviet Party School Degree 2nd	Correspondence Courses
Town Members	89	10	0	3	0	13	8
Town Candidates	30	4	0	0	3	0	0
Rural Members	47	2	0	0	2	6	1
Rural Candidates	56	1	0	0	1	0	0
Total Members	136	12	0	3	2	19	9
Total Candidates	86	5	0	0	4	0	0
Total Members and Candidates	222	17	0	3	6	19	9
As a Percentage of the Party	92.8	7.1	0	1.2	2.5	7.9	3.8

1. For the additional standards and the curriculum of these "communist universities," designed to train barely literate students to be party agitators, see John Scott, *Behind the Urals* (Bloomington, Ind., 1973) 45-49.

Source: WKP 321, 140.

and tutors to work on basic skills, including reading and arithmetic.[34] The latter skill was especially essential in a government, like that of the Soviet

Union, with a voluminous appetite for the collection of statistics.

Belyi's under-educated officials presided over administrative hierarchies that were severely understaffed for the tasks with which they were delegated and composed largely of other, equally ill-educated officials, whose inefficiency merely increased the work load of their colleagues. The *raion* people's judge, M. I. Brandin, whose work was reviewed by a government commission in August and September 1937, provides a good example of the administrative overload that many Belyi officials experienced. Brandin began life as a tailor and textile worker before being selected by the party to attend a two-year course to train future government and party leaders as an upwardly mobile young worker (*vydvizhenets*) during the First Five-Year Plan. He possessed no training in law nor any prior judicial experience before his appointment as *raion* judge in 1934, having worked for several years in the *oblast'* hierarchy.[35]

Between January 1 and September 1, 1937, Brandin was scheduled to hear a total of 1,424 cases-- 406 criminal cases and 1,018 civil cases. Had the schedule on his docket been strictly adhered to, such a schedule would have required him to review an average of seven cases a day, assuming a six day work week, with no vacations or holidays. In addition, Brandin was responsible for supervising the work of the thirty-four rural judges (*sel'sudy*) of the rural soviets and instructing those generally ill-educated men, who were selected from among the local peasant population, in Soviet law. Where Brandin found the time in his career as a judge to learn Soviet law is unclear. Brandin was also supposed to participate actively in the reelection of rural judges, scheduled for the fall of 1937. Such participation entailed Brandin's attendance at eighty pre-electoral meetings in the countryside that began in August. No wonder that decisions in 83 criminal and 279 civil cases

were still pending at the time of the investigation, including such "politically important" cases, as draft resistance and suspected "wrecking" of agricultural machines. Nor is it surprising that Brandin's decisions were fully upheld by higher courts in only sixty out of 95 instances of appeal in 1937.[36]

Brandin's heavy workload stemmed from the efforts of the Soviet government to integrate the nation's peasant majority into the nation's judicial system as full citizens, with equal rights under law. This was a task which the tsarist government had never demanded of itself. Under the old regime, peasants were legally segregated from the rest of the population, with a judicial system of their own, operating under unwritten, customary law and local peasant-elected *volost'* judges, who decided cases by local tradition and commonsense and whose decisions could not be appealed to higher courts.[37] The bulk of Brandin's cases, in contrast to his pre-revolutionary predecessors in Belyi, involved the peasant population of the *raion*.[38] Even the heavy volume of civil cases were initiated largely by peasants, originating in the endemic boundary disputes that had long plagued the Russian countryside and now set at loggerheads collective farms, individual peasants and government institutions and resulted at times in pitched battles between collective farms, between collective farmers and individual peasants, or between peasants in general (both collective farmers and individual peasants) and government forest guards. These conflicts were exacerbated by incompetent (or nonexisting) surveying work and the endemic boundary confusion of the past, compounded by the upheavals of collectivization, which left boundaries fluid for a number of years, as peasants continually entered and left collective farms.[39] Only towards the mid-thirties did the government attempt to resolve these conflicts through a general survey.[40] But the results of the survey were highly

unsatisfactory in Belyi *raion* and local surveyors admitted in the fall of 1937 that the survey must be repeated.[41]

Ironically, Judge Brandin's case load would have been significantly heavier had it not been for the incompetence of his fellow officials. Many, if not most, of the cases submitted to the *raion* prosecutor by lower-level authorities were "so confused" that it was "unclear who should be held criminally responsible."[42] Such "confused" cases were usually thrown out, since neither the local NKVD nor the *raion* militia possessed a sufficient contingent of police officers (as Table 2 indicates) to handle all the complaints received from the countryside. Also, no Soviet counterparts to the pre-revolutionary rural police, the much-hated *uriadniki* and *strazhniki*, yet existed to ease the workload of the NKVD and militia.[43] The NKVD's informer network was no substitute for a rural police. These informers were largely concentrated in *raion* institutions in the town of Belyi. They were not empowered to make arrests and their political reliability was so questionable that *raion* authorities outside of the NKVD decided to run a general security check on this informer network in the fall of 1937.[44] The *raion* prosecutor's office, which was also empowered to conduct investigations along with the NKVD and militia, consisted only of the prosecutor himself and a harried, near-hysterical secretary, who had been driven to an unsuccessful suicide attempt by repeated efforts, beginning in 1928, to expel her from the party. By 1937, this woman was capable of doing little more than losing or filing away uninvestigated complaints.[45]

The heavy demands of office were not the only burden that Belyi's party member-officials bore. Party members, at least in theory, were required to participate in a broad spectrum of off-the-job activities, ranging from political studies and remedial

education (if necessary) to making speeches on the collective farms on official holidays and involvement in all the various political and economic campaigns of the government, particularly those directed towards the countryside. With all these activities, many officials lacked sufficient time to devote to their regular jobs, as V. D. Zakharchenkov complained:

> I am the head of the *raion* office of internal trade, a party organizer, an agitator, and an emissary (*upolnomochennyi*) to a cluster of rural soviets. Now I am also attached to a collective farm. I also need to spend some time on political education, to study. All this occupies twenty-five days a month. If you add up the time devoted to meetings, conferences and agitation, there remains only five days a month for me to do my regular job. During campaigns, like spring sowing and harvest, we all become workers in the *raizo* [*raion* land department, the government agency responsible for overseeing the operation of the collective farms]. During spring sowing we are in the villages continually, i.e., we were ordered not to leave before it was over. During harvest, we are also there for a month. And then there is also the procurements campaign. I am seriously ill. And no one even thinks of asking about my health.[46]

Not even the topmost officials in Belyi were exempt from such endeavors. During the campaigns to which Zakharchenkov referred, the *raikom* bureau, the executive organ of the *raion* party committee, which generally met every few days, closed down for two to six weeks on end. *Raikom* bureau members, the most important officials in Belyi, were dispatched at

Table 7: Wage Structure among Belyi *Raion* Communists and Selected Occupations and Professionals, 1934-1935

Distribution of wages within the Belyi raion *party organization as of September 27, 1934*

Monthly Income (in rubles)	*Raion* Party Members and Candidates Receiving Such Income	
	Number	Percent
100 or Less	40	19.7
101-150	37	18.2
151-200	46	22.7
201-250	25	12.3
251-300	32	15.8
301-500	22	10.8
Over 500	1	0.5

Wages of selected professions and occupations, 1934-1935

Occupation/ Profession	Monthly Salary (in rubles)	Occupation/ Profession	Monthly Salary (in rubles)
Engineer[1]	500 to 600	Feldsher (rural)	160 to 200
Doctor (town)	300 to 400	Agronomist	100 to 200
Doctor (rural)	275 to 360	Zootechnician	100 to 200
Teacher	240 to 300	Accountant	105
Pharmacist	224 to 400	Secretary (clerical)	85
Dentist	225 to 350	Typist	80
Feldsher (town)	180 to 225		

1. Salary offered to a Leningrad engineer to relocate to the Western *oblast'* to reconstruct a local factory. This salary is likely to be higher than that of the average engineer.

Table 7 (Continued)

Salaries of full time party functionaries, 1934

Position within the Party	Monthly Salary (in rubles)
Raikom Secretaries	350 to 400
Raikom Instructors	300 to 350
Manager of *raikom* Party Office	250 to 300
Obkom Instructors	400
Secretary of a Large Factory PPO in Smolensk	300

Source: WKP 313, 100; WKP 235, 12-15; WKP 176, 163-164; WKP 234, 278, 313-314, 366, 408, 425, 457, 487; WKP 111, 212; and WKP 386, 331.

these times to the collective farms to oversee the campaigns, along with the rest of the urban party *aktiv*.[47] Faced with such a work schedule, many high officials, like *raion* soviet executive committee chairman Shitov, reported working often until 3:00 a.m. and not finding time for a vacation for several years.[48] Others, like Zakharchenkov (quoted above), apparently enjoyed no regular days off. Moreover, the endemic confusion engendered by repeated territorial reorganizations of the thirties, the chronic shortages of vital supplies, and the almost universal inaccuracy of official statistics upon which economic planning was based did not render these officals' jobs any easier. In turn, the many tasks required of these officials and their lack of adequate education for their jobs further reduced the accuracy of the information they provided the central government.

The lives these officials lived off-the-job were by no means comfortable or luxurious. The perquisites of party membership in a locality like Belyi in

the thirties were surprisingly meager, even for high-ranking *raion* officials. These perquisites consisted in the main of advantages in obtaining apartments,[49] an important consideration given the chronic housing shortage, and a more secure, although not necessarily more diverse, supply of food.[50] The wage structure of Belyi Communists, outlined in Table 7, was low in relation to higher status professionals of that time, like doctors, engineers and school teachers. The median wage among party members in 1934 was more comparable to that of a *feldsher*, a para-professional medical worker, really little more than a nurse, traditionally considered underpaid in Russia. Leading full-time party functionaries, however, received salaries comparable to those of doctors.

Like all others on government or institutional payrolls in the thirties, party members only rarely were paid on time. Worse off were those Communists who served as rural soviet chairmen, rural school teachers, or employees of the Machine Tractor Stations, who could routinely expect to go without a paycheck for two to three months at a stretch.[51] Not even full-time party officials on party payrolls were exempt from such delays. Party finances, like those of other Soviet institutions in the thirties, were in a chaotic condition, and the party rarely operated in the black.[52] Often *raikom* secretaries sought to circumvent these financial problems by delving into the funds of other institutions, particularly economic institutions, to meet party payrolls. Such acts, although common in the mid-thirties, inevitably provoked the wrath of higher party authorities, insistent that the party remain self-financing, apart from the government.[53]

To be sure, party membership did provide some Communists with special party rations (*paiki*) in times of food shortages. But less than a fifth of the party members in Belyi *raion* qualified for such rations,[54] and some officials not thus provided

reported going hungry.[355] Yet all schoolteachers were guaranteed special rations in the mid-thirties, along with medical workers and other members of the rural intelligentsia.[356] Just what besides grain products were included in the party rations is unclear. Petitions to higher authorities for inclusion of fats and vegetables are to be found in the Smolensk Archive and appear to have been satisfied only to a limited degree.[357] Many local officials including the Belyi *raion* prosecutor and the chairman of the *raion* soviet executive committee, felt compelled by the lack of meat and milk to keep personal livestock-- pigs and cattle that grazed on a grassy square in front of the building in which the main government and party institutions were housed in Belyi.[358] The size and quality of the party rations might be gauged from a "rare privilege" bestowed by *oblast'* authorities on the Belyi *raikom* secretary and the chairman of the Belyi *raion* soviet executive committee upon the occasion of the eigtheenth anniversary of the October Revolution in 1935. The two Belyi officials were offered a choice of 400 rubles "material aid," approximately the equivalent of a month's salary, *or* a length of cloth from which a suit might be made and a 200-250 ruble basket of produce, containing such delicacies as ham, butter, sausage, cheese, sugar, flour, tea and chocolate candies. The price list attached to this offer for selection purposes indicates clearly that the basket was intended to be a modest one in size: ham was listed at 20 to 25 rubles a kilogram and sausage at 15 to 20 rubles.[359]

Some party members also sought to utilize their official positions and personal contacts within the trade network to bolster their meager living standards through "self-supply," purchasing goods under the counter or "at the head of the line." But the involvement of *raikom* secretaries-- or their wives-- in such practices were sharply condemned by higher authorities, who at times demanded that goods thus

obtained be returned.[50] Some *raion* officials in the Western *oblast'* were removed from office for "self supply" and this kind of petty corruption figured in charges levied against some of the victims of the Great Purges.[51] Moreover, the goods most sought after-- bicycles, leather boots, double-breasted suits or hay to feed one's personal livestock-- illuminate the low standard of living that generally prevailed in the party and nation at this time.[52]

THE UNDERGOVERNED COUNTRYSIDE

Overworked, undereducated, and not even all fully secured with adequate food supplies or regular pay, Belyi's party organization coped valiantly, albeit increasingly ineffectively, with the enormous task of governing the countryside. It was here that party saturation rates scarcely exceeded those of the mid-twenties, with each of the 103 rural-based party members and candidates in 1937, "facing a nonparty mass of 575 persons," to use the words of Belyi *raikom* party secretary Karpovskii.[53] The proportion of Belyi *raion* party members resident in the countryside declined considerably since the mid-twenties, from 73.1% in 1925 to 44.4% in 1937. This decline occurred even as over-all party saturation rates improved and the representation of persons of peasant origins within the party significantly increased, as Table 8 demonstrates.

The growing urban orientation of the Belyi *raion* party organization resulted from the interplay of several different factors. First, the membership screenings or "purges" of 1935-1937,[54] appear to have fallen most heavily upon rural-based and peasant-born Communists, as Table 8 indicates. Rural primary party organizations (PPOs) were prevented from recruiting new members to replace those expelled by a general ban on party admissions, which was lifted only

Table 8: Urban-Rural Balance Within the Belyi *Raion* Party Organization, 1925-1937

[In percentages of party membership]

Year	Where Local Communists Resided		Percent of Party Membership of Peasant Origins
	Town	Country	
1925	26.9	73.1	33.8
1934	45.7	54.3	76.9
1937	55.6	44.4	61.6

Source: WKP 321, 135-139; Fainsod, *Smolensk Under Soviet Rule*; WKP 313, 33, 47, 100, 125, and 147.

at the end of 1936.[45] At the same time, the local bureaucracy expanded throughout the thirties, with the onset of the Five-Year Plans that considerably expanded employment opportunities in town at a time when current salary scales strongly favored those employed in the urban sector.[46]

Then, too, by the mid-thirties, even such an isolated provincial backwater as Belyi could boast of amenities rarely or not at all encountered in the countryside, like an electric power plant, a new public bath (although still no running water), a *raion* library with a 30,000 volume collection, and a 280 seat cinema, equipped for sound in 1935.[47] In town, there were also other Communists to socialize with, an important consideration. Approximately a third of the rural Communists in the *raion* in 1934 were isolated Communists, who lived so far removed from other party members, they were not even assigned to primary party organizations.[48] Besides, in town one could always drop by the *raikom* party offices, where

a game of billiards was said to be often in progress.[69]

Inhabitants of rural localities, on the other hand, had to content themselves with six mobile movie theatres that visited each of the *raion*'s 210 collective farms only infrequently. Less than half the collective farms possessed "red corners" (small libraries of predominately political literature), and the thirty-four rural soviet libraries in the *raion* jointly held a total book fund of 7,000 volumes. These libraries were usually housed in rundown or unsuitable facilities, unheated even at the height of winter. They were also often staffed by unqualified and sometimes outright unsuitable "hut librarians" (*izbachi*), cronies of the rural soviet chairman, attracted to this position by its hundred ruble a month salary.[70] In the Matrennikovskii rural soviet, admittedly an extreme case, the official hut librarian was a functional illiterate and spent his time on the job drinking with the rural soviet chairman. The hut library here existed only "on paper," possessing no books or even a room of its own in the rural soviet building. The periodicals to which the rural soviet was cajoled to subscribe by the party, even *Pravda*, were stashed away in the chairman's office and utilized by members of the rural soviet for rolling cigarettes, to the dismay of the local schoolteachers.[71] In the Medvedevskii rural soviet, in the absence of any soviet or Komsomol-sponsored cultural or social activities, village youths were left with little to do but to gather in the evenings "under the leadership of the class enemy" to drink *samogon* (home-brewed vodka) and sing "counterrevolutionary" *chastushki* such as:

Semenovcha kralina,	Semenovcha thief,
ubili Kirova,	they killed Kirov,
ub'uit i Stalina.	they'll kill Stalin, too.[72]

An even more important development contributing to the outflux of rural Communists to town was the deterioration of the *raion*'s once prosperous agricultural economy under the impact of the heavy procurements and taxation policies of the early to mid-thirties. The decline of agriculture was also fueled by the imposition from above of improper, inconsistent and often non-existent crop rotation practices on the collective farms that exhausted the soil and contributed to the low harvests of the mid-thirties and the crop failure of 1936.[73] Mass collectivization came late to Belyi *raion*, as was generally the case in the non-black soil region. At the beginning of 1934, 46.8% of the peasant households in the *raion* still lived outside the collective farms.[74] But in the next twenty-two months, there was a precipitous upsurge in collectivization that resulted in the collectivization of 91% of the *raion*'s peasant households by October 1935.[75] This turn of affairs was encouraged by the imposition of a new set of outrageously high taxes upon the remaining private proprietors. These taxes could run as much as 95 to 140% of a family's current income for ordinary individual peasants and 200% for artisans and kulaks (or, in many cases, former kulaks).[76] The new taxes resulted in the rapid impoverishment of individual peasants. Overburdened with taxes and higher procurement rates, individual households came to possess significantly less livestock and cultivated less land per capita than the surrounding collective farmers.[77] Individual proprietors were compelled to sell off their personal possessions, livestock and farming equipment to pay their tax bills or risked having their property seized by local authorities and sold to cover their arrears.[78] These destitute families were left with little choice but to leave agriculture entirely or to join a collective farm.

By the mid-thirties, however, many collective farms proved increasingly reluctant to accept new

members, who almost always now were incapable of contributing to a farm's capital stock and could only serve as a drain on the farm's meager income.[79] The farm's resources were already severely strained by the overly onerous procurements policies of these years. In 1935 and 1936, between 34 and 40% of the total collective farm grain harvest nationwide was taken as procurements by the government.[80] Economic hardships on the farms were accompanied by open hostility displayed by many new collective farmers and some old ones as well towards veterans of the *raion*'s original collective farm movement, who were among the soviet regime's staunchest supporters in the countryside. *Raion* party leaders appeared alarmed throughout 1937 about "the bad mood" prevailing on many of the *raion*'s collective farms in the wake of the 1936 crop failure.[81]

At least two cases of overt persecution of government supporters in the countryside surfaced in Belyi *raion* that year. One harried peasant couple, who had led the local assault upon the kulaks in 1929-1933, found themselves by 1937 pariahs in the collective farm that they had helped found. They reported that they were "surrounded by such hatred that it is impossible to live." They were denied work assignments by the farm's present leadership so they were unable to accumulate enough labor days to supply themselves with food. They attributed this state of affairs significantly to the recent, heavy influx of former individual peasants into the collective farm.[82] Another former poor peasant (*bedniak*) activist of the early period of collectivization was expelled from his collective farm. This man was restored to membership only after his brother, currently serving in the army, threatened to go AWOL to restore his brother's membership, forcing the local party organization to intervene on his brother's behalf.[83]

With such hostility compounding economic hardship, which also peaked with the 1936 crop failure, it is no wonder that Belyi's rural Communists, even those recruited from the activists of the initial period of collectivization, came to prefer political appointments in town. Responsible posts outside the *raion* capital, such as the directorship of the Baturinskii MTS, remained vacant in 1937 for over six months. No local urban-based Communists apparently were willing to accept this appointment, which came with a salary higher than that of the *raikom* secretary.[84] By 1936-1937, only five of the party's twenty-one primary party organizations were to be found outside of town-- four on collective farms and one on the Shamilovo pig *sovkhoz*, supplemented by ten party-candidate groups and two party-Komsomol groups, organized on a territorial basis within the rural soviets.[85] In 1934, however, the party possessed thirteen PPOs, two candidate groups and six party-Komsomol groups in rural localities, overwhelmingly located on collective farms. In addition, there were in 1934 over one hundred isolated rural Communists, scattered about the *raion*, again predominantly collective farm members.[86] This isolation of the party from the collective farms coincided ironically with the upsurge in collectivization, which would have seemed to indicate a need for greater, not less, party presence on the collective farms.[87]

By 1937, there remained only 106 rural Communists in Belyi *raion*-- forty-nine members and fifty-four candidates[88]-- compared to 197 rural Communists in 1934.[89] The decline in rural membership was the result of the 1935-1936 party "cleansings," the outflux of rural party members to town, and the loss of eight rural soviets out of the forty-two the *raion* possessed in 1934, due to yet another territorial reorganization.[90] The party was left with insufficient cadres to staff the roughly seven hundred main positions of authority in the countryside, as Table 9

Table 9: Party Saturation of Official Positions in the Countryside in Belyi *Raion* in 1937

Population of Rural Localities in 1937:		60,950
Number of Rural Communists:	Members	49
	Candidate Members	54
	Total	103
Approximate Number of Positions of Authority in the Countryside:		700

Position	Number
Chairmen of Rural Soviets	34[1]
Rural Judges (*sel'sudy*)	34
Rural Librarians (*izbachi*)	34
Directors of *Sovkhozes*	3
Directors of MTS	2
Assistant Directors of MTS (Head of Political Section)	2
Chairmen of Collective Farms	210
Approximate Number of Schools, Grades 1-9	78[2]
Approximate Number of Rural Teachers, Grades 1-9	300[2]
Number of Collective Farms	210
Number of Collective Farms with PPOs	4
Raizo Officials Permanently Attached to Collective Farm Work[3]	11

1. The average population covered by a rural soviet was 1793.

2. With teachers and schools, I have assumed that approximately 15% of the *raion*'s 92 schools (grades 1-9) and 356 teachers (grades 1-9) were located in the town of Belyi which possessed a population of 6,318 in 1937 (10.6% of the *raion*'s population).

3. All of whom were *raizo* agronomists.

Source: WKP 321, 126-142

demonstrates.[91] No wonder that all the teachers in three rural schools in 1937 were said to be members of the old nobility or that three teachers in another village school were reported to be priests' daughters,[92] feeding the party's endemic fears in the 1930s of being overwhelmed by so-called "class aliens," members of the privileged orders of the old regime and/or those former private proprietors who had prospered under the mixed economy of the NEP.[93]

The party sought to operate outside the town through the *raion's* thirty-four rural soviets (*sel'skie sovety*), where the party's presence was more substantial than on the collective farms. In 1937, 71.2% of the rural soviet chairman belonged to the party, up from 61.1% in 1934.[94] The rural soviets, often mislabeled "*village* soviets" by scholars, were actually supra-village institutions in Belyi *raion*, with approximately half to a third of the territory of the pre-revolutionary *volost'*, anywhere from two to thirteen collective farms, and a population of 1,793 on the average,[95], scattered about in 24 "populated points" and numerous *khutora* (isolated farmsteads).[96]

In theory, each rural soviet was a representative body, consisting of as many as twenty to twenty-two delegates, who were responsible for performing a variety of tasks and functions through a number of departments (*otdelenie*) that were manned by the deputies and dealt with such issues as livestock rearing, fieldwork, financial-budgetary matters, culture, commerce, procurements, roads and communications, revolutionary legality, defense (i.e., the draft), the liquidation of illiteracy, and public services. Many, if not most of the departments, however, existed only "on paper," and much responsibility fell upon the shoulders of the soviet chairman, a critical but not always reliable link in the chain of govern-

ment. Most rural soviet chairmen were isolated Communists, devoid of the support of local party organizations. Whenever the chairman occupied himself with "systematic drunkeness," not a rare occurence in Belyi *raion* in 1937, most government functions (save the draft and revolutionary legality) ceased to be performed all together.[97]

In the ill-fated Matrennikovskii rural soviet in 1937, local soviet employees and deputies joined the chairman in his drinking bouts, carousing daily in the rural soviet offices and occasionally popping out the windows to blow party horns at passersby. Here, as a result of "the weak leadership of the collective farms on the part of the rural soviet chairmen," control of the collective farms passed into the hands of his current drinking companions, men with known criminal records, some of whom were said to have been former dekulakized kulaks. Such collective farm chairmen rapidly impoverished the local collective farms.[98] Yet the collective farmers proved incapable of removing such chairmen so long as the latter were careful to wine, dine and keep the rural soviet chairman in a general state of inebriation upon his infrequent visits to the collective farms.[99]

In the countryside, the party also relied upon the support of a local *aktiv*, often described in party documents as "the best people." But such persons were evidently in short supply in the mid-thirties, averaging little more than five individuals per rural soviet in Belyi *raion*.[100] The *aktiv*, activists involved with the workings of local government, consisted of party sympathizers,[101] Komsomols,[102] and persons without political affiliation in roughly equal proportions, recruited in the main from local teachers, low-level rural officials, and collective farm Stakhanovites.[103] Party leaders regarded the Stakhanovites in particular as "the party's reserve," from which party members and future leaders should be drawn.[104] But fifty-four of the *raion's* sixty-six

Stakhanovites in 1937 were women,[105] since much of the labor involved in the cultivation of flax, the *raion's* leading crop, was generally regarded as "women's work."[106] The sexual composition of the local Stakhanovites reinforced the weakness of the party and *aktiv* in rural localities. Women were significantly less prone than men to become politically active. Less than 14% of the *raion's* party members in the mid-thirties and only 17% of the members of local agitational collectives, set up in the fall of 1937, were women, at a time when females accounted for a large majority of the adult population, due to male deaths in World War I and the Civil War.[107]

Without a sufficiently large rural party membership or *aktiv*, the countryside could only be governed "campaign style," as the Belyi *raikom* secretary disparagingly called the local style of government.[108] Town-based party activists were intermittently dispatched to rural localities as emissaries to bolster local cadres at critical intervals in the agricultural cycle, particularly during sowing, harvest and procurement campaigns. Contact with the countryside, however, was sporadic and far from comprehensive. Stretches of six months or more could easily pass without any representative from the *raion* center appearing in any given rural soviet.[109] Some villages in the *raion* remained unvisited by anyone from the *raion* center (much less an official emissary) for a year and a half.[110] *Raion* authorities, by their own admission, "seriously occupied" themselves in a sustained manner with only three of the *raion's* 210 collective farms.[111] With the other collective farms, both the party *raikom* and the MTS appeared to monitor developments through the reading of the official minutes of collective farm meetings.[112]

Raion leaders were hampered in their efforts to govern the countryside by the nation's underdeveloped transportation and communications network, com-

pounded by local terrain. Outside of town, paved roads simply did not exist. The proliferation of bogs, forests and rivers, combined with the distance from the railway lines, rendered visits even to neighboring villages often impossible, save through circuitous and highly time-consuming detours around forests and bogs.[113] To be sure, by the mid-thirties, the *raion* center was nominally connected with the rural soviets by telephone and issued, when it could, daily, sometime even hourly, "telephonegrams" to the rural soviet chairmen at the height of agricultural work and procurements. In return, *raion* authorities expected daily, detailed reports by telephone from the rural soviets at such times, resplendent with up-to-date statistics on local progress in performing the tasks at hand.[114] But no telephone connections to the collective farms yet existed; and existing telephone service suffered repeated interruptions. For over two months in early 1937, the telephones in the party *raikom* and *raion* soviet executive committee offices were out of order, even though the telephone repair office was located only "ten steps down the hall" from these other offices. The local party first secretary repeatedly visited in person the repair office weekly and sometimes daily to try to persuade the repairmen to restore service. Such intervention was to little avail, since repairwork was hindered by a shortage of vital supplies.[115] Eight months later, in October 1937, telephone connections still had not been restored with all rural soviets on a permanent basis.[116]

Raion authorities consequently depended on emissaries as their main means of contact with the countryside, if not often their only sources of information about developments outside of town. But the means of transportation available for such emissaries in the mid-thirties was scarcely sufficient. Employees of the *raion* land department (*raizo*), the local agency responsible for monitoring the work of

the collective farms, were obliged to travel to the countryside by bicycle, which rendered the *raizo* incapable of maintaining contact with the collective farms for much of the year, given the length of the Russian winter.[117] Party *raikom* instructors, permanent *raikom* staff members responsible for political work with rural cadres and overseeing the conduct of such cadres,[118] were provided horses in 1937 for their frequent trips to the countryside.[119] But local terrain, the distances *raion* emissaries were compelled to travel and the frequency of such trips led some thus dispatched to complain that they felt more like "jockeys" than political organizers, dashing madly from one rural soviet and one collective farm to another, without sufficient time to acquaint themselves with local conditions, much less to render local cadres much aid.[120] Rural soviet and collective farm chairmen at any rate vigorously denied the utility of such whirlwind visits. They maintained that *raion* emissaries rarely did more than "say a few words and then leave," blaming anything that subsequently went wrong on "low level local workers," who were treated like "the spitoons of the party."[121] V. A. Fomenkov, the party organizer of the NKVD PPO, maintained of his trips into rural localities:

> We go to meetings where we are given orders and we go to the rural soviets and collective farms where we repeat these orders and demand that they be fulfilled within the time limits established. But the masses, the *aktiv*, remains on the sidelines.[122]

Many town-based party members, however, proved reluctant to accept such assignments in the countryside, save on official holidays, when urban Communists turned out in large numbers on the collective farms to deliver the usual ritualistic speeches demanded of party members on such occasions.[123]

Political zeal alone did not account for such high turnouts, since these festivities were inevitably accompanied by banquets on the collective farms. But urban Communists dispatched to the countryside for routine economic and political campaigns frequently failed to show up for work assignments, even during critical periods like procurements.[124] Others appeared several days late or only came to take advantage of a trip out of town to act as if they were "on vacation," hunting, fishing, or, even worse, drinking with the collective farmers and expecting to be entertained at the height of the agricultural season, when the workload on the collective farms peaked.[125] As a result, party leaders in Belyi *raion* repeatedly maintained throughout 1937 that most party resolutions pertaining to the countryside, even the ambitious and detailed sowing plans that so impressed Merle Fainsod with their militant and military-like language, remained unfulfilled, little more than elaborate literary exercises.[126]

Banditry also continued to plague the Belyi countryside, aided by the weakness of government and the absence of any permanent police presence outside the *raion* capital. Indeed, some local bandits appear to have been active in the *raion* continuously since the time of the Civil War, although banditry here, as elsewhere in the Western *oblast'*, was on the decline by 1937.[127] The helplessness of *raion* authorities *vis-a-vis* the countryside was expressed by *raikom* secretary Karpovskii, when he declared, "Wreckers, oppositionists and rightists are many in our rural localities. We don't lead a struggle against them in the localities. This is the style of work we possess."[128] The top ranking rural-based Communist in Belyi, Ia. P. Senin, the head of the political section on the Shamilovo pig *sovkhoz*, echoed similar sentiments: "Comrades! We can't forget that the enemy carries on work especially where our primary par-

Table 10: Fulfillment of Agricultural Procurements in Belyi *Raion*, 1934-1937

[In percentage of agricultural procurements fulfilled]

Product	1934	1935	1936	1937
Grain	92.5	91.8	88.9	89.7
Potatoes	95.0	68.6	67.3	84.0
Hay	72.0	70.4	76.0	77.0
Flax seed	93.6	100.0	108.8[1]	n.d.
Flax-fiber	76.0	116.0	95.0[1]	n.d.

1. Subsequently these figures were declared to have been grossly falsified, but no revised figures could be found in the Smolensk Archive.

Source: WKP 321, 232; WKP 111, 221.

ty organizations are absent."[129] Such organizations, significantly, were almost completely absent from the countryside.

THE CRISIS OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

In the mid-thirties, as the party's rural membership shrank in Belyi *raion*, problems in collecting agricultural procurements mounted, as Table 10 demonstrates, although this was the one task of critical importance to higher authorities. To be sure, the 1936 crop failure figured prominently in the decline in local procurements collections. After the 1936 harvest, many collective farms and individual peasants refused outright to fulfill their obligations to the state.[130] The mood in the countryside ran so strongly against the government by the end of 1936

that even the current, highly authoritarian Belyi *raikom* secretary Kovalev declared that "he would be driven out of the *raion* within a week" were he to try to collect the shortfall in procurements.[131]

But the collection of procurements scarcely improved in 1937, except for potatoes, notwithstanding the record harvest of that year and a substantial across-the-board reduction in collective farm obligations to the government, including agricultural procurement payments.[132] Indeed, 1937 procurements collections for milk, meat and flax, the *raion's* major crop, ran significantly *below* 1936 procurements levels,[133] even though the harvest was more than 50% greater in 1937 and the payments owed the government in absolute amounts were no greater, and often somewhat less, than the amounts owed in 1936. Throughout the late summer and fall of 1937, collective farmers in Belyi *raion*, to the distress of local officials, proceeded to divide up the harvest among themselves, before first meeting their obligations to the government, which they were legally obliged to do.[134] Resistance to the use of MTS equipment, particularly Antonov Flax Pullers, which often malfunctioned, grew, along with refusals to make payments in kind to the MTS for services rendered, contributing to the growing bankruptcy of the MTS.[135]

Two new policies of the central soviet government, designed ironically to strengthen local government and bolster its authority among the populace seriously impaired the ability of local authorities to collect procurements and other payments from the peasant population. Local officials were forbidden by central decrees to continue, as they had done in the past, to fine peasants and confiscate peasant property at will through administrative procedures for nonpayment of taxes and procurements. Local authorities were now required first to obtain a court order before imposing fines or confiscating property, which required officials to prove before the courts

that the peasants concerned were indeed in arrears.[136] In light of chronic record keeping problems of low-level officials, due to their lack of proper education, proof that would stand up in court was not easily obtained. Besides, peasants forewarned by court proceedings would usually manage with traditional peasant cunning to hide property of interest to the tax collector before the latter could seize it to auction it off to cover peasant arrears. The new policy towards arrears was evidently inspired by mounting peasant protests against abuses in the collection of arrears.[137] When local officials ignored the new regulations and such abuses continued, show trials (*pokazatnye sudy*, the soviet press called them), prompted by peasant complaints, were organized in the first seven months of 1937 in Lepelsk, Sharevsk, Novominsk and Danilov *raions*. These trials of highly placed *raion* officials were attended by large turnouts of the local peasant population and were given wide publicity in the national press, helping to curb further violations of the new decrees.[138]

Simultaneously, the government early in 1937 decided to free the rural soviets from the responsibility of collecting tax, procurements and insurance payments, beginning July 1, 1937. The rationale behind this measure was to allow the rural soviets to concentrate their attention upon the provision of cultural and welfare services to the local populace. In this way, Soviet authorities hoped to dispell the common notion that the rural soviets were little more than "tax collecting agencies" before the forthcoming new soviet elections, scheduled for the end of 1937.[139] These elections, the first to be organized under the direct and secret ballot provisions of the new Stalin Constitution, may well have been expected to produce less reliable local agents for the central soviet government. In any case, new tax, procurements and insurance agents, numbering 33,200 nation-

wide, were to be recruited as members of the local bureaucracy, not subject to elections, in order to assume the financial tasks previously delegated to the rural soviets. But this new bureaucracy was evidently not yet in working order at the time that the rural soviet's financial responsibilities officially elapsed at the start of the 1937 procurements campaign.[140]

Besides growing difficulties in the collection of procurements and other payments owed the government, there were other indications that the ability of the soviet government to influence developments in the countryside had seriously eroded. At the regular annual accounting meetings on the collective farms to divide up the proceeds of the meager 1936 harvest in Belyi *raion*, forty collective farm chairmen (19% of the total number), including seven Communist Party members, were removed from office by local collective farmers, without prior sanction or even the knowledge of *raion* authorities. Although this development was deplored in local party meetings in the opening months of 1937, no investigations into the reasons behind these ousters, even the ousters of the seven Communists, were made by the end of the year.[141] Once again, new regulations of the central government contributed to the declining ability of *raion* authorities to have their own way in regard to the countryside. In 1935, the soviet government endorsed a new model charter for the nation's collective farms that was subsequently introduced over the next two years. The new charter regularized the relationship between the collective farms and the state and greatly increased the voice of local collective farmers in the selection of collective farm chairmen. Under the new charter, no chairman could assume office on the collective farm unless he was first elected by a majority vote of the collective farm general assembly, attended by a quorum of two-thirds of the collective farm membership.[142] This measure inhibited

the ability of *raion* authorities and rural soviet chairmen to appoint collective farm chairmen from above, without taking the opinion of local collective farmers into account. Those local officials, like Belyi *raikom* secretary Kovalev, who persisted in making appointments from above were soundly censured by *oblast'* authorities in the fall of 1936.[143] This censure evidently helped to curb such practices in Belyi, accounting in part for the party's "loss of control" in the 1936 elections on the collective farms. The party *raikom* received only two complaints from local collective farmers about the appointment of collective farm chairmen from above in 1937, and both complaints, significantly, concerned appointments made in 1935.[144]

In 1937, also, fistfights between collective farmers and individual peasants over pasture and garden plot land erupted in the spring and summer of 1937. There were even incidents of the successful seizure of garden plot land by individual peasants from some collective farms.[145] *Raion* authorities also proved helpless to prevent collective farmers from diverting *en masse* limited supplies of fertilizer intended for use on collective lands to their private plots, although this practice was noted by *raion* leaders in party meetings.[146] Not even traditional peasant patriotism and fear of war appeared to work in the Soviet government's behalf in 1937, as such sentiments traditionally did. One-day military maneuvers of local reservists in December 1937 were disrupted in some rural soviets because local collective farm chairmen failed to provide military authorities with the number of horses requested for the maneuvers.[147] Collections of the annual quasi-voluntary defense loan ran only 67% of 1936 levels at the end of the summer, despite the good harvest, which usually bolstered such loan contributions.[148] When acting NKVD head I. I. Zimnitskii appeared on the Komsomolets Collective Farm July 4, 1937 to col-

lect the loan, he was greeted with cries, "How can we support a loan when there is no bread?" and "None of us will give anything!" Zimnitskii's response, stressing the capitalist encirclement and threat of war, prompted one collective farmer, Ignat Rodchenkov to cry: "Let war come rather than such a life as this! The sooner the better! I'll be first to go!" To the NKVD man's dismay, a number of collective farmers present agreed with Rodchenkov.[149]

The ability of Belyi officials to govern the countryside in the wake of the 1936 crop failure was apparently also undermined by the new Stalin Constitution, officially adopted in December 1936. The constitution seems to have called the collective farm system and the authority of political leaders into question in the minds of some peasants, who like their pre-revolutionary ancestors, continued to read what they wanted to in official acts and legislation.[150] The new constitution, after all, promised the populace "the world's freest elections," and there were elements within both the national government and the local Belyi *raion* party organization willing to live up to this lavish promise by allowing multiple candidates representing diverse social and political tendencies to run for office in the first soviet elections under the new constitution, scheduled for the end of 1937.[151] Confronted with such interpretations of the constitution, which appear the most common interpretations throughout much of 1937, some Communists in Belyi began to voice fears at party meetings that the local party or at least its current leaders might well be defeated in the elections.[152] Only in October, well into the election campaign, did national authorities lay such fears to rest by insisting on a single slate of party and non-party candidates, one for each position, selected among the candidates nominated by local electoral commissions, under clear-cut party leadership.[153]

The new constitution also promised equality of all before the law for the first time in Russia, thus rendering questionable the legality of the class discriminatory legislation directed against kulaks and individual peasants in recent years. Faced with the prospect of legal redress, individual peasants began to display a new assertiveness; and the numbers of individual peasants began to grow, as the *raion*'s collectivization rate slipped from 91% to 85.6% of local peasant households.[154] Some exiled kulaks, even men who had been sentenced to jail for "counter-revolutionary crimes" and had been released in a political amnesty in the mid-thirties,[155] began to return home to their native villages and to demand the return of property confiscated during dekulakization and collectivization, based on the provisions of the new constitution.[156] At the July 1937 *Raion* Party Conference in Belyi, *raion* prosecutor Mal'kov summed up these developments in alarm:

> Now former people (*byvshie liudi*) raise their heads and in many cases we pay no attention. Individual peasants now cry that the constitution allows the re-introduction of individual farms, and we still in many cases ourselves have not adequately studied the Stalin Constitution. We have not explained that the existence of individual farms is allowed only temporarily. There are cases of collective farms converting themselves back into individual farms, acquiring their own horses. Individual presumptious, alien persons have now begun to approach me and, I think, people in the *raion* soviet executive committee as well with questions about returning the homes that were taken away from them [during dekulakization]. And this happens because we have given them full rights as citizens and

> have not explained to them the obligations of citizens under the Stalin Constitution. They study their rights well but the obligations of citizens, they cannot get into their heads.[157]

Complaints even began to trickle in from the countryside of such returnees, including men with criminal records, being elected chairmen of collective farms,[158] a development facilitated because the earlier ban against the admission of former kulaks into collective farms had been lifted by the central Soviet government in 1935.[159]

Under these conditions, the mood of the rural population, deemed outright "anti-government" by some officials, also spread to low-level local officials in the Belyi countryside. In February 1937, at a meeting of a rural soviet called to commemorate the death of Commissar of Heavy Industry, Sergei Ordzhonikidze, the rural soviet chairman Vlasenev was said to have declared of the national government in a confused and rambling official eulogy: "If all of them were to die, it would be good."[160] Later in the year, the frustrations of rural soviet chairmen and collective farm chairmen within the party with the policies and personalities of higher *raion* and *oblast'* officials and the local judiciary was to fuel the Great Purges in Belyi *raion*, which decimated the topmost party and government leaders in the *raion* in the second half of 1937.[161]

In turn, the Great Purges and the freewheeling party elections of 1937, the first held under the secret ballot required by the new Stalin Constitution, [162] further undermined the authority of local officials in the eyes of many peasants. D. I. Morozov, the chairman of the Gridenskii rural soviet, pointed out to the June 4, 1937 Belyi *raion* party conference:

> After [Belyi *raikom* secretary] Kovalev was purged (*chistili*), people in the Gridenskii rural soviet declared, "Once they have taken away Kovalev, it means other leaders will go too" ...Then during the party elections, we criticized Comrade Stogov [the chairman of the Belyi *raion* soviet executive committee] and nothing came of this. But in the Gridenskii rural soviet, people say, "Stogov is a kulak and therefore it is not necessary to fulfill the decisions of the *raion* soviet executive committee".[163]

In the end, however, the Great Purges may also have helped to restore a semblance of popular confidence in the government. No doubt, many ordinary rural inhabitants came to believe in 1937-1938, as did General P. G. Grigorenko, the 1960s dissident who was born a peasant, that the Purges were just "historical retribution for activities against the people."[164] Certainly, the decimation of the top-most national and local leaders that stopped short only of Stalin himself, must have exerted a powerful impression on a peasant population that had long subscribed to the political myth of the tsar, exonerating the nation's top-most leaders for the nation's problems and their own grievances and laying the blame for these problems and grievances upon the leader's lieutenants, the 1930s equivalent of "the nobles and bureaucrats" of yesteryear.[165] Indeed, one wonders what role "survivals" of past political attitudes, like the myth of the tsar, and popular dissatisfactions over the 1936 crop failure played in the Great Purges. As far as Belyi *raion* is concerned, however, Roy Medvedvev is correct in maintaining of the time of the Great Purges that "ordinary people...slept far more peacefully by night than the Communists did in these years."[166] Low-level officials within and without the Communist Party also

slept more peacefully in Belyi *raion* than did their political higher-ups in the *raion* administration. Arrests and convictions of collective farm chairmen for non-fulfillment of procurements and other offenses, common in earlier years, ceased in Belyi *raion* in late 1936 and still had not resumed at the end of 1937, despite exhortations from *oblast'* officials in the late summer of 1937 that such convictions were necessary to restore a semblance of order and compliance with government directives in the countryside.[167] Mass meetings, held on collective farms to discuss "wrecking in agriculture" in the fall of 1937, seemed to rebound in accusations against higher authorities rather than searches for "wreckers" among local collective farmers. At any rate, it was *raizo* officials, not ordinary collective farmers, who feared to attend such meetings and stayed away in large numbers, although the *raizo* was officially delegated with presiding over these sessions.[168]

The ultimate impact of the Great Purges in Belyi *raion* on the relationship of the regime and the populace, however, cannot be determined. Nor can we assess the impact on the mood of local peasants of the better harvests of the late thirties,[169] the lower procurements payments of these years,[170] and the higher prices paid for such procurements, particularly for technical crops, such as flax.[171] Soviet historians of the late thirties maintain that the various laws and decrees of 1935-1937 that contributed heavily to the undermining of government authority in Belyi *raion* in 1937 remained in force in subsequent years, permanently altering the relationship between the state and the nation's collective farms by placing that relationship more firmly on the grounds of legality and due process, which hitherto had been completely lacking.[172] If this is so, these measures could well have helped to strengthen the authority of the government in the long run.

But in all these spheres, evidence is simply lacking for Belyi *raion*. The Smolensk Archive abruptly breaks off its record of events in Belyi at the end of 1937. The rich, all-too-human fabric of government, its unexpected weaknesses and its many human foibles, suddenly gives way to a void and an irretrievable sense of loss. The records that could complete our story, along with so many of the people involved in it, evidently perished in the carnage of World War II. What we do know, however, is that the Communist Party in subsequent years devoted considerable efforts to rebuilding its political base in the countryside, with some success. Between 1938 and 1940, the number of Communist party members and candidates in nearby Leningrad *oblast'* doubled, and half of the new recruits entering the party in these years were residents of rural localities. The new rural Communists, here as elsewhere came largely from the elements of the rural population who had earlier comprised the rural non-party *aktiv*-- collective farm Stakhanovites, brigade leaders, agronomists and especially rural schoolteachers, who came to play an increasing role in the political life of the countryside as the war approached, significantly raising the skill level of the rural party apparatus.[173]

CONCLUSIONS

The experiences of Belyi *raion* in 1937 indicate that the Soviet political system of the 1930s was far more frail, complex, diverse and amenable to dramatic changes over time than scholars hitherto assumed. Instead of an all-powerful state capable of molding society to suit its ends and highly effective in achieving its political goals, we find at the grassroots a government far more human, more prey to events outside of its control (like crop failures) and more vulnerable to the vagaries of public opinion

than any of us have hitherto dared to imagine. In 1937 in Belyi *raion*, the Soviet regime governed the countryside insofar as the countryside was governed at all, dependent ultimately, like all governments, on the consent of the governed. Just how this weak government managed to turn the traditional peasant way of life upside down through the collectivization of agriculture and how it came to win its remarkable victory over the Nazi invaders in World War II should long occupy the attention of historians. Historians, too, must direct their attention beyond the *persona* of Joseph Stalin to events, like the 1936 crop failure and the resulting "bad mood" among the nation's rural majority, as possible contributing factors to the Great Purges. Certainly such a reorientation of Soviet studies is long overdue.

NOTES

1. Examples of such views include Robert C. Tucker (ed.) *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation* (New York, 1977); Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879-1929: A Study in History and Personality* (New York, 1977); Adam Ulam, *Stalin: The Man and His Era* (New York, 1973); Seweryn Bialer, *Stalin's Successors: Leadership, Stability, and Change in the USSR* (Cambridge, 1980) 7-61; Roy Medvedev, *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism* (New York, 1971); Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: Stalin's Purge of the Thirties* (New York, 1968); Helene Carriere D'encausse, *Stalin: Order Through Terror* (London and New York, 1981); Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (Cambridge, Ma., 1953); Stephen Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution* (New York, 1973); Moshe Lewin, *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power: A Study of Collectivization* (New York, 1968).

2. In recent years, however, scholars have come to explore other aspects of the Stalin era. See, for example, Sheila Fitzpatrick (ed.) *The Cultural Revolution in Russia* (Bloomington, Ind., 1978); Kenneth Bailes, *Technology and Society Under Lenin and Stalin* (Princeton, 1978); Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the USSR, 1921-1934* (Cambridge, 1981); J. Arch Getty, *The Origins of the Great Purges: The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered: 1933-1938* (New York, 1985).

3. M. A. Vyltsan, *Zavershaiushchii etap sozdaniia kolkhoznogo stroi (1935-1937 gg.)* (Moscow, 1978), 192.

4. For the contents of the archive by both file number and subject matter, see *Guide to the Records of the Smolensk oblast of the All-Union Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 1917-1941* (Washington, D. C., 1980). The guide, however, is no substitute for perusing the archive itself. The most valuable materials have yet to make their way into the archive guide. Not even the geographic designations in the guide are necessarily correct. Also, the archive is by no means complete, as all who have used it can testify. It appears to consist of random files that escaped destruction

in the fighting over Smolensk or at the hands of the Soviets as the latter prepared to abandon the city to the Nazi invaders. Other local archives in the occupied territories of the USSR apparently suffered similar fates.

5. J. Arch Getty, "Party and Purges in Smolensk, 1933-1937," *Slavic Review* Vol. 42, No. 1 (Spring 1983), 60-79. In general, as Stephen Cohen has pointed out in a recent essay, Fainsod's basic mode of thought in the 1950s, like that of many other American political scientists at the time, was profoundly anti-historical, leading him repeatedly in *How Russia is Ruled* to impose subsequent developments on earlier times. Stephen F. Cohen, "Old and New Approaches: Bolshevism and Stalinism," in Tucker (ed.) *Stalinism*, 5-10. The revised edition of Fainsod's classic textbook on Soviet government, however, abandoned the original ahistorical approach for a more historical one. See Jerry F. Hough and Merle Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union is Governed* (Cambridge, Ma., 1978). For Fainsod's study of Smolensk, see *Smolensk Under Soviet Rule* (New York, 1963).

6. The Smolensk Archive WKP 111 and WKP 321. Henceforth only the archival numbers will be cited.

7. Other archival materials relating to Belyi *raion* include WKP 203, WKP 362, WKP 363, WKP 101, WKP 241, WKP 385, WKP 239, WKP 266, WKP 313, WKP 477. *Oblast'* materials pertaining to Belyi include WKP 238, WKP 237, WKP 386, WKP 243, WKP 242, WKP 252, WKP 235, WKP 239 and WKP 244. The abundance of materials on Belyi led Fainsod to single out Belyi as a case study of government at the *raion* level. See *Smolensk Under Soviet Rule*, 122-137.

8. *Pravda* March 15, 1937, 3. For other references to the bad harvest of 1936, see *ibid.*, Jan. 3, 1937, 4; March 2, 1937, 3; March 6, 1937, 2; April 4, 1937, 1; June 9, 1937, 2; June 30, 1937, 3; August 21, 1937, 1; August 24, 1937, 3; and September 11, 1937, 1. As usual with a short harvest, actual yields varied greatly from one region of the country to another. According to *Pravda*, the 1936 harvest was deemed "good" in the Ukraine, Azovo-Chernomorsk Krai, Ordzhonikidze *oblast'*, the Crimea and Siberia and "especially bad" along the Volga, in Cheliabinsk *Oblast'*,

the Tatar ASSR, and the non-black soil region, which included the Western *oblast'* where Belyi *raion* was located. *Pravda*, August 21, 1937, 12. The problem in the Western oblast, however, appears to have been too much rather than too little precipitation. *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistvo v zapadnom raion RSFSR (1927-1937 gg.)* (Smolensk, 1968), 626. The grain harvest of Belyi *raion* in 1936 was down from average yields per hectare for the two previous years (1934 and 1935) by 11.8% for rye, 26.8% for oats and 17.5% for barley. In addition, the amount of land planted in grain in the *raion* was reduced by 4.4% between 1935 and 1937, further reducing the amount of grain harvested. The actual decline may well have been greater since these figures are based on biological yields and the biological yield for 1936 is known to have been more inflated than in previous years. WKP 321, 127 and Vyltsan, *Zavershaiushchii etap* 144.

9. *Pravda* July 20, 1937, 3 and August 3, 1937, 6 and Vyltsan, *Zavershaiuschchii etap*, 163. The supply situation began to ease in the final days of July 1937 and in August, when reports of abundant supplies and falling prices on the collective farm market began to make the pages of *Pravda*. *Pravda* July 28, 1937, 6; August 4, 1937, 4; August 7, 1937, 6; August 11, 1937, 6; August 17, 1937, 6; August 23, 1937, 6; August 26, 1937, 6.

10. Vyltsan, *Zavershaiushchii etap*, 102. Local officials in the Western *oblast'* tended to regard *trudoden* payments of at least 1.2 kilograms of grain per labor day as the minimum necessary to prevent hunger among collective farm families, without recourse to food loans or the collective farms' mutual aid funds (*kass*). WKP 176, 25. Actually *trudoden* payments varied widely from region to region. In nearby Ivanov *oblast'*, also in the non-black soil region, average *trudoden* payments ran .95 kilograms of grain per labor day in 1936. *Pravda*, June 30, 1937, 3.

11. *Pravda* April 4, 1937, 1.

12. WKP 238, 21, 43, 56-57, 66, 71, 79, 82, 96 and 215-216; WKP 321, 127. Of course, the food loans were not divided evenly but were reserved for those collective farm families

that needed them. In addition. substantial seed loans were made to the *raion* in the spring of 1937 for the planting of new crops.

13. For the timing of the Great Purges, see Getty, *The Origins of the Great Purges*, chapter 6; WKP 321, 158-304; WKP 111, 80-129, and 150-227; WKP 238, 343-344. Many of the charges raised against the victims of the Purges in Belyi *raion* centered around the mismanagement of agriculture. Also, Yezhov, the man who was to give his name to the Purges, which are known in Russian as the *Yezhovshchina*, took over the NKVD (Peoples' Commissariat of Internal Affairs) from Yagoda in September 1936, just as news of a major crop failure was beginning to trickle in. Already at this time, Moscow was receiving only 30 to 40% of its usual supplies of cabbage and carrots. WKP 390, 327-350; WKP 386, 371-376; *Pravda* August 3, 1937, 6. This news of vegetable shortages in Moscow was reported by *Pravda* a year late.

14. Stephen F. Cohen, "Stalinism and Bolshevism," in Tucker (ed.), *Stalinism*, 13.

15. *Spravochnik vsia zapadnaia oblast RSFSR* (Smolensk, 1931), 18.

16. For these reorganizations, see A. G. Kushnir, "Administrativnoe raionirovanie SSSR v gody sotsialisticheskogo stroitelstva," *Istoriia SSSR*, 6 (1981), 132-140; and T. P. Idelevich, "Izmemeniia v administrativno-territorial'nom delenii Smolenskoi oblasti (1708-1961) (Istoricheskaia spravka)," *Materialy po izucheniiu Smolenskoi oblasti* (Smolensk, 1961), vypusk IV, 391-416. Since 1944, Belyi *raion* has been part of Velikolukskii *Oblast'*, formed out of what had been the southern part of pre-revolutionary St. Petersburg (Leningrad) *guberniia*.

17. WKP 32, 131; V. P. Semenev (ed.) *Rossiia: Polnoe geograficheskoe opisanie nashego otechestva* (St. Petersburg, 1905), vol. 9, 436-439.

18. WKP 321, 135 and 138-139; WKP 238, 221.

19. WKP 321, 138-139; *Spravochnik vsia zapadnaia oblast RSFSR*, 14.

20. In contrast, only 13.1% of the arable land in the *oblast'* as a whole was cultivated in flax in 1937, although 35% of the nation's flax seed and 30% of the nation's flax fiber were grown in the Western *oblast'*. B. N. Perlin, "K istorii l'novodstvo na Smolenshchine," *Materialy po izucheniiu Smolenskoi oblasti* (Smolensk, 1952), 215-250; V. I. Revkov, "Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie otnocheniia v Smolenskoi derevne nakaune kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva," *Materialy po izucheniiu Smolenskoi oblast* (Moscow, 1970), vypusk VII, 85-86 and 88-89; P. S. Stepanov, "Iz istorii Smolenskoi derevni nakaune perekhod k sploshnoi kollektivizatsii sel'skogo khoziaistva," *Materialy po izucheniiu Smolenskoi oblasti*, (Moscow, 1970), vypusk VII, 117; *Kollektivizatsiia*, 6, 25, 35, 48-49, 144, 307, 395, 425, 500-502, 507-508, 535-536, 594, 620 and 637; WKP 385, 152 and 355; WKP 321, 24-33.

21. Revkov in *Materialy po izucheniiu Smolenskoi oblast*, (1970) vyp VII, 85-87 and 91-94.

22. WKP 385, 152; and Dorothy Atkinson, *The End of the Russian Land Commune, 1905-1930* (Stanford, 1983), 251 and 254.

23. *Kollektivizataiia*, 6, 77, 510-511, 606, 611-614 and 628-629; WKP 390, 397.

24. In 1934, Belyi *raikom* secretary Kovalev reported that the local collective farms possessed only two-thirds the horses that they needed for transportation and "if you take the condition of the horses into account, the situation is even worse." WKP 313, 86. In the next two years, the number of horses in the *raion* declined even further, by 13.9% to a total herd of 10,210. WKP 321, 126.

25. WKP 321, 135-139.

26. Fainsod, *Smolensk Under Soviet Rule*, 122.

27. John Gillis, *The Development of European Society*, (Boston, 1977), 131.

28. WKP 321, 138-139. If we limit ourselves to party members and exclude candidate members, however, the ratio was one Communist for every 92 townsmen in Belyi in 1937.

29. Fifty-nine point three percent of the *raion*'s party membership in the mid-thirties classified their current occupation as "employee," which meant government officials essentially; 40.4% listed their occupation as collective farmer; and 2.8% as workers (in the main on the local *sovkhozy*). But even these figures underestimate the incidence of officials, since approximately half of those party members and candidates listing their occupation as "collective farmer" were actually collective farm *chairmen*, and many other "collective farmers" in the party occupied minor administrative positions, as collective farm accountants, brigade leaders, board members or hut librarians. WKP 313, 32, 53 and 88.

30. The biographies of party members being admitted and expelled from the *raion* party organization in WKP 321 and WKP 111 would indicate that most party members in the *raion* were under thirty-five.

31. For this period of Soviet history, see Fitzpatrick (ed.) *Cultural Revolution in Russia*, and Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility*.

32. WKP 385, 296.

33. WKP 111, 194. Shitov's slip was not deliberate, because nobody could accuse him of being secretly opposed to collective farms. As a rural soviet chairman in Belyi *raion* in 1930, he achieved a collectivization rate of 90%, a highly unusual feat, given the lateness with which *sploshnyi* (intensive, ongoing) collectivization came to the *raion*.

34. WKP 385, 296.

35. WKP 321, 248. Brandin nonetheless was among the top 10% of the Belyi party organization in terms of the total amount of education received, although he fell short by a year of being considered a "specialist."

36. *Ibid.*, 242-249. Earlier in the year, Brandin's case backlog was considerably smaller, amounting to twenty criminal cases, according to his own estimates. Brandin's August/September backlog, however, was not at all unusual for a *raion* judge. See, for example, V. Volodin, "Buturlinovskii moraly (Voronezh)," *Vlast' sovetov* 6-7 (March-April, 1937), 70.

37. Geroid Robinson, *Rural Russia Under the Old Regime* (New York, 1932) 78-80, 150 and 209.

38. WKP 321, 242-243.

39. For these problems, which finally led to charges of "wrecking" being levied agains the Western *oblast'* party and government leadership during the Great Purges, see: WKP 238, 280, 299-301, 316-317; WKP 321, 254; and WKP 111, 85, 97, and 170.

40. Vyltsan, *Zavershaiushchii etap*, 46-52. According to Vyltsan, as late as the summer of 1935, 40% of all collective farms in the nation had no definite boundaries, and many continued to suffer as in the past from *cherezpolostnost* (intermingling with the land of other farms and villages) and *dalnopolosnost* (lands located far from the village where the peasants owning it resided). Without definite boundaries, economic planning of any meaningful variety and proper crop rotation were clearly impossible.

41. WKP 362, 594-608; WKP 321, 253.

42. WKP 362, 1. The prosecutor's backlog, too, increased significantly in the course of 1937, from 300 uninvestigated cases in March to 2,000 by August. WKP 111, 10; WKP 321, 214.

43. According to Neil Weisman, who is studying the Soviet police in the 1920s, the old sub-*raion* police forces tended

to vanish with the tsar, and as late as the end of the 1920s, no soviet counterpart had been established to replace these forces. The Smolensk Archives, too, give no indication that any police were stationed permanently outside the *raion* capitals in the 1930s. In 1903, the tsarist regime maintained one policeman stationed outside the *raion* town for every 2,600 *rural* inhabitants. In 1937, Belyi *raion* possessed one police employee for every 2,170 inhabitants of the *raion* as a whole (town included). This latter figure comes from dividing the *raion* population of 67,268 by the 31 employees of the militia and NKVD, including the NKVD building inspector, the employees of the *raion* militia's passport desk, and the clerical help of the two agencies. Data on the pre-revolutionary police come from Neil Weisman, "Regular Police in Tsarist Russia, 1900-1914", unpublished paper delivered to the Third Annual Conference of the National Seminar on the Social History of 20th Century Russia, January 1983, 6. Data on Belyi *raion* in 1937 come from WKP 321, 135-139; WKP 101, 4-10.

44. WKP 111, 205.

45. WKP 321, 242-245, 250, and 254, WKP 111, 85-86. For the tragic history of the prosecutor's secretary, A. I. Sventokhovskaia, see WKP 385, 180-181.

46. WKP 111, 13-14.

47. Spring sowing occupied *raikom* bureau members in Belyi for forty-two days (April 5 to May 17) in 1937, broken only by the general *raion* party elections, scheduled by the national Central Committee for April 25. The bureau also suspended its sessions between June 28 and July 19 when the 1937 harvest began in the *raion* and again between September 17 and October 29, when procurements turned out to be proceeding badly in the *raion*. Bureau members were also assigned to oversee forest procurements in four to five rural soviets in January and February 1937. All these campaigns (exclusive of forest procurements) occupied *raikom* bureau members for 105 days in 1937. WKP 321, 44, 113-117, 146, 170-177 and 257-267.

48. WKP 321, 194. For a vacation or even to leave the *raion* for any purpose whatsoever (even a family crisis), a party member needed permission from the party *raikom* bureau, which was by no means always granted. Sometimes officials were informed that no vacation was possible because their services were indispensible to the party. In Belyi *raion* in 1937, vacations appear to have been restricted to officials in political trouble or those causing the trouble. Possibly the motive here was to remove such officials from the *raion* for a while, in hopes of improving the political climate. *Ibid.*, 162 and 215; WKP 71, 4, 21, 125, 127, and 142; WKP 111, 49-50.

49. WKP 111, 197. Efforts of party members in high positions in the town soviet, which administered municipal housing funds, to live rent-free were frequently made and just as frequently condemned by higher authorities. At times, higher party authorities even went so far as to threaten to dock the rent payments owed from the wages of the party members concerned. Efforts of officials to abuse their positions to gain larger than typical apartments also provoked intervention from above. In Elnaia *raion* (also in the Western *oblast'*) in 1931, the *raikom* secretary and the head of the *raion* control commission extended their apartments to seven rooms at the expense of another party member who complained to Moscow newspapers. For this (and for supplying themselves with food from the collective farms), these two officials were removed from office. WKP 234, 234; WKP 389, 8. Party members also suffered from the usual problems of upkeep of their apartments, and some, particularly MTS (machine tractor station) employees, received substandard housing like many other Soviet citizens of this period. WKP 180, 13.

50. For the food supplies of officials, see below p. 20.

51. WKP 362, 309; WKP 178, 47; WKP 237, 89; WKP 235, 34-35; WKP 313, 21; and WKP 111, 159-160.

52. WKP, 313, 77.

53. WKP 239, 227; WKP 238, 1.

54. WKP 313, 54 and 79; WKP 234, 260; WKP 69, 10.

55. WKP 203, 112-113.

56. WKP 313, 20-21; WKP 362, 3, 8, 10, and 13; and WKP 71. Schoolteachers, in addition to their grain rations, were supposed to receive milk, meat and butter from the collective farms, which the latter were reluctant to supply.

57. See, for example, the petition of the Pochinkovskii party *raikom*, March, 1933, WKP 71, 48 and 148.

58. WKP 111, 44-45, 104, and 170; WKP 69, 10-12.

59. WKP 266, 11-12.

60. WKP 389, 9; WKP 363, 2-11.

61. WKP 389, 4-28; WKP 111, 63, 100, and 187-188.

62. WKP 111, 63; WKP 363, 2-11 and 15-17; WKP 362, 274; and WKP 69, 8-9. Before the introduction of the party rations, foodstuffs, like butter, cheese, and honey, taken from the collective farms free of charge or at below market prices, tended to figure prominently in the self supply of even highly placed officials. Such practices persisted mainly among lower level officials who did not receive party rations, especially the rural soviet chairmen who were said to have been particularly ill-paid. WKP 237, 209-213. The most corrupt official within the Belyi party organization, the NKVD chief Vinogradov, who was described by Fainsod as engaging in "large scale pilfering," merely abused his position to obtain a pair of leather boots and a hunting rifle by dropping criminal charges against other party members currently under criminal investigation. He also received the usual under-the-counter food supplies allotted to the top party leaders at this time. Another party member who had earlier been dismissed by Vinogradov from the NKVD and who carried on a personal vendetta with the NKVD man from this time on, raised charges of more spectacular corruption. But these charges were not given credence by the *oblast'* NKVD or the other members of the Belyi party organization who detested the NKVD chief and were trying to

expell him from the party from the spring of 1937 on. WKP 111, 27-28, 47-50, 85-86, 95-100, 106-110, 154-175 and 186-189; WKP 362, 510-513.

63. WKP 321, 135. Rural party saturation rates in Belyi *raion* appear to have been on the low side. In Melitopolsk *raion* (Zaporozhskii *oblast'*) in the Northern Caucasus where the party was stronger, the local party possessed 30 rural PPOs (rural primary party organizations) and 259 rural-based Communists. The *raion* had an agricultural population of 35,328 in 1937 or one Communist for every 136 rural inhabitants. A. E. Arina, G. G. Kotov, and K. V. Loseva, *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie izmeniia v derevne: Melitopolskii raion (1885-1938 gg.)* (Moscow, 1939), 186 and 213-214. This work, despite its age, is one of the most interesting written on pre-revolutionary *and* early Soviet agriculture and deserves more widespread use among American scholars of Russia and the USSR. The authors appear to have been trained by the old zemstvo statisticians.

64. For the membership screenings, which, contrary to Fainsod, were *not* part of the Great Purges, see Getty, "Party and Purges in Smolensk." For the employment problems of those purged in these "cleansings," which proves they were not automatically arrested, as Fainsod implies, see WKP 385, 158 and 180-181.

65. Many of the rural Communists expelled from the Party between 1935-1937 appear to have been expelled for allegedly misappropriating funds, because they were unable to account for all the funds allotted to the institutions that they headed, due to their lack of proper record-keeping and bookkeeping skills. Many of those expelled for such reasons, appear to have been collective farm chairmen. Although local authorities tried to prosecute some of these people for "embezzlement of public property," their cases were often thrown out by the courts. For this, see WKP 385, 63-386; WKP 111, 6 and 38.

66. WKP 235, 12-15; WKP 239, 233-234.

67. WKP 321, 137-138; WKP 237, 214; WKP 111, 108; and *Spravochnik*, 14-18. The local water supply, taken from the

river that ran through town; was not always potable and was said to cause disease, especially when the river overflowed its banks and flooded half the land area of the town, which was not infrequent. WKP 111, 21.

68. WKP 313, 74-76; *Pravda*, August 24, 1937, 4.

69. WKP 111, 19.

70. In only one area did the countryside in Belyi *raion* clearly exceed the town and that was in the provision of daycare services. In 1937, the town of Belyi possessed only two day care centers that served 115 children between the ages of four and seven (at a time when half the town's population was under 15). In contrast, 96.7% of the *raion*'s collective farms operated some sort of child care facilities in the mid-thirties. WKP 313, 88; WKP 321, 127-138. I do not mean to imply here that there had been no cultural progress in the villages in other spheres, particularly education. But at the end of the thirties, only 108,000 of the nation's 207,000 collective farms possessed clubs and only 18,802 permanent movie theatres. Only 10,000 of the 247,000 collective farms had been electrified by the outbreak of World War II. M. A. Vyltsan, *Vosstanovlenie i razvitie material'no-technicheskii bazy kolkhoznogo stroi (1945-1958)* (Moscow, 1976), 41; *Pravda* October 22, 1937, 6.

71. WKP 362, 82-97.

72. WKP 237, 39. The Semenovcha referred to in this ditty, was most likely one of the Semenkov family, either a man who was reported to have been a former bandit, now employed in a high position in the local forestry industry, or a man of the same name recently accused of stealing from the local village store (*sel'po*) where he was employed. The Soviet regime, however, was not always so tolerant towards the spread of such "K-R" (counterrevolutionary) *chastushki*. In the panic after the assassination of Kirov, ten persons charged with "spreading K-R *chastushki*" were arrested in the villages of the *raion*. Most of those arrested were individual peasants or persons with previous criminal records (for non-political crimes). Two of them were rural soviet

chairmen! Other than this incident, however, no action appears to have been taken in the *raion* against persons singing such songs. Even then those arrested were charged with *composing and spreading* the songs, not merely singing them.

73. WKP 111, 18-21, 40-41, 44-46, 82-84, 89, 94; *Izvestiia*, April 6, 1937; WKP 238, 81 and 280; WKP 386, 367-371; WKP 390, 331-335; *Pravda*, July 8, 1937, 1; and Vyltsan, *Zavershaushchii etap*, 134-143. The crop rotation policies imposed also reduced the amount of fodder available, resulting in the mass slaughter of livestock by collective farms and individual peasants for lack of fodder and the spread of epidemics among the malnourished livestock herds. WKP 111, 27-28, 39, 44-46, 50 and 81. The adoption of Vil'iams' grassland rotation system, often ridiculed by Western scholars, appears to have been a desperate attempt to reintroduce some sort of crop rotation once again which took account of the chronic need for pasturelands and fodder, *Pravda*, July 6, 1937, 1-2.

74. WKP 313, 147; Vyltsan, *Zavershaiushchii etap*, 61-64; and *Kollektivizatsiia* 277-278 and 510-511.

75. WKP 385, 152. Some of the decline was caused by a loss of eight rural soviets in another territorial organization. Six of the eight rural soviets lost by Belyi *raion* possessed far lower than average collectivization rates. Among the rural soviets lost were Dobrinskii rural soviet with a collectivization rate of 20% (at a time when the *raion* as a whole had a rate of 56.9%); Velistoskii rural soviet with a rate of 24%; Makarovskii rural soviet, with a rate of 24%; Vertkinskii, with 32%; Novosel'kovskii rural soviet, with 46% and Novo-Fomenkovskii rural soviet, with 50%. WKP 312, 100 and 147; and *Materialy po izhecheniiu Smolenskoi oblast*, vypusk IV, 399.

76. WKP 362, 448-449 and 471-473; Vyltsan, *Zavershaiushchii etap* 57-60 and *Kollektivitsiia*, 524. A number of other factors encouraged the rush of individual peasants towards collective farms. First, the marked tendency of entire villages in Belyi to join collective farms collectively, and the adoption by the government in 1935 of a new

model charter (*ustav*) for collective farms that more clearly delineated the rights and duties of collective farmers, provided a paid two-month maternity leave for collective farm women (which was highly popular), and extended substantially the rights of the collective farms *vis-a-vis* the government by enhancing the voice given collective farms in the selection of their chairmen and limiting the possibilities of appointment of unpopular chairmen from above, against the will of local collective farmers. Food loans were also made available only to collective farmers, and an ambitious, successful and popular government program began in 1934 to supply every collective farm family in the nation with its own private dairy cow. This program was initiated at a time when individual peasants could no longer afford to own dairy cattle, given the high rates of milk and other procurements imposed on private proprietors at this time. WKP 313, 100 and 471; WKP 176, 9; *Kollektivizatsiia*, 448-449; and Vyltsan, *Zavershaiuschii etap*, 25-56.

77. *Kollektivizatsiia*, 467, 496-500 and 519.

78. In Belyi *raion*, local officials tended to pity the impoverished individual peasants and to maintain that these families had little left to be taken by the tax collector. They consequently allowed the tax and procurement arrears of individual households to mount. WKP 111, 155-156; WKP 313, 60. But elsewhere some local Communists launched fierce arrears collecting campaigns, confiscating peasant property to cover these arrears, without bothering to prove first before the courts that these families were indeed in arrears. These excesses were only halted by the government through the organization of a series of "show trials" (*pokazatnye sudy*) of offending officials by the government in 1937. *Pravda* March 10, 1937, 6; March 11, 1937, 6; March 13, 1937, 6; June 15, 1937, 4; June 16, 1937, 6; July 2, 1937, 6; July 5, 1937, 6; July 18, 1937, 1; and July 30, 1937.

79. In some cases, official pressure had to be brought to bear on collective farms to force them to accept such impoverished individual peasants as members. WKP 313, 57 and 62; and *Kollektivizatsiia*, 496, 499 and 525.

80. Vyltsan, *Zavershaiushchii etap*, 144 and 165. Vyltsan's figures include all taxes and procurement payments as well as payments in kind to the MTS in kind for services rendered. Vyltsan tends to regard all such payments as forms of taxation on the peasants.

81. WKP 111, 23, 27, 153-154, 169, and 175; WKP 321, 97.

82. WKP 203, 22-23.

83. WKP 362, 407.

84. WKP 321, 93. In 1937, MTS directors were paid salaries between 650 and 1,000 rubles a month, when most *raikom* secretaries were paid 500 to 550 a month. WKP 238, 254-255; WKP 362, 411; WKP 176, 163-164. But living standards on newly constructed MTS, like Baturninskii, were often deplorable, especially in regard to housing. For this, see WKP 181, 6-13.

85. WKP 385, 355-385; WKP 321, 130; WKP 111, 150. A "group" contained less than the three full party members required by party bylaws for the establishment of a PPO.

86. WKP 313, 53 and 70-76. In 1934, approximately 40% of all collective farm chairmen were party members and approximately 40% of all members of the *raion* party organization were members of collective farms. WKP 313, 32. No comparable data exist for 1937 in the Smolensk Archive.

87. This also occurred in other *raions* of the Western *oblast'*, resulting in charges of "wrecking" being leveled against *oblast'* leaders at the height of the Great Purges in the summer and fall of 1937. *Oblast'* leaders were charged with being directly responsible for the decline of the party's presence on the collective farms. WKP 238, 105-108. However, party "control" of agriculture was stronger in Belyi *raion* than in some other *raions* in the *oblast'*. Four *raions* in the *oblast'* in 1937 lacked enough Communists in their *raion* land departments (*raizo*) to form PPOs in that institution, a key link in agricultural administration since the *raizo* was the local government

agency entrusted with the supervision of political and economic developments on the collective farms, including the functioning "collective farm democracy." *Ibid.*, 32.

88. WKP 321, 139.

89. WKP 313, 33, 100, 124 and 147. Party saturation rates were also higher at this time. In the *raion* as a whole in 1934, there was one Communist (member or candidate) for every 247 inhabitants, one for every 35 in town and one for every 433 in the countryside.

90. Another factor contributing to the decline of rural party membership between 1934 and 1937 was the abrasive personality of the Belyi *raikom* party secretary at that time, Kovalev, whose wrath often fell on rural Communists. For all the factors contributing to the decline, see WKP 111, 3-65; WKP 313, 70-74 and 130-131; Idelvich, "Izmeniia v administrativno-territorial' nom delenie Smolenskoi oblast," *Materialy po izucheniiu Smolenskoi oblast*, vypusk IV, 399.

91. Absent entirely from this list are positions of authority *within* the rural soviets and collective farms, like the chairmen of the collective farm auditing commissions (which monitored collective farm finances periodically), collective farm bookkeepers, the heads of collective farm livestock commodity farms; collective farm brigade leaders and the heads of the departments (*otdelenie*) in the rural soviets.

92. WKP 111, 108 and 195.

93. Fears of such "class aliens" in positions of power or influence run throughout the minutes of the closed sessions of *raion* party conferences, plenary sessions of the *raikom* and meetings of the *raikom* bureau in Belyi *raion* found in WKP 321 and WKP 111. Western scholars have long been dubious of such labels, since such terms were often freely applied in the upheavals of collectivization and the First Five Year Plan. Although not all such charges were true by any means, after 1932, the party was careful to investigate such charges before it accepted them, dispatching emis-

saries to the home town of the accused, usually to interview neighbors. Soviet authorities, however, were prone to use the term "class" differently than do the citizens of most industrial nations, attributing a parent's social status to their children. This was clearly a definition of "class" rooted in the experiences of the old regime, in which children generally followed in the footsteps of their parents and opportunities for social mobility were definitely limited, especially for the lower classes. One cannot understand the history of the thirties without understanding that persons deemed "class aliens" were common throughout the Soviet state apparatus and economic institutions and that undereducated party members were often highly dependent on the skills of persons thus categorized. Soviet policies had probably rendered such individuals hostile to the regime, even if they were not so inclined to begin with. "Class aliens" were repeatedly dismissed from jobs, blamed for any wrong doings in the institutions in which they were employed, expelled from the party (when they were "unmasked"), and subjected to a vast array of legal restrictions on their political rights and personal opportunities from the 1920s on. For these latter, see Elsie Kimerling, "Civil Rights and Social Policy in Soviet Russia, 1918-1936," *The Russian Review*, 41, 1 (Jan. 1982), 24-46.

94. WKP 285, 355-385; WKP 111, 1-24.

95. WKP 321, 70-74. Fainsod is wrong when he claims in *Smolensk Under Soviet Rule* (p. 145) that each rural soviet contained a single collective farm.

96. WKP 313, 147; WKP 321, 138. Also, Belyi *raion* is no exception in this regard. The rural soviets in neighboring Sychevka *raion* contained on the average 17.4 "populated points," 8.7 collective farms and a population that ranged from 1,900 and 12,000 apiece. The typical rural soviet in nearby El'naia *raion* contained anywhere from four to fifteen collective farms and an *adult* population of between 500 and 600 individuals (at a time when half the Soviet population were children). WKP 202, 232-233; WKP 201, 65. For national data, see Atkinson, *The End of the Land Commune*, 298-300.

97. Such conditions could be found throughout the Western *oblast'*, as a survey of the functioning of the rural soviets in mid-1935 by the Central Control Commission reveals. WKP 236, 1-27, 58-71 and 95-148.

98. WKP 362, 82-97; WKP 313, 83.

99. WKP 362, 82-97.

100. WKP 385, 296.

101. The number of sympathizers in the *raion* had been growing since the mid-thirties, consisting of 126 persons in the *raion* as a whole in 1937, up from 68 in 1935. WKP 321, 140. Sympathizers in the 1930s were not simply persons who sympathized with the goals of the party. They occupied an official status within the party, below that of candidate members. Before being accepted as a sympathizer, one had to go through the official screening process at the hands of the local party organization, only somewhat less demanding than that required of candidates. Sympathizers were also organized into separate sympathizer or combination party-sympathizer groups. WKP 321, 290

102. In Belyi *raion*, the Komsomol officially consisted of 848 members in 1937, organized in 90 PPOs. But the Komsomol *raikom* often went as long as four to six months without meeting, and the Komsomol *raikom* secretary in the fall of 1937 admitted candidly that the organization was "in shambles." Hindering Komsomol work in the *raion* was the fact that the local organization possessed only four full-time staff members, who were constantly being sent on various campaigns and missions to the rural soviets and collective farms by the party *raikom*, resulting in the Komsomol leadership's neglect of Komsomol work. As a result, Komsomol saturation of the *raion* student body was exceedingly low. At the Belyi Technicum for the Mechanization of Agriculture, the *raion*'s premier educational establishment located in the town of Belyi, only 91 of the 315 member student body were Komsomols in 1937. WKP 321, 133, 141; WKP 111, 33, 54, and 217; and WKP 101, 10.

103. WKP 321, 4-5, 100, 130 and 173-174.

104. *Ibid.*, 128-131.

105. *Ibid.*, 35-38.

106. B. N. Perlin, "K istorii l'nodstvo na Smolenshchina,", 236. Flax production on one *desiatina* of land involved 11-12 days of men's labor and 64-65 days of women's labor.

107. WKP 313, 32; WKP 321, 100 and 173-174. Party work among the *raion*'s Stakhanovites was so weak that *raion* authorities were unable to find a bonafide Stakhanovite milkmaid who was a party member to send to ceremonies in Moscow in 1936 and had to fake the production records of a party member-milkmaid. For this, see the discussion of the Nekulinova affair that figured prominently in the Great Purges in Belyi *raion*. WKP 111, 187-190; WKP 321, 204-205, and 228-229.

108. WKP 321, 134.

109. WKP 111, 48-49.

110. *Ibid.*, 216.

111. WKP 321, 129. Even then, the chairmen of the Shooting Star Collective Farm, one of the three singled out for attention by *raion* leaders, complained in the spring of 1937 that his farm had received no instructions from *raion* authorities for six months. WKP 111, 39.

112. WKP 321, 50; WKP 201, 65-74.

113. *Kollektivizatsiia*, 511-512.

114. WKP 111, 46.

115. WKP 362, 12.

116. WKP 111, 97. Telephone services in Belyi *raion* appears to have been fairly typical of the RSFSR as a whole for this time. See *Vlast' Sovetov*, 6-7 (April-May, 1937), 79.

117. WKP 362, 231-232. Although the *raikom* secretary and the head of the *raizo* were provided with automobiles which were supposed to be used by the staff of their offices, these vehicles were reserved for the personal use of the *raikom* secretary and *raizo* head, who used them to travel around the small town of Belyi and to make occasional visits to the railroad station, thirty kilometers away.

118. WKP 234, 398; WKP 313, 8.

119. Earlier apparently, even horses were lacking! WKP 313, 77.

120. WKP 111, 4.

121. *Ibid.*, 11, 16, 38, 46, and 97.

122. *Ibid.*, 17.

123. WKP 321, 93 and 134; WKP 362, 5.

124. This was even true of one of the local procurement agents at the height of procurements in 1937; WKP 321, 225 and 282-283.

125. WKP 111, 48, 178, and 181.

126. *Ibid.*, esp. 1-3; WKP 321, 12-304.

127. WKP 111, 93; WKP 385, 153.

128. WKP 321, 93.

129. *Ibid.*, The Shamilovo Sovkhoz boasted the largest PPO outside the town of Belyi.

130. WKP 111, 54.

131. *Ibid.*, 55.

132. In 1937, overall procurements payments were reduced, while past arrears in such payments were cancelled. In addition, the central government agency entrusted with

estimating the harvest in the field, i.e., the notorious "biological yield," on which procurements payments rested, was abolished. The functions of this agency were transferred to local authorities more sympathetic towards local collective farmers. At the same time, the collective farms were exempt from unpaid, corvee-like work in road construction, seed sorting, and hauling and unloading fuel for the MTS (from the railway station thirty kilometers from the town of Belyi). For these developments, see WKP 238, 254-255 and 261-263. *Pravda*, March 26, 1937, 1; June 10, 1937, 2; June 29, 1937, 1; July 5, 1937, 2; May 12, 1937, 1; and Vyltsan *Zavershaiushchii etap*, 162-163. See also the memoirs of I. M. Borisevich, who was chief agronomist in Minsk *raion* in the 1930s. Borisevich remembers with great pride how his estimates of biological yield were set deliberately low, with the interests of local collective farmers in mind. Yosif Mikhailovich Borisevich, "V te trudnye gody," *V nachale bol'shogo puti: memuarnyi sbornik* (Minsk, 1975), 159.

133. Although no *raion* data is available on the level of 1937 flax procurements, *oblast'* data would suggest that flax procurements were far lower than normal. As late as October 1, 1937, when such procurements were long overdue, the two major flax trusts in the Western *oblast'*, the Smolensk Flax Trust and the Viaz'ma Flax Trust had received respectively only 61% and 35% of the flax procurements due them. WKP 238, 169-186. See also *Pravda*, September 16, 1937, 3. In addition only 40% of the seed fund for the planting of the next year's crops had been collected in Belyi *raion* as of December 16, 1937, again long after such collections were due. Only 50% of the planned levels of autumn plowing of spring crop lands was actually plowed in 1937 in the *raion*, and the plans for road construction and forest procurements, both of which were heavily dependent on collective farm labor, remained underfulfilled, despite new regulations that went into effect in 1937 requiring that peasants be paid for such labor. WKP 321, 44, 267, 275, 293, and 303.

134. WKP 111, 180.

135. *Ibid.*, 75, 77, 85, 160, 178, 192, 213-214 and 221; WKP 321, 281-282; WKP 362, 326; and Vyltsan, *Zavershauishchii etap*, 81-94.

136. Vyltsan, *Zavershauishchii etap*, 260.

137. *Pravda*, March 13, 1937, 6.

138. *Ibid.*, March 10, 1937, 6; March 11, 1937, 6; March 13, 1937, 6; June 15, 1937, 4; June 16, 1937, 6; July 2, 1937, 6; July 15, 1937, 6; July 18, 1937, 1; July 30, 1937, 6; July 31, 1937, 6.

139. *Ibid.*, March 22, 1937, 1 and July 8, 1937, 3.

140. On August 27, *Pravda* was compelled to publish a lead editorial denying that rural soviet chairmen were "completely liberated" by the new measure from helping collect grain procurements. *Ibid.*, August 27, 1937, 1.

141. WKP 321, 94. *Oblast'* authorities appear to have exerted little more influence over their subordinants in the *raion* land department (*raizo*). Between 1935 and 1937, 33 heads of *raion* land departments in the Western *oblast'* were replaced, but in only ten of these cases were these officials replaced at the instigation of the *oblast'* land department. *Pravda* March 6, 1937, 2.

142. Vyltsan, *Zavershauishchii etap*, 24-25, 35-36, 41-45 and 270-260.

143. WKP 237, 174. Nonetheless during the Great Purges, *raion* soviet executive committee chairman Stogov was charged with illegally removing 54 of the 210 collective farm chairmen in the *raion*. WKP 111, 9; WKP 321, 196.

144. WKP 362, 28; WKP 203, 39.

145. WKP 111, 106 and 153.

146. *Ibid.*, 74 and 77.

147. WKP 362, 586-590.

148. WKP 111, 180. The local newspaper, *Bel'skaia komuna* may have helped to impede defense loan collections by carrying articles that threatened the prosecution of any local offical who collected the loan "illegally," by resorting to "collective signatures," i.e. allowing the collective farm chairman to sign up the entire collective farm for the loan, which would then be deducted from the gross income of the collective farm before it was distributed among its members. According to the newspaper, the only way to collect the loan legally was to collect "individual signatures," allowing collective farmers to refuse individually to subscribe to the loan. *Bel'skaia komuna*, August 12, 1937, found in WKP 111, 191.

149. WKP 362, 340.

150. WKP 111, 106 and 153.

151. For such interpretations of the constitution, see *Pravda*, March 11, 1937, 1 and 3; *Bel'skaia komuna*, No., 76 (August 12, 1937), 2, found in WKP 111, 192. J. Arch Getty was the first to recognize the importance of the 1937 elections and the radical interpretation given them by leading government and party officials. For this see Getty, *Origins of the Great Purges*, chapter 6.

152. WKP 321, 99 and 267; WKP 111, 24, 29, 34, 51, 58, 72, 77, 85-86, 88, 121, and 226.

153. *Pravda*, October 12, 1937,1; WKP 111, 124.

154. WKP 385, 152; WKP 321, 127. For reports of peasants leaving collective farms elsewhere at this time, see *Pravda*, March 2, 1937, 3; June 30, 1937, 3; and September 14, 1937, 4.

155. Gabor Tamas Rittersporn, "Du Goulag de la litterature a l'histoire de la politique penale en Union sovietique, 1933-1953," *Critique politique*, 7/8 (1981), 18-19.

156. WKP 111, 83. Kulaks were also said to have returned in significant numbers in Minsk *Oblast*. *Pravda*, August 2, 1937, 3.

157. WKP 111, 83.

158. WKP 362, 83-97.

159. Vyltsan, *Zavershiaushchii etap*, 251.

160. WKP 111, 107.

161. The Great Purges in Belyi *raion* will be discussed in a future article.

162. Getty, *Origins of the Great Purges*, chapter 6.

163. WKP 111, 73. The actual charges raised against Stogov in the party elections was that *his father* had earlier been expelled from the party for being a kulak but that subsequently the father's membership was restored. *Ibid.*, 166.

164. Petro G. Grigorenko, *Memoirs* (New York/London, 1982), 36-37.

165. For a discussion of "the myth of the tsar" and how it was used by the peasants consciously as well as shaping their behavior, see Daniel Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar*, (Boston, 1977) *passim*. For some indications that the Soviet populace tended to blame lower level officials for the USSR's problems while exonerating Stalin, see John Scott, *Behind the Urals* (Bloomington, 1973), 41-43. See also the letters of complaint written by ordinary citizens of Belyi *raion* in 1937 in WKP 362 and WKP 203.

166. Roy A. Medvedev, "New Pages from the Political Biography of Stalin" in Tucker (ed.) *Stalinism* 214-215.

167. WKP 111, 86, 103, 106-108, 123, 178-179, 182-184, 195, 198, 213-214; WKP 321, 214, 242-245, 282-283 and 293. Calls, however, for the prosecution of chairmen who withheld procurements and of peasants who diverted fertilizer from collective lands to private plots become more frequent towards the second half of 1937, but subsequent statements in party meetings would indicate that no action followed such calls as late as the end of 1937.

168. WKP 321, 282-283.

169. For the better harvests of the late 1930s, see Table 1 above.

170. Vyltsan, *Zavershaiushchii etap*, 156-182; V. A. Seleznev and A. N.Gutarov, *Sovetskaia derevniia v predvoeny gody 1938-1941 (11 istorii Kolkhoznogostroitel'stva v osnovykh rainov severo-zapada RSFSR i Leningradskaia oblast. Kratkii istoricheskii ocherk* (Leningrad, 1976), 76 and 91-93.

171. Seleznev and Gutarov, *Sovetskaia derevniia*, 48.

172. Vyltsan, *Zavershaiushchii etap*, 25-52; 160, and 235-260; M. A. Vyltsan, *Sovetskaia derevniia nakaune Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny* (Moscow, 1970), *passim*; Seleznev and Gutarov, *Sovetskaia derevniia*, 12-14.

173. Seleznev and Gutarov, *Sovetskaia derevniia*, 81-87; D'Encausse, *Stalin*, 68-69.

#403 William Husband, *Workers' Control and Centralization in the Russian Revolution: The Textile Industry of the Central Industrial Region, 1917-1920.* $5.00

#402 R. Craig Nation, *Soviet Conceptualizations of the Iranian Revolution.* $5.00

#401 Jonathan Harris, *After the Kratkii kurs: Soviet Leadership Conflict over Theoretical Education, 1956-1961.* $4.50

#308 *Perspectives on the 1881-1882 Pogroms in Russia.* DOUBLE ISSUE: A. Orbach, *The Pogroms of 1881-1882: The Response from St. Petersburg Jewry*; J. Klier, *The Times of London, the Russian Press and the Pogroms of 1881-1882.* $5.00

#307 Arnold Katz, *Growth and Regional Variations in Unemployment in Yugoslavia, 1965-1980.* $4.50

#306 Peter Juviler, *The Family in the Soviet System.* $5.00

#305 Marshall Shatz, *Stalin, the Great Purge, and Russian History: A New Look at the "New Class".* $4.50

#304 Kenneth Coleman and Daniel Nelson, *State Capitalism, State Socialism and the Politicization of Workers.* $5.00

#303 Blair Ruble, *The Applicability of Corporatist Models to the Study of Soviet Politics: The Case of the Trade Unions.* $4.50

#302 Daniel Brower, *Estate, Class, and Community: Urbanization and Revolution in Late Tsarist Russia.* $4.50

#301 Roberta T. Manning, *Government in the Soviet Countryside in the Stalinist Thirties: The Case of Belyi Raion in 1937.* $4.50

#204 Thomas Remington, *Soviet Public Opinion and the Effectiveness of Party Ideological Work.* $4.50

#203 Steven Burg, *The Political Integration of Yugoslavia's Muslims: Determinants of Success and Failure.* $5.00

#202 Istvan Deak, *Assimilation and Nationalism in East Central Europe during the Last Century of Habsburg Rule.* $4.00

#201 Halina Filipowicz, *The Theater of Tadeusz Rozewicz.* $4.50

#104 Stephen Scherer, *England and the Northern War in Soviet Historiography, 1935-1950.* $3.50

#103 Michael Sozan, *Food Deprivation and Social Stratification in Pre-War Hungary.* $3.50

#102 Charles F. Ziegler, *Policy Alternatives in Soviet Environmental Protection.* $3.50

#101 Ronald H. Linden, *East European Studies: Towards a Map of the Field and Its Needs.* $4.50

The Carl Beck Papers

Forthcoming

#507 Vladimir Shlapentokh and Vladimir Kontorovich, *Organizational Innovation: Hidden Reserve in the Soviet Economy.* $5.00

#506 Richard D. Lewis, *Revolution in the Countryside: Russian Poland, 1905-1906.* $5.00

#505 Norma Rudinsky, *The Context of the Marxist-Leninist View of Slovak Literature 1945-1969.* $4.50

#504 Robert Weinberg, *Social Democracy and Workers in Odessa: Ethnic and Political Considerations.* $4.50

In Print

#503 James H. Bater, *Urban Industrialization in the Provincial Towns of Late Imperial Russia.* $5.00

#502 Alexander F. C. Webster, *The Romanian Legionary Movement: An Orthodox Christian Assessment of Anti-Semitism.* $5.50

#501 Barbara Ann Chotiner, *Dismantling an Innovation: The November 1964 Decision Reunifying Industrial and Agricultural Organs of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.* $4.50

#406 Zbigniew Fallenbuchl, *The Balance of Payments Problem and the Economic Crisis in Poland.* $5.00

#405 David Kemme, *The Real and Monetary Impacts of Exogenous Economic Disturbances upon Centrally Planned Economies: With an Application to Poland.* $5.00

#404 Vladimir Shlapentokh, *Evolution in the Soviet Sociology of Work: From Ideology to Pragmatism.* $5.00