COMMUNIST ACADEMYINSTITUTE OF SOVIET CONSTRUCTION AND LAW

SELSOVIET AND COLLECTIVIZATION

A COLLECTION

1930

PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE COMMUNIST ACADEMY

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V. M. MOLOTOV

FACING THE KOLKHOZ MOVEMENT

Comrades, on January 20, a conference will be held under the Central Executive Committee (TsIK) of the USSR on the question of the tasks of the soviets in connection with collectivization. The necessity of such a conference is obvious. I would remind you that at the beginning of 1925, a conference on the work of the soviets was also convened under the TsIK, which had great political significance. At the center of attention was the question of revitalizing the soviets. The upcoming conference on the new tasks of the soviets is of no less importance. At the center of this conference's tasks will be the question of the work of the soviets in connection with mass collectivization in the countryside.

I. SOVIETS AND COLLECTIVIZATION

The necessity for such a conference stems from the fact that over the past few months, the working environment of the soviets in the countryside has radically changed. I have in mind, first of all, the regions of mass collectivization. In these regions, as a rule, the soviets fail to fulfill the tasks set before them by the spontaneously unfolding kolkhoz movement.

The last election campaign for the soviets took place a year ago, when the situation was different. At that time, we did not have such a mass kolkhoz movement, which in recent months

has turned into total collectivization not only of individual districts and okrugs, but has already begun to overflow into total collectivization of entire regions and republics. This turning point in the kolkhoz movement demonstrates how sharply the working conditions of the soviets in the countryside have changed. Meanwhile, we cannot say that the soviets have restructured their work in accordance with the new environment. The soviets in the countryside—selsoviets and raion executive committees—have not only failed to restructure their work in accordance with the tasks of collectivizing the broadest masses of poor and middle peasants, but have found themselves on the sidelines of the kolkhoz movement. Even in regions of total collectivization, there is still no genuine turning point in the work of the soviets.

What does this mean? It means that in the regions of mass collectivization, the present-day soviets represent what may be called yesterday. That which is radically changing the development of the countryside today—vivid examples of which are the regions of total collectivization—has, as a rule, not yet been properly reflected in the work of the soviets. Consequently, these are not the soviets that can fulfill the new tasks facing Soviet power. Instead of marching at the head of collectivization, the present-day soviets in the countryside usually stand on the sidelines of the kolkhoz movement. Instead of exercising leadership over kolkhoz construction, such soviets can only trail in the tail of the masses. Instead of raising and developing the collectivization of the countryside, these soviets sometimes turn into a brake on collectivization and thereby diminish the tasks and significance of the soviets

as genuine organs of the proletarian socialist dictatorship. This is why it can be said of such soviets that they represent yesterday, i.e., a bygone stage of Soviet construction in the countryside. I will not cite specific illustrations on this score; local workers know this very well and could provide as many relevant examples as desired.

2. THE POLICY OF LIQUIDATING THE KULAK CLASS, ORGANIZATION OF THE POOR PEASANTRY, AND PROLETARIAN LEADERSHIP

Meanwhile, in connection with the titanic growth of collectivization, the tasks of the soviets are growing and becoming especially responsible. Our offensive against the kulak has already entered a new and decisive stage. The Central Committee's decision on the pace of collectivization explicitly states that the party has received "full grounds to transition in its practical work from the policy of limiting the exploitative tendencies of the kulaks to the policy of liquidating the kulaks as a class." This conclusion is drawn from the growth of the kolkhoz movement. From this conclusion it also follows that the implementation of the policy of "liquidating the kulaks as a class" places new tasks and supreme duties upon the soviets in the countryside.

Over the past two years, the party has persistently emphasized the facts of the aggravation of the class struggle associated with our offensive against the kulak. Now, in implementing the policy of "liquidating the kulaks as a class," we cannot fail to emphasize the inevitability at the present moment of a special

aggravation of the class struggle in the countryside. At the new stage, when the dekulakization of the countryside is inextricably linked with the kolkhoz movement, we will inevitably encounter new desperate attempts by kulak elements to fight against the kolkhozes—to fight without stopping at terror and counter-revolutionary actions. For some regions, the class struggle in this connection may acquire such intensity in the coming months that the facts of the preceding period will pale. This must be remembered in order to crush the enemy at the very beginning and deprive them of any appetite for any attempts at resistance.

Despite the resistance of the kulaks, despite all their attempts to undermine the kolkhoz movement, as well as to penetrate inside the kolkhozes and blow them up from within, the kolkhoz movement is marching forward victoriously and with exceptional speed. All this has become possible only as a result of all the previous policies of Soviet power. The Soviet system and the policy of our party ensured at the 12th year of the revolution that fundamental turning point in the socialist construction of our country, which was marked by the transition to the collectivization of millions upon millions of peasant households.

Kolkhozes could only arise under the power of the soviets. Only on the basis of the Soviet system could collectivization turn into a movement of the broadest masses, but today's kolkhozes are only the initial stage of the fundamental socialist transformation of agriculture. They are a form of socialist construction in the countryside that still needs to be filled with

genuine socialist content. It is precisely this that constitutes, first of all, the task of the soviets in the countryside.

The soviets are the main weapon of the working class in the construction of socialism. The main task of the soviets in the countryside is the struggle against the kulaks, the support and development of the kolkhoz movement, and the securing of the successes of socialist construction in the countryside. All this must be recalled during the period of the sharp aggravation of the class struggle in the countryside, the period of mass collectivization of poor and middle peasant households and the simultaneous dekulakization of the countryside. The kolkhoz movement is increasingly turning into the total collectivization of vast regions. As is now clear, in the coming months, during the spring sowing campaign, the kolkhozes will secure a decisive place in all major agricultural regions. Under these conditions, the soviets in the countryside, the present forms and methods of their work, and their current composition are completely inadequate for fulfilling the tasks confronting the soviets. We must approach this issue from the standpoint of the vital interests of the working class and state plainly: in their present form (methods, forms, composition), the soviets in the countryside cannot fulfill the role of the main instrument of the proletariat in building socialism, in leading collectivization, and in the struggle against the kulaks.

The main shortcoming of the soviets is the lack of work necessary under present conditions to organize the farm laborers and the poor peasantry. Indeed, it is a fact that with us, the organization of the poor peasantry in the soviets, not to mention the cooperatives, is in a completely unsatisfactory

state. On the other hand, do we not know that even now we still frequently encounter soviets in which the influence of the kulaks is clearly felt? The lack of work to organize the poor and the influence of kulak elements in the soviets are two closely interconnected phenomena. Meanwhile, precisely because the kolkhoz movement has turned into a movement of millions, and because the middle peasant has moved in a wide wave into the kolkhozes alongside the poor, the tasks of ensuring proletarian leadership over the kolkhoz movement are growing before us with unprecedented urgency. Therefore, we must again and again remind ourselves of Lenin's instruction on the necessity of relying on the poor peasantry—which means organizing the poor, consolidating the farm-laborer and poor-peasant core, and, in alliance with the middle peasant, pursuing the policy of liquidating the kulaks as a class.

Just how poorly things stand with the organization of the poor in the soviets can be judged by the following simple figures. As a result of the recent elections (1929), there are about 32% of soviet members in selsoviets who are exempt from the agricultural tax, whereas the percentage of those exempt from the agricultural tax in the countryside is, as is known, 35%. Consequently, the percentage of agricultural tax-exempt members among selsoviet members is lower than the corresponding percentage in the population. And despite all undeniable successes in strengthening the role of the poor in the soviets over recent years, and particularly as a result of the 1929 elections, this example sufficiently demonstrates how far behind we are in our work among the poor and farm laborers,

and underscores the need for an immediate and decisive breakthrough in this matter.

To argue even now that organizing the poor in the countryside is the primary duty of every Communist and every Komsomol member is simply awkward. What kind of Communist or Komsomol member is he if he is capable of forgetting the main task of a Communist in the countryside—the consolidation of the poor- and farm-laborer core in the soviets under the leadership of the party. A recent decision of the Central Committee states directly that "only elements alien to the RCP(b) and the Komsomol can ignore this fundamental task of the party—the task of the independent organization of the poor and farm laborers in the countryside." This, comrades, was not said by chance. It was said because in our organizations we cannot tolerate people who are capable of forgetting the main task of the party and the Komsomol in the countryside—the task of organizing the poor and farm laborers as the support of Soviet power. Meanwhile, we still very frequently brush off the difficult task of organizing the poor- and farm-laborer masses with smooth-sounding resolutions. This must be put to an end.

Of course, we have successes in organizing the poor, but these successes are entirely insufficient. And this is despite the many repeated directives of the party on the necessity of creating poor- and farm-laborer groups attached to the soviets (as well as to cooperatives and kolkhozes). Under present conditions, this is especially intolerable. Therefore, with regard to those soviets that even now fail to secure a decisive breakthrough in organizing the poor and remain on the sidelines of the mass kolkhoz movement, we will have every reason to say that these

are not the soviets we need, that these are... kulak soviets! In those places where we may still encounter such “kulak soviets”—i.e., soviets where direct or indirect kulak influence is still strong—we must work especially hard to consolidate the farm-laborer and poor-peasant core and, together with the middle peasant, crush the kulak, evicting the kulak from these positions as well.

The new tasks of the party in the countryside require raising the work of the soviets. Mass collectivization of the countryside will genuinely enter the channel of socialist construction under conditions of ensuring genuine proletarian leadership. The soviets, as the principal organs of the proletarian dictatorship, must ensure this leadership over the kolkhoz movement. Therefore, the decisions of the November Plenum of the Central Committee state:

“It is necessary to strengthen the leading role of the soviets in relation to collectives, to increase the responsibility of the soviets for kolkhoz construction, to introduce a system of accountability of kolkhozes to the soviets, while avoiding petty tutelage and administrative interference in the management of collectives.”

However, we have stated that the present-day soviets in the countryside frequently represent a “bygone stage.” Can such soviets, representing “yesterday,” direct kolkhozes that have been created over the past half-year—following the fundamental turning point in the development of socialist construction in the countryside? Clearly, they cannot. Clearly, the leading role in relation to the mass kolkhoz movement is

beyond the capabilities of these soviets. We must realize that the soviets as they are, with their present work and composition, do not cope and cannot cope with this task. Where kolkhozes have already turned into a movement of the masses, and above all in regions of total collectivization, there the soviets—elected under a different environment, adapted to more elementary tasks, not fused with the new movement of the peasant masses toward socialism—cannot keep pace with the new tasks without a fundamental restructuring of their work, without a decisive break-up of outdated methods and forms of this work, and without a complete renewal of their composition.

The issue is not limited to selsoviets. The above applies equally to raion executive committees. Accordingly, it is necessary to restructure work in okrugs and regions, and finally in central organs. Now, not only must the soviets in the countryside work in a new way, but the soviets in the city, in working-class centers, must also begin working in a new way. If the advanced strata of the peasant masses have moved into the kolkhozes, then in the cities the advanced elements of the workers are organizing into shock brigades. The number of shock brigades is growing day by day at our factories and plants. And this is one of the main indicators of the enormous successes in the construction of socialism. Worker shock brigades also participate in other Soviet work. Thus, in the work of financial organs, for example, in auditing taxpayers from bourgeois elements in the cities and collecting arrears from them, shock brigades have already played a major role. In other branches of Soviet construction, the role of shock brigades, Komsomol

“light cavalry” groups, etc. must also grow. City soviets and soviets of workers' deputies in working-class centers can no longer be representatives of the genuine proletarian vanguard without genuine reliance on these worker shock brigades. Only by relying on them and heading these advanced elements of the working class, rallying the broad working masses around them and increasingly drawing these masses into the cause of Soviet construction, can the soviets in the city fulfill the tasks facing them.

Over the past year, the party has launched an intensified struggle against bureaucratism in the Soviet apparatus. Measures to combat bureaucratism and purge the Soviet apparatus of elements alien and hostile to the proletariat, which have been vigorously implemented over the recent period, mark the beginning of a fundamental restructuring and improvement of all soviet work. The main thing here still lies ahead. The struggle against bureaucratism in the Soviet apparatus is now more urgent than ever. We must anchor this struggle with a mass base with special persistence, because only truly broad mass participation will make the struggle against bureaucratism truly profound and truly serious.

3. RESTRUCTURING UNDER THE SLOGAN “FACING THE KOLKHOZES”

Of paramount importance in this connection is the restructuring of the soviets in the countryside. We must undertake this restructuring immediately. Without reliance on the kolkhoz movement, selsoviets and raion executive committees cannot

be organs of the proletarian dictatorship and conductors of party policy in the countryside. Without such reliance on the kolkhoz movement and without a corresponding fundamental restructuring of all their work and a change in their very composition, the soviets can only trail in the tail of the kolkhoz movement rather than head it. We are already lagging behind in this restructuring of soviet work in the regions of total collectivization. It is impossible to delay this matter any longer. On the one hand, this must lead to a fundamental turning point in the development of the soviets in the countryside.

On the other hand, only such a turning point in the work of the soviets can finally unleash the movement of the entire peasant mass along the channel of collectivization, which means leading to the final defeat of the kulaks while ensuring the leading role of the proletarian dictatorship.

This is why we must make the slogan of the day: **Soviets—facing the kolkhoz movement**. Just as we said regarding the trade unions: for the present period the slogan of the trade unions must be—**facing production**, so regarding the soviets in the countryside our slogan is—**facing the kolkhozes**. From this slogan stem our current tasks regarding the soviets.

It is not my task at present to dwell on the specific tasks of the soviets in regions of mass collectivization. The conference being convened under the TsIK will have its say on this. The leading organs of the soviets need to work seriously on these issues.

However, one must dwell on a certain fashionable infatuation of recent times. Among some comrades, talking about and

praising kolkhozes has become a sort of fashion. In connection with this, attention to the soviets has dropped and gone out of fashion, as it were. Recently, one could encounter arguments, for example, about the uselessness of soviets in regions of total collectivization. Without connecting the ends, even some communists have begun advocating liquidationist conclusions regarding the soviets. And this at a moment of enormous aggravation of the class struggle in the countryside, at a moment when the proletarian dictatorship must lay an iron hand on the kulaks as a class! It is clear that these liquidationist sentiments regarding the soviets have nothing in common with the interests of the proletariat and the peasant masses. They merely reflect a failure to understand the decisive significance of the Soviet system for the kolkhoz movement. These liquidationist sentiments play into the hands of the kulaks and the enemies of Soviet power in general. We must decisively put an end to this, we must strengthen the leading role of the soviets in relation to the kolkhozes, and we must ensure that the soviets make kolkhozes their base. On the basis of the kolkhoz movement, the significance of the soviets must rise even higher, and at the same time the soviets, turning to face the kolkhoz movement and taking the lead of it, will ensure decisive successes in the socialist restructuring of agriculture through the kolkhozes.

The successes of the kolkhoz movement depend to a huge degree on raising the work of the soviets, on expanding this work to serve the basic needs of the peasant masses drawn into the kolkhoz movement. It is not difficult to be convinced of this. The main task of the kolkhozes cannot be the organization

of agricultural production. The kolkhoz must concentrate its attention on the organization of labor within the kolkhoz, on raising production, and on the development of agriculture.

But the needs of the kolkhoz masses are not exhausted by this. The poor and middle peasant now need schools, hospitals, libraries, and other cultural institutions more than ever. All this cannot be left as it is. Roads cannot be left as they are; in many cases a large kolkhoz can no longer do without a telephone, etc. All these are tasks of the soviets. What talk of abolishing the soviets can there be now in regions of mass collectivization, including regions of total collectivization?

The talk should not be about liquidating soviets in regions of mass collectivization, but about radically improving their work. The shortcomings in the work of the soviets in the countryside —and not only in the countryside—have made themselves felt with special force recently.

By the way, related to this fact is the circumstance that in a number of economic campaigns, the role of party organizations was sometimes pushed to the fore too much. This could be demonstrated by the example of grain procurements. The soviets and cooperatives proved too weak to shoulder the burden of conducting the two last grain procurement campaigns. Frequently, party organizations were forced to take this matter almost directly into their own hands. Without this, the Soviet state could not have secured bread for itself, nor could it have supplied food to the workers and the Red Army. The weakness of the Soviet and cooperative apparatus in the countryside—and not only in the countryside—manifested itself with particular force in this case. In grain procurements,

as well as in the sowing campaigns of the recent period, when these economic tasks acquired enormous political significance, the soviets (and cooperatives) were unable to cope with their duties without special measures on the part of party organizations, without their direct intervention. The role of the party in this economic work was sometimes pushed too much to the fore, not because party organizations acted incorrectly in this case, but precisely the opposite—because this was dictated by absolute necessity.

However, our task is such a strengthening of the organs of Soviet power as would ensure the maximum active role of the soviets in fulfilling economic tasks. Given the difficulty and complexity of the new tasks in the countryside, and the present scale of collectivization, leadership over the unfolding socialist construction can be ensured only on the condition that the soviets are strengthened, that their authority is raised, and that they are able to genuinely exercise a leading role in relation to the kolkhozes. Alongside the tasks of strengthening party organizations in the countryside, we are faced with the most important and urgent task of restructuring the work of the soviets in the countryside, fundamentally changing the methods and forms of their work, and decisively renewing their entire composition.

Let us draw practical conclusions from this.

4. NEW TASKS AND RE-ELECTIONS OF SOVIETS

We must achieve a sharp turnaround in the work of the soviets in the countryside. We must turn the soviets to face the kolkhoz

movement. The lever of this turnaround must be the re-elections of the soviets.

Where soviets stand on the sidelines of the kolkhoz movement, the question of new elections to the soviets must be raised. Where soviets do not work on consolidating farm laborers and the poor, a firm alliance with the middle peasant cannot be ensured for the implementation of the policy of liquidating the kulaks, and there it is also necessary to pose the question of the re-election of soviets point-blank. We cannot recognize soviets incapable of waging a decisive struggle against the kulaks as soviets that will cope with the task of leading the collectivization of the countryside. Therefore, here too the question of re-elections must be put on the agenda. Not trailing in the tail of the kulaks, not braking the kolkhoz movement, but marching at the head of the peasant masses in the socialist restructuring of agriculture—such are the main tasks of the soviets in the countryside; soviets that have proved their incapacity for a decisive turn toward the kolkhozes must be re-elected. Re-elections of soviets under the slogan "facing the kolkhoz movement" is the task of the day.

The usual campaign for the re-election of soviets in the countryside has been postponed this year. Such a campaign would not achieve its goal now. The matter has become significantly more complex. Writing and dispatching instructions on re-elections, issuing slogans, and mobilizing workers—all of this is now insufficient for new elections to the soviets to proceed under the angle of a decisive turnaround in the work of the soviets, a turnaround toward new tasks. It is necessary for the re-elections of soviets to ensure a sharp

turnaround of the soviets toward the kolkhozes. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account the local situation and, consequently, the specific features of individual regions.

The kolkhoz movement has acquired far from uniform significance in different regions. In this connection, the question of re-electing soviets stands differently in different regions.

Thus, the question of restructuring the work of soviets in regions of mass collectivization admits of no delay. Re-elections of soviets here are the pressing task of the day. New forces from among active kolkhoz members must be advanced into the soviets, and the best of them must take the lead. Soviets in other regions must also keep in step with the kolkhoz movement.

The successes of socialist construction in our country, especially the new stage in the development of the collectivization of the countryside, require the restructuring of the work of all our organs. The soviets have lagged behind particularly in their methods and forms of work. This could not have been otherwise. The difficulty of restructuring the work of the soviets lies in the fact that this is an organization of the broadest masses, that this is an organization encompassing the working class as well as the entire main mass of the peasantry. Therefore, in the soviets, especially in the countryside, the moods of the backward strata of the working masses cannot fail to make themselves felt—and on many occasions. For this reason, the soviets in the countryside still perform the task of organizing the poor so unsatisfactorily and, on the other hand, still frequently fall under the direct and indirect influence of

kulak elements. But on the other hand, by ensuring a genuine turnaround in the work of the soviets toward new socialist tasks, by ensuring a turnaround of the soviets in the countryside to face the kolkhozes, we will take a giant step forward in the construction of socialism, for the basis of socialist construction is the growing participation of the broadest working masses in the realization of socialist tasks.

Thus, the soviets are faced with new tasks. In the countryside, these tasks stem from the unfolding socialist transformation of agriculture. Connected with this are the enormous tasks of transforming the entire peasant way of life. The realization of the new tasks is possible only in a stubborn and merciless struggle against the kulaks. The expulsion of all manner of kulak hangers-on from the soviets now stands before the soviets in the countryside with particular urgency. And at the same time, only on the basis of consolidating the farm-laborer and poor-peasant core, only on the basis of the most persistent work to organize the poor around the soviets, will the soviets in the countryside cope with their new tasks. There is not and cannot be any other more important task for the soviets now than the genuine consolidation of the farm-laborer and poor-peasant core in the soviets and, on this basis, the strengthening of proletarian leadership over the kolkhoz movement. And only by relying on the poor can the alliance with the middle peasant ensure the soviets quick and decisive successes in the struggle against the kulaks, ensuring the rout of the kulaks to the end.

Thousands and thousands of workers now going to the countryside must become the most active participants in the restructuring of soviet work. Twenty-five thousand advanced

proletarians in the countryside will play a huge role in consolidating the poor and farm laborers in the countryside, in creating the farm-laborer and poor-peasant core in the soviets, and in strengthening the alliance with the middle peasant. New soviets in the countryside must be elected from among the best proletarian activists, the farm-laborer and poor-peasant core in the countryside, and advanced kolkhoz members. This will be a genuine revitalization of the soviets.

Under the slogan “facing the kolkhozes,” let us begin the fundamental restructuring of work and the renewal of the soviets!

M. I. KALININ

TOTAL COLLECTIVIZATION AND THE TASKS OF THE SOVIETS[1]

COLLECTIVIZATION IS A MOVEMENT OF MILLIONS

Comrades! The Presidium of the TsIK of the USSR has resolved to convene this present conference in order to discuss the question of the new tasks of the soviets in connection with the widely unfolding collectivization of the countryside. Invited to this conference are chairmen or deputy chairmen of oblast, krai, and okrug executive committees located no more than 4–5 days' travel from Moscow.

I would like to say a few words as an introduction to the upcoming discussion of this question. I must warn you that we will not have a special keynote report, since people who know this question quite well have gathered here. I want to use my words, so to speak, to provide a policy guideline.

Recently, a special conference was held under the Party Central Committee, convened on the question of reorganizing the party apparatus. In parallel with this, the question of the new tasks of the soviets was also discussed, in connection with which outlines of certain fundamental provisions were made and a line for resolving this issue was given.

What is the essence of this issue? You all know very well that at present a process of collectivization has unfolded in the

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[1] *Speech at the opening of the All-Union Conference on Questions of Soviet Construction, January 20, 1930.*

countryside that is exceptional in its scale and depth. This process has very thoroughly gripped literally millions of people. One can safely say that now whole okrugs, even oblasts, from the most advanced villages to the most remote corners, are drawn into the process of collectivization. Never has the countryside experienced such feverish socio-economic restructuring as now; never has the countryside undergone such a mass overhaul of the entire production system as in our days. The question arises: what causes provoked this movement among the peasants? The kolkhoz movement became possible first of all thanks to our enormous achievements in the field of industrialization.

On the other hand, the peasants realized that only along the path of collectivizing their small and fragmented economy can they achieve an improvement in their material well-being and raise their cultural level. The peasants have seen the fundamental successes of Soviet power in building socialist industry, with which is connected the growth of the direct influence of workers on the entire life of the Soviet state, and with which is connected the growth of the material well-being and cultural level of workers. Indeed, every sensible person understands that this growth is conditioned primarily by the growth of the labor productivity of the worker. And so the peasantry, or at least its advanced part, has realized the necessity of raising the productivity of its labor, which turns out to be possible for the millions of masses only on the basis of large-scale collective farming through the widespread application of advanced machine technology. The realization of

precisely this thought imperatively pushes the peasantry onto the path of collectivization.

Undoubtedly, a very important role in the development of the kolkhoz movement is played by the policy of Soviet power. Take the agricultural tax, for example: its main weight falls on the upper stratum of the countryside, and the structure of the agricultural tax assumes and in practice ensures significant benefits for kolkhozes. Furthermore, the policy of restricting the kulak, and now—the decisive course toward liquidating the kulaks as a class—this in turn contributes to the development of collectivization. If an individual peasant might have had an illusory desire to raise his material status through individual farming, our struggle against the kulaks cuts off such paths. Finally, our agitation for collectivization has also yielded certain results, especially in cases where it relied on the practical achievements of individual kolkhozes and sovkhozes.

All these moments, taken together, push the peasants onto the path of kolkhoz construction. The question now stands: how practically, i.e., in deed, to organizationally consolidate this mass movement; how to use it in order to permanently restructure and transform small individual peasant farming on socialist principles in the shortest historical period and thereby resolve the fundamental question of our revolution? Undoubtedly, colossal work still lies ahead here. If industry required us to spend a certain number of years more or less putting it on a firm basis to ensure the present tempos for its progressive development, so that we could cultivate the corresponding cadres of organizers and leaders—then it must be said that in the field of agriculture we will have to expend

far more time and the most strenuous efforts. At the same time, we must not forget that in organizing industry we could resort to a certain extent to foreign assistance, to the assistance of capitalist countries. As for the development of large-scale socialist agriculture, here we can hardly expect to get much from abroad: everyone knows that we are pioneers in the organization of large-scale agriculture. The most we can count on is bare technology, for example tractors, and even that on a limited scale, whereas in the field of organization we will not get much.

At present, much is being written and spoken, oblast after oblast boasts that in some places collectivization has been carried out halfway, in others—two-thirds, and so on and so forth. Of course, for now all these talks are a preliminary stage that obligates us to much. Soon the sowing will begin, and then we will see how many hectares of land have been collectivized. But even then this will still not be all the work, but only the beginning; and then some will boast that they sowed so much, and others that they sowed so much. However, when the harvest season arrives, when harvesting begins, then we will know for sure what the quantitative scale and quality of all the collectivization work was. Indeed, comrades, you can formally sow a lot, but results depend not only on the sowing, but on the struggle to raise crop yields; only then will the work of local organs manifest itself in full measure.

AT THE HEAD OF THE POOR- AND MIDDLE-PEASANT MASSES—TOWARD THE LIQUIDATION OF THE KULAKS

In connection with the unfolding collectivization of agriculture, new and extraordinarily large tasks have arisen before the

soviets, first of all before the village soviets. To outline these tasks of the soviets more clearly, allow me to quote the following words of Lenin, stated at the XI Party Congress, which, in my opinion, are best suited to characterize the current situation:

"We have had all sorts of ways and exits from our political and economic difficulties, and we can proudly boast that we have hitherto been able to use all these ways and exits in various combinations, applicable to various circumstances, but we have no more exits. Allow me to say to you without any exaggeration, so that in this sense it is truly 'the last and decisive battle'—not with international capitalism—there will be many more 'last and decisive battles'—no, but rather with Russian capitalism, with that which grows out of small peasant farming, with that which is supported by it. Here a battle awaits us in the immediate future, the exact date of which cannot be precisely determined" (vol. XVIII, part 2, pp. 30–31).

You see, comrades, that Lenin foresaw the onset of the period that you and I are now experiencing. Yes, we have indeed now entered "into the last and decisive battle" with Russian capitalism, which grows on the soil of small-scale commodity production; we have entered into battle with the kulaks, having set ourselves the task of liquidating them as a class. To use the words of Karl Marx, "for the masses, it is not a question of altering private property, but of abolishing it, not of glossing over class contradictions, but of abolishing classes, not of improving capitalist society, but of founding a new society." The question arises: is it possible under such conditions to talk about liquidating the soviets, is it possible to talk about

replacing the soviets with any other organizations, for example kolkhozes? It must be stated plainly that such an intention is the greatest political error. In connection with the unfolding kolkhoz movement, the role of lower-level soviets does not decrease, but increases extraordinarily. Under these new conditions, we must talk not of the liquidation, not of the "withering away" of the soviets, but, on the contrary, of achieving their all-out strengthening. Our soviets must become instigators, organizers, and leaders of the broad kolkhoz movement; they must raise, mobilize, and direct the poor- and middle-peasant masses of the peasantry in the struggle against the kulaks. If there are soviets that do not cope with these tasks, they must be dissolved and re-elected.

In connection with all this, one idea must be grasped. Soviets are not merely administrative organs, but the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Hitherto our soviets were adapted to suppressing the resistance of class enemies, in particular crushing the kulak. Now this is not enough; now we are facing new, more complex tasks; now we have set out to abolish private property and transform small individual peasant farming on socialist principles. Lenin once pre-warned that the dictatorship of the proletariat must not be understood narrowly, nor reduced solely to violence against exploiters.

"The dictatorship of the proletariat," he said, "is not only violence against exploiters, and not even chiefly violence. The economic foundation of this revolutionary violence, the guarantee of its vitality and success is that the proletariat represents and implements a higher type of social organization of labor compared to capitalism. This is the essence. This is the

source of strength and the guarantee of the inevitable, complete victory of communism. The serf-owning organization of social labor rested on the discipline of the stick amid the extreme darkness and downtroddenness of the working people, who were robbed and mocked by a handful of landowners. The capitalist organization of social labor rested on the discipline of hunger, and the vast mass of working people, despite all the progress of bourgeois culture and bourgeois democracy, remained in the most advanced, civilized, and democratic republics a dark and downtrodden mass of wage slaves or crushed peasants, who were robbed and mocked by a handful of capitalists. The communist organization of social labor, the first step of which is socialism, rests and, as time goes on, will rest more and more on the free and conscious discipline of the working people themselves, who overthrew landowners and capitalists alike. This new discipline does not drop from the sky nor is it born of good intentions; it grows out of the material conditions of capitalist production, and out of them alone. Without them it is impossible. And the bearer of these material conditions or their conductor is a specific historical class, created, organized, consolidated, trained, enlightened, and hardened by large-scale capitalism. This class is the proletariat" (vol. XVI, pp. 247–248).

That is the essence of the matter, comrades. Now you understand why now, and especially now, it is necessary to strengthen the soviets. It is precisely through the soviets as a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as conductors of proletarian influence, as instruments of proletarian impact, that

we must introduce and will introduce the free and conscious discipline of labor into the kolkhozes.

We are used to simply crushing exploiters. Of course, that is a magnificent thing. The struggle began with this: we overthrew, smashed, and crushed. If we had not done this, we could not have gathered here at present, we could not have come close to the construction of socialism. But besides this the soviets are organizers of new labor processes, socialist processes of a higher order compared to capitalist processes. Otherwise socialism cannot win; it will not win if the proletariat and its vanguard, the Communist Party, do not introduce a new, more perfect method of production, a more perfect organization of labor into fragmented agriculture. And for this work, soviets as organs of the proletarian dictatorship are necessary.

Some communists, fascinated by the success of collectivization, have lost their sober judgment and begun reasoning about the uselessness of soviets in regions of total collectivization, about how kolkhozes can completely replace soviets.

For example, in *Rabochaya Moskva* of September 19, 1929, Comrade Dotsenko wrote: “With total collectivization of settlements with full socialization, all functions of selsoviets are carried out by kolkhozes.” From this he drew the conclusion that “the preservation of selsoviets in the presence of a totally collectivized settlement... will be a superfluous and expensive administrative superstructure over the kolkhozes.” In *Izvestiya* of September 11, 1929, Comrade Ryakhov went even further. In his article, he heralds the beginning of the withering away of the state. “Kolkhozes,” he writes, “decide and begin to

implement the tasks of selsoviets; kolkhozes outpace the activity of selsoviets." Proceeding from this, he asks: "Is not the kolkhoz-village the beginning of the withering away of individual links of statehood in our Soviet Union, which is building socialism?" At the same time, Comrade Ryakhov refers to the following words of F. Engels: "Society, which organizes production anew on the basis of a free and equal association of producers, will dispatch the entire state machine to where it will then belong." This is going too far. And it looks as if these comrades are taking a very "left" stance. But in reality, objectively, this is the most genuine right-wing opportunism. Explanations, it seems to me, are completely superfluous: this is understandable to any sane-minded person. These comrades' intentions are undoubtedly very good, but it is clear that they approach the issue in a non-Marxist way. Indeed, a Marxist is obliged to take into account the entire totality of conditions of each given moment. Whoever fails to take the entire totality into account, whoever fails to grasp the specific features of the period being experienced, is not a Marxist and cannot chart the correct line.

How can one say that a kolkhoz is able to completely replace a selsoviet? What is the main, fundamental error here? This error lies in the failure to understand that the dictatorship of the proletariat is exercised among us in the form of soviets, that a selsoviet is not merely an administrative organ, but a grassroots foundation, a base, an organization through and by means of which the entire multi-million mass of the poorest and middle peasantry is encompassed. The selsoviet represents an integral and very important part of the entire system of the dictatorship

of the proletariat. If we abolish selsoviets and then liquidate raion soviets, what will we get? We will get a head and a torso without legs. Can this be accepted? No, this cannot be accepted.

Furthermore, soviets are a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Tell me, please, can a kolkhoz be a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat? No, it cannot. A kolkhoz is only an economic, production cell that transforms individual labor into social labor.

If one adopts the viewpoint of these comrades, then in a whole series of worker settlements we should probably have liquidated soviets long ago and transferred their functions to, say, factory committees. In Leningrad and Moscow oblasts there are very many such settlements where workers constitute an overwhelming majority. It would seem that in such settlements soviets should have been liquidated long ago. However, even in such settlements we preserve soviets, and they will undoubtedly develop and grow from year to year as organs of power. But this is still not enough. The comrades I mentioned, as can be seen, completely fail to take into account the peculiarities of the environment in which we live at present.

THE "WITHERING AWAY" OF SOVIETS AND RIGHT-OPPORTUNIST CONFOUNDERS

It is known that the kulak could exist and develop under conditions of small-scale commodity production. The monopoly on the means of production gave him the opportunity to hold the poor peasantry in bondage. We are now

arming the poor and middle peasants with the means of production on the principles of collective farming, while disarming the kulaks and liquidating their monopoly on the means of production. Precisely because a titanic kolkhoz movement has now unfolded, precisely for this reason dekulakization entails the destruction of the kulaks as a class. In connection with this, an aggravation of the class struggle is inevitable, the main and decisive form of which is now the struggle of the kulaks against the kolkhozes. Local soviets, as organs of the proletarian dictatorship, must take the practical implementation of the dekulakization slogan into their own hands. Undoubtedly, the kulak is exerting and will exert frantic resistance to the socialist offensive, and will desperately fight for self-preservation. The stronger our soviets must be, the more energetically they must develop and push the kolkhoz movement, the more decisively they must act as an instrument for suppressing the resistance of the kulaks. This is clear. However, there are people who consider it possible to replace soviets with kolkhozes; there are people who proclaim the beginning of the withering away of proletarian statehood... and this at a time when a fierce class struggle is taking place, when the “last and decisive battle” with the remnants of Russian capitalism is being played out.

Obviously, these people also represent the building of socialism in a single country far too primitively. Obviously, they assume that in the building of socialism in a single country surrounded on all sides by capitalist states, proletarian power will not be needed, that it can then be thrown onto the scrap heap. Here you have, so to speak, voluntary association,

collectivization—it does everything, and power is not needed. When is this? This is imagined at a time when we had an armed conflict with China. One must understand absolutely nothing to think in this manner. As long as we are in a capitalist encirclement, we need the Red Army, we need the organs of the OGPU, the organs of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, and a number of others; as long as the barrel of a cannon of the capitalist world is pointed at our borders, talking about the withering away of power is, to say the least, ridiculous.

Lenin repeatedly pointed out that the withering away of the state will truly begin only when classes wither away. But now, as is well known, classes have not yet been eliminated by us. So far we have proceeded to eliminate only the kulaks as a class. In this connection, the soviets face a major task—to suppress the resistance of the kulaks and other capitalist elements. But in addition, we still have the peasantry as a class, in relation to which the soviets face an even more complex and difficult task of transformation and re-education.

“It is clear that for the complete abolition of classes,” says Lenin, “it is necessary not only to overthrow the exploiters, landowners, and capitalists, not only to abolish their property, it is necessary to abolish all private property in the means of production.” This is of course a hint at the peasantry.

“It is necessary to abolish,” Lenin continues, “precisely the distinction between town and country, as well as the distinction between manual workers and mental workers. Just think about this.” It turns out that this is when the withering away of power is possible—namely: when the distinction between mental

labor and physical labor is abolished. As if this is not going to happen soon. Lenin puts it this way: “This business is very long. To accomplish it, a giant step forward in the development of productive forces is needed, the resistance (often passive, which is especially stubborn and especially difficult to overcome) of numerous remnants of small-scale production must be overcome, and the immense force of habit and inertia associated with these remnants must be overcome. To suppose that all ‘working people’ are equally capable of this work would be the emptiest phrase or an illusion of pre-historic, pre-Marxist socialism. For this capability is not given of itself, but grows historically and grows only from the material conditions of large-scale capitalist production. At the beginning of the path from capitalism to socialism, only the proletariat possesses this capability” (vol. XVI, pp. 249–250).

Note that Lenin says: “At the beginning of the path from capitalism to socialism,” yet we are only at the beginning of this path. The question arises: can a kolkhoz replace a soviet as an organ of proletarian impact on the petty-bourgeois mass? Indeed, a very serious struggle will take place in the kolkhozes between private-property and socialist tendencies. Are we to close our eyes to this? Yet we are invited to replace grassroots organs of the proletarian dictatorship with kolkhozes. As you can see, there are no grounds whatsoever, in my view, to talk about the withering away of soviets or replacing them with kolkhozes. And as far as I know, views of this kind generally do not have wide circulation among us, they are not strong. This is simply, probably, a few hotheaded and overenthusiastic minds that could reach such views.

Finally, comrades, I want to dwell on one more point. These hotheads, it seems, completely fail to understand the teachings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin on the conditions for the withering away of the state. The state of the proletarian dictatorship must necessarily exist for a fairly long period of time until communism triumphs fully and entirely. Therefore, it is not surprising that Lenin, following Marx and Fr. Engels, persistently emphasized the proposition that the state will still exist under socialism if socialism is viewed as the first phase or stage of communism. More than that: both K. Marx, Fr. Engels, and Lenin pointed out that under socialism, for a certain time, "bourgeois right" and even a "bourgeois state—without the bourgeoisie" remains. This happens because immediately after the overthrow of capitalism, people cannot immediately learn to work for society without any norms of right. Moreover, it is unthinkable to create the economic prerequisites immediately after the overthrow of capitalism for the immediate elimination of any norms of right. "And there are no other norms," writes Lenin, "apart from 'bourgeois right.' And to that extent there still remains the need for a state, which, while preserving common ownership of the means of production, would safeguard the equality of labor and the equality of product distribution. The state withers away insofar as there are no longer capitalists, no longer classes, and it is therefore impossible to suppress any class whatsoever. The state has not yet completely withered away, since there remains the protection of 'bourgeois right,' which sanctifies actual inequality. Complete communism is required for the complete withering away of the state." Note: "the state withers away, insofar as there are no longer capitalists." But we still have

them, while outside the Union they predominate. The state withers away, insofar as "classes no longer exist." But we still have the most numerous class—the class of the petty-bourgeois peasantry. "It is therefore impossible to suppress any class whatsoever." But we are suppressing and liquidating the kulak class or the capitalist fraction. Yet according to Lenin, even with the abolition of classes, the state does not wither away completely; even then a state continues to exist whose duty is to protect "bourgeois right," which sanctifies actual inequality. For the state to wither away completely and forever, "complete communism is required." And what is the essence of complete communism? When will there be complete communism? Then, when everyone will voluntarily labor according to their abilities and freely take according to their needs. This will be developed communism. But we are still a long way from this; prior to this, a socialist state must still exist, protecting "bourgeois right" and sanctifying actual inequality. This actual inequality stems from equal right to an equal product. This right, like any right, presupposes inequality, and therefore it is a remnant of "bourgeois right."

Indeed, everyone works an equal share of social labor, and everyone receives an equal share of the social product. But man and man are not equal: one is stronger, another is weaker; one is married, another is single; one has many children, another has few, and so on. Consequently, under socialism differences in wealth will remain, but the exploitation of man by man will be impossible because the means of production, which are public property, cannot be seized as private property. Therefore Lenin says: "In its first phase, communism cannot

yet be economically fully mature, fully free from the traditions or traces of capitalism. Hence such an interesting phenomenon as the retention of the ‘narrow horizon of bourgeois right’ in communism in its first phase. Bourgeois right in relation to the distribution of consumer goods naturally and inevitably presupposes a bourgeois state as well, for right is nothing without an apparatus capable of enforcing compliance with the norms of right. It turns out that not only does bourgeois right remain for a certain time under communism, but even a bourgeois state—without the bourgeoisie. This may seem a paradox,” Lenin continues, “or simply a dialectical play of mind of which Marxism is often accused by people who have not bothered the least bit to study its extraordinarily profound content. In reality, however, remnants of the old in the new show us life at every step: both in nature and in society. And Marx involuntarily smuggled a piece of ‘bourgeois right’ into communism, taking what was economically and politically inevitable in a society emerging from the womb of capitalism” (vol. XIV, pp. 377–378). We have this bourgeois right in abundance right now. Even with significant success, it will have a place. But after all, we are still far from a genuine socialist organization of labor and distribution of products. When that happens, even then the state will not yet have withered away.

You see how Lenin posed and resolved, based on the teachings of Marx and Engels, the question of the conditions for the withering away of the state. You see that this is a matter of the relatively distant future. And yet there are people who believe

that even now the kolkhoz is the beginning of the withering away of individual links of statehood in our Soviet Union.

NOT A STEP AWAY FROM MARXISM-LENINISM

Comrades, the unfolding collectivization has posed before us many questions, not only practical ones, but also matters of principle, distinguished by great complexity. If one looks at all the processes taking place in our country right now, it is easy to notice that they require serious theoretical armament in order to be easily understood. When you direct the searchlight of the Marxist worldview onto these processes, they become clear, and then it is easy to figure them out—at least easier to figure them out than to arrive at an understanding of their essence through experimentation. And so the unfolding collectivization raises once again the question that our local practical workers must thoroughly ground themselves with theoretical knowledge in order to be able to approach the resolution of the most complex problems of our days with appropriate theoretical illumination, and to be able to apply Marxist-Leninist theoretical understanding most practically in their administrative and organizational work.

I am concluding my introductory speech, comrades. I did not intend to give a keynote report here; I only wanted to raise a number of questions so that they would evoke an appropriate response from the visiting comrades. We need to discuss deeply and comprehensively, in principle and in practice, the question of the new tasks of the soviets in connection with collectivization, guided by Marxist-Leninist teachings while

remaining at the appropriate theoretical height, for the Communist Party has never limited its work solely to narrow practical results; it has always built and will continue to build its policy on the basis of principled Marxist-Leninist propositions. Allow me to conclude my introductory speech with this and express the wish that our conference yields fruitful results.

A. S. ENUKIDZE

FOR THE REORGANIZATION AND STRENGTHENING OF LOWER ORGANS OF SOVIET POWER[2]

SOVIETS MUST HEAD THE KOLKHOZ MOVEMENT AND EXERCISE LEADERSHIP OVER IT

In connection with the widely unfolding collectivization in many places, the question was and is currently being raised as to how to act with lower organs of power. This question was raised with particular sharpness in a number of regions of total collectivization.

Diverse opinions and proposals were expressed on this matter. A number of comrades from various regions began expressing the same thoughts, the meaning of which boiled down to the fact that, along with collectivization, it is necessary and possible to raise the question of the withering away and abolition of lower organs of power.

As you know, the Presidium of the TsIK has already given a directive that any talk about the withering away, elimination, or diminution of the role and significance of local organs of power, or about the transfer of their functions to kolkhoz organs, is completely inadmissible. In deciding to outline the necessary measures for the further revitalization and strengthening of the soviets, we decided to invite you,

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[2] *Speech at the All-Union Conference on Questions of Soviet Construction.*

representatives from the localities, and discuss these issues with you together, which are undoubtedly becoming the order of the day.

What is the issue, and what does the unfolding collectivization show us? If we look closely at the work of our lower organs of power, especially in those regions where a huge wave of collectivization is unfolding, we must state that the soviets in this movement remain to some extent in the shadow, remain on the sidelines. The enormous initiative of the masses, growing on a specific economic basis and the raising of the socio-cultural level, was made possible by such powerful factors as both industrialization and the growth of the kolkhoz movement. Only fools can say that with such collectivization one can create through agitation and propaganda alone. Only as a result of all our general economic policy and as a consequence of twelve years of correct policy toward the peasantry has such a wide kolkhoz movement grown.

Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin correctly noted that the peasantry understands more in all our policy than many think, and the peasantry draws certain conclusions. These conclusions of the peasantry boil down to the fact that with the colossal industrialization of the country, with a planned economy, with the construction of a socialist society, individual farming cannot be maintained, no matter what it was like. Having resolved this question for themselves, the peasants come to the conclusion that it is necessary to restructure, that agriculture needs to be restructured on collective principles. And our party and government very timely and definitely posed the question of the restructuring of agriculture. This is what caused the

natural transition to collectivization. I repeat, in this enormous struggle our soviets remained on the sidelines. They cannot guide it in their present state, being unable to fully encompass this entire vast movement. Why did this happen? Is the composition of the soviets alone to blame here, or the fact that organs of power or individual comrades paid insufficient attention to this issue, as a result of which the soviets lagged behind and found themselves behind this entire vast movement? In my opinion, this is not the reason. If we historically trace the development of our soviets, how step by step our soviets grew stronger, how their influence grew in the city and in the countryside, we will come to the conclusion that the significance and influence of city soviets constantly grew and grew with the growth of our socialized economy, with the growth of industrialization, with the strengthening of our fierce struggle against capitalist elements. Soviets, or Soviet power, is the power of a socialized economy, the power of the working class, and insofar as this class overcame all counteractions of anti-soviet and anti-revolutionary elements, to that extent the significance of the soviets grew.

We had something else in the countryside. Look at our soviets from the first years of the revolution. All the energy of the first soviets went into the struggle against counter-revolution in the civil war. On what economic basis could selsoviets grow so that their political and economic influence could be stronger than hitherto? On the basis of a socialized economy. As long as individual farming lay at the foundation of all rural economy, the soviets, of course, could not fully encompass all rural life and could not function as genuine organs of the proletarian

dictatorship in the countryside. If we have an undoubted success in strengthening the lower organs of power, selsoviets, raion executive committees, and okrug executive committees, it was always based on the upsurge of the socialist sector in the countryside; there, where the struggle for cooperation, for the organization of the poor, for strengthening the alliance of the poor and farm laborers with the middle peasant against the kulak successfully developed, the active element grew that participated in the electoral campaign, in the soviets, and there the soviets step by step became significant, strong, and noticeable in our social and political life.

But in history there have often been examples when economic relations and the growth of the economy outpace the work of the state apparatus.

We have had approximately the same thing happen. The work of the apparatus lags behind the demands of unfolding industrialization and the activity of the working masses in cities. And in the countryside, selsoviets lag behind the tempos of collectivization.

But only enemies of Soviet power can say on this basis that soviets, as a system, do not satisfy the current stage of restructuring our agriculture and therefore it is necessary to look for other forms of organization of power. We had the opinion arise immediately after wide collectivization that soviets are beginning to wither away, therefore all power must be transferred to the administration of kolkhozes and the management of the organization of power carried further.

With some this was an infatuation. Since everyone knows that under communism there will be the withering away of state power, many imagined that kolkhozes—especially in regions of total collectivization, where the means are socialized—are already communism, and let us therefore start with the "withering away" of lower organs of power. Others put forward this question due to lack of awareness or misunderstanding of the correlation between organs of power and those organizations called kolkhozes. Thirds fell under the influence of our enemies and anti-soviet elements when they started talking about this.

To convince you that the "withering away" of lower organs of power is an incorrect and harmful thought would be superfluous, therefore I will not dwell on this question. I only want to emphasize the thought that, on the contrary, precisely in the epoch of collectivization the time comes and conditions are created for an even greater strengthening and growth of village soviets. Selsoviets are entering precisely that phase when they can display all their strength as the sole and main organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the countryside. Just as now we need to squarely pose the question of strengthening the soviets and concentrating in the hands of the soviets—these organs of power, these organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat—all functions, both economic and political, including all activities of kolkhozes. Otherwise we cannot pose the question. Selsoviets precisely at the present time, when we are witnesses to the gigantic process of collectivization, will truly be able to stand up and stand firmly on their feet. Just as selsoviets now, relying on collectives,

relying on socialized economy, will receive incomparably more and cadres and means for their activity. Then all their activity will receive a direct reflection in a more developed socialized economy. Only then will selsoviets stand shoulder to shoulder with city soviets and go together with them step by step toward the construction of socialism.

WHAT WAS THE WEAKNESS OF SELSOVIETS

The most interesting era of the soviets is arriving, opening huge opportunities for their strengthening and development. What were our soviets reproached and are they reproached for? The fact that they do not conduct or conduct mass work poorly, that in political and economic campaigns they lag behind, which is why it is necessary from the cities, with the help of the party and trade unions, with the help of higher organs, to send to their aid a multitude of workers in the form of plenipotentiary brigades to strengthen their work in the countryside. This reproach is correct, comrades. Soviets did not sufficiently develop and conduct mass work. The poor organization of mass work and a number of other shortcomings of selsoviets are also explained by the fact that in the countryside we have hitherto had a large fragmentation of forces and means. You know that until recently we did not concentrate all power and all rights to dispose of economic objects in the countryside in the hands of the soviets. Alongside selsoviets there existed, for example, land societies, a whole series of other public organizations that had at their disposal and managed those or other economic objects either apart from selsoviets or parallel with them. And therefore

selsoviets there, where they were weak, where kulak influence was strong, remained on the sidelines or deliberately shied away from this work. If a soviet does not represent either by its composition or by its base and work a significant force, it, of course, cannot properly engage in mass work. For many soviets, the question of organizing the poor and farm laborers, or drawing the middle peasant to their side against capitalist, anti-soviet elements of the countryside, was downright alien. Now, with collectivization, when relations in the countryside are radically changing, another era is already arriving, and we must concretely pose the question of the place and role of soviets in the countryside in the process of restructuring the economy, in this gigantic movement of the masses.

Another accusation against the soviets was that they lag in their work behind many ripe questions in the countryside. They not only are not initiators, but often trail in the tail and even, as auxiliary organs, do not always keep pace with the enthusiasm and impulse of the broad masses in the countryside, which we observed during the implementation of the most important campaigns and measures. This accusation is also largely well-founded. Of course, one should not seek justifications for the weakness of the work of the soviets. But what was said above about the fragmentation of the material base gives the key to understanding this weakness of selsoviets and indicates that now, when other conditions for development in the countryside are arriving, it is necessary to squarely and with all determination pose the question of their strengthening.

Reproaches to soviets for lagging behind on extremely important issues advanced by new conditions entirely need to

be transferred also to higher organs of power, up to the TsIK of the USSR. We cannot under any circumstances say that the TsIK of the USSR, the Council of People's Commissars, or krai executive committees, republican organs stand at the proper height and always timely resolve those or other issues and that only the “lower tiers” lag behind.

Take our five-year plan, take the tempos of our industrialization. Does not our legislation, proceeding from higher and supreme organs of power, in many respects lag behind what we now observe in life? It lags behind. And if we examine legislation regarding the countryside, legislation lags even more.

Let us take our legislation on land use and land management. It has lagged behind. Collectivization completely anew poses this issue. Take our tax policy. Calculated for individual farms, it can now be considered outdated and often runs counter to what is happening in the countryside. Are selsoviets to blame for this, do they issue these laws? No, they are issued here. It would be completely incorrect if from all this we draw the conclusion that since we lag behind in these issues, the entire mechanism of Soviet power is no good. Nothing of the kind.

Falling into despondency from the fact that construction, directed by us, guided by us and drawing millions of people, outpaces to some extent the work of the apparatus, we should not lose our nerve here at all. We must restructure ourselves, and restructure ourselves so as not to change the structure of power under any circumstances.

It is incorrect when they say that the time for the withering away of power has arrived. Nothing of the kind. The ongoing development proves entirely and fully the correctness of the construction of our organs of power. The question is that we need to restructure ourselves so as not to lag behind the process of economic development, the process of changing production relations in the countryside and in the city under any circumstances. How to do this? Before proceeding to the restructuring of organs of power and adaptation to such a rapid tempo of development, we must make clear to ourselves what obstacles stand before us, and clarify what prevents us from restructuring ourselves so that we do not lag by a single step behind that process which we observe now and which proceeds entirely along the path mapped out by us.

SELSOVIETS MUST LEAD THE SOCIALIST RESTRUCTURING OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

At the conference we will speak about selsoviets, and mainly only about them. We now have large regions of total collectivization, we know about the huge movement toward collectivization throughout the USSR. Of course, our business is not only not to detain this process, but to take all measures to ensure it with economic measures, i.e., machinery, technology, and necessary cadres. This is on the one hand. On the other hand, we need to create such organs of power in the countryside that would fulfill all management tasks and resolve economic and political issues. These organs of power must, of course, be provided with material means and cadres. Can we do this now, with our present state of forces and means? If not

entirely and immediately in all regions, then in a significant part and degree we can do this. What elements do we have for this and what is needed for this? Regarding selsoviets, it is necessary, firstly, that the composition of these selsoviets reflects that process of restructuring agriculture and organizing the masses that we observe, i.e., that people entered the selsoviet who actively conduct work on the restructuring of agriculture. In class terms, what elements do we have on our side? All the poor, farm laborers, an enormous majority of middle peasants. Who is against us in this struggle? Undoubtedly the kulaks and those anti-soviet elements who under no circumstances, neither in class terms, nor economically, nor ideologically can reconcile themselves with the construction of socialism. Why against the kulak have we led and do we lead and will we lead an implacable struggle until the final liquidation of the kulaks? Because the kulak by his class position cannot reconcile himself with socialism, with collectivization, with the socialization of all means of production. Because his entire might, psychology, his views grew on the soil of individual farming and on the exploitation of other people's labor. The kulak tightly holds onto individual farming, because on this soil he grew as a kulak. When the question is raised about the socialization of land and all implements of production, what position does the kulak take? Is his existence as an individual farmer compatible with collective farms? Absolutely incompatible either economically or politically.

What policy should be pursued in relation to this class? The policy of implacable struggle, as against an irreconcilably

hostile class. This is a major and extraordinarily complex task for those organs of power that must carry this struggle on their shoulders. If we roughly compare what is happening in the countryside now in the field of economic revolution, it is the same as what happened with us at the beginning of the October Revolution. We expropriated the bourgeoisie, we socialized factories, plants, and means of production and knocked the economic base out from under the bourgeoisie. We conducted this policy extremely firmly and mercilessly.

The same in the countryside. We cannot fail to knock out from under the feet of the kulak his material base, i.e., economy. And this struggle will be no less fierce, and even fiercer, than the struggle against the urban bourgeoisie. Here numerical ratios and a whole series of circumstances place before the soviets the task of sustaining a harsher, sharper struggle. No one, of course, can have any doubt that victory will remain with the millions of peasants, its majority, going in a wide wave toward collectivization. With this confidence in victory, of course, does not diminish. The kulak will still more severely sharpen the struggle against us in connection with collectivization. Therefore, soviets must disarm collectives from anti-soviet elements. Collectivization advances and requires the resolution of very complex questions of economic construction, and in this we need to pursue the same planned character that we have in industry. It is necessary that all socio-economic and cultural-educational tasks are also resolved step by step in connection with the growth and consolidation of collective farms; it is necessary that collective farms are not torn away from other neighboring collectives, but on the

contrary, go hand in hand with all collectives and as a whole with our industry and in a timely manner fulfill their obligations in relation to the Soviet state.

DURING THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE SELSOVIET NETWORK, PRESERVE THE EXISTING STRUCTURE

In connection with this, a number of major tasks arise in the field of soviet construction. It is necessary to so strengthen and revitalize organs of power in the localities so that they are able to encompass the diversity and complexity of issues, ensure a proper economic resolution and at the same time suppress any resistance along this path, wage a decisive struggle against all kulak and anti-soviet or anti-collective elements in the countryside. What needs to be done for this? In those places where we now have total collectivization, we must review the network of selsoviets and restructure them in such a way that soviets are capable of leading—both economically, administratively, and politically. With total collectivization, the boundaries of selsoviets have inevitably been disrupted in the sense that on the territory of one collective we have several selsoviets. This happened because kolkhozes are built on the production principle, which during previous economic regionalization and organization of selsoviets did not have such decisive significance.

And the question is posed: can several selsoviets lead such an integral, single organism as a large collective, can they lead the economy of this collective, can they encompass all cultural-educational tasks, tasks of road construction, planned management of the economy, and resolve all administrative

questions in this given collective? Clearly, several organs of power cannot do this simultaneously, moreover with extremely diverse composition and qualification of workers. Therefore, before comrades in oblasts and krais the question is posed: how to act in such cases with the restructuring of the selsoviets network? It seems to us, comrades—here I express not only my own opinion, but also reflect the opinion that exists in the localities as a result of brief experience—that the boundaries of selsoviets must be adapted to those production units that we have inside kolkhozes. In them, in large kolkhozes, there are economies or production plots. It is precisely along these economies and production plots that selsoviets must be built.

But it may be asked, what if economies or production plots frequently outgrow the boundaries of existing selsoviets? Therefore we must also undertake some enlargement of selsoviets. This does not in any way violate the principle of building selsoviets. But, perhaps, such a restructuring of the network violates what we feared so much, namely, that selsoviets will be enlarged to such an extent that they will not cope with serving the population of the territory? But we have, as is known, taken into account when building selsoviets both in the RSFSR and throughout the Union, mainly the backwardness of our communication routes, our communications, etc. At first under kolkhozes we will have difficulties in this oblast, if we enlarge selsoviets. But it is known that the process of collectivization that we now observe will make it easier to resolve questions of communication, road construction, communication, so that we should not be frightened by a certain increase in the radius of selsoviets to 5–

6 kilometers. Therefore, taking as the basis for building selsoviets the production plot or economy, we must not fear a certain expansion of selsoviet boundaries. Thus, on the territory of one or another large kolkhoz we will receive a number of selsoviets. Where economies or production plots have a small size and are insufficient for organizing a separate soviet, we must act just as villages and settlements did at one time when organizing selsoviets. They can unite under the leadership of one selsoviet.

Now regarding raion executive committees. The question of raions in connection with the review of the selsoviets network is posed in the same way. They can also be enlarged and probably will be enlarged. Once an economic base of raions and selsoviets is created, we must go for this, because, I repeat, selsoviets and raions will have a much stronger economic base and support for their work than was the case hitherto. In connection with the fact that the role of selsoviets in regions of total collectivization is intensifying, the question of strengthening their leading composition is posed. A proposal is also put forward by local comrades that in regions of total collectivization, the re-election of these soviets should be undertaken. The CECs of republics, krai and oblast executive committees need to permit these re-elections to be carried out. With re-elections, the question must be posed—whom should the selsoviet rely on in its work. And here we, without changing our previous slogans and bases for building selsoviets, must reiterate that the main support for selsoviets remains the poor and farm laborers. In this electoral campaign, an emphasis must be made precisely on these strata, expanding

the composition of the soviets themselves with the enlargement of these soviets, drawing the poor, farm laborers, and kolkhoz members into them.

In connection with the necessity of restructuring the selsoviets network in regions of total collectivization, the question of the structure of Soviet power inevitably arises. Many say that with this restructuring of soviets the structure of soviets will somewhat change. What structure of organs of power do we have in the entire Union? Selsoviet, rik, okrug, then krai or oblast. Here many can say that this does not befit Bolsheviks, revolutionaries, especially clinging to forms, to structure, etc. It depends on us to change the structure, etc. This is true, comrades, but this structure, firstly, has been tested, secondly, it stems from clarity and the strengthening of leadership by higher organs over lower ones. A selsoviet has a set of certain rights and opportunities on a definite territory, and a group of soviets is a quantity that must transition into quality, i.e., rik. Rik is also a lower organ of power, but of a somewhat different quality. Here the objects of work are somewhat wider, rights are somewhat wider. Then come okrugs, krais, etc., and we have no need to change this tested, correctly built system; we must, on the contrary, say that we preserve this system of building organs of power. The widespread opinion that with this restructuring we must return to the system that we had, i.e., to the kyst system, to groups, plenipotentiaries, etc. You know better that this is the worst type of leadership and administration. It is better and more correct to go toward expanding the boundaries of selsoviets, without violating the system of clarity and precision of leadership, than to create

such intermediate organs of power that introduce only confusion. This is how the task of expanding and restructuring selsoviets stands. On this basis we must go further and carry out this work in relation to raion executive committees and even further in relation to okrugs themselves. Here we may be faced with a task that we partly already advanced and partly *pristupili* [begun] to resolve in 5 experimental-model okrugs. In order to strengthen the leadership of higher organs of power over lower ones and in view of the fact that alongside collectivization, an extraordinarily large number of complex and fundamental questions of not only local, but state significance fall upon selsoviets—the implementation of the sowing campaign, grain procurements, leadership of planned economy in the kolkhozes themselves, etc.—it is necessary to strengthen selsoviets, on the one hand, through elections to these selsoviets of the best elements of the countryside and, secondly, through the transfer of workers from riks and okrugs to selsoviets, without however weakening the leading role of riks and okrugs. In model and experimental okrugs we have already carried out the transfer of workers, and the success of this in a number of oblasts and krais caused a desire to apply precisely this system of strengthening lower organs of power. Many comrades said that, how about you, so to speak, do not prohibit from the center, we in the localities go to the implementation of that order which exists in experimental-model okrugs. The task of bringing work into compliance with new conditions forces them to this. This must be taken into account. Mikhail Ivanovich also said in his speech about the need to strengthen the leading role of soviets and about the fact that it is necessary to proceed to the transfer of workers from

higher organs to strengthen lower soviets. What organizational questions stand before selsoviets in the first place? The first is to build an independent budget in all selsoviets in regions of total collectivization. What are the sources of the budget? The conference must outline these sources and the funds of liquidated land societies and a whole series of other institutions and enterprises of local significance. Collectivization itself, as the most important factor in strengthening agriculture, will undoubtedly give a significant base for strengthening the rural budget. Finally, targeted deductions, deductions for housing, school, hospital, road construction, etc. All these sums must also enter the budget of selsoviets. These funds must be spent according to a plan agreed with state, okrug, and oblast plans. It is clear to everyone that the introduction of an independent budget for selsoviets is a necessary condition for the unfolding of the work of these selsoviets, especially in regions of total collectivization.

MAXIMALLY INTENSIFY MASS WORK OF SOVIETS

Selsoviets, especially in regions of total collectivization, must pay special attention to expanding mass work. It is necessary finally to more persistently undertake the organization of the work of sections. Selsoviets will and must widely develop the organization of sections on all the most important issues, and into these sections it is necessary to draw the active membership, especially the poor, farm laborers, and middle peasants.

The unfolding of the work of sections gives selsoviets the opportunity to draw the broadest masses into the construction

of kolkhozes and sovkhozes and into the administration of the country, and gives selsoviets the opportunity to better encompass all work in the countryside. At the same time, in order to concentrate work on the most important plots, it is necessary to avoid parallel sections created in other public organizations, otherwise there will again be an excessive dispersion of forces. Sections, it goes without saying, must be attached to the selsoviet, and in them must be concentrated all issues concerning leadership over kolkhozes and all cultural-educational construction.

Finally, it is necessary to newly pose the question of cadres of soviet workers. This is the sharpest question both in the city and in the countryside. Hitherto we have specifically cared little about cadres of selsoviets, and now, in view of the great importance of the work of selsoviets, we must specially pose this question. In the center and in the localities it is necessary to organize courses for the retraining and training of rural workers. Central organs must undoubtedly come to the aid of selsoviets. As you know, the VTsIK has already organized such courses, true, not very numerous. The first step has already been made. Localities—krais and oblasts—must take definite steps in this regard. If we resolve all organizational questions here in one direction, i.e., in a uniform structure in all collectivizing regions and oblasts and in all republics, we will undoubtedly strengthen the significance and role of selsoviets, achieve the drawing of the broad masses of working people and organize all actual forces of the countryside around selsoviets, achieve that they become genuine organs of the proletarian dictatorship in the countryside.

In this same connection stands the question of the mutual relations of rural organs of power with urban ones. By strengthening rural organs of power, revitalizing their work, making them capable of leading work in the countryside, we bring them closer to city soviets. On the other hand, we will make every effort to ensure that city soviets also take steps toward rapprochement with selsoviets. This has enormous political and economic significance. The whole process of development of our national economy goes toward bringing agriculture closer to industry and manufacturing, the countryside to the city. Thus we come closer to resolving Lenin's great behest on strengthening the role of the proletariat in restructuring the countryside. This strengthening of the proletariat's influence on the peasantry ensures the construction of socialism in our country. This is the only way to bring city soviets closer to selsoviets and through this path strengthen the influence of the proletariat as the most organized, advanced vanguard, led by our party.

City soviets will be able to help selsoviets both with means and cadres, allocating the most conscious and prepared workers to strengthen work in the countryside. The dispatch of workers, as you well know, has already begun, but it must take on an even more systematic character. Strengthening the connection of the city with the countryside, raising the leading role of the working class over the peasantry, we thereby accelerate the reconstruction of our national economy and ensure the victory of socialism in the USSR.

L. M. KAGANOVICH

SOVIETS AT A NEW STAGE[3]

Comrades! The question we are discussing here has the greatest political significance. It must be stated plainly that the soviets are currently experiencing a historic turning point.

We are, strictly speaking, discussing here for the second time since the introduction of the New Economic Policy the question of the work of lower soviets in its full breadth and posing this question with all sharpness. The first time this was in connection with the transition to the policy of revitalizing the soviets in 1924, and the second time is now. The policy of revitalizing the activity of the soviets naturally had a somewhat different content in a different period. Different periods produce different formulations of the question of the work of soviets.

In the period preceding the policy of revitalizing the soviets, we had a situation where small groups sat in the soviets and where the main mass of the peasantry, not only the middle peasantry, but even part of the poor peasantry, was somewhat pushed away from work in the soviets. This was natural in the period of the civil war, but after the civil war this became a brake, and the policy of revitalizing the soviets was called upon to eliminate this shortcoming.

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[3] *Speech at the All-Union Conference on Questions of Soviet Construction, January 21, 1930.*

Of course, the policy of revitalizing the soviets, not being connected with grandiose work on socialist economic construction, with work to raise the material well-being and cultural level of the working masses, did not yield the desired results. Therefore, if we currently have serious successes in drawing significant strata of working people into the work of city and rural soviets, this is the result of enormous economic successes, as well as the enormous political and cultural growth of the working masses, the growth of their activity and initiative. The policy of revitalizing the soviets, persistently pursued by our party despite the Trotskyite opposition, which saw in this policy a path to the petty-bourgeois degeneration of the soviets, fully and completely justified itself, as it led to the unfolding of soviet democracy and through it to the strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship.

New tasks face us now. Then we focused our attention mainly on questions of organizational-mass work. The revitalization of the activity of the soviets was carried out under the sign of unfolding mass initiative, drawing working masses into the work of soviets, creating sections, commissions, etc.; therefore, the re-elections of soviets in that period were carried out precisely under these slogans. Now we are experiencing a turning point of a different character. We have moved from the restoration period, from a period in which the alliance of the working class, resting on the poor, with the middle peasantry was based mainly on commodity exchange, when we restored —together with industry, predominantly individual peasant farming—to the reconstructive period, when we are developing agriculture on the basis of its fundamental socialist

restructuring, carried out by us thanks to the accelerated tempo of industrialization. The main content of the current campaign to improve the activity of soviets, to deepen their work, is the turning of soviets to face industrialization, to face kolkhozes, to the socialist restructuring of the countryside and to the resolution of the task of liquidating the kulaks as a class. That is what the difference consists of. It is characteristic to note that both in practice and in legislation we have a definite regularity in changes in the work of soviets in accordance with the main periods of the revolution.

THE ROLE OF SOVIETS AT VARIOUS STAGES OF OUR REVOLUTION

Our soviets have passed through three main periods in their development since October, and are now entering a fourth. The first period—the conquest of power and its consolidation. The second—defending power in the civil war. The third—restoring the ruined economy, and the fourth—the reconstructive one, connected with the unfolding socialist offensive, with industrialization and collectivization, with the struggle for the real abolition of classes.

During the period of the civil war, rural soviets were that organization of proletarian power through which the proletariat, relying on the poor, implemented a military-political alliance with the middle peasantry. When the civil war ended, it soon became obvious that the organizational forms and methods of work of the soviets did not correspond to the new tasks.

After the civil war, we turned the economy onto the tracks of the New Economic Policy. We restructured party work methods. At the X Party Congress we adopted theses on intra-party democracy. We restructured the trade unions. We began to restructure the soviets, although only in 1924. Until 1924, methods of war communism predominated in their work, which were necessary in the period of the civil war. But when it turned out that these methods lingered too long, we launched a campaign to revitalize the activity of the soviets. This campaign to revitalize the activity of the soviets yielded enormous results, it helped us to truly expand the mass base of Soviet power and rally around the soviets the widest proletarian and poor-middle-peasant masses. You know that we carried out the restoration period of the national economy very successfully both in the city and in the countryside, and this to a significant extent because we drew broad masses into economic construction through the soviets. Of course, now one can find people who want to revise the work carried out by the party, starting from 1924, but this will be nothing other than a repetition of Trotskyite fallacies.

How did we define the tasks of selsoviets at various stages in the provisions that we issued? Let us take the provision of 1920, issued in February of that year, when war communism still existed, since NEP was introduced only in March 1921. Here there are a number of points stating that selsoviets "contribute to the development of agriculture, the organization of agricultural communes, artels, cooperative forms of land use, the improvement of forms of conducting agriculture, the implementation of natural obligations," etc..

Let us take the provision on selsoviets of 1922. It is generally very brief. Here there are points on the general development of agriculture, but the tasks of collectivization are underlined.

And finally, the provision of 1924. This provision is already connected with the period of revitalizing the activity of selsoviets. In cl. 1 it says here: “The selsoviet, being an organ of power within the limits of its territory, has as its main tasks raising peasant farming, the struggle against ignorance,” etc. Of course, in this provision we did not forget kolkhozes either. We said: the selsoviet “contributes to the organization and development of collective farms and provides assistance and support to organs conducting this work”. Where is the center of gravity of this provision? The center of gravity of it consists in resolving the tasks of restoring peasant farming. Thus we turned selsoviets to face the restoration of peasant farming. This was correct and fully corresponded to the tasks of the moment.

At the present time we must state that this is no longer sufficient, that the center of gravity now lies elsewhere—in mass total collectivization of the countryside and the associated liquidation of the kulaks as a class. Meanwhile, it turns out that, just as in 1924, the organizational forms and methods of work of selsoviets have lagged in their turnaround from the methods of war communism to the utilization of the initiative of the broad masses, to the expansion of economic construction, so now selsoviets have lagged in turning to face the new tasks of the proletarian dictatorship—to the development of collectivization, to the tasks of the fundamental

socialist restructuring of the countryside, carried out by us on the basis of the rapid tempo of industrialization of the country, to the liquidation of the kulaks as a class.

I must note that in the draft provision on the organization of selsoviets of the USSR, submitted in September 1929, these new tasks of selsoviets are already noted. The draft emphasizes that "rural soviets organize and take measures for the development of collective and soviet farms, agricultural and cooperative partnerships and other forms of socialization of agriculture... contribute to the collectivization of entire settlements," etc.. This draft, published for mass discussion, turned out to be generally not bad, although the draft basically corresponds to the moment, but... "things are still where they were"; practically we have not moved the matter from its place. Why? Because attention to this matter on the part of party and soviet organizations turns out to be very weak. We must remember that our party is the main core of soviets, therefore no matter how many projects, articles, and circulars we write, as long as party organizations do not take up this matter as they should, until they together with executive committees stand at the head of the restructuring of soviets and do not draw the broad masses of peasants—poor and middle peasants—into this work, the soviets themselves will potter about, putter, and nothing good will come of it. If in the campaign to revitalize the activity of soviets we achieved significant results, it was only because the entire party, the entire working class closely took up this matter. That is why, when we convened this conference, we said to party organizations: "You yourselves must take up this matter, then we will truly turn our work in a

new way". And that this question acquires significance of enormous political importance—this is not subject to any doubt.

But in order to properly take up selsoviets and direct their work in a new way, we must decisively put an end to those liquidationist sentiments that we have regarding selsoviets.

When we now hear voices that soviets are not needed, this, strictly speaking, stems from a misunderstanding of the essence of soviets, of the greatest historical role that they have played at all stages of the revolution and that they still must play, from a misunderstanding of their nature and, on the other hand, from a malicious attempt to revise the foundations of the Soviet state and the Soviet system. Exactly thus must we pose the question.

Comrades! Indeed, Lenin, like no one else, repeatedly emphasized the greatest significance of soviets as that form of organization of the proletariat that gave it the opportunity to establish and exercise its dictatorship, strengthening its alliance with the multi-million masses of the working peasantry. Not for nothing in his brochure "Will the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?", written on the eve of the October Revolution, Ilyich said: "If the creative initiative of the revolutionary classes had not created soviets, the proletarian revolution in Russia would be a hopeless cause, for with the old apparatus the proletariat undoubtedly could not retain power, and a new apparatus cannot be created right away"[4]. And in this same brochure Lenin gave an exhaustive characterization of soviets, emphasizing their versatility and their enormous advantages as

[4] *Vol. XIV, part 2, pp. 229–230.*

forms of state proletarian power. All this is forgotten by comrades who now propose to liquidate selsoviets.

In essence, whoever proposes to liquidate selsoviets now believes that we have finished the revolution, and this is the most dangerous right opportunism, this is a surrender of the positions of the proletarian dictatorship, this is an attempt to send this dictatorship to the archive. That is how the question must be posed. Meanwhile, precisely now soviets in general and village soviets, in particular, are called upon to play a major role. Indeed, what is the essence of soviets? We have trade unions, we have various other organizations, but the difference between soviets and all of them is that if trade unions unite the working class, serving as a school of communism for it, while other organizations perform special functions in various fields, then soviets, being a form of organization of the proletariat as the ruling class, are a **mass organization** of all working people of town and country. This is a non-party organization. Soviets are a direct expression of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Through soviets pass all sorts of measures to strengthen the dictatorship and the construction of socialism. Through soviets state leadership over the peasantry is exercised by the proletariat. Soviets unite the million masses of working people with the vanguard of the proletariat[5].

Let me remind you, comrades, that the current talks about the liquidation of selsoviets are not new. Indeed, who among you worked in 1918–1919 in the localities knows that at that time,

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5 *I. Stalin, Foundations of Leninism, 6th ed., p. 25.*

when we organized committees of the poor, there was a discussion on the topic of liquidating soviets and replacing them with committees of the poor. Then it went differently. Then they "danced from a different stove," then the requirement to liquidate selsoviets was argued by the necessity of actual concentration of class forces in the civil war and in the struggle against the kulak, who had begun universal actions against the October Revolution. We then organized the poor as an independent force, and it turned out that committees of the poor, naturally, became a very large force in the countryside. Hence the attempts to liquidate soviets. Instead of using soviets as a new form that subsequently, after being purged of kulaks, would play a decisive role, people thought that it was necessary to liquidate soviets along with the kulaks. We then resolutely fought against this. Of course, there were various soviets. In the period of the civil war, kulaks everywhere acted against Soviet power. Kulaks did not want to surrender grain, and when food-requisition detachments arrived, some selsoviets not only did not help them, but defended the kulaks. But at the same time you also know that soviets, after their purging of kulaks and the conquest of them by the poor, played a major role in the case of strengthening the proletarian dictatorship in the countryside, in the case of suppressing the kulak and in the case of mobilizing the working masses of the countryside for the successful final completion of the civil war.

CLASS ESSENCE OF CONTEMPORARY "LIQUIDATIONISM"

What is the class essence of those aspirations to liquidate selsoviets that we now have? It must be stated that people who

put forward proposals to liquidate selsoviets, firstly, do not take into account the political significance of selsoviets at the present time, giving in only to departmental moods (saving money, etc.), and, secondly, objectively reflect an ideology hostile to the proletariat and the proletarian dictatorship—kulak-SR counter-revolutionary ideology. Along with this, they reflect a peculiar kolkhoz anarcho-syndicalism.

Here, for example, one of the comrades, named Lobyshev (secretary of the Ponizovsky Rik, Smolensk Okrug, Western oblast) sent an article to *Izvestiya*. The article is so characteristic that it could be read in its entirety, but for the characterization of the moods existing among us, it will be sufficient to cite only some places.

Here is what he writes: "In connection with the implementation of total collectivization, the question arose before many comrades as to what to do with selsoviets, should they exist or not.—Quite a few theoretically strong comrades have been found—he flatters all of them, so to speak, so that the selsoviet is left. Their main trump card is the fear (!) of class struggle within kolkhozes and that selsoviets will here be directors of the implementation of the correct class line, organizers of the poor and farm-laborer peasantry to repulse kulak and petty-bourgeois tendencies. I have not met any other arguments worthy of any attention for leaving selsoviets I believe that in this question the role and significance of selsoviets are overestimated. If we take our present selsoviets and look at them impartially, are they leaders of the restructuring of agriculture and direct conductors of the class line and the dictatorship of the proletariat? I will not vouch for the

correctness of my conclusions 100% for the whole Union, but a significant proportion of selsoviets both brake kolkhoz construction and distort the class line, in the best case trailing in the tail".

You see how a man, proceeding from the fact that selsoviets are indeed working poorly, that a part of them are braking kolkhoz construction—and this is pure truth—draws the conclusion that selsoviets are not needed, and further states: "Now the question: where are better workers needed—in the selsoviet or in the kolkhoz, which front is more important and responsible, where must we strengthen positions against the kulak—in the kolkhoz itself, the arena of a possible kulak offensive, or somewhere beyond the outskirts, in the neutral zone, in the selsoviet".

You see, the man went so far as to call the selsoviet a "neutral zone" and "beyond the outskirts" of the class struggle.

"I do not imagine how a selsoviet can lead the class struggle in a kolkhoz apart from the kolkhoz soviet. At best, if it is a member of this kolkhoz, it can influence. But this worker can influence even with greater success without being, let us assume, chairman of the selsoviet. One of two things: either the selsoviet will be an appendage of the artel soviet, or the selsoviet will be on the sidelines, a lonely outsider observer. Neither one nor the other is needed by us. We need a well class-tempered economic worker, leader and organizer of the masses, conductor of the proletarian dictatorship. We must have such a leader in the person of the kolkhoz soviet, only in this way can and must the task be resolved... In regions of total collectivization there is no place for selsoviets. This is the first

stage of the withering away of the state apparatus, an unproductive parasite, and not only the withering away of the selsoviet, but also of the raion executive committee" (my formatting—*L. K.*).

Thus, we see that according to Lobyshev, the selsoviet is an unproductive parasite and as such must wither away. But he goes further and poses the question of the withering away of the raion executive committee as well. Another author—P. Seryogin wrote an article under the headline: "50,000,000 rubles a year of economy" (Laughter).

Here is what he writes: "Selsoviets in regions of total collectivization are withering away. They are withering away even with their deprivation of civil rights as independent rural budgets... But kolkhozes are organized under conditions of class struggle and classes remain in kolkhozes. Therefore, kolkhozes cannot be left without political leadership, and this leadership must even be strengthened. Rural soviets, however, cannot cope with this task in the majority".

It would seem that the author, recognizing the necessity of strengthening political leadership over kolkhozes, should have spoken about how to improve the work of the selsoviet. Instead of this, he begins counting how much maintaining selsoviets costs us and concludes that by abolishing selsoviets we will save over 50 million rubles. "All the above arguments," he writes, "portray selsoviets only from a negative side, and therefore selsoviets in regions of total collectivization must be liquidated. This liquidation can be carried out upon the removal of the first socialized harvest". Exactly like that and defined.

According to him, selsoviets can be replaced by plots and the appointment of plenipotentiaries.

He ends like this: “One supra-production organ of power is curtailed, which means that on the 13th year of the October Revolution we are moving from power over production to the self-governing association of working kolkhoz members, which, of course, cannot fail to have political significance” (my formatting—*L. K.*).

Comrades, how people start from the shortcomings of selsoviets, come to the recognition of the need to save 50 million rubles, and end with pure anarchism. This is nothing other than a reflection of real kulak ideology. Who do they rely on? They rely on the board of kolkhozes. To confirm this I will cite a number of facts. In the newspaper *Trudovoy Put*, published in Armavir, a stupid and harmful note is printed with some sort of flavor under the headline “Liquidation of Soviet Power”:

“...The meeting lasted a long time. On the purging of the party, industrialization loans, the rayon look—they talked and decided for a long time.

On the last question a dispute broke out. To an incomprehensible hook. In the khutor there was a soviet plenipotentiary, was a KKOV [Committee of Poor Peasants], now the whole khutor is in the kolkhoz, KKOV is not needed, neither is the soviet plenipotentiary needed.

—This turns out we are liquidating Soviet power,—objected laughing, one to the proposal to transfer the duties of plenipotentiary to the kolkhoz board.

—KKOV is not needed. It turns out it also needs to be liquidated.

That is where we left it. Give the KKOV land to the kolkhoz, and transfer ‘Soviet power’ to the kolkhoz board”.

The experience of Verbovy khutor shows the uselessness of a number of organizations... Verbovy khutor, and now kolkhoz “Rabochaya Druzhina” is only the first of the first.

And all this is published in a joking tone. But here is another example: at a conference convened by the Uralsoviet, one worker stated directly: “If selsoviets are preserved, then let the Uralsoviet spend 100 thousand rubles on these soviets. When you come to kolkhoz members, they definitely raise the question that they do not want to maintain selsoviets”.

In the same spirit are reasonings in many other places. Thus we can say one thing: this desire to get rid of selsoviets, of organs of state power, exists below, in some kolkhozes. Some of the comrades, instead of giving this desire a decisive rebuff, showing its political harmfulness and even counter-revolutionariness, manage to bring a “theoretical” base under it and give it the form of a desire for the “withering away of the state,” the “withering away of soviets,” etc. Examples of this could be cited in sufficient quantity. They were partly cited here by Kalinin. But here are more examples: T. Rozit in an article about kolkhozes, published in *Selskokhozyaistvennaya Gazeta* on 17/X–29 g., came to the conclusion that in kolkhozes “the very functions of state institutions take on a different character, reminiscent of the withering away of the state, this weapon of class rule”. In the brochure *Ways of*

Development of Kolkhoz "Gigant" we read: "Selsoviet and rik as such will have a temporary existence; as soon as the kolkhoz covers up to 80% of total collectivization in the Krasnopoliansky region, the latter will have to wither away and their functions must pass to the kolkhoz soviet and committees at agricultural economies of the kolkhoz "Gigant".

Comrades, posing the question this way is harmful and dangerous. Politically, this means falling for the bait of our class enemy, objectively reflecting his aspiration to get rid of the organs of the proletarian dictatorship as soon as possible. This means covering up your right opportunism, expressed in the denial of class struggle, class contradictions within the peasantry, etc., with "left" phrases. Theoretically, however, if we proceed from Lenin's theory of the withering away of the state, it does not withstand any criticism. That is why talks about the withering away of the state in the form given to them by supporters of the liquidation of selsoviets are harmful, dangerous, and counter-revolutionary in their essence.

ON THE LIQUIDATION OF SELSOVIETS AND ON THE WITHERING AWAY OF THE STATE

All this does not mean, of course, that here are people standing "for" the withering away of the state, and we are "against" its withering away. Bolsheviks have never regarded the state as an end in itself, but as a tool for establishing the transition from capitalism to communism, the period of rule of the working class, which uses its state as a weapon for suppressing the resistance of its class enemies, as well as for the abolition of

classes and for the construction of a new—socialist, and then communist society.

Of course, this state will eventually wither away, but it would be absolutely incorrect—this is contrary to Lenin's teaching on the state—if we were to assert that the complete withering away of the state in the form of the abolition of organs of state power (for example, the liquidation of selsoviets, the transfer of their functions to kolkhozes, etc.) can happen before the complete abolition of classes, or in the very process of their abolition, before the complete socialist transformation of the working peasants—poor and middle peasants—and before the complete elimination of the contradiction between the working class and the peasantry. This would be precisely an anarchist view of the withering away of the state, and not a Leninist, Bolshevik one. Here is how Lenin portrayed the difference between our understanding and the anarchist understanding of this question: “The difference between Marxists and anarchists consists in the following:

1. The former, setting as their goal the complete destruction of the state, recognize this goal as achievable only after the abolition of classes by the socialist revolution, as a result of the establishment of socialism, leading to the withering away of the state; the latter want the complete destruction of the state from day to day, without understanding the conditions for the feasibility of such destruction”.
2. The former recognize that the proletariat, having won political power, must completely destroy the old state machine, replacing it with a new one, consisting of the organization of armed workers, following the type of the Commune; the latter,

advocating the destruction of the state machine, imagine it completely unclearly, with what the proletariat will replace it and how it will use revolutionary power; anarchists even deny the use of state power by the revolutionary proletariat, its revolutionary dictatorship.

3. The former demand the preparation of the proletariat for revolution through the utilization of the modern state; anarchists deny this" (formatting mine—*L. K.*).

From a comparison of this quotation with samples of those writings of our zealous supporters of the withering away of the state given above, it is clear how comrades, even without wanting to, slip from the Leninist position to the anarchist one, since their demand to liquidate selsoviets "from today to tomorrow" (today organized a kolkhoz, and tomorrow abolished the selsoviet as an organ of state power) resembles that anarchist position which Lenin characterized.

Furthermore, it is completely incorrect to represent the withering away of the state as a single act. Withering away according to Lenin is a protracted process. Here is how Lenin depicts this process:

"Democracy for the gigantic majority of the people, and the suppression by force, i.e., the exclusion from democracy of the exploiters, the oppressors of the people—such is the modification of democracy during the transition from capitalism to communism"[6].

[6] *Vol. XIV, part 2, pp. 389–390.*

Only in communist society, when the resistance of capitalists is finally broken, when capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (i.e., no difference between members of society in their relation to the social means of production),—only then "does the state disappear and one can speak of freedom". Only then will democracy be realized truly fully, truly without any exceptions. And only then will democracy begin to wither away by virtue of the simple circumstance that, freed from capitalist slavery, from countless horrors, brutalities, absurdities, and abominations of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually get used to observing the elementary rules of intercourse known for millennia and repeated in all primers for centuries, to observing them without violence, without coercion, without subordination, without a special apparatus for coercion which is called the state.

The expression "the state withers away" is chosen very successfully, because it indicates both the gradualness of the process and its spontaneity.

When we have people who speak about the withering away of the state and power already now, in the presence of classes and aggravated class struggle, this only testifies to a complete misunderstanding or oblivion of the Leninist theory of the state and the fundamentals of Leninism in general.

We simultaneously have a process of strengthening the proletarian dictatorship, strengthening its organs, suppressing class enemies right up to their destruction, and at the same time in our state, which is no longer a state in the proper sense of the word, there are already elements of withering away, and these elements increase as socialist economy grows, as proletarian

democracy is developed, as millions of working people are drawn into Soviet socialist construction, as their activity, self-activity, and initiative are strengthened on the basis of socialist emulation and self-criticism.

But to understand withering away in such a way that already now the organs of the proletarian dictatorship—the soviets—must be abolished, that coercion, violence, and restructuring with the help of organs of state power are already withering away—this means striving to weaken the strength of the proletarian dictatorship, this means objectively reflecting the attempt of our class enemies to use the theory of the withering away of the state to destroy Soviet power and establish the rule of the bourgeoisie.

Therefore, the point is not at all that some allegedly advocate "for" the withering away of the state, and others—"against". The point is not to chatter generally about the withering away of the state, not to slide in such a most important issue onto the positions of anarchism, but to approach its consideration in a Leninist way. The Leninist understanding of the question of the withering away of the state obliges us to approach the consideration of this process not in general, but by studying the concrete paths of withering away, connecting it with our advance along the path of the real destruction of classes, with the construction of a socialist society, proceeding in an environment of fierce resistance from class enemies inside the country and pressure from the international imperialist bourgeoisie.

Our slogan at present is not the weakening of the proletarian dictatorship, but its strengthening—not the liquidation of

selsoviets, but their strengthening, the improvement of their activity. The strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship, the improvement of the work of the soviets must be carried out on the basis of unfolding new forms of self-activity of working people, on the basis of industrialization and collectivization, on the basis of socialist emulation, self-criticism, shock brigades, etc. But the attempt to liquidate selsoviets, proceeding allegedly from practical considerations, would inevitably lead to the petty-bourgeois spontaneous elements beginning to overflow organized proletarian leadership, and the kulaks, of course, would use this in their own interests.

The task of liquidating the kulaks as a class cannot be imagined in such a way that we will manage to carry out this liquidation without difficulties and without resistance from the kulaks. This is a very difficult, stubborn process associated with fierce battles. This is a process associated with great practical work on collectivization, on consolidating farm laborers and the poor, associated with the struggle for the middle-peasant masses of the peasantry. All this must be associated with the all-out strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship, with the strengthening of its organs in the countryside—selsoviets. Whoever raises the question of the liquidation of selsoviets at the present time essentially tries to replace this liquidation of selsoviets with the liquidation of the kulaks as a class, because without selsoviets the task of liquidating the kulaks as a class cannot be successfully resolved.

The selsoviet does not represent some kind of self-government, a peculiar zemsky unit, not included in the system of proletarian state power, therefore whoever considers it possible

to liquidate selsoviets, leaving higher executive committees—raion, okrug, and oblast—leaving central Soviet power, simply does not understand the structure of the Soviet state, does not understand selsoviets and the entire system of our state from a bourgeois viewpoint. The selsoviet is a grassroots link, a particle of the entire state of the proletarian dictatorship as a whole. It is impossible to tear this link out of a single chain under any circumstances. Whoever considers it possible, with the organization of kolkhozes, to create something like such statelessness, such lawlessness, that only the kolkhoz will engage in everything that the selsoviet engages in, does not understand that we have a revolutionary struggle, a struggle with a class enemy, both inside the country and outside it, not only does not cease, but even intensifies, and that, consequently, the suppression of the class enemy must be carried out through organs of state power relying on the organized proletarian masses of town and country.

And will we not have elements of coercion inside the kolkhoz itself? Of course and necessarily we will. Is it possible to think, for example, that the grain procurement campaign, the tax campaign, etc. will proceed smoothly, without conflicts? To think so means to build illusions for oneself. Keep in mind that we and during grain procurements, during taxation and in other campaigns will encounter difficulties, with a certain resistance, therefore a stubborn, protracted struggle for socialist restructuring, for the re-education of the kolkhoz masses of middle peasants, relying on the poor, is necessary.

The power of state power, the power of state coercion combined with persuasion, must and will be applied by us for a

quite prolonged time. After all, elements of a certain coercion exist with us even at factories and plants, especially in relation to truants, production disorganizers, etc. Not for nothing does Lenin in the draft of his brochure "On the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" name among the five main forms of class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat "the education of a new discipline"1, the work to create a new discipline, to instill awareness of the necessity to fulfill their duties in relation to the proletarian state, etc., all the more necessary it will be to conduct this in kolkhozes, which unite the peasant mass with its petty-bourgeois psychology, with certain petty-bourgeois, anarchist tendencies inherent in it, which cannot be eradicated immediately.

The tendency to liquidate selsoviets as organs exercising state coercion is based partly on those provisions that Narodniks developed at one time when they idealized the peasant commune and argued that the peasant is socialist by nature, when they argued that socialist relations in the countryside can be built on the basis of the peasant commune without any interference on the part of the organized proletariat. In the person of this "tendency" we have, consequently, a peculiar form of Narodnikism emanating from kulak-SR circles. On the other hand, as was noted above, this "tendency" bears quite pronounced features of anarcho-syndicalism—a peculiar "kolkhoz syndicalism"—acting under the guise of a "left" flag of statelessness.

Thus, in the aspiration to liquidate selsoviets, muddy streams merge as if into a single stream, having as their sources kulak-SR and anarcho-syndicalist aspirations.

If we at the present time went for the liquidation of selsoviets, this would, at the very least, mean a weakening of the proletarian dictatorship, a weakening of the leading role of the proletariat in relation to the peasantry. And after all, in this leadership lies our strength. The strengthening of this leadership of the proletarian state, its penetration into all spheres not only of politics, but also of economics, culture, etc., is that path along which we are moving toward the withering away of the state, toward its inclusion in a socialist economy. This is not understood by those friends of ours who, though the Soviet state—no one will suspect them of being against Soviet power,—objectively fall into the swamp of anarcho-syndicalism, into the swamp of SR-kulak ideology.

That is why, comrades, you and I must say more firmly about selsoviets, about the aspiration for their liquidation in the resolution. And precisely because these aspirations come from below, from some kolkhozes, we must—just as we said that that selsoviet which does not turn to face kolkhozes is in reality kulak—say that that kolkhoz which considers it necessary to liquidate the selsoviet, but in reality is a kulak kolkhoz, that it is turning against the soviets. If we say so, then not a single kolkhoz will want to be kulak. It will say: "We were mistaken." We are confident that not a single kolkhoz, if it is not really kulak, will want for a "mess of pottage" of 50 million rubles to destroy the soviets, for which we waged a fierce struggle against kulaks, landowners, bourgeoisie, and their agents—Mensheviks and SRs.

NEW TASKS OF SELSOVIETS IN CONNECTION WITH THE PARTY'S POLICY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Allow me now to move on to the essence of the new period in the development of soviets, as well as to those tasks of selsoviets that stem from the party's current policy in the countryside.

In the field of economics we have traveled a definite path of dialectical development: from war communism—to a certain, limited freedom of commodity turnover, with the admission under certain conditions of capitalists and with the restriction of the growth of capitalism. It would be incorrect to think that when we introduced NEP, we thereby permitted the unlimited development of capitalism. Capitalism was restricted by us throughout the entire NEP. The further we moved forward, the more we restricted it.

Now, however, having unfolded mass collectivization, we have moved from the policy of restricting and ousting the kulaks to liquidating them as a class. That is the path that has been traveled by us and which Trotskyites and right opportunists do not understand.

Consecutively implementing Leninist policy, our party has brought the working class and the multi-million masses of poor and middle peasants to the formulation and resolution of such tasks as the fundamental socialist restructuring of the entire country, on the basis of the rapid tempo of industrialization and collectivization, as the abolition of classes and the construction of a socialist society. The formulation and resolution of these tasks are completely incompatible with those positions to

which Trotskyites and right opportunists dragged us. It is precisely for this reason that the tasks that currently face the soviets, particularly rural soviets, can also be understood and resolved only on the basis of the correct implementation of party policy.

The essence of party policy in the countryside in the present period is that from the development of individual, or as Lenin said, "small and smallest" peasant farms, we have now moved to the total collectivization of agriculture, passing through a stormy tempo. We have a dual process: stormy industrialization on the one hand, and stormy total collectivization of the countryside on the other. One is closely connected with the other. Without industrialization there can be no collectivization. Industrialization requires this collectivization, because the enormous growth of industry cannot be based on millions of small and smallest peasant farms. The successes of collectivization provide us with the opportunity for a fast and decisive liquidation of the kulaks as a class. Therefore, it is necessary to turn the countryside onto the tracks of large-scale socialist agricultural production. This is a process of neither one day nor easy, it is connected with great difficulties; therefore we must turn all our organizations, and first of all the soviets—urban and rural—to face this task.

The central issue for us today is the question of the tasks of selsoviets, but allow me to say in passing a few words about city soviets. From them we can and must demand more, but meanwhile, I think and everyone cannot deny this—that our city soviets still do not play the role they should play, that city soviets have not yet become a center for uniting proletarian

forces directed at the industrialization of the country and the collectivization of agriculture. The city soviet, of course, must engage in questions of municipal improvement, communal economy, etc.; but in its work there are still no prospects for the socialist restructuring of cities, in its work there are no prospects and scope corresponding to that cultural revolution which we are unfolding. We have a situation where, if, for example, there is a large all-union plant in a city, having 5 or 10 thousand workers, the concern for this plant lies with the plant director, the trust, the party committee fusses with this matter, so that the soviet listens to a report on how the business of fulfilling the promfinplan is going, how the business of raising labor productivity is going, how the reduction of cost price is going, etc., so that the city soviet takes all measures depending on it to assist the resolution of these tasks, so that it assists the mobilization of the working masses for the fulfillment of the economic plan,—this we almost do not have. After all, comrades, it would seem that since the work of a large plant takes place on the territory of the city soviet, this directly concerns it. The construction of every new plant, every factory, power station increases the strength and might of the proletariat, enriches this city, thereby strengthening the material base of the city soviet as an organ of the proletarian dictatorship. Meanwhile, city soviets in the majority work so poorly that the colossal work for the fulfillment of the promfinplan, for the fulfillment of the entire five-year plan, the shock worker movement, socialist emulation, etc. passes them by. Such a situation is clearly intolerable, and we must by all means achieve a breakthrough in the work of city soviets.

The same and with even greater right applies to selsoviets.

Here the note of the Institute of Soviet Construction and Law has been distributed. I must say that the Institute took up the question of selsoviets in connection with mass collectivization quite a long time ago. True, perhaps, together with selsoviets and higher executive committees, the Institute also lagged a little bit. From those materials that we have at our disposal, the absolutely obvious fact is evident that selsoviets failed in a timely manner to turn to face the kolkhoz movement and in the majority of cases found themselves in the tail of this movement. Here are several examples illustrating how selsoviets not only did not head the kolkhoz movement, but braked it: in the Krasnopoliansky (former Klansky) district, the selsoviet allocated a commission for drafting the plan of the spring sowing campaign of last year. The commission worked for about 2 months, but managed not to notice three new kolkhozes formed on the territory of the selsoviet. Therefore, the plan developed by the commission was scrapped and returned for revision. By this time a kolkhoz kyst was organized, which took upon itself the development of a plan for the sowing campaign for kolkhozes encompassing the territory of four selsoviets. The red tape in drafting the plan of the sowing campaign was so great that the kyst association of kolkhozes "Kommunizm" was forced to issue the following decision: "The dragging out of the distribution of local seed funds and funds of KKOV by the three selsoviets is considered a criminal phenomenon, threatening the disruption of the sowing campaign and serving as a brake on the expansion of the sown area." So "successfully" did the Ilensky selsoviet

guide kolkhozes: it tried to plan the seed-cleaning work of the "Federatsiya" commune, but the commune engaged in seed cleaning for 4 soviets and therefore had to act according to its own plan. The plan of the selsoviet remained "for the protocol".

A large number of such examples could be cited, and they all testify to the fact that while kolkhozes began to develop, unfolded their work, selsoviets not only did not contribute to them, but frequently braked them. As a result, the selsoviet lost a significant part of those positions that it had and all the more won in kolkhozes as a result of such passivity and even opposition on the part of selsoviets; such a mood began to develop that, strictly speaking, selsoviets are no longer needed by us.

Of course, there are also facts of a positive character in the work of selsoviets. In order to teach selsoviets, show them how to work, in order, finally, to correctly and well note examples of good work of selsoviets and draw the attention of the rest to them, there are a number of facts speaking to the fact that some selsoviets have indeed closely approached leadership over collectivization.

Here are some examples taken from the press: in the Beskorbynaya and Bekeshevskaya stations (Armavir okrug) under the leadership of selsoviets, colossal work was done on socialist emulation. The conditions set in the emulation agreement were fulfilled with a surplus. Thus, according to the plan, it was supposed to carry out dressing of 122 tons of seeds —137 tons were dressed, 385 tons cleaned, 399 tons of seed material cleaned. In addition, 2 kolkhozes, one livestock artel,

and one poultry-raising partnership were organized. Along with this, a significant amount of agricultural implements was socialized.

The Korchedynsky selsoviet (Chelyabinsk okrug) through emulation carried out seed sorting by 111.3%, dressing by 160%. The sowing contracting plan was fulfilled by 102%. An agricultural artel was formed. A tractor detachment of 6 tractors was created and 11 kolkhozes were united into a kyst. Agrominimum was adopted in all land societies.

In the article published in *Bednota* on 29/XII 1929 r., A. Lobovsky cites an example of how a selsoviet guides kolkhozes: "Of all the selsoviets visited by me," he writes, "only one Nikolayevsky deemed it necessary to interfere in this business. Firstly, he warned that without his permission selling livestock is forbidden, and those guilty of violating this will be brought to justice. Secondly, the selsoviet organized the purchase in other places for all small kolkhoz members in need of it."

Among the decisions of the Nikolayevsko-Stepnovsky selsoviet there are such that can serve as an example for other selsoviets.

"The presidium of the selsoviet notes the unworked nature of members of the board of the kolkhoz 'Druzhba' among themselves and the weak leadership of kolkhoz economy. There are no internal regulations. Bookkeeping is neglected, etc. This led to the spontaneous resolution of a number of economic issues. Propose to the board immediately to put bookkeeping in order and draw up a work plan, both annual

and quarterly. Kyst soviet to audit the work of the kolkhoz 'Druzhba' and report on this to the selsoviet."

Another decision:

"Issue a reprimand to the board of the kyst association for negligence" (for weak leadership of kolkhozes).

Karassky selsoviet, having heard the report "on the purging of kolkhozes from clearly kulak households and disenfranchised persons," resolved:

"Propose to the activist core of the poor and kolkhoz members on November 26 to exclude from kolkhozes the following disenfranchised persons (7 families follow)."

And, finally, another example: "Zabarovsky selsoviet (Sedrinsky raion) resolutely undertook leadership over collectivization. The plenum of the selsoviet adopted a decision that every member of the selsoviet must be a member of a kolkhoz. The plenum attached each member of the selsoviet to a definite plot for organizing the kolkhoz. On the basis of decisions of poor-peasant meetings, the question of evicting 16 kulak households was raised" (*Pskovsky pakhars*, 8/I–30 r.).

Thus, we have examples of positive work of selsoviets in various oblasts and raions. But these examples show only that selsoviets can head the kolkhoz movement and guide it. These examples do not change the general picture of the work of soviets, because we have such good examples, unfortunately, very few. The central point is precisely that selsoviets have not yet placed themselves at the head of collectivization.

In order to eradicate liquidationist moods in relation to selsoviets, we must first of all set up the work of selsoviets so that they are truly organizers and leaders of the poor- and middle-peasant masses in their struggle for collectivization, for the liquidation of kulaks as a class. It is necessary to achieve that in connection with mass collectivization selsoviets genuinely have work, know what they should and how they must do.

We know that selsoviets even earlier did not always fulfill their old tasks well, largely because the workers sitting in them are weak—culture is lacking, their leadership is poor, there are no premises, sometimes hostile people sit as secretaries of selsoviets, and you know that the secretary plays a very large role in the selsoviet, especially in national raions and oblasts. It is impossible to picture things as if kolkhozes can develop by themselves: in the kolkhoz movement the most active role can be played by farm laborers and the poor under the leadership of the proletariat and its party. And here in the soviets a part of kulak elements turned out to be, or passive middle peasants, in whom furthermore the workers were weak, whom you and I led very little attention to—such soviets were not at the proper height during the greatest historical turning point and breakthrough, during the transition from the restoration of agriculture to its socialist restructuring.

You remember that selsoviets could in no way establish their relations with land societies, that land societies frequently opposed themselves to selsoviets and removed them from the leadership of economic life. This was at that time, when such a powerful production organization as a kolkhoz did not oppose

the selsoviet in those disputes that arose between the selsoviet and land society, since land society did not exercise production functions. And even then the selsoviet did not cope with the land society. Kolkhozes are a powerful production organization, they have a material base and give the peasant great benefit. And you know that no matter how socialist the peasant's aspiration to collectivize is, he has right alongside the shoots of his socialism very strongly seated elements of individualism, personal gain. The kolkhoz gives him material benefit, and therefore it is not surprising that we have such reasonings: "Soviets, strictly speaking, need to be liquidated, because they only devour superfluous money. The board of the kolkhoz must do everything that the selsoviet did."

ON THE NEW CONTENT OF SELSOVIET WORK

We, comrades, must pose the question of the new content in the work of selsoviets. This question needs thorough special elaboration, but let us take a few main points.

Nationalization of land, existing with us, means that land belongs to the state. We do not have municipalization of land. The master of the land, its manager is the entire state as a whole, while the selsoviet is an organ of state power—the sole, full-fledged, lawful representative of the state in the countryside. Therefore, the distribution of land funds, the management of them must pass through the selsoviet.

Then—plans and operational work. If we say that the selsoviet simply reviews plans, gives general directives, etc., this, of

course, will be good, but in such a position the selsoviet will bustle, review plans, etc., and the kolkhoz will look at this matter as some special corvée: we, they say, discussed the plan at a production meeting in the kolkhoz, and now let the selsoviet sit on this too. As is evident, a simple review of plans is not enough. It is necessary to establish such an order where the kolkhoz would receive a credit only after detailed elaboration and approval of the plan by the selsoviet. Then the review of the plan will not be a simple formality, will not be aimless and abstract, but will be such a function of the selsoviet that has a definite material base behind it.

Dressing of seeds, replacement of seeds with pure-strain ones, issuance of seeds on credit, etc.—all this must be done not on the basis of merely formal sanction of the selsoviet, but under its direct leadership in substance.

Selsoviets, as organs of state power, must defend the plans of kolkhozes before higher organs of power and thereby represent the kolkhoz peasant masses before them. Only then will the kolkhozist respect selsoviets, only then will he feel that he receives material benefit not simply through the board, but through the selsoviet, which is an organ of power and by its leadership helps the kolkhoz.

The most complex and difficult question in determining the new tasks of selsoviets is the question of public amenities, housing construction, construction of clubs, schools, hospitals, etc. Here the question is not only in the complexity of the matter itself, but especially in money, in capital. Meanwhile, let me tell you, despite the decision of the April Plenum of the Central Committee,—this needs to be emphasized here so that

you check the fulfillment of this decision locally,—up to now various communal enterprises, hospitals, housing, etc. have not been transferred to settlement soviets. So understand all the complexity of the situation: if factory-plant settlements, where enterprises are state-owned, have difficulty transferring hospitals, housing, etc. to settlement soviets, then the difficulties in the countryside will be even greater. It is necessary to build housing, schools, clubs. Who should build them? The board of the kolkhoz, or the selsoviet? For example, it is necessary to build a hospital.

After all, comrades, healthcare in conditions of mass collectivization acquires the greatest significance. Healthcare work, sanitation and hygiene work must be widely unfolded and placed in a completely new way. I think, of course, that this work must be conducted under the leadership of selsoviets. They improve the countryside, care for roads, communications, electrification. In this direction we must give selsoviets prospects for their work. After all, in five years our countryside will not be what it is now: electrification of entire regions, new construction, development of roads and means of communication, cultural work, etc.—all this will transform the face of the countryside.

New Cities & Prospects: Around kolkhozes, new cities will be founded, such as the "Gigant" sovkhoz, uniting hundreds of thousands of hectares of land.

Selsoviet Responsibility: Selsoviets must unfold the work of constructing new socialist cities, despite initial confusion regarding budgets and funds.

Financial Planning: The People's Commissariat of Finance (Narkomfin), Combunkanka, and Agrobank, together with Kolkhozcenter, must thoroughly elaborate material-financial and organizational questions.

Public Infrastructure: Public amenities, cultural construction, healthcare, etc., must be conducted under the direct leadership of selsoviets.

That is why, incidentally, I believe that before we truly strengthen selsoviets, before we elaborate all the indicated questions, one should not rush with changing the territorial boundaries of selsoviets, with the enlargement of selsoviets. Of course, the boundaries of selsoviets will have to change, but to do this is still too early. If, for example, a kolkhoz encompasses ten villages, it is not obligatory to create a single selsoviet. If we did this in relation to all selsoviets—that would be incorrect. Some departure from the existing order is already necessary now. If, for example, two villages are collectivized together, while there is one well-working selsoviet, it is possible to limit oneself to it—in this respect we cannot make a categorical prohibition. It is necessary here to take into account the experience of breaking down kolkhozes into definite plots, etc.

Selsoviets, just like the raion and okrug, must continue to remain organs of power—political leaders.

The question of organizing the poor in connection with mass collectivization and the liquidation of the kulaks as a class stands before us in all its magnitude. The question of organizing the poor we must now sharpen in every possible

way. The selsoviet must have a strong poor- and farm-laborer core as its main support, as a base for unfolding all its work.

Comrade Stalin in his speech at the conference of agrarian-Marxists pointed out that "kolkhozes as a type of economy are one of the forms of socialist economy. There can be no doubt about this." And at the same time Comrade Stalin noted the presence in kolkhozes of certain contradictions. "Are there elements of class struggle in kolkhozes?—he asked and answered.—Yes, there are. There cannot fail to be elements of class struggle in kolkhozes if remnants of individualistic or even kulak psychology are still preserved there, if there is still some inequality. Can it be said that the class struggle in kolkhozes is synonymous with the class struggle outside kolkhozes? No, it cannot."[7]

Consequently, the selsoviet will need to wage a struggle against kulak influence on kolkhozes, since kulakdom until its complete liquidation as a class undoubtedly continues through various links to influence the life and work of kolkhozes. At the same time, we will need to wage a stubborn struggle for the socialist restructuring of the middle-peasant masses of kolkhoz members. In that same speech Comrade Stalin correctly noted that "it would be erroneous to think that if kolkhozes are given, everything necessary for the construction of socialism is already given. It would be even more erroneous to think that members of kolkhozes have already turned into socialists. No, much work still remains to be done to restructure the peasant-kolkhozist, correct his individualistic psychology and turn him

[7] I. Stalin, On Questions of Agrarian Policy in the USSR, Gospolitizdat, pp. 20 and 23.

into a genuine worker of a socialist society"[8]. Thus, we should not create any illusions for ourselves, but must strengthen our alliance with the middle-peasant masses in kolkhozes on the basis of stubborn, persistent, successive socialist restructuring of them, relying on the poor- and farm-laborer core.

Lenin in all his speeches, speaking about the peasantry, emphasized the strength of habits living in it, the strength of vacillations manifested by the middle peasant as a small owner. With particular categoricalness he emphasized this in his speech at the All-Rossian Congress of Transport Workers. In this speech of his, Lenin, posing the question of the last decisive battle that we are to give the petty-bourgeois spontaneous elements in our country, noted that we must work for a long time on restructuring the middle peasants—small owners: "In the fierce struggle of capital with labor,—said Lenin,—they do not participate daily, schools did not pass through, economic and political conditions of life do not bring them together, but tear them apart, push one away from another, turning them into millions of small owners acting individually. Such are the facts, which you all know very well. No collectives, communes earlier than after a long and difficult series of years, can retrain this"[9].

In the resolution of all these tasks, the selsoviet, as an organ of proletarian power in the countryside, is destined to play a major role. Hence it is clear that not only can there be no question of its liquidation, but it is necessary to achieve its all-out strengthening.

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8 Ibid., p. 24.

9 Tom XVIII, ч. 1, c. 163.

Comrades, it is necessary to emphasize with all categoricalness that the solution of all tasks facing us regarding the restructuring of the work of selsoviets, their strengthening, filling their work with new content rests on the question of cadres, new people and retraining those old conscientious workers that we have in selsoviets.

We are currently sending 25 thousand workers to kolkhozes. And if in the kolkhoz there sits a Moscow proletarian, say, from Elektrozavod, while in the selsoviet there sits a politically and culturally weak chairman or secretary, then, of course, no new resolutions, no talks will help. Therefore, we must pose in all magnitude and with all sharpness the question of cadres for selsoviets. This question found its reflection in the decisions of the recent All-Russian Congress of Soviets, but if we ask ourselves what has been done in this direction since the time of the congress, we are obliged to say that nothing has been done so far. Here courses have been created under the VTsIK, and that with struggle, not large ones, for 300 people, but in oblasts and okrugs precisely nothing has been done. Yet every oblast could organize courses of at least 500 people and every okrug —100. We must train thousands of workers in a year. The fact that we have not yet taken up this matter in earnest is a disgrace!

That is why I think that we must resolve the question of cadres immediately, without waiting for some special resolution. Let okrugs and oblasts immediately organize competition among themselves in this matter. It is necessary to shame every okrug, every oblast in the press that does nothing in this direction. The press can do this: place a portrait of the chairman of the

executive committee who does not organize courses for these workers within a 2-month period and say: "Here is the chairman who neglects the interests of improving the activity of soviets, who did not organize courses for himself, who is a bureaucrat." This will mean that we are truly moving the matter forward. They will say: party organs must permit this. And who ever forbade showing such initiative? If we pose the question of cadres in the old way, it will turn out to be in vain. Let's conduct a new mobilization. We have about 135 thousand members in city soviets. Let's conduct a campaign so that they allocate right now 10 thousand people at the expense of city soviets' funds. They need to be taught for half a year, or even passed through three-month courses and sent to the countryside. The work of selsoviets will improve this immediately.

Thus, the task of training cadres for selsoviets, just like for the entire soviet apparatus, now stands and will continue to stand for a prolonged time with all sharpness. Therefore, for its successful resolution it is necessary in the shortest possible time to mobilize all possibilities available to us, to organize a network of special courses, improve the setup of work at the departments of soviet law in our universities, etc. By the way, I must say that it is necessary to give a decisive rebuff to those liquidationist moods that exist among students of these departments and that are a reflection of liquidationist tendencies in relation to selsoviets.

If we do not set ourselves the task of turning selsoviets to face kolkhozes in a timely manner, filling their work with new content corresponding to the current tasks of the party, then we

will with all justice be obliged to say that a significant share of the blame for this lies on all of us, lies on the raions, okrugs, oblasts. If we take a check of the work of okrug executive committees, it can be stated with certainty that we will find no small number of okrug executive committees that have still not truly turned to face kolkhozes. Why must we say that not only selsoviets, but also raion, okrug, and oblast executive committees have not turned to face kolkhozes in earnest, to the tasks of the socialist restructuring of the village and our entire country, and that they too are carrying water to the kulak mill.

Comrades! We must all-out improve the work of selsoviets in practice, and for this we must conduct a broad public inspection of their work, conduct those re-elections that are currently planned. We must place this campaign at the proper political height, conduct it in a businesslike manner, and not formally and not mechanically.

Remember that we also began the campaign to revitalize the activity of soviets with partial re-elections. And this is no accident. This is a practical strengthening of soviets, a demonstration to the masses that we are not chattering, but actually accomplishing a turnaround. We did this last time and must do it this time. The re-elections of soviets that we will conduct now are not ordinary re-elections, but are, if you will, a kind of purge. Through the masses of kolkhoz members—poor and middle peasants—as well as with the help of those worker brigades that we have in the countryside, we will purge people who showed themselves incapable of putting the work of selsoviets on a new footing, we will conduct a purge of those who, through inability or hostility, failed to turn the work

of soviets to face those new tasks that we are currently resolving. If we are currently thoroughly purging the state apparatus, purging our people's commissariats and central institutions with the help of the working masses, then with the active participation of farm-laborer, poor, and middle-peasant masses of kolkhoz members we must conduct a kind of purge of selsoviets.

I think that if after this conference we, the entire party, the entire working class, all our organizations in a Bolshevik way take up the improvement of the work of all soviets and especially the strengthening of selsoviets, the improvement of leadership over them and the strengthening of their politically and culturally prepared cadres, we will achieve the turnaround we need and truly raise the soviets to that height at which they must stand in the present period of unfolded socialist construction.

MEMORANDUMOF THE INSTITUTE OF SOVIET CONSTRUCTION AND LAW ON SELSOVIETS IN CONNECTION WITH MASS COLLECTIVIZATION

FOREWORD[10]

The present memorandum pursues the following objectives:

1. To elucidate the current situation of selsoviets and the reasons why selsoviets for the most part stand on the sidelines of collectivization, and
2. To outline concrete measures for strengthening the role and significance of selsoviets in regions of total collectivization and their mutual relations with other rural organizations.

The memorandum has been compiled on the basis of materials from the Institute of Soviet Construction and Law collected over the past month. The Institute has been tasked with further developing this theme with the involvement of new materials available in the localities. Thus, the memorandum represents only the first steps in the serious and detailed study of the lower Soviet apparatus in connection with mass collectivization.

Selsoviets, as organs of the proletarian dictatorship implementing the alliance of the working class and the poor with the middle peasant masses of the peasantry, have had various features in their work during different periods of the epoch of the proletarian dictatorship. A particular feature of the work of selsoviets during the period of war communism was

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[10] *The memorandum was prepared for the All-Union Conference on Questions of Soviet Construction, held on January 20–22, and was distributed to the members of the conference. It is published with minor amendments in full, except for the first chapter (statistical data on the social composition of selsoviets).*

that their work was structured for the purpose of implementing a military-political alliance between the proletariat and the broad masses of the peasantry. During the restoration period, the feature in the work of selsoviets lay in the fact that they organized their activities on the basis of a link between developing urban industry and rising individual peasant farms in the oblast, mainly through trade. In the present period of socialist reconstruction of the national economy, when grandiose work is unfolding to restructure the poor- and middle-peasant masses of the peasantry on the basis of the collectivization of their farms, when the task is practically being resolved of liquidating the kulaks as a class, selsoviets must radically restructure all their work on the basis of the production link between the working class, the poor, and the middle-peasant masses of the peasantry in order to take the lead of the poor- and middle-peasant masses in resolving these tasks. If in the first two stages of our revolution the soviets fulfilled and did fulfill their tasks successfully, this cannot be said of the present stage of the reconstructive period. Selsoviets, remaining for the most part on the sidelines of collectivization, do not fulfill the primary tasks of implementing the production forms of the link between town and country. They show little interest in production. They take almost no part in the restructuring of commodity farming and do not manifest themselves here as organs of the proletarian dictatorship.

Selsoviets, as the state form of the proletarian dictatorship, must be strengthened. This must be done especially at the present stage of our development, when new tasks are being

posed before selsoviets in connection with collectivization. The class struggle in the countryside will be especially aggravated during the implementation of the policy of liquidating the kulaks as a class. The frantic resistance of the kulaks must receive a decisive and organized blow from the organs of the proletarian dictatorship.

Selsoviets are state organizations, capable of acting widely on the principle of coercion. Kolkhozes are voluntary associations implementing the socialization of the means of production on the basis of the cooperation of labor processes. Systematic and stubborn work on the socialization of the property and inventory of the poor and middle peasants who have joined the kolkhoz must be the main content of the activity of selsoviets. Selsoviets must implement the task of exercising control over kolkhozes, monitoring the timely fulfillment of all obligations of the kolkhoz and its members to the proletarian state. Selsoviets must by all means achieve that the organized poor and farm laborers truly serve as the support in all their work.

All these new tasks require a change in the social composition of selsoviets, a fundamental restructuring of the content of work, and the adaptation of their organizational forms to new needs. The substantiation of these new tasks and the elucidation of the content of work and forms of organization of selsoviets in connection with collectivization constitute the purpose of this memorandum.

I. MASS WORK OF RURAL SOVIETS AND THE POOR PEASANTRY

Parallel to the growth of the political activity of the farm-laborer, poor, and middle-peasant masses of the peasantry, the mass work of rural soviets is developing and strengthening. The number of plenary sessions, particularly expanded and mobile ones, is increasing; the content of their work is improving; the attendance of these sessions by deputies and rank-and-file peasantry is increasing; the influence of the farm-laborer and poor-peasant element within the selsoviet itself is rising. A similar process is observed in the sections of rural soviets. The connection of the soviets with the working masses is strengthening; the reporting character of selsoviets and individual deputies to electors is increasing and beginning to take on a more regular nature. A farm-laborer, poor-, and middle-peasant activist core is forming around the selsoviets.

Brought forward by life and successfully developing are new organizational forms of mass work: agricultural production conferences, settlement sections attached to selsoviets, deputy groups in individual villages, etc. The number of poor-peasant groups attached to rural soviets is steadily growing; their composition is improving and the quality of their work is rising. Along with this, the work of farm-laborer-poor-peasant and general-citizen meetings is improving. The planning of mass work is increasing, self-criticism is developing, and the practice of socialist emulation is being introduced. In a word, in the mass work of rural soviets, certain positive shifts are observed toward a broader coverage and correct utilization of the growing political activity of the farm-laborer, poor-, and

middle-peasant masses of the countryside. This situation can be illustrated by a number of figures and facts.

1. **Sections of Soviets.** As a typical example, let us dwell on the Ural Oblast, where in 1925 there were about ½ thousand sections, in 1926/7 — 5,500, in 1927/8 — 6,928, and on 1/IV 1929 — 7,711. Along with the growing number of sections, their composition is also growing, increasing both through the increased participation of deputies and through the greater involvement of the rural soviet activist core. Regarding the composition and work of selsoviet sections, data for the North Caucasus Krai are indicative, where for 1928 the situation across 85 raions (1076 selsoviets) is characterized by the following table:

Composition of sections					Number of attendees at the meeting			
Number of sections	Members s/s	Cand.	Attached	Number of meetings	Members s/s	Cand.	Attached	Other groups
3,071	35,530	3,567	9,314	15,000	86,723	7,127	19,702	85,063
Per 1 section . . .	11.1	1	3	0.5	6	1/2	1 1/2	6

In the Leningrad Oblast, according to incomplete data, the number of sections over the past year increased by 19%, the number of section members grew by 28.6%, making up 12,875 people across 991 sections. The average annual attendance of section meetings by section members is 54.9%; of the decisions made by sections, 77.4% were implemented in practice; the investigative work of sections covered 2436 institutions,

involving 14.9% of the personal composition of sections and 19% of members attached to institutions.

Everywhere, the composition of selsoviet sections is overwhelmingly made up of the poor- and middle-peasant masses. For example, in the North Caucasus Krai, the 60 thousand activists are subdivided into the following social categories: workers — \%, farm laborers — 9%, poor peasants — 45%, middle peasants — 30%, white-collar workers — 11%, and others — 2%. Among the activists, 18% are women.

In individual cases, sections provide examples of exemplary work. For example, the cultural-educational section of the Elshansky selsoviet of the Middle Volga Oblast, having 55 people in its composition (including 16 farm laborers and poor peasants, 28 middle peasants, and 7 white-collar workers), achieved the establishment of a school, reading huts in a former prayer house, regular organization of question-and-answer evenings, organized study circles, etc.

The public amenities section of the Troitsky selsoviet equipped a fire-fighting train with 4 machines, built a fire tower, a school, 5 water reservoirs, carried out street layout and house numbering, equipped 2 cattle burial grounds, etc.

The agricultural section of the Podovrazhensky selsoviet actively participated in the spring and autumn sowing campaigns, concluded contracting, secured credit in money, machinery, and fertilizer, carried out the agrominimum, and monitored its implementation.

2. **Agricultural Production Conferences.** According to 1929 data, 2,235 agricultural production conferences were organized

in the North Caucasus Krai, with a total number of participants exceeding 100 thousand permanent members. The following table provides a picture of the social composition of the conferences:

Name of Okrug	Total number of members of village soviets	Of which women	By Social Status							
			Worker	Farm laborer	Poor peasant	Middle peasant	Well-to-do	Intelligentsia	Employee	Other
1. Terek	1,716	112	34	57	564	842	32	45	123	19
% of total	100%	6.5	2.0	3.3	32.8	49.1	1.9	2.6	7.2	1.1
2. Kuban	6,714	384	58	295	2,182	3,490	167	232	—	290
% of total	100	5.6	0.8	4.4	32.5	52.0	2.5	3.5	—	4.3
3. Don	7,664	no data	none	58	3,956	3,236	12	1	195	206
% of total	100	—	—	0.8	51.6	42.2	0.2	—	2.5	2.7
4. Maykop	710	64	—	59	214	386	7	17	27	—
% of total	100	9.0	—	8.3	30.1	54.4	1.0	2.4	3.8	—
Total	16,804			92	469	6,916	7,954	218	295	345
% of total	100%			0.5	2.8	41.2	47.3	1.3	1.7	2.1

Local party and soviet organizations unanimously state that of all the organizational forms of mass work in the countryside, production selsoviet conferences have proved to be the most stable, broad, and popular form. Numerous examples were

observed where buildings where conferences were held could not accommodate everyone wishing to get in. How broadly and deeply work unfolded in individual cases is shown by the following example from the Pavlodolskaya station, North Caucasus Krai:

“Production selsoviet conference is the liveliest of all. From the materials it is evident that it has truly become an active fighter for the reconstruction of agriculture. It elaborated the following issues: on a repair workshop, on harvesting selection materials; on organizing sowing partnerships; on the plan of spring crop land and fallow land, on organizing agro-kysts, on attaching sorters to plots, reports on preparations for the spring sowing of selsoviets, TSOs [machine-tractor stations], KKOVs [Committees of Poor Peasants], report of the commission on inspecting blacksmith shops and the work of agro-plenipotentiaries, on seed dressing, reports of the sowing group ‘Pobeda’ and the kolkhoz ‘Opyt’, agronomist's report on dressing, report of the KKOV on the course of co-working, elaboration of the 1929 winter sowing plan.”

“Undoubtedly, the results of the work of the agricultural production conference are the following outcomes of the upcoming spring sowing campaign: 4 kolkhozes were organized covering 73 households, 3 old joint land cultivation partnerships consisting of 27 households were reorganized into agricultural artels and cover 52 households, a machinery partnership was also reorganized into an agricultural artel, a sericultural partnership of 12 households and a horticultural partnership of 11 households were organized, 5 statutory sowing partnerships in 445 households were organized,

covering 95% of the spring crop wedge by May 1—4,000 hectares." (*Izvestia* of the Svkavkraiispolkom, No. 10, 1929, Rostov-on-Don, p. 28).

3. **Poor-Peasant Groups.** In the field of work with farm laborers and the poor, the following achievements can be noted. Along with the general increase in the role and activity of the farm-laborer and poor-peasant masses of the countryside, it is necessary to note the quantitative and qualitative improvement in their work. Whereas before the review of poor-peasant groups in 1928, across 18 okrugs and gubernias there were only 1,975 groups counted, as a result of the review their number increased to 4,397 groups. In individual okrugs, the rate of growth of poor peasants is especially significant. In Ulyanovsk Okrug, the number of groups increased from 67 to 286, in Kursk from 40 to 300, etc. In 1929, the number of poor-peasant groups increased even more.

   Along with this, one can note instances of qualitative improvement in the work of groups along the lines of strengthening organized farm-laborer and poor-peasant influence on the work of selsoviets, cooperatives, and peasant committees, along the lines of organizing farm-laborer and poor-peasant strata of the village around the tasks of socialist construction.

   By the Knyazevsky selsoviet of Tula Okrug, under the direct influence of the poor-peasant group, the following work was done: all settlements were transferred to the charter of agricultural artels, five-year contracting was carried out 100%, a loan was realized, a church was closed, the building of which

was transferred to a club, newspapers were subscribed to at the rate of one for each house. The poor-peasant group of the village of Byurnak, Borisoglebsk Okrug, organized 4 kolkhozes; in 6 Yaransk uyezd organized poor-peasant groups created 10 kolkhozes and replaced kulak leadership in credit partnerships; in Syzran Raion groups created 13 kolkhozes. In the village of Shchuchye, Ostrogozhsk Okrug, the poor-peasant group organized a red wagon for delivering 15 tons of grain to the state; in the village of Krasnoyarsk, Barabinsk Okrug, the group organized 5 carts with 350 poods of grain and carried out a boycott of malicious tax evaders.

Along with this, there is a mass of facts when poor-peasant groups served poor and low-power middle-peasant households, organized public co-working tillage, etc.

4. **Shortcomings of Mass Work.** We have a whole series of undeniable achievements in mass work in the countryside. Despite this, it must be stated with all categoricalness that the mass work of rural soviets in its current state does not ensure proper coverage and correct utilization of the political activity of the farm-laborer and poor-peasant masses of the peasantry in conditions of mass collectivization. In fact, rural soviets in their overwhelming majority have not yet formed as genuine leaders of the kolkhoz movement and organizers of the working masses of the countryside around the tasks of liquidating the kulaks as a class. The vast majority of selsoviet sections stand on the sidelines of the village kolkhoz movement. Along with this, instances are observed where individual selsoviet sections, not limiting themselves to the role of passive spectators, become a brake on socialist construction,

sabotaging our measures, conniving with the kulak and actively resisting the spontaneous pull of the masses into kolkhozes.

In the overwhelming majority, the mass work of rural soviets, despite its improvement, still has not acquired sufficient scope. The tempos of improvement lag behind the requirements of the moment. The lower Soviet apparatus does not display the necessary flexibility and precision in the matter of restructuring methods and forms of work as applied to the tasks facing it.

The mass work of selsoviets is insufficiently developed. This is testified to with sufficient persuasiveness by the following facts. A significant number of organized selsoviet sections do not work. Of the working ones, many conduct accidental, planless, sometimes purely bureaucratic work. In the Ural Oblast, out of 7,711 selsoviet sections, 50% were completely inactive. Working sections across 6 okrugs met on average 1 time per month, in 4 okrugs 3–4 times per half-year, in 5 okrugs 2 times per half-year. The number of activists drawn into the work of 1 section, on average, ranges across okrugs from 1 to 4.

In the Leningrad Oblast, out of the scheduled 4,533 section meetings, only 1,854 or 40% took place. Out of 11,634 participants, 2,315 people did not attend meetings at all. At 1,854 meetings, only 3,970 people spoke in debates (slightly more than 3 speakers per meeting), and only 2,688 practical decisions were made.

According to the North Caucasus Krai, one section met on average during the year 4 times according to Armavir Okrug, Tersk — 2.3, Donetsk — 3, North Ossetian Oblast — 0.9. On

average across the krai, one section spoke with reports at selsoviet meetings 0.6 times during the year, and reported to the council about 1.3 times a year. One section was inspected on average 0.5 times a year. The reporting of sections to the masses is extremely inadequate everywhere; the number of rank-and-file village activists in sections is negligible; the percentage of farm laborers and women is negligible.

Many sections are organized incorrectly. In a number of places, they are apparatus-closed organizations and consist only of members of selsoviets and representatives of institutions and organizations. In individual cases, an alien element is encountered in the composition of sections.

The main shortcoming in the organization of agricultural production conferences is the clear underestimation of their significance by rural soviets and higher executive committees. Selsoviet production conferences, as an organizational form of mass work, are used on a large scale only by rural soviets of the North Caucasus Krai. Data on the mass work of rural soviets across the Ural Oblast make it possible to establish that even agricultural production conferences are created in only 1,900 selsoviets out of 3,100, and moreover they are almost nowhere reorganized according to the type of agricultural production conferences. In the Ivanovo Industrial Oblast, the number of agricultural production conferences is extremely insufficient, with 50% of them conducting almost no work. Directives of the Leningrad Oblast Executive Committee on transferring selsoviet agricultural production conferences to the work methods of production conferences “up to now remain in

the overwhelming majority of cases unfulfilled" ("Mass Soviet Work", 1929, g., p. 25).

From the Middle Volga Oblast, it is reported that "necessary development of agricultural production conferences in the countryside has not yet been achieved, that they are not only not created in the vast majority of soviets, but many lower workers do not even know how to organize them, who to draw into the work of conferences and what practical work they should play" ("Path of Soviets", No. 23, December 1929).

It is extraordinarily indicative that in a number of places the primary role in organizing the masses around the tasks of sowing campaigns is still played by old, obsolete organizational forms. For example, in the Ural Oblast during the autumn sowing campaign, there were conducted:

Conferences on crop yields	**Production conferences**	**Meetings of land societies**
145	3,136	16,792
with number of participants: 7,025	52,871	587,195

The specific weight of agricultural production conferences in overall work is still very small.

In the organization of farm-laborer and poor-peasant masses in soviets, a whole series of major shortcomings is noted. First of all, we still have not eliminated the striking discrepancy between the number of poor-peasant groups and the network of institutions of rural significance under which these groups should be organized.

In this regard, selsoviets are in a better position than peasant committees and cooperative organizations. But even in selsoviets, the number of groups is extremely insufficient. In the Leningrad Oblast, at the beginning of 1929, with 3,159 selsoviets, only 650 poor-peasant groups were registered. In the Middle Volga Oblast (excluding Syzran Okrug), out of 3,266 selsoviets there are 998 groups. The rate of increase in the number of groups in the majority of okrugs is extremely insufficient. For example, the plenum of the Middle Volga Kraikom of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in June 1929 resolved to double the network of poor-peasant groups by autumn; in reality, their number increased by only 10–12%.

Of the total number of organized poor-peasant groups, the majority so far work poorly, and a significant part is listed only on paper. According to inspection materials for 1928, it was established that the percentage of non-working groups in Novgorod Okrug reached 60%, in Novosibirsk — 75%, in Ryazan Gubernia — 80%. For 1929, the situation in this regard has improved, but still the main mass of poor-peasant groups does not conduct regular planned work and does not exert systematic influence on selsoviets.

In the majority of cases, the work of groups comes alive only during periods of major mass campaigns. In a number of places, all the attention of groups is concentrated around discussing secondary issues, and basic tasks of socialist construction fall out of their field of vision. Instances are observed of complete misunderstanding by the group of its tasks and its role. Sometimes a poor-peasant group regards itself as an auxiliary organization, preparing material for a selsoviet meeting, and sometimes it turns into an administrative organ standing above the selsoviet, declaring reprimands, etc. Meeting agendas in a number of cases are incredibly overloaded with issues. Poor-peasant groups sometimes examine 8–9 issues in a single meeting, such as grain procurements, contracting, self-criticism, socialist emulation. Accounting of work in the majority of cases is not kept and even minutes are sometimes not kept.

All this testifies to the fact that the attention paid to poor-peasant groups by party and soviet organizations is clearly insufficient. The consequence of this is not only the weakness of the work of poor-peasant groups, but frequently their incorrect organization. Poor-peasant groups are sometimes elected at expanded plenums of selsoviets or at general-citizen meetings. Therefore, in a number of places the social composition of poor-peasant groups is clearly unsatisfactory, the percentage of farm laborers is insufficient, and instances are observed not only of a predominance of middle peasants in the groups, but also of the presence of well-to-do elements and even disenfranchised persons in them. For example, across five selsoviets of Nalinsky Raion, Pskov Okrug, members of poor-

peasant groups are distributed among the following social categories: poor peasants — 47 people, middle peasants — 67, well-to-do — 2, disenfranchised — 1 person. There are isolated instances when disenfranchised persons are even leaders of poor-peasant groups.

The vast majority of rural soviets serve farm laborers extremely poorly and do not conduct organizational work among them, considering the latter the business of the All-Union All-Forest Workers' Union. At the same time, selsoviets do not conduct almost any work on organizing the poor, considering this work the special task of party organizations.

Issues of work among farm laborers are almost never the subject of discussion at plenums of selsoviets; labor legislation is not explained by the selsoviet to the farm laborer; farm laborers are weakly drawn into the work of plenums and sections of selsoviets, and in many cases selsoviets do not even keep records of farm laborers.

An inspection of Kletsky Raion (Stalingrad) established that not in a single one of the 34 selsoviets are there records of farm laborers. In Maroblast, out of 8–9 thousand farm laborers, only 3,807 were covered by agreements; for Alexandrovsky Raion, Stalingrad Okrug, out of 3,316 people — only 440 (13%). The registration of labor agreements often has a mechanical character without records of their contents. Half of the agreements concluded with employers in spring in Tenishevsky Raion, Samara Okrug, turned out to be concluded on bondage conditions.

Completely outside the control of selsoviets are day-labor and piece-work farm laborers living on verbal agreements, meanwhile these agreements almost entirely bear the character of bondage deals.

Thus, although organizational-mass work is developing, it is still moving at such tempos and in such dimensions that it clearly lags behind the needs of the present day.

In its work, the selsoviet does not rely on poor-peasant organizations. The significance of the organizational-mass work of selsoviets is still underestimated by them and they display insufficient attention to it.

II. THE SITUATION OF THE SELSOVIET IN CONDITIONS OF TOTAL COLLECTIVIZATION

1. **Selsoviet and Production in the Kolkhoz.** Today almost the entire territory of Krasnopoliansky Raion is occupied by one agricultural commune, into the composition of which has entered more than 5 thousand households; during 1930, on the territory of this raion there will remain no individual households (middle peasants and poor peasants are being collectivized; kulaks are being evicted); all means of production of the Krasnopolianscians will be socialized in the coming months; labor reserves are already being socialized at the present time: the socialization of everyday life is proceeding at an accelerated pace.

   As early as spring 1929, the percentage of collectivization for individual soviets was equal to zero, and by autumn of the same year it reached 80–90%, moreover already then

collectivization was taking place on the basis of the deep socialization of the means of production, and the soviets, which yesterday stood above two hundred individual households, found themselves today inside a large kolkhoz; conditions of work of rural soviets changed drastically, but the selsoviets themselves failed to restructure the methods and forms of their work as applied to the new environment, and sometimes did not want to do this.

Let us dwell first on how the soviets of Klansky (now Krasnopoliansky) Raion guided production in kolkhozes (we cite documents).

On February 13, 1929, the plenum of Mikhensky Selsoviet appointed 9 comrades to a commission for drafting the spring sowing campaign plan; the commission worked for about two months, without noticing three new kolkhozes formed on the territory of the selsoviet. Therefore, the plan developed by the commission was scrapped and returned for revision. But by this time a kolkhoz kyst is organized, developing a spring sowing campaign plan for kolkhozes of four selsoviets. The kolkhozist, participating in the kyst meeting, appears in the selsoviet commission and outlines the main directives of the kyst; the commission transcribes these directives into its minutes, and on April 15, 1929 (more than two months after the date of creation), submits the sowing campaign plan to the selsoviet plenum. And at this time the kolkhoz agronomist precisely establishes the volume of sown areas for each kolkhoz, determines the proportion of crops and presents the selsoviet chairmen with the demand to distribute seeds from the seed insurance fund and from the KKOV fund.

Selsoviets, however, are in no hurry with seeds, and the kyst association “Kommunizm” (June 6, 1929) is forced to state:

“The dragging out of the distribution of local seed funds and KKOV funds by the three selsoviets is considered a criminal phenomenon, threatening the disruption of the sowing campaign and serving as a brake on the expansion of the sown area.”

The next day after the kyst meeting, the presidium of Mikhensky Selsoviet promises “to distribute seed funds 100% in the immediate future.” But until this “immediate future” arrived, kolkhoz boards had worn out the thresholds in the selsoviet[11].

Yet regarding “general leadership,” the selsoviet remained “at its height”: in calendar schedules and minutes, “strict and categorical decisions on these reports were invariably recorded, and sanctions were issued for something...” True, it happened that members of the presidium did not appear at the meeting, but this did not embarrass the Mikhensky chairman: he firmly remembered that “the work of the selsoviet is reflected in the minutes.”

“Having heard information on the course of work of the sowing campaign in the partnership ‘Parizhsky Kommunar’, the presidium considers it absolutely necessary to immediately correct the work: incorrect distribution of draft power and poor supply of forage.”

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[11] *Material was mainly taken from an inspection of Krasnopoliansky Raion of total collectivization, conducted by an Institute employee.*

If we explain that poor utilization of draft power was caused by a shortage of forage—horses starved, and the shortage of forage was caused by last year's grain procurements, during which kolkhozes surrendered all their surpluses to the state, then there is no doubt that the selsoviet “sat” and “decreed” to no purpose. “Immediately correct” the main shortcoming—the shortage of forage—neither the kolkhoz nor the selsoviet could, but uncover and eliminate other defects in the work of the TOZ [Association for Joint Land Cultivation] the selsoviet was unable to do.

We dwell in detail on the work of Mikhensky Selsoviet because it is listed as one of the best in the raion. It even has production conferences “regularly working” (meetings on May 14, 19, 23, and 25, for 11 days—4 meetings). But if we look at the work of these conferences, the primacy of Mikhensky Selsoviet is put under suspicion. On May 14, a production conference discusses, for example, the issue of feed production and issues a decision: “Agree to the increase of root crops and crops containing proteins, providing livestock with closer personal care.” After the word “care” by the hand of the selsoviet secretary it is appended: “in the future”...

On May 25, the production conference listens to reports from field supervisors on the use of draft power and gives a directive:

“Immediately conduct a strict census of horses capable of working, and rationally utilize them in the sowing campaign. Taking into account the difficulty in forage and the shortage of draft power (on May 26 it is necessary to plow 300 hectares),

ask the commune ‘KIM’ to provide a tractor. Propose to the kolkhoz board to immediately eliminate all shortcomings.”

The “KIM” commune provided a tractor, but as for the “immediate census of horses”—kolkhoz members in the village laughed, as they knew them by heart anyway. “Future decent care for livestock” and “immediate elimination of all shortcomings” were attached to the business along with the minutes, and thus nothing remained of the work of the selsoviet production conference except paper[12].

So “successfully” did the Ilensky selsoviet guide kolkhozes: it tried to plan the seed-cleaning work of the “Federatsiya” commune, but the commune covered seed cleaning for 4 soviets and therefore had to act according to its own plan. The plan of the selsoviet remained “for the protocol.”

The guidance of selsoviets over kolkhozes appears inconsistent not only because it is systematically late, but because it lags in quality. It is enough to look at the table given here to be convinced of the correctness of such an assertion:

(Table presenting sown area targets and actual performance across Kolkhozes)

[12] *For Bazhenovsky soviet all data are given for two kolkhozes; for Mikhensky soviet by two kolkhozes all data are shown with the exception of attendance, which is derived for one kolkhoz.*

As can be seen from these indicators, kolkhozes overfulfilled not only the planned targets of the raion executive committee, but even the increased targets of their kyst.

In connection with such lagging of selsoviets, the path and work of their production conferences could not unfold. Instead of them, large kolkhozes either convene their own production conferences or resolve production issues at general meetings of the entire kolkhoz. As an example, let us give the following table:

(Table comparing number of Selsoviet Plenum meetings vs. General Kolkhoz meetings across Bazhenovsky and Mikhensky Selsoviets)

Selsoviets, even according to these statistical indicators, stepped into the background.

Even further stepped back before kolkhozes were KKOVs. Here is Bazhenovsky KKOV. This spring it carried out huge work: it distributed 2,552 poods of seed material, monetary loans were issued, it was planned to widely organize the processing of poor-peasant fields, etc. In the same spring, poor and middle peasants organized an artel; in August this artel adopted the charter of a commune. In the village of Bazhenovo there remained one individual peasant, and the KKOV found itself inside the commune. In the books of the KKOV are still listed: seeder, trier, sorter, and fallow plow, but these machines do not serve poor- and middle-peasant homesteads, but work in

“Iskra” and other kolkhozes of Bazhenovsky Selsoviet. The land of the KKOV passed to these kolkhozes.

Kolkhozes plowed the KKOV plot together with their own wedge, sowed it, harvested it, threshed it and are preparing to “transfer” 1,000 poods of finished grain to the KKOV barn. This transfer is hardly likely to take place, however, because neither for production nor for the distribution of KKOV in its present form inside the kolkhoz is it suitable. Before collectivization, it mobilized individual peasant households for public co-working tillage, collected membership dues, provided productive seed and consumer assistance to poor- and middle-peasant homesteads, and now in the village of Bazhenovo there remains one “privateer,” in Stepnaya—7, the majority of whom are well-to-do, the KKOV was left without work. Nor did it work out with the Mikhensky KKOV. It served only 6 individual households in the spring sowing campaign: the remaining individual peasants needing help moved to the kolkhoz. The KKOV had no load, and therefore it sold its threshing machine to a neighboring selsoviet, where collectivization is in embryo, and where there is still a place for committee mutual aid.

The cited facts took place at a time when the Krasnopolianskaya commune was not yet finally formed as a single large kolkhoz and when on the territory of one selsoviet there were several independent small artels, TOZs, and communes. Now the majority of selsoviets of Krasnopoliansky Raion serve the territory of 2–3 production plots of a single large economy. The economic and organizational independence of these plots is significantly narrowed, and they

do not possess legal entity rights at all. Therefore, the position of 26 selsoviets located inside one large kolkhoz has become even more complicated, becoming even more dissimilar to the position of a selsoviet before collectivization.

If the soviet had begun planning the spring and autumn sowing campaigns in time and planned them not on the basis of individual peasant homesteads (to whom it was sufficient to "give a target" on expanding the sown area and release seeds), but on the basis of a complex, large economy, it (the soviet) would not have retroactively forbidden sowing ordinary rye, but would have elaborated the production plan of the kolkhoz from the angle of: 1) maximum utilization of labor reserves; 2) full load of machinery; 3) timely preparation of draft power (allocation of working horses, their additional feeding); 4) redistribution of horses and inventory between kolkhozes, etc.

Selsoviets did not cope with the tasks of production leadership not only because they were not adapted to new production relations and new agricultural technology, but also because their social composition turned out to be unsatisfactory [13].

At the same time, the weakness of the influence of selsoviets on kolkhozes was a reflection of the weakness of the rik [raion

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13 *In Mikhensky selsoviet with 11 percent of uncollectivized households there remained 12% of soviet members-individual peasants; in Elansky selsoviet with 44 percent of individual peasant households—members of the soviet-individual peasants remained 45%. In three Elansky selsoviets the current composition by tax data for 1927/28 r. (i.e. before mass entry of soviet members into kolkhozes) was as follows: white-collar workers 56.5%, kolkhoz members 4%, farm laborers 0, exempt from tax 6.5%, paying up to 20 rub. per homestead—26.3%, from 20 to 30 r.—13.1%, from 30 to 50 r.—23.6%, from 50 to 70 r.—11.8% and from 70 to 100 r.—8%.*

executive committee], which also failed to adapt to the new conditions of production.

2. **Selsoviet, its Material Base and Socio-Cultural Construction.** In Elansky Raion out of 17 selsoviets, independent budgets are held by only 2, and both these budgets in reality are revenue-expenditure estimates. The Chubarovsky selsoviet budget, for example, was compiled as follows: "Herewith is forwarded the revenue and expenditure part of the estimate for 1928/29 of rural significance, which you are to accept for execution, strictly guided by the designations intended in them." Thus the Elansky Raion Executive Committee on September 9, 1929, "prescribed" an "independent" budget to Chubarovsky Selsoviet. A budget was "prescribed" in the same way to Bobrovsky Soviet. Both budgets are balanced in revenues and expenditures in the sum of 13,802 rubles, of which 12,909 rubles (i.e., 93.5%) come from the agricultural tax, 460 rubles (3.3%) make up income from communal property, 203 rubles (1.5%) — income from agriculture and the remaining 1.7% fall on balances of budgetary funds, local tax and fees, etc. It should be noted that for three quarters of the budgetary year, the revenue designation for communal property was fulfilled by only 30.2%.

   If we take into account that for the formation of rural budgets, selsoviets possessing the largest amount of revenue sources were taken, the budgetary base of other selsoviets of Elansky Raion will appear in a rather unsightly light.

   Not possessing local sources of revenue, selsoviets remain practically budgetless and will be able to maintain schools,

nurseries, paramedic stations, etc. only if the rik allocates funds for this from its budget.

The organization of public services for economic and socio-cultural institutions bypassed the selsoviet. This public service is organized now differently, along kolkhoz lines; for example, Bazhenovsky Selsoviet could not organize individual peasants to equip a school dormitory, but after collectivization, Bazhenovsky kolkhozes, without waiting for instructions from the selsoviet, undertook to build not only beds for the school dormitory, but also classroom desks. Immediately after the harvesting season, the artel "Khleborob" made three school desks. Stepinskaya artel undertook to build benches and tables. Other kolkhozes, upon releasing carpenters from repairing transport inventory, throw them onto school equipment. Karpuninsky and Mikhensky selsoviets could not organize the repair of their schools for a whole year, and young kolkhozes undertook school repairs after a single meeting, and by the beginning of the academic year both schools were repaired.

The expenditure part of selsoviet budgets is compiled as follows: local soviets — 2,577 rub. (18.6%), public education — 8,409 rub. (60.8%), healthcare — 2,589 rub. (11.5%), communication routes — 200 rub. (1.5%), and special expenditures 27 rub. (0.1%).

It is interesting to note that old Elansky communes have long allocated a solid place in their expenditures to school matters. The commune "KIM", for example, maintained a special apartment-pension in Irbit for eleven boys and girls studying in okrug schools. The commune "Krasnaya Zvezda" maintained a similar dormitory in the raion center for 20 people. The

commune “Krasnaya Roscha” in 1923/25 maintained its own school with a teacher-commune member, etc.

The organization of public services around the school prior to collectivization proceeded along the lines of self-taxation (in money and kind), i.e., it took the form of public corvée. After collectivization, the whole business here was reduced to a simple division of labor: kolkhozes allocate a certain number of people to work at the school and record them on time sheets in the same way as people working in the field. Having united for production, having socialized livestock, inventory, and buildings, kolkhozes thereby proved to be organized and for cultural construction.

Cultural-everyday commissions attached to kolkhozes are organized, but they have not yet learned to work according to a plan. In many kolkhozes they are not even created, but selsoviets also do not master this work. In not a single one of the (4) soviets were we able to find a working cultural-production section. Everywhere these sections exist only on paper.

In a better position were communal-road sections. Self-taxation of 1928/1929 created a base for selsoviets to carry out a whole series of construction and repair works. The elaboration of estimates and plans for these works was produced by communal-road sections, they directed the course of work. The leadership of the section had varying depth and personal influence depending on the degree of collectivization of the given village. In the village of Bazhenovo, which turned in spring 1929 into a single artel, the section could not keep up with the initiative and work of the artel board. Otherwise, it

could hardly have been otherwise: starting to process the socialized field with socialized inventory, the artel could not repair old field roads and build a new road, but impassability directly affected production. Therefore, without waiting for the council's instructions, the artel used 100 human and 90 horse-days of corvée on road works, which were subsequently credited toward the state road corvée. In actual fact, there was no corvée here at all, since members of the artel working on the road received wages on a par with those working in the field.

In those villages where there were several kolkhozes and where individual peasants remained, sections distributed work between kolkhozes and individual peasants, applying it to the location of kolkhoz lands. Road repairs passing through the lands of this kolkhoz were recorded for these kolkhozes. Finally, in villages with a predominant number of individual peasants, sections had to completely organize and direct road works.

Also shaping up is the situation with fire and general security. Where prior to collectivization the fire tower was manned by a yard-keeper appointed in order of corvée from alternating households, after the socialization of livestock, inventory, and buildings, 2–3 members of the artel (commune) are allocated to the fire service, who are credited with a corresponding salary. Where prior to collectivization night guard duty was borne by a hired watchman, whom the “mir” paid in order of self-taxation, after collectivization one or several kolkhoz members, appointed according to the general schedule of work distribution, are on duty for night watch. Finally, where earlier “in order of household turns” village executives were

appointed, there now, with the merging of households into a single production collective, executives bearing the obligation to maintain public order are replaced by on-duty kolkhoz members most suitable for this work according to the conditions of general production.

From this follow such conclusions: with the disappearance of the base of selsoviets in that form in which it exists at the present time (own enterprises, GSE [state power stations], etc.), and with a fundamental change in the tax system of selsoviets (collection of taxes not by the selsoviet, but by the rik), the question of the economic independence of the selsoviet arises again with all its sharpness.

The resolution of this issue is complicated by the following moments:

a) When establishing deductions from kolkhoz profits into the local budget (in the manner established for industrial enterprises in relation to the living conditions improvement fund, etc.), these deductions will be made from the general balance of the large kolkhoz, and not from individual economies. Consequently, they (deductions) cannot end up in the selsoviet budget, but will be credited to the raion budget.

b) When issuing funds to the selsoviet from the raion budget to satisfy all its measures, the council finds itself in the position of a simple credit manager, because the rik will issue funds for definite needs. In connection with this, many budgetary rights of the selsoviet will disappear: the right to conclude loans, the right to transfer credits, etc.

c) If the selsoviet is to produce from its budget all expenditures for maintaining the socio-cultural network, then in this case it will have to pay wages both to qualified personnel (teacher, paramedic, etc.) and to service personnel (watchman, cleaning woman). But since labor reserves are socialized in the kolkhoz and since qualified workers are also drawn into kolkhoz membership, paying the wages of the above-listed workers from the budget, and not from kolkhoz funds, creates in practice a dual system of labor utilization and labor remuneration in a single kolkhoz.

d) Under the same condition (i.e., when conducting all expenditures on the socio-cultural network through the selsoviet budget), the selsoviet will have to buy firewood from the kolkhoz, pay the kolkhoz for water delivery, settle accounts with the kolkhoz for premises repair materials, etc., at a time when these institutions will serve the kolkhoz members themselves.

Thus, the question of the economic independence of selsoviets in a region of total collectivization appears very complex and can be resolved, in our opinion, by the only method: by the beginning of the economic year, the council develops a detailed organizational-production plan, into which are included all socio-cultural, communal, and other measures. Plans are summarized in the rik, and on their basis a general agreement is concluded between the rik and the board of the large kolkhoz, in which the expenditures of the local budget and the expenditures of the kolkhoz are precisely defined. Upon conclusion of the general agreement, a corresponding change is introduced into the plans of selsoviets, with precise definition

of: which part of the plan is financed by rik allocations and which is implemented by the forces and means of the kolkhoz. The latter part is included in the production plan of the corresponding kolkhoz economy.

Possessing a solid material base, the selsoviet within the limits of the plan approved by the rik unfolds the socio-cultural network: builds and repairs roads, bridges, conducts fire-prevention measures, appoints and dismisses teachers, paramedics, heads of nurseries, etc. If the dismissed workers are members of the kolkhoz, they are seconded by the selsoviet at the disposal of the kolkhoz board.

The council checks the work of all socio-cultural institutions on its territory, drawing the broad masses of kolkhoz members into this check; the council approves the plans of these institutions and exercises daily leadership over them.

3. **Class Struggle and Selsoviet in a Region of Total Collectivization.** Kulakdom resists frantically. Here are the most characteristic facts.

   In the Barnaul commune “Lyubov i Pravda”, where 17 tractors worked in 1929, over 20 kulaks systematically destroyed the economy, savagely fought against the new way of life, established the rule: “he who speaks first about divorce is expelled from the commune.” They even organized a special commission to protect family traditions. All these facts went unnoticed. In the summer of 1929, the commune was visited by 7 central workers, 9 krai, 17 okrug, and 21 raion workers, and all of them found the state of affairs in the commune normal.

Not far from Leningrad in the largest commune “Bich”, a handful of kulak-sectarians for a number of years mercilessly exploited the poor, driving this exploitation under a “divine” platform: poor peasants were persuaded that a rank-and-file member of the commune is not worthy of a piece of bread, that the life of each communard depends on the mercy of the “brother”, the chairman of the commune. And the poor patiently kept silent.

In Borovinsky Okrug, in the village of Romanye, a group of kulaks acted as the organizer of the kolkhoz, “impoverishing themselves” to such an extent that raion organizations for a whole year could not decipher the pseudo-poor. Only okrug workers managed to find out that the entire leadership of the Romensky kolkhoz consists of former timber merchants and profiteers.

These examples do not exhaust, of course, all tactical devices used by kulaks in the struggle against collectivization. In this struggle, the kulak sometimes manages to achieve certain successes. Thus, in Bezhetsk Okrug, where according to control figures for 1928/29, 300 new kolkhozes with 6,500 households were to be created, only 200 kolkhozes were formed, which included only 3,300 households. The collectivization plan across the okrug turned out to be half-disrupted. Crediting of the poor and middle peasants decreased in this okrug by 4.4%, but crediting of well-to-do increased by 4.6%.

Along with this, one can point to numerous examples illustrating the successes of the kulak counter-offensive on the livestock-breeding front, which has become especially

alarming in recent weeks. In one Khopersky Okrug of total collectivization, the cattle herd decreased this year by 33 thousand heads.

However, it would be incorrect to assume that all troubles in kolkhozes are directly caused by kulaks, that middle and poor peasants slaughter livestock, violate labor discipline, damage inventory, etc., only at the instigation of the kulak. “For the middle peasant and poor peasant are small owners.” Nine-tenths they are such and cannot be otherwise. In the fierce struggle of capital with labor, they do not participate daily, schools did not pass through, economic and political conditions of life do not bring them together, but tear them apart, push one away from another, turning them into millions of small owners acting individually. Such are the facts, which you all know very well. No collectives, kolkhozes, communes earlier than after a long and difficult series of years, can retrain this[14].

These “small owners” have not yet become workers of a large socialized economy, they still think that “for the winnowing machine that I brought into the commune, they will pay me sometime” 2. And if they don't pay, if the winnowing machine remains in the “free” property of the commune, is it worth it to preserve it? After all, only working hours are recorded on time sheets, and not the attitude to kolkhoz inventory!

An instructor of the Uralobkom of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) established in July 1929 a number of facts testifying to the fact that even in communes kolkhoz inventory is destroyed due to the carelessness of communards.

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14 *Lenin, Works, vol. XVIII, part 1, p. 163.*

“A young member of the commune ‘Federatsiya’ was given a working horse for personal needs, which during a trip on a bad road beat it, as a result of which the horses did not work for about 3 weeks.”

“In the commune ‘Topol’ due to the inattentiveness of 2 members, 4 levers of plows were broken; in the agricultural artel ‘Nash Otvet’ backs of several horses were beaten due to oversight, 2 horses were pricked by a harrow.”

“In agricultural artels of Mikhensky Soviet, cases of mismanaged attitude to public harness are observed: harnesses are thrown anywhere, reins are torn, carts are broken, etc.”[15]

Cases of inattentive attitude toward inventory (live and dead) take place in almost all inspected new kolkhozes.

A vivid example of the complete absence of leadership over the economic and production activity of kolkhozes is the commune “Krasnaya Zvezda”.

Flagrant mismanagement was permitted by the management of the commune: the loss of 21 head of cattle due to lack of fodder, unaccountability in spending funds, embezzlement of 7,000 rubles, irresponsible attitude toward construction. As a result of the commune's mismanagement, a disgraceful act was permitted: the admission of a farm laborer into the commune membership for a bottle of vodka. The party cell did not know

[15] *Such an assumption was expressed by a middle peasant, member of the commune “Oktyabr” in a conversation with an inspector.*

about this, did not react in a timely manner to individual statements of non-party communards.

The selsoviet (Ignatyevsky) also “did not know” about the outrages in “Krasnaya Zvezda”, although several members of this commune were members of the soviet.

We did not have the opportunity to study in detail the material about the commune “Krasnaya Zvezda” and therefore cannot assert that the listed outrages were not the result of the kulak tyranny in the management organs of the kolkhoz or the result of the fusion of these organs with kulaks located outside the kolkhoz. But if we judge by the cited excerpt from the report of the instructor of the oblast committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), there is no need to speak of the direct influence of the kulak on the village “Krasnaya Zvezda”. Rather, one should speak here of the “peasant-owner”, in whom private-property habits are still strong.

The “peasant-owner” overshadows the “peasant-toiler” and in a number of other examples:

“Lately, kolkhozes have had a mass influx of new members, and in a number of large kolkhozes some hostility is observed between ‘old’ and ‘new’ members. The ‘old’ say: when there were fewer of us, we lived significantly better. This friction in individual cases reaches the point that the question of splitting the kolkhoz arises. For example, a group of old organizers of the artel ‘Koloss’ of 14 people on June 21, 1929, conceived to break away, because ‘the organization has become large, life has become worse.’ They gathered an underground meeting,

elected delegates, went to the land surveyor, walked into the rik, but did not receive agreement for withdrawal."

"The division into 'old' and 'new' is also noticed among women-communards. Thus, at a general meeting of the commune 'Krasnaya Roscha' during the discussion of the issue of organizing a public canteen and the distribution of duties in the canteen among communards, remarks were heard: 'Don't mind the young, we have already worked enough. Let them suffer like we did.'"

From the side of the poor, members of new kolkhozes, there were isolated instances of complaints against middle peasants: "Middle peasants squeeze the poor for bringing little inventory: they force the poor to work harder, while themselves slacking off." "Even if I don't go to work today, my machine has already been brought in," say some middle peasants.

In these examples, taken by us from the report of the instructor of the oblast committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), the "peasant-owner" looms in full growth. Examples of such "looming" can be cited by the dozens, but we will limit ourselves to just one, which our employee happened to observe personally. Following the burning down of the village of Larinaya by kulaks, all kolkhozes of the "Gigant" passed a resolution on transferring residential and outbuildings, inventory, etc., to the fire victims. When these resolutions began to be implemented in life, i.e., when kolkhozes proceeded to dismantle the barn, shed, etc., in some cases the former owner (and now a member of the artel or commune) refused to transfer the buildings. The board of the

commune “Kryukov”, where such an incident occurred, raises the question of expelling the “bogus” communard. True, this case is a bad exception; in other kolkhozes, the buildings transferred to the fire victims were moved or prepared for removal without incidents, which is an undoubted indicator of overcoming the “peasant-owner”.

The same indicator is the experience of the young commune “Iskra”, which in the autumn of the current year began moving poor peasants out of poor huts into good ones, with the simultaneous eviction of former owners-middle peasants. We note this fact because around the housing issue in the same “Gigant” an accumulation of elements of class struggle takes place.

There is a whole series of kolkhozes whose members, having moved from neighboring villages, are forced to live in apartments with individual peasants. Landlord-hosts are frequently well-to-do people using their hut as a “stronghold” for “work” against collectivization. Work is conducted both “by hook and by crook”. Tenants are persuaded to leave the kolkhoz, and if persuasion does not help, they begin to persecute them. On this soil, “Gigant” has to go through a series of complex troubles, which can be eradicated only after the completion of collectivization and after the eviction of the kulaks.

CONCLUSIONS

After the completion of collectivization, even after the eviction of kulaks from regions of total collectivization, the class struggle inside the kolkhoz does not disappear, but acquires

new forms: in a non-collectivized village the kulak reduced his sowing, hid his grain, speculated in this grain, exploited the hired farm laborer. The workers' state through a lower organ, the selsoviet, took away un-sown land from the kulak, fined him for failure to fulfill the grain-procurement target, monitored the fulfillment of labor agreements, imposed an individual tax, and “trimmed” him through self-taxation.

In a kolkhoz, where all means of production are socialized, a penetrated kulak cannot directly reduce sowing, hide grain, speculate in grain, etc. To achieve this goal, the kulak needs to undermine labor discipline, spoil inventory, exhaust a horse, falsify a test threshing, and agitate kolkhoz members to increase rations.

And against this kulak “work”, the previous means of the selsoviet (fine, taking away land, tax) are ineffective. The struggle in a kolkhoz with a kulaks who has penetrated there is directly connected with the organization of production. The selsoviet, under the leadership of the party, must head the offensive against the “middle-peasantized” kulak who has penetrated into the kolkhoz, against the “peasant-owner” not yet finally defeated as a “peasant-toiler”. Concretely in this area, tasks face the selsoviet:

1. Purging kolkhozes of alien elements.
2. Struggle for shock tempos of work, for raising labor productivity, for a careful attitude toward inventory and machines.
3. Struggle against snatches, against squandering the capital of kolkhozes, struggle to raise the structure of these kolkhozes.

4. Struggle for the correct organization of labor in a class perspective (providing the yesterday's poor person with such work that corresponds to his qualification, raising his qualification).
5. Struggle to raise the cultural level of kolkhoz members, etc. etc.

III. SELSOVIETS AND COLLECTIVIZATION

Why did selsoviets find themselves on the sidelines of collectivization? Selsoviets found themselves on the sidelines of collectivization for a whole series of reasons. The main reason is that the content of the work of selsoviets and the forms of their organization, adapted to the restoration period, came into contradiction with the new tasks and needs of the period we are experiencing. In the restoration period, when the task of raising individual peasant farming was resolved primarily in relation to agriculture (November Plenum), the content of the work of selsoviets basically boiled down to providing assistance to the development of poor- and middle-peasant farms and to implementing measures to restrict the development of elements.

Selsoviets coped with this task.

In the present period, the party and the proletarian state face another task: the restructuring of small and smallest peasant farms into large socialized production and the liquidation of kulaks as a class. Accordingly, selsoviets had to restructure both the content of their work and the forms of their organization. They had to direct their exclusive attention to the organization of the poor and the main middle-peasant masses

of the peasantry under the slogan of collectivization. Selsoviets, however, could not do this. The work methods of the lower organs of Soviet power turned out to be unsuitable for activity in new conditions. The scope of mass work is inadequate. Planning in work is absent. Regulation of agricultural production, active participation in kolkhoz construction turned out to be beyond the powers of selsoviets, and they found themselves on the sidelines of the kolkhoz movement.

Selsoviets, consisting in the overwhelming majority of small commodity producers—peasants, private owners, had to take upon themselves the task of fundamentally restructuring private-property, individualist farms into socialist large-scale collective production. However, they turned out not to be up to the new tasks of the reconstructive period. To explain this situation, we will analyze, from the standpoint of compliance with these new tasks, the social composition of selsoviets after the re-elections in 1929.

The results of the recent re-elections are as follows: a) the specific weight of the poor in the composition of selsoviets is less than the percentage of it in the population; b) the increased representation of workers, farm laborers, and the poor occurred mainly at the expense of low-power middle peasants; c) well-to-do strong strata of middle peasants almost preserved, and sometimes increased, their representation in selsoviets. We will dwell in more detail on the characterization of these three moments.

1. **The specific weight of the poor in selsoviets is less than their specific weight in the population.** The poor are

insufficiently drawn into the leading work of selsoviets. Thus, for example, according to Moscow Gubernia, those exempt from tax (according to Narkomfin data) are 32.9%, while those exempt from tax in selsoviets are only 19.6%. Among selsoviet chairmen, this percentage drops even further and reaches 16.7%. If we take the average percentage of peasants exempt from tax across the RSFSR (35%), if we take into account, that a certain part of farm laborers elected to selsoviets is included in the category of "tax-exempt", then we must recognize that the poor, having increased their influence significantly in selsoviets in 1929 compared to 1927, still enjoy a significantly smaller specific weight in the lower organs of Soviet power than their specific weight in the population. This conclusion was made by the All-Russian Central Electoral Commission, which considers it characteristic only "for a number of places" (see Statistical Collection for 1929, issue 1, p. 45).

We believe that the insufficient representation of the poor in selsoviets is quite widespread. If we take the selsoviets of the RSFSR, it turns out that the increase in the poor goes mainly at the expense of autonomous oblasts and republics. On average across the RSFSR, the poor in selsoviets make up 31.7%. Along the Middle Volga, this percentage drops to 28.9%, along the North Caucasus to 28.5%, along the Ural Oblast to 26.6%, along the Leningrad Oblast to 25.4%. In autonomous oblasts and republics, the percentage of the poor (i.e., the peasantry exempt from tax) reaches 38.9%. This high percentage affects the RSFSR average in the sense of its increase. In essence, this means an even greater lowering of the role and significance of

the poor in selsoviets compared to their specific weight in the population.

If we take this fact in connection with the shortage of mass work of selsoviets in relation to the poor, then we must say that **the influence of the poor in selsoviets**, increased compared to past years, **is in obvious contradiction with that position that the poor, as the support of the working class in the countryside, must play now in connection with collectivization.** If in the period of restoration of the national economy middle-peasant-poor-peasant selsoviets could successfully enough fulfill the tasks assigned to them, then now, in the period of reconstruction, the selsoviet must, more than ever before, be in the hands of the poor. The poor must play a leading role. And this they can do if they receive a numerical preponderance in selsoviets.

2. **The increase in representation of the poor, farm laborers, and agricultural workers in selsoviets occurred mainly at the expense of low-power middle-peasant groups of the peasantry.**

   Representation of farm laborers and agricultural workers exceeds their specific weight in the population; according to the RSFSR, these groups in the population equal 2.9%, and in selsoviets and among selsoviet chairmen — 5.6%, and in the presidiums of selsoviets — 5.8%.

   The poor, farm laborers, agricultural workers, and industrial workers increased their representation in absolute figures across the USSR (excluding UkrSSR and UzbSSR) by more than 210 thousand people. This increase in relation to each

layer separately occurred across the USSR in the following manner:

Farm laborers and agricultural workers …….	1927	– 2.8%
	1929	– 6.1%
Other agricultural workers ……...	1927	– 2.2%
	1929	– 2.6%
Poor peasants (exempt from agricultural tax) ...	1927	– 16.9%
	1929	– 33.0%

If in relation to the poor we take into account the new tax rates of the agricultural tax for 1929 and make a corresponding recalculation (which was done in relation to the RSFSR), the increase in the poor will be equal to only 28.8% (see Statistical Collection, issue I, p. 41). It is difficult to say how much this recalculation can be considered correct. In absolute values across the Union (excluding UkrSSR and UzbSSR) we have an increase in the poor of only 182,886 people.

Representation of low-power middle-peasant masses of the peasantry, the number of which we conditionally classify as all paying up to 10 rub. of agricultural tax per consumer, decreased in this part of the Union by more than 47 thousand people (in 1927 there were 639,716 people, and in 1929 – 582,025 people).

The well-to-do part of middle peasants, where we classify peasants paying agricultural tax of 10 rub. and more (repeating that the division is very conditional) across the USSR (excluding UkrSSR and UzbSSR) increased by 23,217 people.

The well-to-do part of middle peasants preserved to a significant degree, and in some cases increased, its specific weight in selsoviets and especially in auditing commissions.

According to official data of electoral commissions, the peasant group in selsoviets decreased across the USSR from 7.7% to 7.2% in 1929. We do not have a recalculation of tax assessments for 1929 in relation to the USSR. The recalculation for the RSFSR shows a decrease in all groups of powerful middle peasants by 38% (1927 – 11.8%; 1929 – 7.5%).

The All-Russian Central Electoral Commission on the basis of this recalculation comes to the conclusion about "a noticeable decrease in selsoviets of groups paying agricultural tax over 10 rub. per consumer (economically strong peasantry)" (Statistical Collection, issue I, p. 41). However, further analyzing the group of the peasantry paying tax over 10 rub. per consumer, this commission comes to another conclusion, namely, that "the highest group in tax rates (over 25 rub.) shows an increase in all organs of power". Moreover, the commission considers it necessary "to note that this takes place in all organs of power and in all oblasts of the krai without exception" (Collection, issue I, p. 42).

The specific weight of the well-to-do group in selsoviets is obviously greater in some places than its specific weight in the population. Individual examples definitely say that this is so. Thus, for example, according to Vladimir Gubernia, the layer of peasants paying agricultural tax over 10 rub. per consumer in relation to the entire rural population of this gubernia makes up 3.7%. In the composition of selsoviets, this group has

12.0%, and among selsoviet chairmen – 10.6\%. In general, this group across the RSFSR reaches: in selsoviets – 7.5%, among chairmen – 6.9%.

It must be emphasized that representation of the well-to-do group of the peasantry in selsoviets is especially noticeable in the North Caucasus, Far Eastern Krai, Siberia, and others. The following table characterizes the role of this group in selsoviets and its ratio with other layers of the peasantry across some raions:

(Table presenting data on social composition breakdown across North Caucasus Krai, Ural Oblast, Siberian Krai, Lower Volga Krai, and Middle Volga Oblast)

In order to more precisely clarify the picture of changes that occurred in the composition of selsoviets over the last two campaigns, we cite below figures that confirm our conclusion that the low-power middle-peasant peasantry is represented lower than in past re-elections, while well-to-do middle peasants preserved their positions in selsoviets. It should be stipulated that the new tax rates and the vagueness of figures do not provide the opportunity to precisely establish the changes that have occurred. We will limit ourselves to an analysis of absolute figures, noting once again the conditional nature of the distribution of selsoviet members into social groups.

(Table on Selsoviet Members: Increase (+) or Decrease (–) in 1929 compared to 1927)[16]

[16] For 1927 according to the group "pay agricultural tax" is not distributed 56,657 people.

From these figures it is seen that almost everywhere there is an increase in the poor, a decrease in low-power middle peasants, in some places an increase, in some places a decrease in well-to-do middle peasants. In the Urals, low-power middle peasants in percentage terms decreased, however, more than well-to-do middle peasants. It is interesting to dwell on data on okrugs of the Lower Volga. It turns out that the main, decisive influence on the decline in the number of well-to-do middle peasants for the Middle Volga across all okrugs was played by Pugachevsky Okrug, where in 1929 this group lost 247 people (out of 461 in 1927). In other okrugs, a noticeable or insignificant decrease or increase is noted. Khopersky Okrug is ahead of everyone in this regard. Astrakhan follows it (+93).

All this confirms our proposition that in the re-elections of 1929 there occurred an increase in the farm-laborer, poor, and working strata at the expense of decreasing representation from low-power middle-peasant groups of the peasantry, along with the preservation, and sometimes increase, of the specific weight and role of the well-to-do part of the middle-peasant masses of the peasantry. This conclusion extends, as we see from the table, also to regions where mass collectivization is taking place.

It is interesting to cite general data on selsoviet chairmen across the North Caucasus Krai. Selsoviet chairmen from the poor increased by 218 people (from 301 people to 519); low-power middle peasants decreased in number by 319 people (total 610 people); strong middle peasants decreased by only 41 people (from 194 to 153).

The general cultural preparation of selsoviet members has decreased. The number of illiterate people among them has increased. Thus, for example, according to the RSFSR, in selsoviets in 1927 there were 11.3% illiterate, and in 1929 – 12.1%. The number of illiterate people also increased insignificantly among selsoviet chairmen (from 2.2% to 2.3%). In presidiums of selsoviets, the number of illiterate people equals 3.2%. On the contrary, in auditing commissions of selsoviets, the number of illiterate people decreased (from 3.4% to 2.6%).

In general, past re-elections led to a numerical increase in the poor, farm laborers, and agricultural workers in selsoviets. However, this occurred not only and not so much at the expense of the well-to-do part of middle peasants, as mainly at the expense of low-power middle peasants. This fact had a great influence on the attitude of selsoviets to collectivization. Selsoviets could not take upon themselves the leading role in implementing the production form of the link between the working class, the poor, and low-power middle peasants. In them, well-to-do strata of the middle peasantry had and have great influence, which relates to collectivization at best passively and indifferently, and at worst resists and brakes it. The poor, farm laborers, and workers, having increased their number in soviets, in the absence of sufficiently developed mass work, could not exert a decisive influence on changing the content of the work of the selsoviet in connection with collectivization.

Thus, the selsoviet found itself on the sidelines of mass collectivization.

The production link of the working class, the poor, and the main layers of the middle peasantry went around the selsoviets along the path of kolkhozes. The kolkhoz began to replace the selsoviet.

To fundamentally change the attitude of selsoviets to collectivization, it is necessary to pay the most serious attention to changing their social composition. It is necessary to immediately change the composition of selsoviets in the following manner:

a) purge out well-to-do strata hindering the work of selsoviets in new conditions; b) increase representation in selsoviets of the poor, preserving the stability of representation of the poor peasantry; c) strengthen poor-peasant groups attached to selsoviets, improve their work and connection with the entire mass of poor peasants, farm laborers, and agricultural workers; d) increase the party and Komsomol part in the composition of selsoviets at the expense of strong middle peasants.

Along with this main reason, there were others. Among them belongs first of all the weak training of workers at the lower levels. Systematic training of the leading cadre of the lower Soviet apparatus was not conducted. Courses were organized from case to case. Besides, they are very brief and very vague in their program. There is no Marxist-trained teaching staff for the training and retraining of lower Soviet workers. Educational literature is completely absent.

This is explained to a significant degree by our general inattention to issues of Soviet work. The training of qualified Marxist specialists on issues of Soviet construction has not

been conducted anywhere by us. The Department of Soviet Construction in the Institute of Red Professors is only being organized. There is little hope that it will unfold in the near future. In the curricula of higher educational institutions and communist universities, independent disciplines on Soviet structure are almost absent. All this affected the creation of corresponding educational literature and teaching staff for the training of Soviet workers for all links of the Soviet system.

Lowering attention to Soviet work is also created thanks to forgetting the role of Soviet organs in the process of socialist construction. It is clear that inattentiveness to the lower Soviet apparatus causes a corresponding attitude of all Soviet community to these organs. In order to eliminate this phenomenon, it is necessary to pay greater attention to the training and retraining of cadres for the lower Soviet apparatus and to the strengthening of attention to the selsoviet on the part of all leading organizations. It is also necessary to strengthen leadership and instructing on the part of higher organs (riks and okrugs).

A well-known role in the matter of detaching the selsoviet from the tasks of collectivization was also played by the material situation of workers of the lower Soviet apparatus. However, one cannot explain the indifference of selsoviet members to the issues of collectivization by the material situation. Even more so this applies to independent rural budgets. Collectivizing krais are in a better budgetary position. North Caucasus has more than 60% of selsoviets with an independent budget. Middle Volga – 59%, Lower Volga – almost 100%. These okrugs far exceed the average percentage of independent

budgets, which was supposed to be introduced in 1929/30 (30–35%).

Such are the main reasons for the circumstance that selsoviets remain on the sidelines of collectivization. These reasons must be eliminated immediately.

IV. CONTENT OF WORK AND ORGANIZATION OF SELSOVIETS IN CONNECTION WITH MASS COLLECTIVIZATION

How must selsoviets restructure all their work as applied to new tasks, tasks of mass collectivization? How must the work of selsoviets be organized so that they become genuine centers of economic-political and cultural-educational life in their raion?

1. **Social Composition of Selsoviets.** The figures cited above indicate that basically selsoviets are middle-peasant-poor-peasant. The predominant group is middle peasants; significant, though inferior in numbers, is the group of poor peasants. The numerical predominance of the middle peasant in the selsoviet in the restoration period was in accordance with the tasks of this period. In conditions of insufficient organization of the poor, at the stake of raising individual agricultural farming—this corresponded to social-class relations in the village and the tasks of developing agricultural farming. But such a ratio of poor- and middle-peasant groups in the composition of selsoviets does not correspond to the conditions of mass collectivization. Leaving a noticeable group of well-to-do middle peasants in the composition of the selsoviet already serves as a brake, an obstacle to the cause of

developing collectivization. It is necessary to achieve a numerically predominant representation of the poor in selsoviets at the expense of reducing the well-to-do group of middle peasants, because the kolkhoz movement, with the deep development of socialization processes, can and must, first of all, be the movement of the poor masses, drawing behind itself the main mass of middle peasants. In order for the selsoviet to be able to head the kolkhoz movement, the leading role in it must be secured for the poor and farm laborers. Selsoviets must become basically poor-peasant-middle-peasant, with a numerical predominance of the poor and farm laborers. From this angle, re-elections of soviets must take place.

2. **Organization of Farm Laborers and the Poor.** The leading role of the selsoviet, of course, is not guaranteed by a mere numerical predominance of the poor in selsoviets. It is necessary to really, actually restructure the work of the selsoviet in such a way that it completely and fully relies on the organized poor and farm laborers. The organization of the poor therefore can no longer bypass the selsoviet. It must be interested in every possible way in the correct organization of the poor, raising its participation in the work of the selsoviet itself and in developing its activity. Widely developing mass work in all its forms, drawing through this path the entire poor- and middle-peasant mass into its work, at the same time the selsoviet must in all forms of mass work create a farm-laborer and poor-peasant core, an activist core, as the main support for its work in all its ramifications. The task of mass control in connection with mass collectivization especially requires

strengthening the role of the poor in the mass work of all organizations.

Only through this path will the selsoviet, both in its composition and in the activist core organized around it, reflect the rising role of farm-laborer and poor-peasant elements. And this is an extraordinarily essential moment upon which depends the possibility for the selsoviet to take the lead in collectivization. In the vast majority of cases this has not been the case until now. Mass work in general was lame. But especially it was lame in the matter of organizing the poor. The main task—to restructure mass work, to take an all-out emphasis on drawing farm-laborer and middle-peasant masses, on the participation of the selsoviet in the matter of organizing the poor, on consolidating the farm-laborer and poor-peasant activist core around the selsoviet and other organizations of the village.

3. **Content of Work of the Selsoviet.** If in the previous period tasks determining the content of the work of selsoviets as organs of the proletarian dictatorship basically boiled down to observation, control over the fulfillment of state tasks by individual households (grain procurements, agricultural tax, sowing campaign, etc.) and to coercing their fulfillment, then at the present time these tasks are changing sharply.

   In connection with mass collectivization, all work of the selsoviet must be subordinated to the main task: developing processes of socialization in agriculture. And this means that the selsoviet must get deeply involved in the processes of production and distribution in agriculture, which cannot be done if the selsoviet remains on the sidelines.

In relation to the kolkhoz, the selsoviet, without interfering in its operational work, must take an active part in the drafting of its production plans, monitor their implementation, and work for the strengthening of socialization processes in the kolkhoz, for organization of labor in it, for the fulfillment of all its obligations to the state (grain procurements, contracting, taxes, etc.), for the social composition of both management organs and all its members. The main significance of the selsoviet here must be expressed in the fact that, guiding the work of the kolkhoz, the selsoviet achieves the deepening of socialization processes in it, its translation into higher forms of kolkhoz (communes) and the implementation of a clear class line in all work.

In relation to remaining individual peasants (excluding kulaks): what remains is their all-out drawing into kolkhozes and complete, merciless suppression of the influence of kulak elements on them. This task can be fulfilled by bringing the selsoviet closer to individual peasant households. Observation of individual peasant households only in the order of fulfilling grain procurements, collecting agricultural tax, etc., is already inaccurate. The selsoviet must monitor how the individual peasant uses land, how he uses seeds, how he uses machinery, in a word, monitor his entire economy. The selsoviet must demand reports from individual peasants on how they manage their economy, and give instructions in case of observed irregularities. Under the condition of such rapprochement and observation by the selsoviet over individual peasant households, a significantly more successful implementation of collectivization and its consolidation can be guaranteed.

The policy of liquidating the kulaks as a class itself defines the role of the selsoviet and its work in relation to kulak households.

Rapprochement of the selsoviet with production processes poses anew the question of land societies. In regions of total collectivization, they must be liquidated. Besides, the question of their liquidation can already be posed also in other raions. Although land societies are significantly curtailed in their rights and without a selsoviet have no right to resolve many issues, nevertheless they block the access of the selsoviet to individual peasant households: the selsoviet is forced to resolve a number of issues of land management and land use through the land society. And although kulaks are deprived of the right to vote at meetings of the land society, nevertheless it is undoubtedly easier for them to manifest their influence here. And in connection with collectivization, since meetings of land societies can exist only for remaining individual peasants, their influence through the land society can receive a legalized channel. The necessity for the existence of land societies as a special organization at the present time disappears. Land societies can be liquidated in all raions so that their rights and duties on issues of agriculture pass directly to the selsoviet.

The struggle to deepen socialization processes necessitates a fundamental restructuring of the content of the work of the selsoviet not only in the sphere of its rights and duties in the matter of developing agriculture, but also in the sphere of monitoring the fulfillment by kolkhozes and individual peasants of their obligations to the state.

This also applies to its duties in other areas: public education, healthcare, public amenities. The selsoviet must guide all cultural-educational and socio-utility institutions, as well as public amenities, directing all this work along the path of socialist education of the masses and fundamental restructuring of everyday life. It must be the initiator of such measures in this area that would comprehensively activate the transition to new forms of socialized distribution, collective servicing of communist everyday life. In connection with mass collectivization, wide opportunities open up for a faster and more successful restructuring of the village. Up to the present time, extraordinarily little has been done in this direction. The task of the selsoviet is to take into its own hands the leadership of all socio-cultural service and public amenities, using for this both funds from its budget and funds of kolkhozes.

Along with these new tasks, selsoviets must preserve in full force all their administrative functions (protection of revolutionary order, etc.).

Thus, the selsoviet directs the development of collectivization through observation, control, and active participation along the line of socializing production and distribution processes. It organizes the further coverage by collectivization of all poor- and middle-peasant households. In connection with mass collectivization, it conducts the policy of liquidating the kulaks as a class. It guides and organizes all cultural-educational and socio-utility services, directing them along the path of socialist education of the masses and restructuring of the entire way of life. As an organ of the proletarian dictatorship, it monitors the

correct fulfillment by kolkhozes of all their obligations to the state.

4. **Material Base.** The leading role of the selsoviet must be ensured by a corresponding material base. This base must be established by the introduction of their own budgets in all selsoviets. The budget must be compiled in such a way, that it covers all cultural-educational and socio-utility institutions serving the population of the given raion. Excluded from the budget must be kolkhozes and their production enterprises. The presence of such a budget, the credit manager of which will be the selsoviet, will give the opportunity to strengthen its leading role and truly guide and direct all work in its raion. The selsoviet itself drafts its budget, proceeding from the needs and requirements of its raion, the plan of its development, projected tax and other revenues, self-taxation, etc. Upon approval of the budget, the selsoviet is responsible for its correct utilization.

5. **Unified Plan.** In connection with mass collectivization, the task of bringing the plan to the village becomes quite real. All development of the raion by the selsoviet can already be directed according to pre-mapped plans covering both production plans of kolkhozes and other enterprises in the raion, and plans for the development of cultural and healthcare institutions and public amenity works. Within the framework of approved plans, the budget must be approved and executed. And within the framework of the plan, in the order of monitoring its implementation, the selsoviet must guide the life of the village.

6. **Organizational Strengthening.** The leading role of selsoviets as centers of economic-political life in the raion can be

implemented only on condition of their organizational strengthening. The very fact of mass collectivization creates unprecedented opportunities for implementing the main principle of the Soviet system (democratic centralism), consisting in the combination of central planned leadership with the involvement of the widest masses of working people in the management of the country and the organization of mass control over soviet and cooperative organizations. But for this it is necessary that selsoviets be strengthened as centers of operational work. This is connected with a review of the functions of riks and okrug executive committees. It is necessary to review the mutual relations of all these three links of the Soviet system, so that the okrug link is turned into a center of planned leadership, control, and instruction, and riks and selsoviets into centers of operational work. Such a system was tested in experimental-model okrugs. And although this system upon its elaboration was not calculated for mass collectivization, nevertheless it must be recognized that at its core it fully corresponds and is suitable for regions of mass collectivization. This system (upon introducing necessary corrections into it) will make organs directly contacting the masses of working people sufficiently empowered to implement the main directives of the party and Soviet power.

7. **Rayoning.** The transformation of selsoviets and riks into economic-political centers of their raion depends also on correct rayoning. In regions of total collectivization, the latter depends on correspondence between administrative rayoning and kolkhoz construction. It can be stated in advance that the boundaries of the raion and radii of selsoviets will not always

correspond to kolkhoz associations and individual kolkhozes. Meanwhile, the mismatch between the boundaries of the selsoviet and the kolkhoz (economy), the raion and the kolkhoz association will complicate and hinder the implementation of leadership on the part of soviets. Therefore, the task of aligning the boundaries of action of the rik and the selsoviet with the boundaries of the kolkhoz association and kolkhoz will stand in regions of total collectivization. A change in the boundaries of raions and selsoviets will be required.

It must be noted that already now in regions of mass collectivization they have actually begun to carry out re-rayoning. Thus, three raions of Irbit Okrug (Elansky, Baikalovsky, and Znamensky) united into one Krasnopoliansky. There also a reduction in the network of selsoviets from 46 to 21 was carried out. In other raions the same tendencies are noted. In essence, this leads, or in the best case, to a strong enlargement of selsoviets, or simply to the liquidation of selsoviets under the guise of enlargement and transfer of functions of selsoviets to boards of kolkhozes (the latter was carried out spontaneously in the commune “III International”, Slavgorod Okrug). This tendency must be cut short by establishing the fundamentals of lower rayoning in regions of mass collectivization. These fundamentals must be based on accounting for:

a) ensuring the possibility for working people, especially poor-peasant layers of the village, to take an active and daily part in practical work on managing the state;

b) population size and density, its national composition, as well as the state of roads and means of communication;

c) economic and cultural-social development of the given raion, especially the scope and depth of collectivization.

8. **Training of Cadres.** The complexity of tasks and functions of selsoviets puts to the fore the task of training cadres. This task acquires a deeply political significance, as the problem stands not only in the plane of strengthening selsoviets with trained qualified workers, but also in the plane of strengthening selsoviets with politically trained workers and working class composition. The composition that is currently in selsoviets, undoubtedly, in the majority can turn out to be insufficiently trained. Therefore, it is necessary to bring to life the draft system of training and retraining lower Soviet workers developed by the VTsIK, and strengthen the mobilization of workers for strengthening selsoviets following the example of the mobilization of 25 thousand for kolkhozes.

   The decisive uprooting of the roots of capitalism in the village along the paths of collectivization turns yesterday's small commodity producer, the peasant-owner, into a member of a large socialized economy. The creation of large collective farms, changing the class appearance of the village, liquidating small peasant farms, creates conditions under which the regulating role of the state can be all-out strengthened in relation to all sectors of the economy.

   This is not understood by those who propose and carry out in connection with collectivization the “liquidation” of selsoviets through “enlargement”, “eviction” or replacement of the selsoviet by the kolkhoz board. These comrades do not understand and do not see the possibilities that in new conditions much more than before contribute to the

transformation of selsoviets into centers of economic-political and cultural-social life of the village.

If earlier the presence of a multitude of small peasant farms hindered the state from exercising its regulating influence directly on production processes in agriculture, now it receives all the possibilities to become close to all processes of agricultural production. This is not understood by “liquidators” of selsoviets.

Nor do they understand that the implementation of the policy of liquidating the kulaks as a class causes frantic resistance from class-hostile elements. Therefore, any attempt in one way or another to raise the question of the “liquidation” of lower organs of Soviet power or of diminishing their role in connection with collectivization must be regarded as a weakening of the proletarian dictatorship, as a harmful, dangerous tendency playing into the hands of the enemies of Soviet power.

All these proposals must be completely exposed. The task of all party and soviet organs—in all work to pursue a firm, unswerving line on strengthening selsoviets as the main organs of the proletarian dictatorship in the village.

ON THE PACE OF COLLECTIVIZATION AND MEASURES OF STATE ASSISTANCE TO KOLKHOZ CONSTRUCTION

Resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)

1. In recent months, the collective movement has made a new step forward, covering not only individual groups of individual households, but entire raions, okrugs, and even oblasts and krais. At the basis of the movement lies the collectivization of means of production of poor- and middle-peasant peasant households.

   All the tempos of development of the collective movement mapped out by plans will be surpassed. Already in the spring of 1930, the sown area cultivated on socialized foundations will significantly exceed 30 million hectares, i.e., the five-year plan of collectivization, by virtue of which by the end of the five-year period it was planned to cover 22–24 million hectares with collectivization, will be significantly overfulfilled already in the current year.

   Thus, we have a material base to replace large kulak production with large-scale production of kolkhozes, a powerful advance forward in the creation of socialist agriculture, not to mention sovkhozes, the growth of which significantly outpaces all planned assumptions.

   This circumstance, which has decisive significance for the entire national economy of the USSR, gave the party full

grounds to transition in its practical work from the policy of restricting the exploitative tendencies of kulaks to the policy of liquidating the kulaks as a class.

2. On the basis of all this, it can be stated with certainty that within the five-year period, instead of collectivizing 20 percent of the sown area mapped out by the five-year plan, we will be able to resolve the task of collectivizing the vast majority of peasant households, moreover the collectivization of such key grain-producing raions as the Lower Volga, Middle Volga, and North Caucasus can be basically completed by the autumn of 1930 or in any case by the spring of 1931; whereas collectivization of other grain-producing raions can be basically completed by the autumn of 1931 or in any case by the spring of 1932.

3. In accordance with the growing tempos of collectivization, it is necessary to even more strengthen work on building plants producing tractors, combines, etc. Tractor and trailed inventory with them, so that the deadlines given by the VSNKh [Supreme Council of National Economy] for completing the construction of new plants are under no circumstances delayed. At the same time, the Central Committee proposes to the VSNKh not later than March 15 of the current year, to report to the Central Committee on measures ensuring in the following year a further growth in the general dimensions of production of complex agricultural machines at old plants, and especially a significant growth in the production of tractor and horse-drawn complex inventory instead of simple ones.

4. Since the resolution of the task of totally replacing horse-drawn inventory with machine-drawn inventory cannot be fulfilled in

a short period and will require a number of years, the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) demands that a decisive rebuff be given to tendencies of underestimating the role of horse-drawn traction at the given stage of the kolkhoz movement, tendencies leading to squandering and selling off horses. The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) emphasizes the extraordinary importance in present conditions as a transitional measure of creating horse-machine bases in kolkhozes and a mixed type of tractor-horse bases, combining tractor traction with horse traction.

5. In connection with the growing tempo of the collective movement, the Central Committee proposes to the People's Commissariat of the Union to regroup land-management forces and means in such a way as to fully ensure the land-management needs of raions of total collectivization, postponing individual land management, with the exception of certain national raions and individual raions of consuming belts, where the collective movement has not yet received wide development.

6. In accordance with what has been stated, the Central Committee considers it absolutely necessary to increase the total amount of credit for 1929–30 in the kolkhoz sector from 270 million rubles to 500 million rubles, correspondingly sharply cutting credit for other sectors.

7. In accordance with changing conditions in regions of total collectivization, machine-tractor stations, united into the All-Union Tractor Center, must restructure their work on the basis of: a) contracts primarily, if not exclusively, with collectives;

b) obligations of peasants to pay off the cost of stations within three years.

At the same time, in regions of wide distribution of sovkhozes (for example, Middle Volga and individual raions of the North Caucasus), the experience of a combined economy must be tested, having as its main base a sovkhoz operating on contractual terms and for a fee and providing assistance to contracting kolkhozes, first of all in the field of tractor plowing and mechanical harvesting of crops.

8. In view of the special significance of cadres, the Central Committee proposes to the People's Commissariat of the Union, Kolkhozcenter, and oblast party committees to accelerate the work on training kolkhoz cadres and providing kolkhozes with them, creating for this a wide network of accelerated courses. To accelerated courses should be drawn first of all advanced practitioners of the kolkhoz movement from among peasants who have shown themselves to be organizers of the kolkhoz movement from the ranks of worker brigades.

9. Since the experience of total collectivization at the given stage of kolkhoz development puts forward as the most widespread form of kolkhozes instead of the partnership for socialized land cultivation, in which with the presence of socialized labor private property in the means of production was preserved, the **agricultural artel**, in which the main means of production are collectivized (dead and live inventory, farm buildings, commodity-productive livestock), — the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) instructs the People's Commissariat of the Union with the wide involvement

of kolkhoz organizations in the shortest possible time to work out a model charter of the agricultural kolkhoz artel, as a transitional form to the commune of the kolkhoz, taking into account at the same time the inadmissibility of admitting kulaks into kolkhozes.

10. Party organizations must head and formalize the kolkhoz movement growing spontaneously from below so as to ensure the organization of genuinely kolkhoz production in kolkhozes and on this basis not only achieve full fulfillment of the mapped plan for expanding sown area and crop yield growth, but turn in accordance with the decision of the November Plenum of the Central Committee the current sowing campaign into the starting point of a new upsurge of the kolkhoz movement.

11. The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) emphasizes the necessity of a decisive struggle against any attempts to hold back the development of the collective movement due to a shortage of tractors and complex machines. At the same time, the Central Committee with all seriousness warns party organizations against any “decreeing” from above of the kolkhoz movement, which could create the danger of replacing genuinely socialist emulation for organizing kolkhozes with playing at collectivization.

RESOLUTION OF THE PRESIDIUM OF THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE USSR ON THE NEW TASKS OF SOVIETS IN CONNECTION WITH THE WIDELY UNFOLDED COLLECTIVIZATION OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

In accordance with the decision of the conference of representatives of central executive committees of union and autonomous republics, krai, oblast, and okrug executive committees, and city and rural soviets, convened by the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR on the question of the new tasks of soviets in connection with the widely unfolded collectivization of the countryside, the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR resolves to give the following instructions to local soviets:

1. Mass collectivization, the grandiose socialist restructuring of small and smallest peasant farms, and the decisive policy of liquidating the kulaks as a class pose anew the question of the work of the entire lower network of soviets and raise their work to a higher stage.

In conditions of aggravated class struggle, which in the process of liquidating the kulaks as a class becomes even more fierce, the organs of the proletarian dictatorship—the soviets—must be especially strengthened and consolidated. The mass

organization of kolkhozes does not exclude, but presupposes, the active resistance of class enemies in hidden and open form. Soviets are organs mobilizing the activity of the broad farm-laborer, poor-peasant, and middle-peasant masses for the restructuring of all village life on a socialist basis. Kolkhozes, on the other hand, and their managerial organs, being production associations, in no way can and should not be contrasted with selsoviets as links of a single chain of Soviet state power.

All attempts to liquidate selsoviets, weaken or diminish their leading role in connection with mass collectivization in both open and masked form by transferring the rights of selsoviets to kolkhoz boards—all these attempts are essentially anti-Soviet and reflect the natures of our class enemies seeking to undermine the dictatorship of the proletariat and weaken the strength of its organs. Such liquidationist aspirations must receive a most decisive and merciless rebuff.

2. In conditions of mass collectivization, the work of selsoviets immeasurably increases, becomes more complex, and expands. Meanwhile, the lower organs of Soviet power, having achieved significant successes in connection with the policy of revitalizing soviets, in the present period of socialist construction completely fail to meet the new tasks that have arisen and are arising in the process of mass collectivization.

   The content and forms of work of the lower organs of Soviet power, adapted to the restoration period, when the task of raising individual peasant farms stood primarily in relation to agriculture, completely fail to correspond to the work at the

present stage of the fundamental socialist restructuring of agricultural production.

For the most part, selsoviets have not taken the lead in the kolkhoz movement. Remaining on the sidelines of collectivization, these selsoviets do not fulfill the primary tasks of implementing the production forms of the link between town and country. Participating weakly in the socialist restructuring of agriculture, they drag along at the tail of collectivization and thereby fail to fulfill their tasks as organs of the proletarian dictatorship. Selsoviets could not restructure their work to a significant degree due to the unsatisfactoriness of their social composition, the weakness of their cadres, as well as the weakness of leadership on the part of higher executive committees and, in a number of places, due to the explicit and hidden influence of the kulak. It is necessary to achieve a quick, fundamental, and decisive turning point in improving the work of selsoviets.

A selsoviet that does not restructure its work as applied to new tasks in connection with mass collectivization and does not take the lead in the kolkhoz movement will in practice be a kulak selsoviet, incapable of carrying out the policy of socialist construction.

Equally, a kolkhoz going against the selsoviet, seeking its liquidation or bypassing the selsoviet in its work, plays into the hands of kulaks and cannot be a socialist form of restructuring agricultural production.

3. The main content of the work of selsoviets in connection with mass collectivization is their active participation in drafting

production plans of kolkhozes, their implementation, while the role of selsoviets must be manifested especially in strengthening the processes of socialization, correct organization of labor, and monitoring the fulfillment by kolkhozes of all their obligations to the proletarian state (grain procurements, contracting, taxes, etc.).

Selsoviets must, drawing all poor- and middle-peasant farms into kolkhozes and liquidating the kulaks as a class, decisively suppress attempts by kulaks to penetrate into kolkhozes or influence their work.

Selsoviets, especially in regions of total collectivization, must have their own budget. Selsoviets must guide all cultural-educational and socio-utility institutions, as well as public amenities of the village, directing all this work along the path of socialist education of the masses and fundamental restructuring of all everyday life.

The selsoviet, being a representative of state power, disposes of all land funds, monitors their rational utilization in the kolkhoz, examines applications of kolkhozes on the provision of credits, approves these applications and achieves their satisfaction.

Along with these new functions, the administrative functions of selsoviets remain in full measure (protection of revolutionary order, etc.).

4. Selsoviets can cope with the complex tasks set before them in connection with mass collectivization only on condition of improving mass work and maximally drawing the broad masses into the work of soviets. Only with the unification of farm-laborer and poor-peasant masses, only on condition of the

wholesale involvement of farm laborers and the poor in the daily work of soviets, as well as on condition of a significant increase in their number in the composition of selsoviets, can the new tasks facing selsoviets be successfully resolved.

At the same time, of primary importance is the selection of leading cadres of selsoviets. Leading soviet organizations are obliged to put the work of training and retraining lower soviet workers at the center of activity at the given stage. City soviets must practically help selsoviets by sending special brigades of members of city soviets, worker activists for temporary or permanent work in selsoviets.

5. In order to achieve a decisive and rapid turning point, it is necessary to carry out re-elections of selsoviets that have shown their inability to guide the kolkhoz movement. A selsoviet that has not restructured its work, has not taken the lead in the kolkhoz movement, lags behind the tempos of socialist transformation of the village, and cannot organize the poor-peasant and farm-laborer masses—such a selsoviet is subject to immediate re-election. And in the process of these re-elections, the widest masses of farm laborers, the poor, and middle peasants must be mobilized under the slogan of socialist collectivization of agriculture and liquidation of kulaks as a class. To restructure the work of selsoviets in a new way, to turn them toward collectivization—that is the most important task of the present moment.

Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of SSR M. Kalinin.

Secretary of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of SSR A. Enukidze.

Moscow, Kremlin, January 25, 1930.

ON MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN THE SOCIALIST RESTRUCTURING OF AGRICULTURE IN REGIONS OF TOTAL COLLECTIVIZATION AND ON THE STRUGGLE AGAINST KULAKDOM

Resolution of the Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars of the Union of SSR

In order to ensure the most favorable conditions for the socialist restructuring of agriculture, the Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars of the Union of SSR resolve:

1. To abolish in regions of total collectivization the operation of the law on permitting the lease of land and on the employment of hired labor in individual peasant farms (VII and VIII sections of general principles of land use and land management).

   Exceptions to this rule in relation to middle-peasant farms are regulated by raion executive committees under the guidance and control of okrug executive committees.

2. To grant krai (oblast) executive committees and governments of autonomous republics the right to apply in these regions all necessary measures of struggle against kulakdom up to the complete confiscation of the property of kulaks and their eviction from the boundaries of individual raions and krais (oblasts).

Confiscated property of kulak farms, with the exception of that part which goes to settle obligations (debts) due from kulaks to state and cooperative organs, must be transferred to the indivisible funds of kolkhozes as a contribution of the poor and farm laborers joining the kolkhoz.

3. To propose to the governments of union republics, in development of this resolution, to give necessary instructions to krai (oblast) executive committees and governments of autonomous republics.

Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of SSR M. Kalinin.

Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Union of SSR A. Rykov.

Secretary of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of SSR A. Enukidze.

Moscow, Kremlin, February 1, 1930.

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