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A Note on The Kuban Affair (1932–1933)

The crisis of kolkhoz agriculture in the North Caucasus*

Nobuo Shimotomai

1 Introduction

As is fully described by Professor Y. Taniuchi and Professor R. W. Davies in their monumental works, wholesale collectivization in the beginning of 1930's together with its aftermath, totally changed the social system of the rural areas in the Soviet Union.¹⁾ By 1932, almost all the main agricultural regions had completed the task of collectivization and liquidation of the *kulaks*. The *kolkhoz* system now became the main form of agricultural production. Accordingly, Soviet official history emphasizes the establishment of the 'foundation of Socialism' at that time. However, it is generally recognized that the years 1932–1933 were difficult, even disastrous for the *kolkhoz* peasants, and that there was considerable famine in the Ukraine and the North Caucasus, although these phenomena are not totally analyzed as yet.²⁾ On the policy level, there is reported a drastic shift in agricultural reorganization. Such changes as the institutionalization of the passport system, the nationalization of MTS, the disbanding of *Kolkhozsentr* and the replacement of *kontraktatsiya* by compulsory procurements occurred in this context. In the political arena, this was the period for the introduction of the *politotdels* of the MTS and state farms, major purges in the party, the institutionalization of the agricultural department of the Central Committee (henceforth CC) headed by Kaganovich, and many other changes; even the activation of the oppositionists and deviationists, as is shown by the example of the 'Ryutin' affair and 'Eismont-Smirov and Tolmachev' case, which were said to be the last oppositionists moves against the Stalinist system.

In this article the author seeks to demonstrate that the political and economic changes which took place in this period form part of the counter-measures to meet the agricultural crisis in the south of the USSR. To limit our scope of study, special emphasis should be laid on the North Caucasus region, especially on Kuban.

* This is an enlarged study of the paper which was presented to the SSRC Conference on Soviet Economic Development in the 1930s, held at CREES, Univ. of Birmingham, England 16–19 June, 1982. It is based on more detailed study 'A Note on the Kuban Affair (1932–1933)' 1–2, in "*SEIKEI HOGAKU*"—the Journal of Legal, Political and Social Sciences—, No. 18, No. 19, 1981–1982. The author wishes to express his heartfelt gratitude for the aid and comments given by Prof. R. W. Davies. Also thanks are due to Prof. H. Hunter, Dr. M. Harrison, Dr. S. Wheatcroft, Dr. S. Merl, Dr. A. Rees and Mr. D. Thorniley.

1) Y. Taniuchi, "The Establishment of the Stalinist Political System" (in Japanese), vol. 1–3, Tokyo, 1969–1981; R. W. Davies, "The Soviet Collective Farm 1929–1930", vol. 1–2, London, 1980.

2) *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 15, 1964, 250–84.

Apart from the fact that a study of the Soviet Union as an entity requires a preparedness which the author feels he has not yet achieved, there is some reason to describe this region in particular. 'Kuban' affair occurred at the end of 1932, which the CC had to meet by sending a committee headed by Kaganovich. This affair was mentioned after the criticism of Stalin and Kaganovich in the context of 'Destalinization' and some politicians and historians referred to it;³⁾ however, broad description of the affair was never published in the USSR.⁴⁾ This affair must now be analyzed in the context of the development of kolkhoz system and party policy towards it, from the 'revolution from above' to the consolidation of Stalinism. The aim of this article, however, is only to describe the general outline of this unknown affair.

2 Kolkhoz of the North Caucasus in 1931–1932; A general view

In January 1931 the CC of the Communist Party declared that the North Caucasus was the first region in the Soviet Union to complete wholesale collectivization. By the spring of 1931, about 73 per cent of the peasants were living in the *kolkhoz* system with about 98,600 households incorporated into 5,300 *kolkhozes*. One *kolkhoz* consisted of 188 households or 841 members.⁵⁾ Major features of the *kolkhoz* in the North Caucasus included the following points; firstly, the *kolkhoz* here was large, compared to the size of the ordinary one; with the beginning of 1932 'Gigant' *kolkhoz* was divided and the average number of households per *kolkhoz* was reduced from 830 to 270.⁶⁾ Secondly, the proportion of Cossacks was high, especially in the Kuban and Don areas. In the wholesale collectivization campaign, Cossacks had been classified as *kulaks* or middle peasants; in fact, they were sometimes hostile to the regime and not a few had been deported. Until 1936, they were not conscripted in the Red Army.

It should also be noted that the quota of grain collection was very high in this region; the North Caucasus was traditionally famous as the granary of Europe. In 1930, 38 per cent of the grain production was delivered to the state in the North Caucasus. The next year, this quota was increased to 44 per cent. This quota was still higher in the *kolkhoz* sector; some 45.6 per cent in 1930 and 63.4 per cent in 1931 was taken away by the government with the effect that the peasants in the

3) 22 s"ezd KPSS, t. 2, 1961, 43; *Khrushchev remembers*, (in Japanese) 1972, 71. *Ocherki istorii kollektivizatsii sel'skogo khozyaistva v soyuzhnykh respublikakh*, 1963, 55; Y. Moshkov, *Zernovaya problema v gody sploshnoi kollektivizatsii sel'skogo khozyaistva*, 1966, 216; M. A. Vyl'tsan, V. P. Danilov, V. V. Kabanov, Y. A. Moshkov, *Kollektivizatsiya sel'skogo khozyaistva v SSSR*, 1982, 273–74.

4) For example, a collection of materials on the collectivization of the North Caucasus such as *Kollektivizatsiya sel'skogo khozyaistva na severnom kavkaze*, Krasnodar, 1972 completely omits the materials concerned, though there is a reference to this affair in the preface. E. Oskolkov's book (*Pobeda kolkhoznogo stroya v zernovykh raionav severnogo kavkaza*, Rostov on Don, 1973) may be exceptional, though the affair is not fully described.

5) *Kolkhoznoe stroitel'stvo na severnom kavkaze v 1931 g.*, Rostov-on-Don, 1932, 3.

6) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, organ Sev. Kav. kraikoma VKP (b), No. 4–6, 1932, 9.

kolkhozes were deprived of the incentive to work.⁷⁾

It was these conditions which gave rise to the difficult situation in the *kolkhoz* system, especially in the grain collection campaign. Serious tension developed between the regime and *kolkhozniks* in 1931–1932. Some local authorities pursued a policy of forcing 100 per cent collectivization, though the regional leadership condemned it as 'leftist' excess.⁸⁾ Labour discipline was loose and some of the *kolkhozniks* never worked in the socialized sector; incomes were distributed equally among the members, in spite of criticism from authorities; some *kolkhozes* were 'paper' ones. These factors might have been why the grain collection campaign of 1931 was delayed until the spring of 1932 in some districts (*raion*).⁹⁾ In addition there were exsoduses from *kolkhozes* in 1931–1932. Local authorities ascribed the difficulties to '*kulaks*', though there had already been three 'dekulakization' campaigns by 1932, and many *kulaks* had been deported.

Sheboldaev, first secretary of the regional party committee, stated at the regional party conference in January 1932 that 'though the *kolkhoz* system was better established in 1932 than in 1930, there was a serious problem with the grain collections.'¹⁰⁾ He reproached those who idealized the *kolkhoz* as 'leftist' deviationists and those who took the side of the *kolkhoz* against the state as 'right' deviationists. However, the *kolkhoz* lacked 'organization-economic' identity. It was Sheboldaev who stressed at the 17th conference of the Communist Party in the same month: 'For a few years, it is inevitable that we keep the element of coercion within the *kolkhoz*, and we must sometimes apply the direct pressure of the state on those *kolkhozes* which are not sincerely concerned with the state interest, under the influence of the mood of the *kulaks* and petty proprietors'¹¹⁾ It seems curious to have laid the responsibility for lack of success with the *kulaks*, as great numbers had, by then, been exiled.

In order to complete the agricultural campaign effectively in 1932, the regional leadership took up new lines; firstly, with regard to policy on *kolkhoz* and secondly, policy towards party structure. As far as concerns the *kolkhoz*, the government and local leaders sought to strengthen the *kolkhoz* system as 'organization-economic' unit.¹²⁾ The division of '*Gigant*' *kolkhoz* mentioned above occurred in this context. The department of organization for the district party committee was instructed to be responsible in this respect, while the regional (*krai*) committee bureau decided to send seed and workers from the city.¹³⁾ Despite these measures the local situation was rather ambiguous. For reasons which yet remain unclear, the government's policy toward the *kolkhoz* seems somewhat relaxed in spring. *Kolkhoz-trade* was legalized, though trade in grain was supposed to be postponed until the completion of collections. The decree 'On Revolutionary Legality' stressed the democratic principle of the *kolkhoz* system and criticized those who violated legality in the countryside

7) Oskolkov, *op. cit.*, 286; Moshkov, *op. cit.*, 168.

8) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 1–2, 1932, 51.

9) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 3, 1932, 3–4.

10) B. Sheboldaev, *Stat'i i rechi 1932–1933*, Rostov on Don, 1934, 19.

11) *17 konferentsiya VKP (b)*, 1932, 208.

12) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 1–2, 1932, 43.

13) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 4–6, 1932, 58.

and those who applied 'administrative methods' (penalties).¹⁴⁾ There was a rumour that a 'Neo-NEP' had been introduced, with the result that some *kolkhozniks* withdrew from the *kolkhoz* en masse. The spring campaign in the Kuban districts was said to have completed smoothly in contrast with Ukraine, where there were many difficulties.¹⁵⁾

On the party line, there was a reorganization of the rural party structure. At that period, there were 79 districts in this region, with about 30 located in the Kuban. Each district committee was responsible for controlling district of 20–25 soviets, each of which incorporated 2–3 *kolkhozes*. According to a local census, about one fourth of the total 216, 798 party members were *kolkhozniks* on 1st January 1932.¹⁶⁾ However, most of them were either candidates, or Komsomol members, and the stratum of local communists who had long career very thin. Below the district level, cadre communists were often replaced and the position of the secretary of cells was instable.¹⁷⁾ In other words, the hierarchical structure of the leadership below the district level was poorly coordinated and connected. After the abolition of the *okrug* (the local governmental level between the 'region' and the 'district'), organizational policy concentrated on the formation of strong party bases—'*opornye punkty*' in the centre of large *kolkhozes*. The aim of this policy was to use scarce communist forces effectively. In the North Caucasus, village committees (*stankom*) were organized in this context.¹⁸⁾ *Stankoms* or *Sel'koms* were to be organized with numbers of more than 30 local communists which were directly subordinated to the district committee in accordance with the decision by the regional committee in February.¹⁹⁾

Despite these measures, the system for control of the *kolkhoz* was not well organized. In order to enforce the agricultural campaign and to strengthen the *stankom* or *kolkhoz*, cadre communists were dispatched from the city or from the district level. The CC issued further decisions in May.²⁰⁾ Village communists and Komsomol members were ordered to go to field and shock-brigades (*udarnaya brigada*). Local sub-leaders, however, remained in official administrative work. Thus, the authority estimated that the reorganization of the party workings and structure was 'insufficient'.²¹⁾

In order to prepare for the grain collection and other campaigns, the second plenum of the regional committee was held in June. It was decided that efforts should be made to complete the grain collection by the 1st December. To avoid the

14) *Vazhneishie resheniya po sel'skomu khozyaistvu dlya politotdelov MTS i sokhkhovov*, 1933, 49, 107.

15) *Udarnik kolkhoza*, Severo-kavkazskii kraevoi ezhemesyachnyi zhurnal sotsialisticheskogo polevodstva, No. 6–7, 1932, 3–5.

16) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 9–10, 1932, 51; No. 22, 1932, 7.

17) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 4–6, 1932, 23–24.

18) *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vyp. 8, 1934, 668; *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 3, 1932, 38.

19) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*. No. 3, 1932, 10–11.

20) *Vazhneishie resheniya po sel'skomu khozyaistvu dlya politotdelov MTS i sovkhovov*, 1933, 107.

21) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 13, 1932, 8.

errors committed last year, a special commission for registering the harvest and compiling the grain collection plan was set up.²²⁾ Each district was ordered to check the implementation.

The harvest and grain collection campaign began in July. The lack of preparation and disorganization of the brigades were soon felt. Most of the harvest was left in the field, with only part of the harvest being threshed; peasant took the heads of the wheat for their own use and left the stalks standing. In order to stimulate the *kolkhozniks*, an advance in kind of 15–20 per cent of the total amount of grain was permitted. The peasants, however, had lost the will to go back to the fields. Many simply distributed the grain among themselves before the delivery to the state. In many areas the harvest was merely spoiled in the fields because of rain and the lack of manpower.²³⁾

Upon receiving this disastrous information, regional leaders immediately took up new measures. Firstly, they dispatched plenipotentiaries from the region to the districts, using the system which had been abolished some eighteen months before.²⁴⁾ Secondly, yet more advances were permitted. Thirdly, the vacations of district party workers were cancelled. Two district secretaries were reprimanded. The CC and the government sent a telegram of alarm. An editorial in *Pravda* warned of inadequate leadership and the lack of revolutionary vigilance against 'kulaks and their associates'. Kaganovich commented that 'kulaks and counter-revolutionary elements are stirring in the village'.²⁵⁾

The results of grain collections by 15th August were under 30 per cent of what they had been the previous year.²⁶⁾ Only 32 per cent of the plan had been fulfilled by August in this region, and that with difficulty. Due to this poor operation, most of the harvest was left unthreshed. A district such as Veshensky, where the harvest was reasonable, had collected only 10 per cent of the planned amount in August.

The regional party committee and regional executive committee issued a resolution 'On the Process of the Grain Collection' in August which pointed out the slowness of the collection and condemned local communists and rural party organizations who were under the influence of kulaks-provoker and anti-state elements. This resolution recommended the calling of conferences of the local party secretaries.²⁷⁾ The regional committee also called for a conference of the department of the agitation–mass (AMO) of the district committee, to activate the party–mass organization. In September, the regional committee set up the sector for party activity in the *kolkhozes* and state farms under the department of the Organization and Instructors.²⁸⁾

In spite of these measures, the situation of the collection campaign became even worse. Although the level of the completion of the plan was better in terms of

22) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 14–15, 1932, 8, 43.

23) *Pravda*, 14, 17 July, 1932.

24) *Sheboldaev, op. cit.*, 55–60.

25) *Pravda*, 22 July; 4 August, 1932.

26) *Pravda*, 19 August, 1932.

27) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 19, 1932, 31.

28) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 25–26, 1932, 43.

overall figures, the proportion of wheat declined.²⁹⁾ At the conferences, most of the district secretaries who assumed responsibility for the collections admitted that the harvest per hectare would be 2–6 *tsentners*, as against the planned level of 9.8 *tsentners*.³⁰⁾ In October, the position was desperate, with only 2–3 per cent of the monthly plan being achieved in some districts. The situation in the state farm sector was especially critical.³¹⁾

It was not only the grain collections which were poorly organized, but autumn cultivation and especially sowing also suffered in this respect. A *Pravda* editorial showed serious concern for the bad results of the sowing in the Kuban.³²⁾ On 4th October some southern districts of the North Caucasus were placed on the 'black list' (*chornaya doska*), though the level of sanctions was apparently low.³³⁾ These results of the autumn campaign were deeply connected with the collapse of the labour system in the kolkhoz. The brigades, consisting of 50–60 neighbouring households³⁴⁾, disintegrated after the harvest.

Despite the provisions called for by the party, no communists were found in the brigades. Indeed, in one brigade 37 out of 58 members went to different jobs in two weeks of October.³⁵⁾ In addition, the distribution of communists personnel, who assumed the virtual obligation to take grain, was badly organized. According to data on the 1st July, there were 2,574 kolkhoz cells and local communist organizations, which had 81,266 members.³⁶⁾ Despite the decision of May by the CC to let communists members engage directly in the field or member among the brigades, local communists as a rule did not work in the fields between June and October.³⁷⁾ They preferred to work in administrative or economic related posts. Thus the field was left without leadership. The higher authorities in the fear that the achievement would not be convincing, preferred to dispatch plenipotentiaries in great numbers to the village, instead of using the regular methods of control of lower party organization.³⁸⁾ However, the task of these men was often in contradiction with each other.³⁹⁾ The district committee was often replaced by plenipotentiaries from the regional level. One report from a lower level complained that too many plenipotentiaries from various institutions damaged the the campaign. They often used straightforward methods of an administrative character.⁴⁰⁾ One plenipotentiary stayed in the brigade for 'five' minutes. They were often of city origin and did not know what to do in the country-

29) *Pravda*, 9 September, 1932.

30) Oskolkov, *op. cit.*, 287.

31) *Pravda*, 20 October, 1932; 3 November 1932; *Na agrarnom fronte*, No. 3, 1932, 106.

32) *Pravda*, 24 September, 1932.

33) *Pravda*, 4 October, 1932.

34) *Brigadnaya sistema organizatsii truda v kolkhozakh*, 1931, 28.

35) *Na agrarnom fronte*, No. 3, 1932, 116.

36) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 22, 1932, 7.

37) *Udarnik kolkhoza*, No. 3, 1932, 8; *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 13–14, 1932, 23, 32.

38) Sheboldaev, *op. cit.*, 60.

39) *Pravda*, 4 August, 1932.

40) *Pravda*, 19 August, 1932.

side. Anyway, the reintroduction of this system in this region made it clear that the situation was as severe as that of the end of 1929 to the spring of 1930, when the plenipotentiary system was at its height.

The harsher the methods used for grain collections, the stronger became the resistance of the *kolkhozniks*. Even Kalinin admitted that 'our grain collection' did not correspond to the interests of the locality.⁴¹⁾ Peasant resistance took various forms. Firstly, they demanded extra-advances. In the beginning local authorities had allowed up to 15–20 per cent of the harvest as advances, in spite of the fact that the central decision was 10–15 per cent. However, as the prospects of the campaign appeared desperate, the regional committee cancelled the extra-advances. The starved peasants now often asked for 30–50 per cent of the total harvest, with some thieving and secretly concealing grain.⁴²⁾ The government recommended that distributions should be made in accordance with the number of labour-days (*trudo-den'*) earned, but *kolkhozniks* distributed them equally. Secondly, desperate peasants went so far as to destroy machines and slaughter cattle and livestock. The numbers of the horses, for example, diminished from 840,000 in 1932 to 650,000 in 1933 in this region. As one Komsomol member recollected 35 years later, "At night, there were many disturbances of fire or,... the wells were poisoned."⁴³⁾ Many peasants and their families simply abandoned the agriculture and migrated to the cities.

To make things still worse, this resistance began to infect local communists and *Komsomols*, who overlooked the thefts and squandering, some local leaders even making secret advances to encourage people to work.⁴⁴⁾ Even the cadre communists established secret warehouses. For as the communists who were aware of the shortage of food in the countryside, the grain had to be distributed among the *kolkhozniks* before delivery to the state.⁴⁵⁾

To meet this situation, the authorities took drastic measures. The famous decree on 'Protection of the Socialist (Public) Property' was made public in August. It should be noted that this law was written by Stalin himself.⁴⁶⁾ It stated that public property was the basis of the Soviet system and 'sacred and inviolable'; those who usurped it must be regarded as 'enemies of the people'; those who plundered *kolkhoz* property would be shot, or in case of extenuating circumstances, deprived of freedom for not less than ten years with confiscation of property. This decree paid special attention to the *kulaks*, who were said to have used force and threats against the *kolkhozniks*. Also to curb those who speculated in goods and grain, the government empowered the OGPU and local soviets to confine speculators in camps for 5–10 years.⁴⁷⁾

Nevertheless the situation in the rural areas did not improve. Local officials

41) *Udarnik kolkhoza*, No. 4, 1932, 4.

42) Sheboldaev, *op. cit.*, 58; *Pravda*, 4 November, 1932; *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 19, 1932, 5, 31.

43) *Leninskim kursom*, Krasnodar, 1970, 88–89.

44) *Pravda*, 19 November, 1932.

45) Sheboldaev, *op. cit.*, 83.

46) J. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 13, 1955, 418.

47) *Vazhneishie resheniya*, 260.

complained that it was impossible to meet the grain collection plan. They asked for seed to sow in the autumn. Even the plenipotentiaries supported them. Some outspoken officials asked for the disbanding of the *kolkhoz* system altogether.⁴⁸⁾ Meanwhile, people and horses starved to death. In this situation Sheboldaev visited the CC and asked for seed in the latter half of October.

3 The Kuban affair and the activities of the Kaganovich delegation

It is not clear when authorities in the centre began to take notice of the crisis regarding the grain collections in the North Caucasus, but by the end of October Stalin certainly took a harder approach in dealing with the crisis. As Sheboldaev recalled one year later, Stalin refused to lend seeds to the peasants of the Kuban, and blamed the bad implementation of policy, resulting from the sabotage of the 'kulaks'.⁴⁹⁾

"Stalin gave us instructions, not only for the completion of the grain collection plan and for the strengthening the *kolkhoz*, but also for struggling with the class enemy who sabotaged the grain collection and sowing"⁵⁰⁾

Kaganovich commented in the January plenum of the CC and CCC (Central Control Commission).

Stalin's new approach was revealed when the CC dispatched the Kaganovich delegation to Rostov-on-Don. Its members were,

L. M. Kaganovich, Politburo member

A. Mikoyan, People's Commissar for Supply

M. Chernov, Vice-chairman of the Committee for Collections (*KOMZAG*)

T. Yurkin, People's Commissar for State Farms

Ya. Gamarnik, Deputy of People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs, and Chief of the Political Section of the Red Army

G. Yagoda, First Deputy Chairman of the OGPU

M. Shkiryatov, Presidium of the Central Control Commission (CCC)

(A. Kosarev, General secretary of the Komsomol)⁵¹⁾

From this list of the membership of this delegation, one can easily see the proportion of police-control top officials. Arriving at Rostov-on-Don, this delegation made four important decisions with the bureau of the North Caucasus regional party committee (2nd-4th November).

Firstly, the quota for grain collections was reduced by 59 million *pud*, (that is 97 million *pud* —one *pud* is 16.3kg) for the *kolkhoz* sector. Top officials were dispatched to the 31 districts most behind in meeting their quota to remain there for more than one month in the capacity of plenipotentiaries.⁵²⁾

48) *Udarnik kolkhoza*, No. 9–10, 1932, 7–8.

49) Sheboldaev, *Doklad na pervoi kraevoi azovo-chernomorskoj partkonferentsii*, 1934, 12.

50) *Materialy ob'edinennogo plenuma TsK i TsKK VKP (b)*, 1933, 144.

51) *O kolkhoznom stroitel'stve*, sbornik rukovodyaschikh materialov, Rostov-on-Don, 1932, 279. Kosarev is printed in this sbornik as Kosyrev and surely there was a such person in the Komsomol bureaucray.

52) *O kolkhoznom stroitel'stve*, 281–83.

Secondly, general trade was restricted or prohibited outright, to say nothing of kolkhoz-trade in grain. Three large village (*stanitsy*) were placed on the black list (*chornaya doska*). Peasants who refused to work in the kolkhoz were to be deprived of all property, including personal plots, and threatened with deportation to the North. Prosecuting and judicial authorities were urged to apply the law regarding 'Protections of the Socialist/Public Property' against the '*kulaks*' and 'the enemies of the people'

Thirdly, local communists, who carry out '*kulak* policy' and who were reluctant to implement the grain collection and sowing campaign were purged and deported as politically harmful. A special central committee headed by Shkirvatov, was appointed by the CC and CCC to take charge of these purges.⁵³⁾ Fourthly, there were also purges to be carried out against Komsomol members who were organizing '*kulak* resistance'.

These harsh policies were based upon the theory of '*kulak* sabotage', not at all in accordance with the resolutions of the 17th party conference where the task of dekulakization (*raskulachivanie*) was declared to be basically over and the *kolkhozes* were spoken as being consolidated day by day. Kaganovich is believed to have pointed out the 'new form of the class struggle', though the author failed to find his comment. However, Sheboldaev made a severe speech on 12th November in Rostov-on-Don, attacking those who thought that the *kulak* problem was over and who did not understand the new tactics of the '*kulaks* and the white guards'. In the Kuban, he said, some *kolkhozniks* had only ten or twenty labour days and even communists were stealing grain massively; this constituted a most severe menace:

"We explicitly made public that malicious saboteurs, accomplices of the *kulaks* and those who don't want to sow would be exiled to the North region. ...Since remnants of the *kulaks* are trying to organize sabotage and opposing the demands of the Soviet power, we had better give the rich land of Kuban to *kolkhozniks* of another region which have poor and barren land. ...Those who don't want to work and who stain the land shall be sent to another place. ...You may say that we have already deported the *kulaks*. ...this time we are going to exile the whole village including *kolkhozes* and honest individual peasants. What shall we do? It is true. We must pose the problem of the deportation of the whole village. In these circumstances *kolkhozes*, *kolkhozniks* and even honest individual peasants must take responsibility for their neighbours."⁵⁴⁾

This harsh speech was not published in the central press. However, these measures completely rejected the local party officials' approach and policy, to say nothing of the concerns of the *kolkhozniks* and individual peasants. For the local officials, the peasants should be kept alive, enabled to work in this situation of food shortage; thus they advanced extra grain (10–15 per cent of the total harvest was legally advanced). This contradicted Stalin's new policy which was to give first priority to the government quota, second to seed and third to distribution of what was left among the *kolkhozniks* in accordance with the number of labour days (*trudo den*).

53) *O kolkhoznom stroitel'stve*, 281.

54) Sheboldaev, *Stat' i i rechi*, 67.

It was in this context there occurred the famous 'Kotov case'.⁵⁵⁾ Kotov, party secretary of a village (*stanitsa*) committee in Tikhoretsky district, secretly advanced two or three times more than the quotas of grain prescribed. He was expelled in October, and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. Unfortunately enough, the resolution of 4th November ordered local courts to re-examine cases involving the 'Protection of the Socialist Property' within five days. Sheboldaev predicted before the trial that as the case was one of counter-revolution, Kotov would be shot, and indeed on 18th of November, poor Kotov was sentenced to death with another 15 members of this *stankom* being purged.⁵⁶⁾ Such behaviour on the part of local officials was so popular and prevalent that only such harsh measures could prevent them.

In the campaign of the end of 1932 to the spring of 1933, the black list (*chornaya doska*) system played a special role. This system prohibited trade until the village completed its quota. It seems that there were at least three levels of *chornaya doska*.⁵⁷⁾ In most severe cases, the village listed on the list was not only deprived of all goods and required to pay debts before they came to term, but also threatened with total deportation. Two villages were in fact deported to the North in 1932.⁵⁸⁾ In milder cases, the districts mentioned in the *chornaya doska* were banned from conducting all trade until the quota was fulfilled. In the mildest instances of all, the districts mentioned were merely prohibited from bringing in goods from outside.

As well as confiscating grain by the system of *chornaya doska*, there were purges of local party officials. For this task 56 subcommittees were organized under the guidance of Shkiryatov, which in one month investigated about 1,300 members and expelled almost 400.⁵⁹⁾ 40 of the latter were ousted as counter-revolutionaries from the North Caucasus region. Out of a total of 716 party secretaries from the villages and *kolkhozes* of Kuban, 358 were expelled. Some party organization met with total disbandment. In the end, of the 24,969 members of the party investigated, in the Kuban, 10,689 (or 42.8 per cent) lost their party cards. 600 communists were sent for trial. 26,000 communists were sent from the city in the North Caucasus.⁶⁰⁾ Such institutions as *orgpartgroups* were established from above in order to rebuild and investigate the local organizations.⁶¹⁾ *Orgpartgroups* of the regional committee

55) Sheboldaev, *Stat' i i rechi*, 83; *O kolkhoznom stroitel'stve*, 273.

56) *Pravda*, 19 November, 1932.

57) *O kolkhoznom stroitel'stve*, 281. On the function of *chornaya doska* see L. Kopelev, *I sotvoril sebe kumira*, 1978, USA, 257. One chekist named Lyushkov who had worked with Kaganovich and Yagoda in this campaign, took refuge in Japan in 1939, left a memoir, in which he described the Kuban affair partly; T. Nishino, *Nazono-bomeisha Lyushkov*, 1978, (in Japanese).

58) For example, the peasants of Poltavskaya village were almost totally (except one *kolkhoz*) deported at the end of December. Demobilized Red Army soldiers moved there to live, changing the name of this village to the 'Red Army' (B. Shar', *Na karte Kubani novaya stanitsa krasnoarmeiskaya*, 1933).

59) *Partiinoe stroitel'stvo*, No. 2, 1933, 399; Sheboldaev, *Doklad na...*, 37-38; *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 1, 1933, 29.

60) Sheboldaev, *Doklad na...*, 46; *Istoricheskie zapiski*, No. 76, 1965, 49; *Za ukreplenie ryadov partii*, 1933, 39.

61) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 2, 1933, 46.

were instrumental in promoting the grain collection, though they often collided with the district committee over the jurisdiction of the rural party.⁶²⁾ Equally the system of plenipotentiaries had the function of stimulating grain collection on the spot. Some plenipotentiaries, however, were critical of the new line and two were purged because they defended local interests instead of realizing the interest of the 'state'.⁶³⁾ Mikoyan complained that counter-measures against the class enemy were not well organized.⁶⁴⁾

About 25th November, the regional party bureau with Rostov-city committee and 'aktives' held a meeting with Kaganovich in attendance. Sheboldaev's speech underlined the class struggle in the countryside, and criticized those party organizations, which did not understand the struggle over *kolkhozes*.⁶⁵⁾ Five villages were listed on the *chornaya doska*.

The regional party organ also wrote on the methods used in purges of villages listed on *chornaya doska* in detail.⁶⁶⁾ However, the task of taking grains was barely achieved in only 45 districts out of 74 in this region by the end of December. Despite the aid given by *orgpartgroup* and purge committees, local communists organizations were almost decayed. In the favourable districts and villages, a counter-plan (*ustrechnyi plan*) was imposed. In the result completion of the grain collection was declared on 15th January, though in reality the goal was never perfectly attained.

However, on the whole, drastic measures from above made it possible to obtain the assigned quota (60 per cent of the grain assigned in 1931). As the result of this, peasants suffered from hunger, and began to flee from the land, cattle were left without fodder and horses (for which the Kuban was famous) died. Agricultural machines and tools were left without care. *Kolkhozniks* gained almost nothing from the harvest. It is reported that the average harvest per hectare was one third or one fourth of the planned level of 9.8 *tsentner*.⁶⁷⁾ In the joint plenum of the regional party committee and regional control committee, several top officials were replaced. Further difficulties were foreseeable in the spring of 1933. Sheboldaev proposed to applying considerable use of repression with the help of GPU.⁶⁸⁾

4 The enlargement of the crisis

At first the agricultural crisis in Kuban was analysed as a local and temporary phenomenon. When *Pravda* celebrated the 15th anniversary of the October Revolution, Postyshev (Party Secretary) did refer to the difficulties regarding food supply in some districts due to the unfinished liquidation of the 'kulaks',⁶⁹⁾ but such difficulties were seen as being short-lived and of only partial significance.

62) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 27–28, 1932, 10–14.

63) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 29–30, 1932, 34.

64) *Pravda*, 11 November, 1932.

65) *O kolkhoznom stroitel'stve*, 1932, 284.

66) *Partrabotnika severnogo kavkaza*, No. 27–28, 1932, 42–44.

67) Moshkov, *op. cit.*, 212.

68) B. Sheboldaev, *Stat'i i rechi*, 1934, 106.

69) *Pravda*, 7 November, 1932.

The crisis of *kolkhoz* agriculture took its most acute form in the Kuban districts, but the crisis was almost universal. In the Ukraine, where the problem with grain collections was chronic, especially in Kharkov, the total amount of grain collected was half of that of 1931. The Lower Volga region had the same problem, though the level of the crisis was apparently milder than in the North Caucasus, and in fact at the end of the year Postyshev went there to investigate and hasten the tempo of the collections.⁷⁰⁾ Two party secretaries in the tardy districts were replaced, and Ptukha (First Secretary of this region) was even reprimanded in public. Kazakhstan and Belorussia had the same problem. Only Moscow and Tartar Republic were successful in the collection campaign; they were permitted *kolkhoz* trade in grain in December.

It is known that on 27th November a joint conference of the Politburo and the Presidium of the CCC was held, which Kaganovich attended; it is probable that this conference was the turning point of the whole agricultural policy and party control of it. At this conference, Stalin accused the local communist officials of idealization of the *kolkhozes*, which had been infiltrated by 'kulaks' and anti-soviet elements. Molotov also made the same comments at the Engineer's congress, "*Kolkhozes*, which we don't lead, were organized by the anti-soviet elements, who were opposing us. There is no neutrality here".⁷¹⁾ These definitions of 'kulaks' by the top leaders contradicted the understanding of term held by the local leaders.

Stalin himself made contradictory remarks about *kulaks*, when he said in his speech at the joint plenum of the CC and CCC in January.⁷²⁾ "They look for '*kulaks*' like those depicted on our posters, but such kulaks long ceased to exist on the surface... They (*kulaks*) favour *kolkhozes* now". But who could distinguish *kulaks* from the ordinary *kolkhozniks*, when almost all the peasants scarcely lived beyond subsistence, owing to hunger resulting from the 'excesses' of the grain collections?

This problem was inseparably related to the image of the '*kolkhoz*'. Stalin and some leaders attacked those who idealized and made a fetish of *kolkhozes*. But it seems to me that other leaders took a moderate line towards '*kulaks*' and '*kolkhozes*'. In his speech to Leningrad activists, for example, Kirov criticized those who did not understand the great accomplishments of the party, —*kolkhozes*— and who criticized to excess the defects in them. Postyshev too is reported to have criticized Stalin's understanding of *kulaks* at the joint plenum.⁷³⁾

In fact, there were important changes in the agricultural policy and party control system between the end of 1932 and the beginning of 1933. Firstly, the *Kolkhoztse* system was disbanded in December. Already, in October, the *Traktrotsentr* had been 'nationalized'. Secondly, the 'passport system' was reinstitutionalized and *kolkhozniks* were prohibited from moving 'in order to eliminate *kulak* elements from the cities'. Also, work outside the village (*otkhodnichestvo*) was restricted in March in

70) See my paper, *The crisis of kolkhoz agriculture and the introduction of politotdel* in the Festschrift for Professor Taniuchi (forthcoming in Japanese in 1984).

71) *Pravda*, 30 November, 1932.

72) Stalin, *Works*, vol. 13, 235.

73) *Pravda*, 22 January, 1933; *Istoricheskie zapiski*, No. 76, 1965, 53.

1933. *Kolkhozniks* became, as it were, the second rank citizen. Thirdly, 'compulsory delivery' system was decreed instead of *kontraktatsiya* and grain collection now became a kind of tax. These changes are worth studying in detail, but here the author can only mention them in passing. Note that these changes were institutionalized and survived until the Khrushchev period, some even to this day.

On the political front, there were significant shifts in policy. Firstly, a purge of the whole party was announced on 10th December.⁷⁴⁾ Although there had been many local purges since the last one in 1929 nationally, whole purge was not mentioned. This is fairly good evidence that this purge stemmed from the harsh conditions in the countryside as proven by the Kuban affair. The aim of the purge was to get rid of the *kulaks* and traitors 'who have party cards in their pockets'. *Pravda* often referred to the 'Kotov' case as a pretext for the purge.⁷⁵⁾ And the purge of 1933 was conducted by a special hierarchy of 'purge commissions', apparently modelled on the Shkiryatov committee, and not by the CCC organization.⁷⁶⁾ The CCC was going to be disbanded next year. An article in the party journal made it clear that the purge of the whole party was to be conducted in relation to the crisis, revealed in the Kuban.⁷⁷⁾

Secondly, quasi-military methods of control over the countryside were introduced in the form of the political department (*politotdel*) of the MTS and the state farms. In the Kuban more than 4,000 ex-military men were sent to promote grain collections and sowing campaigns, often replacing the party on the spot in 1932–1933.⁷⁸⁾ In fact the *politotdels* of the North Caucasus were the first to be organized. By the end of 1932, committee was organized in the CC, headed by Postyshev, to choose the leaders of the *politotdel* by individual selection. Most of them were recruited from the cadre workers of Moscow and Leningrad and from the armed forces. The January plenum of the CC and the CCC decided to build up the agricultural department (*Sel'khozotdel*) of the CC, headed by Kaganovich. This incorporated all the activities of the local areas, including the political sector of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture, which was the nominal headquarters of the *politotdel*. Incidentally, Shteingart, the leader of the *politotdels* of the North Caucasus, was at the same time No.2 of the political sector.⁷⁹⁾

In any case, it is a fact that these harsh measures were modelled on the Kuban experience. There was apparently confusion and even resistance within the party ranks. For example, Smirnov, ex-Commissar for Agriculture of Russian Republic began to organize 'anti-party' group and Rykov and Tomsy are believed to have given some aid. These 'Right oppositionists' were condemned by the January plenum, but such activities did have some sympathy among the local party members. In Uzbekistan, party members, a certain Bunin and others openly defended the "Rights' programme."⁸⁰⁾ Economist like Petrov, who wrote that the development of

74) *Pravda*, 10 December, 1932.

75) *Pravda*, 13 December, 1932.

76) T. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership in the USSR*, 1968, 202.

77) *Partiinoe stroitel'stvo*, No. 23–24, 1932, 5–6.

78) *Ocherki istorii Krasnodarskoi organizatsii KPSS*, 1966, 370.

79) *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS za 1933, 1934*, 204.

agriculture was uneven and not in harmony with the development of industry, was criticized.⁸¹⁾ Some leading officials of the people's Commissariat of Agriculture were even shot in the spring. Some leaders like Kirov admitted that these measures were too severe, but stressed that rural districts needed unusual attention in these '2 years'. Strong party control was necessary for '1-1/2 or 2 years', he declared.⁸²⁾ And the *politotdel* was to be abolished in November 1934.

5 The spring agricultural campaign of 1933 and the deepening crisis in the kolkhoz

The grain collection campaign in the Soviet Union succeeded, although with difficulty, at the beginning of 1933, but the prospects for the spring agricultural campaign were far more discouraging. Labour discipline had almost collapsed and brigade organization hardly functioned. Tractors and horses were left without care. In one district of the Kuban 4,000 horses out of a total of 13,000 died in two months.⁸³⁾ However, most serious was the seed situation, especially in the North Caucasus, Ukraine and Lower Volga.

Authorities took drastic measures, the CC and Council of People's Commissars issuing a decision 'On Measures for Organization of the Spring Sowing in the North Caucasus' on 23rd January.⁸⁴⁾ The effect of this decree was felt too, in neighbouring areas, such as the Lower Volga. Firstly, the methods used in the grain collections were to be utilized in the collection of seed, that is, the *chornaya doska*, an allocation quota per household, dispatch of plenipotentiaries and, this time, *politotdel*. Saboteurs were threatened with expulsion from the *kolkhoz* and those who absconded with seed or who failed to sow were to be punished according to the decree for the 'Protection of Socialist Property'. In the North Caucasus there was organized the spring sowing committee, headed by Sheboldaev, in which the People's Commissariat of State Farms (Yurkin) and the heads of the regional OGPU (Evdokimov), the representatives of the regional party committee and the soviet took part.⁸⁵⁾ The decision of this committee was supreme, and the district soviet was empowered to assign labour obligation for weeding etc. All kind of officials, military, police, local CC, soviets, judicial organs, party and Komsomol members, were mobilized to complete the spring campaign. For example, in the Ukraine, three-man sowing groups (*troika*) were organized at the district level, consisting of the party secretary, a plenipotentiary and the head of the OGPU.⁸⁶⁾

80) See my paper *The crisis* of kolkhoz agriculture and the introduction of *politotdel*.

81) *Na agrarnom fronte*, No. 1, 1933, 36-37. On Petrov's comments, see *Materialy po balansu narodnogo-khozyaistva za 1928, 1929 i 1930 gg*, 1932, 37.

82) S. Kirov, *Leningradskie bol'sheviki mezhdru 16 i 17 s"ezdami VKP (b)*, 1934, 328.

83) *Pravda*, 11 March, 1933.

84) *Vazhneishie resheniya ...*, 172-173.

85) *Vazhneishie resheniya ...*, 173. The head of OGPU in this region was Evdokimov, who had been famous for the disclosing the "Shakhty affair". Sheboldaev in his speech in 1934 commented that he '*with the aid of Evdokimov*', stopped tens of thousands of organized counter-revolutionaries and wreckers from going into action (insurrection?).

On 26–29th January a joint plenum of the North Caucasus party committee and control commission was held and a new policy was adopted. The regional head of the soviet was replaced and a regional agricultural section of the party instituted.⁸⁷⁾ Special attention was paid to the low level of seed collection (12 per cent), and it was decided to dispatch 830 activists from the cities and to institutionalize the *orgpartgroup*. The Shkiryatov committee decided to strengthen the purge sub-committees (200). In some villages a second purges was conducted on the basis of the bad preparation for the sowing.⁸⁸⁾

Despite these measures seed collection still continued poorly. In some districts, seed diminished every five days. *Pravda* listed 30 districts on the *chornaya doska*.⁸⁹⁾ Among the peasants, however, a rumour circulated that the government would be lending the seed, which possibility Stalin categorically denied at the first congress of *Kolkhoz-Shock-Brigades*. District leaders were assailed by pressures coming from two different directions: on the one hand, higher authorities and their agents were urging them to take strong measures to collect seed: on the other, local communists and peasants were requesting food and seed. Some local communists and officials fled. In one district, as many as 51 secretaries were replaced in a year. In February, the regional authorities took a harder line, listing 10 villages on the *chornaya doska* which apparently, later became the object of deportation from the region.⁹⁰⁾ On the eve of the spring campaign (5th March), the regional committee decided that 1 district party secretary should be purged, 3 secretaries should be freed from recent positions, and many other officials should be purged. Some village and *kolkhozes* were listed in the *chornaya doska*, food aids were even cut.⁹¹⁾ On 17th March, two district secretaries were added to the list of those who were purged.

Politotdel began to work in the villages, but some district committees and village committees assumed a hostile attitude. *Politotdel* came into conflict with the plenipotentiaries, too. Indeed, Shteingart's first report asked the party leadership to shift 'from dispatching plenipotentiaries to sending permanent party workers as secretary of the big cell or *kolkhoz* chairman'.⁹²⁾

For fear of the total decay of *kolkhoz* agriculture in the North Caucasus and Ukraine, the government decided to lend part of the seed for the sowing campaign, 'because of bad weather'. This decision was also extended to the Lower Volga and part of the Central Black region at least. But this decision in itself made the situation worse. Regional party committee and especially *Pravda* became alarmed that, due to the lending of seed, a demobilization mood was prevailing in Kuban and the North Caucasus.⁹³⁾ The *chornaya doska* system and selective lending of seed were accordingly reintroduced: seed and goods were taken from the most miserable

86) *17 s'ezd VKP (b)*, 1934, 67.

87) Sheboldaev, *Stat'i i rechi*, 98–100; *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 4, 1933, 29.

88) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 2, 1933, 44–45; *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 3, 1933, 23–25.

89) *Pravda*, 6 February, 1933.

90) *Pravda*, 9 February, 1933.

91) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 5–6, 1933, 56–57, 63.

92) *Kollektivizatsiya sel'skogo khozyaistva na severnom kavkaze*, 1972, 532.

villages which the authorities viewed only as the village where *kulak* sabotage was most serious. Yet more horses, the very animals which carried the seed, died.

The famous Veshensky case, about which Sholokhov-novelist-wrote to *Pravda* and sent a personal letter to Stalin, occurred in this context. By this time the poor preparation for the immediate sowing campaign was felt seriously. On 29th March the People's Commissariat of Agriculture issued harsh instructions regarding the process of sowing in the North Caucasus, recommending the use of the decree of 'Protection of Socialist Property' as a means of expanding the acreage sown.⁹⁴⁾ The 'administrative' method was in full swing. No one could distinguish the proper method from 'excess', though occasionally the latter was condemned. Veshensky (Don) district was listed on the *chornaya doska* on the 5th March by the decision of the regional committee, because seed collection was only 0.3 per cent of the quota in February. Goods, seed and in all likelihood fodder were to be sent out to Millerovo district, where collection of the seed was reasonable. The slowness of the transportation, however, was remarked upon in a *Pravda* editorial.⁹⁵⁾ A secretary of the regional committee directed the operation by using the 'administrative methods'. More than 2,000 horses died and some cars were damaged. It was this point where Sholokhov wrote the letter to Stalin, in which he protested not only against those who 'had adopted a sickening method of torture, slaughter and outrage, but also against those who inspired them'.

Stalin, however, replied negatively.⁹⁶⁾ Budenny (Stalin's comrade in the war period and an official of the Peoples' Commissariat of Agriculture concerned with horses) warned against bad care of the horses.⁹⁷⁾

The CC intervened in the case and on 27th April the regional committee carried out a self-criticism with regard to the 'excess' of the Veshensky case.⁹⁸⁾ The severe methods used in the sowing campaign brought about a turn in labour organisation. There appeared in the newspapers statements asserting that those who relied on the administrative method and coercion were 'kulaks'. At this time, it is reported, the party and government issued special secret instructions to all communists, soviet officials and to all organs of OGPU, court and procuracy authorities', ordering a halt in the mass arrests, deportation and repressive measures.⁹⁹⁾ Now, judicial organs were restricted in their use of the decree of 'Protection of Socialist Property', An editorial in *Pravda* on 11 the May indirectly revealed the new approach, i. e. the shift from administrative method to mass-political methods.¹⁰⁰⁾ Molotov also indicated in the Central Volga that a change had occurred in the attitude of the masses towards the *kolkhoz*: sabotage was not a mass phenomenon. In the North Caucasus,

93) *Pravda*, 11 March, 1933.

94) *Krest'yanskaya gazeta*, No. 17, 1933.

95) *Pravda*, 11 March; 20 April, 1933; Sholokhov on *Pravda*, 22 March, 1933.

96) *Ocherki istorii kollektivizatsiya ...*, 56.

97) *Pravda*, 10 March, 1933; *Krest'yanskaya gazeta*, No. 32, 1933; Stalin, *Works*, vol. 13, 266.

98) Sheboldaev, *Doklad na ...*, 1934, 38.

99) Smolensk archives, WKP 178.

100) *Pravda*, 11 May; 17 May, 1933.

Sheboldaev made a speech along these lines before the secretaries of districts and chairmen of *politotdel* on 27th May;

“Kolkhozniks of the North Caucasus learned something in the severest school... It is true that there are class struggles and resistance of the *kulaks* and negative phenomena, but now the situation is decisively and sharply different from the situation of last November, when the CC had corrected us and given us aids to resolve the difficulties we face... But we are informed that the old method is still in full swing, with demand for deportation, repression and *chornaya doska*.”¹⁰¹⁾

Sheboldaev asked for change, for a new means of mass organization without the administrative method.

The spring sowing campaign in the North Caucasus succeeded, but with many victims. Not only men-*kolkhozniks* but also women were mobilized. Even children in the young *Pioneers* were sent to the fields to preserve the harvest. 16 villages were exiled to the North by the system of the *chornaya doska*.¹⁰²⁾ Out of 120,000 village communist members, 26,000 were purged, 13,000 members were ousted from office and another 30,000 changed their place without registration.¹⁰³⁾

Following the lessening of the strain, the conflicts between the district committees and *politotdels* moved to the foreground. One secretary threatened to arrest *politotdel* members and their families were not supplied with food.

In reality there was a struggle between the district committees and the *politotdels* over the leadership of the village and the kolkhoz.¹⁰⁴⁾ Who had the authority to appoint and change the secretary of the kolkhoz cells, or the chairman of the village soviets? These quarrels became more serious because, after the spring sowing campaign, there was now the necessity of constant and steady leadership in the village, rather than the dispatch of all kinds of plenipotentiaries.

It was in these circumstances that the CC decided the relationship between the *politotdel* and the district committee. By the decision of 15th June, *kolkhoz* cells were reorganised into productive, not territorial, organizations and placed under the jurisdiction of the *politotdel*. And in a sense, the *politotdel* method became universal.¹⁰⁵⁾ Thus, it was not clear whether normalization had begun or whether this period was merely an interlude.

Concluding remarks

The Kuban affair occurred in the period between the first Five-Year Plan and the second Five-Year Plan. Over-optimistic, the first Five-Year Plan was replaced by the more deliberate, second Five-Year Plan. The Soviet Union was affected in its international position as a result of the unexpected reduction of the trade in 1932–1933. Needless to say, this was due to the bad harvest in the Ukraine and the North

101) Sheboldaev, *Stat'i i rechi*, 109–114.

102) R. Medvedev, *K sudy istorii*, New York, 1974, 211.

103) Sheboldaev, *Doklad na ...*, 1934, 46.

104) *Partrabotnik severnogo kavkaza*, No. 9–11, 1933, 59.

105) *Vazhneishie resheniya ...*, 139–41.

Caucasus.

Internal agricultural policy was also affected by this affair. Although a more detailed study than the present one is required to make the fact clear, there is a causal relation between this affair and the sudden shift of the peasant policy in the 1932–1933. State control over the *kolkhoz* system became more apparent, whilst the *kolkhozniks* were left uncared for. Concerning the control through the party system, direct intervention from above came to foreground. These changes were caused by the tension accumulated between the regime and peasantry since the wholesale collectivization, or to be more exact, the grain collection crisis at the beginning of 1928.

However, the period following this affair is more curious and ambiguous, so much so that scholars are divided on how to assess it. Some argue that it was a period of normalization and moderation. Such top leaders as Kirov took a moderate line, and Stalin became a secretary (no longer the General secretary). Even Bukharin was partly rehabilitated. On the other hand, though the harsh method of the *politotdel* was not immediately abolished, the CCC ceased to exist and some elements of pluralism in the party structure were brought to an end. When one considers this, it would be asserted that the harsh method of government was *not* stopped. These ambivalences in policy may have been a prelude to the ‘cult of personality’. However, these themes must be studied in the broader context of the whole structure of that period. My article forms only limited preparatory work on the study of the 1930s.

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