



Frank Grelka and Stephan Rindlisbacher (eds.)

“Our Work with the Masses Is Not Worth a Kopeck ...”

A Document Collection on German and Polish Rural Soviets in Ukraine during the NEP, 1923–1929

“Our Work with the Masses Is Not Worth a Kopeck...”

Interdisciplinary Polish Studies

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in cooperation with

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Frank Grelka and Stephan Rindlisbacher, Frankfurt (Oder), September 2021

Editorial Notes on Terminology and Transliteration

General considerations

This volume deals with Russian, Ukrainian, Polish and German language documents. The transliteration of Russian and Ukrainian Cyrillic follows a simplified version of the Library of Congress system. Terms of the original language are preserved as far as general intelligibility allows. The hard sign in Russian and Ukrainian (ъ and ') is not transliterated. Transliterations will follow the Russian Cyrillic transliteration if a certain wording comes from the all-union level (*raionirovanie* instead of Ukr. *raionuvannia*). If there are different spellings for a location, the most common one is used, for instance *Johannistal* instead of *Johannestal*.

Institutions and Territories

In general, Ukrainian Cyrillic transliteration is preferred for administrative territorial units and institutions of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic (e.g. Ukr. *Mykolaïv Okruha* instead of Rus. *Nikolaev Okrug*; Ukr. *VUTsVK* instead of Rus. *VUTsIK*). However, geographic and institutional terms in Russian language documents appear in Russian Cyrillic transliteration. In translations of German and Polish language documents, larger geographic units (beginning at *volost'* or *raion* level) appear in Ukrainian transliteration (e.g. *Mykolaïv Okruha* instead of *Nikolajewer Kreis*). Smaller territorial units, such as the minority villages' names and their institutions, can appear in the wording of the minority language (e.g. *Hrezczany Rural Soviet* instead of *Grechany Rural Soviet*; *Speyer* instead of *Shpeer*) or in the wording of their preferred official designation (e.g. *Vysokopillia Rural Soviet* instead of *Kronau Rural Soviet*). Even though institutions and localities are generally named according to the document's language, certain authors could include Russian wording in German or Polish language documents. In such cases, Russian Cyrillic transliteration is preferred. If certain geographic or political terms are commonly known in English, such as in the cases of *Odessa* and *Bolshevik*, then this commonly acknowledged wording is preferred instead of the accurate Cyrillic transliteration.

Individuals

The names of individuals involved are provided according to the document language. In cases of individuals, whose names appear in different languages, the wording in “their” national language is mentioned in brackets (e.g. *Iogan Merts* [*Johann Merz*] or *Stanislav Kozlovskii* [*Stanisław Kozłowski*]).

Periodicals

The names of periodicals appear in their language of origin or Russian or Ukrainian transliteration. After the first mentioning the name of the periodical is translated into English (e.g. *Das Neue Dorf* [The New Village] or *Sierp* [The Sickle]).

Adaption of specific terms

In the documents and the articles of this volume, the English method of creating a plural is preferred. This means, the plural of *desiatina* would be *desiatinas* rather than *desiatiny* or *raions* rather than *raiony*.

Administrative Territorial Units and Corresponding Administrative Bodies in Early Soviet Ukraine (as Used in the Documents)

Preferred terms for the volume are highlighted in bold.

Russian	Ukrainian	Polish	German	English translation	State Admin. Russ. / Ukr.	Party Russ.
guberniia (pl. gubernii)	huberniia (pl. hubernii)	gubernia	Gouvernement	province	Gubispolkom/ Hubvynkonkom	Gub(part)kom
uezd (pl. uezdy)	povit (pl. povity)	powiat	Ujesd	pre-reform county	Uispolkom/ Povynkonkom	U(part)kom
volost' (pl. volosti)	volost' (pl. volosti)	wolost/ gmina	Wolost	shire	Volispolkom/ Volvynkonkom	Vol(part)kom
oblast' (pl. oblasti)	oblast' (pl. oblasti)	oblast/ provincja	Oblast	region	Oblispolkom/ Oblvynkonkom	Ob(part)kom
okrug (pl. okruga)	okruha (pl. okruhy)	okręg	Kreis	post-reform county ¹	Okrispolkom/ Okrvynkonkom	Okr(part)kom/ Okruzhkom
raion (pl. raiony)	raion (pl. raiony)	rejon	Rayon/ Rajon	district ²	Raiispolkom/ Raivynkonkom	Rai(part)kom
sel'skii sovet (sel'skie sovety)	sil's'ka rada (pl. sil's'ki rady)	sielsowiet/ rada wiejska	Dorfrat/ Selsowjet	rural soviet	sel'skii sovet/ sil's'ka rada	party cell

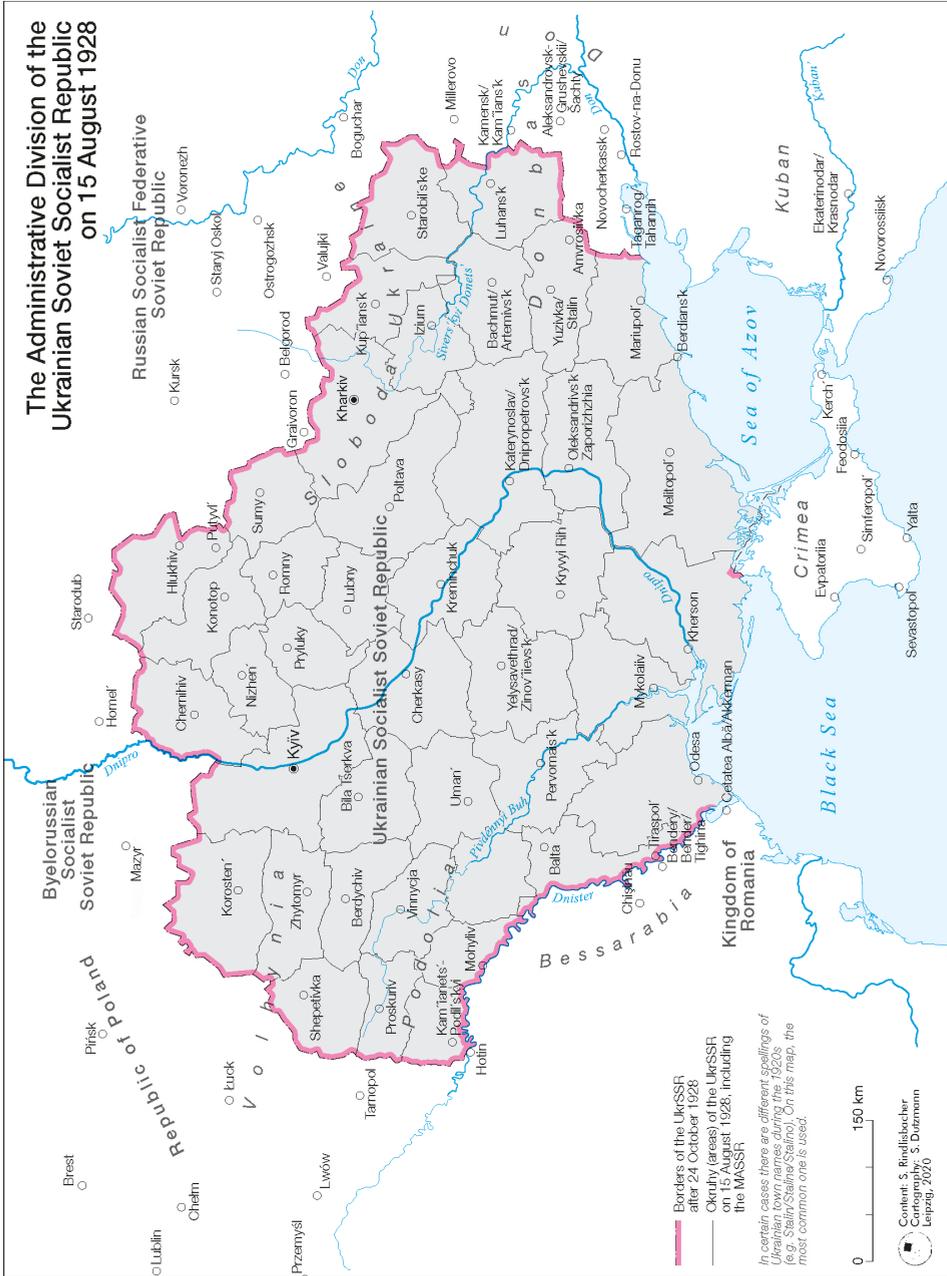
1 At the start of the administrative reform (*raionirovanie*) in 1923, the volosti and povity were abolished, but the hubernii were maintained for the time being, making the okruha a county-level administrative unit. With the elimination of the huberniia in 1925, the okruha effectively became a regional level unit.

2 The raion initially served as the next level of administration after the okruha until the elimination of the huberniia in 1925. Afterwards, it was effectively a county, albeit smaller than a county in the United States or Germany.

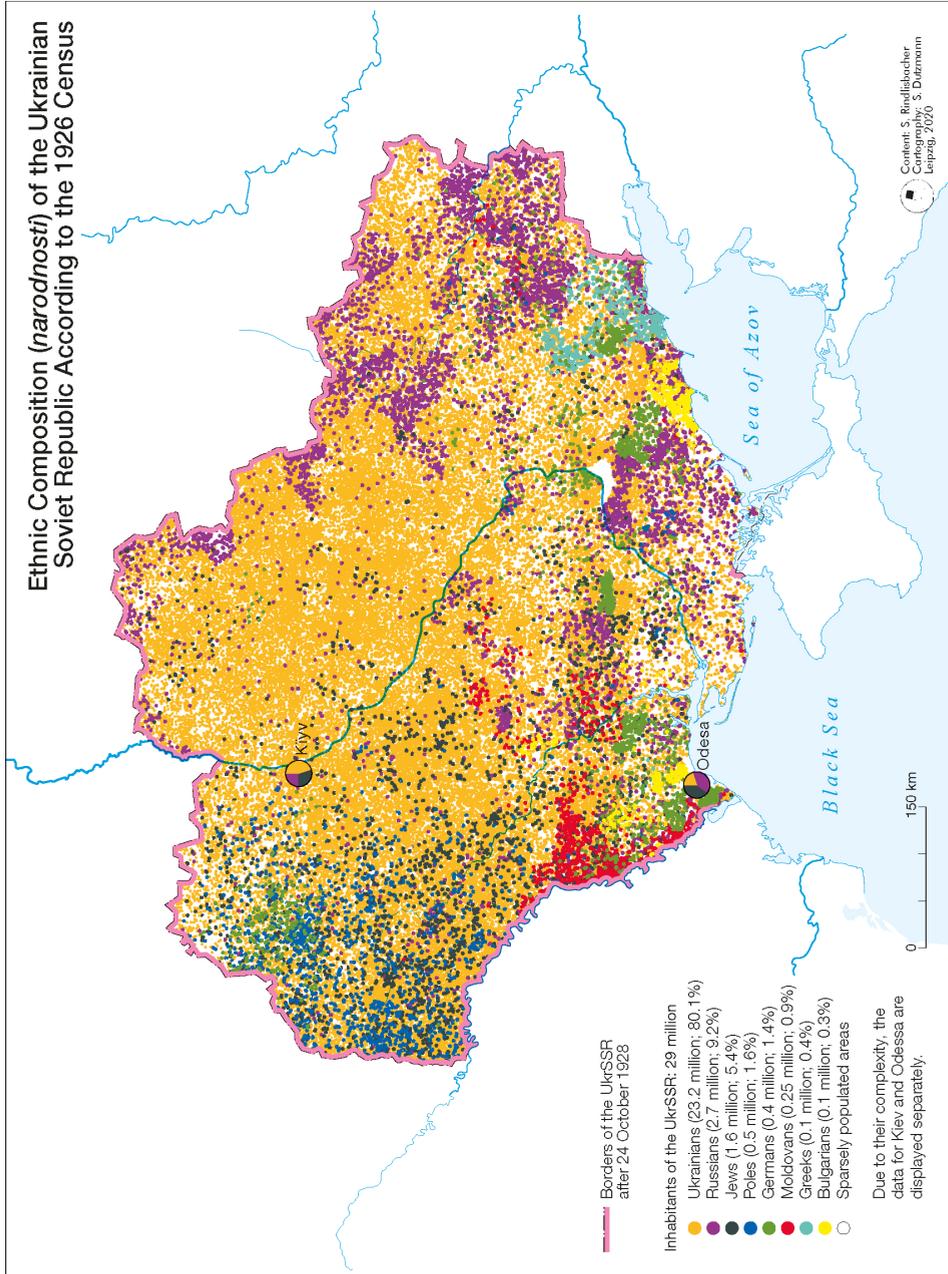
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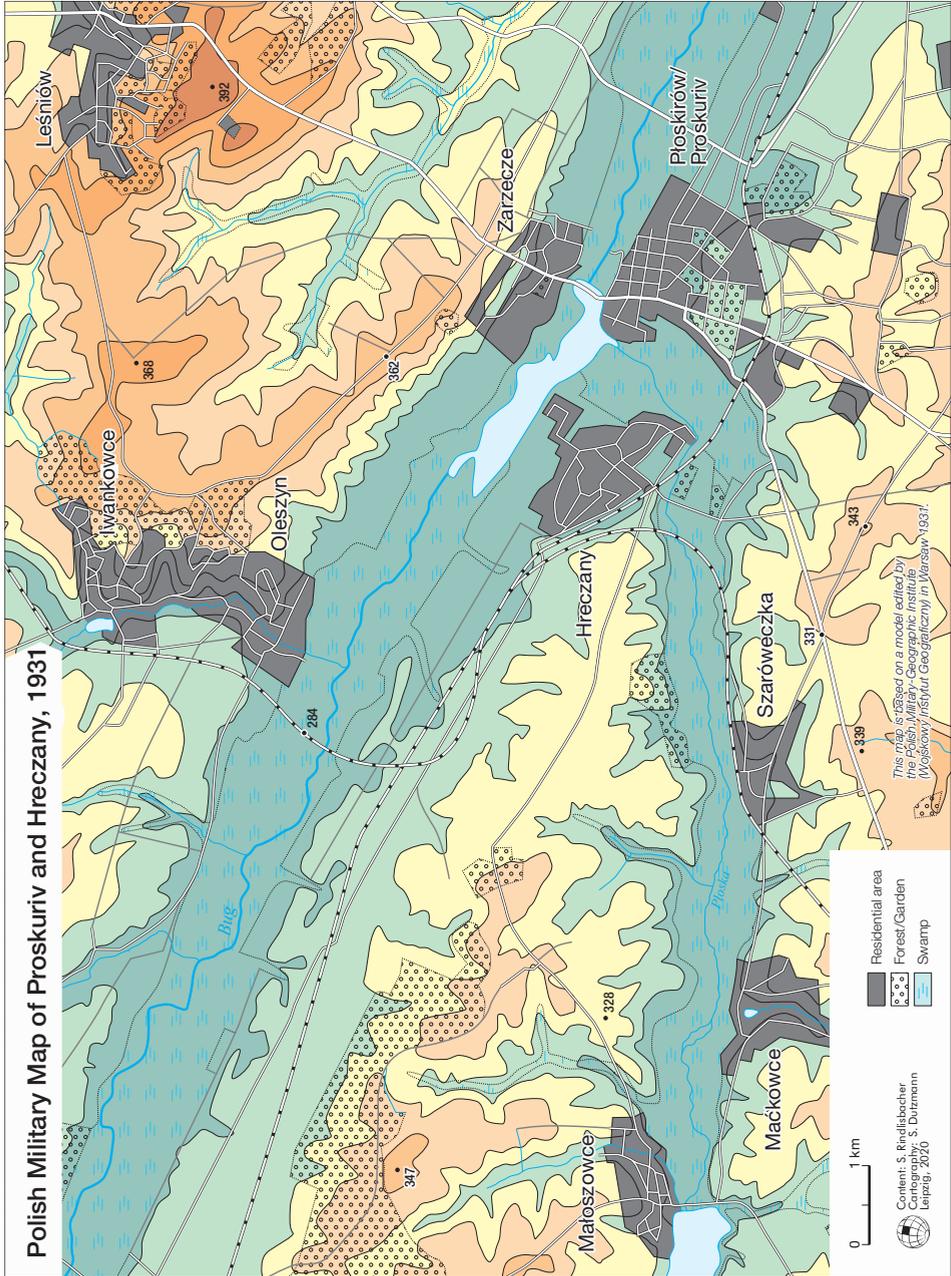
Map 1. The Administrative Division of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic on 15 August 1928



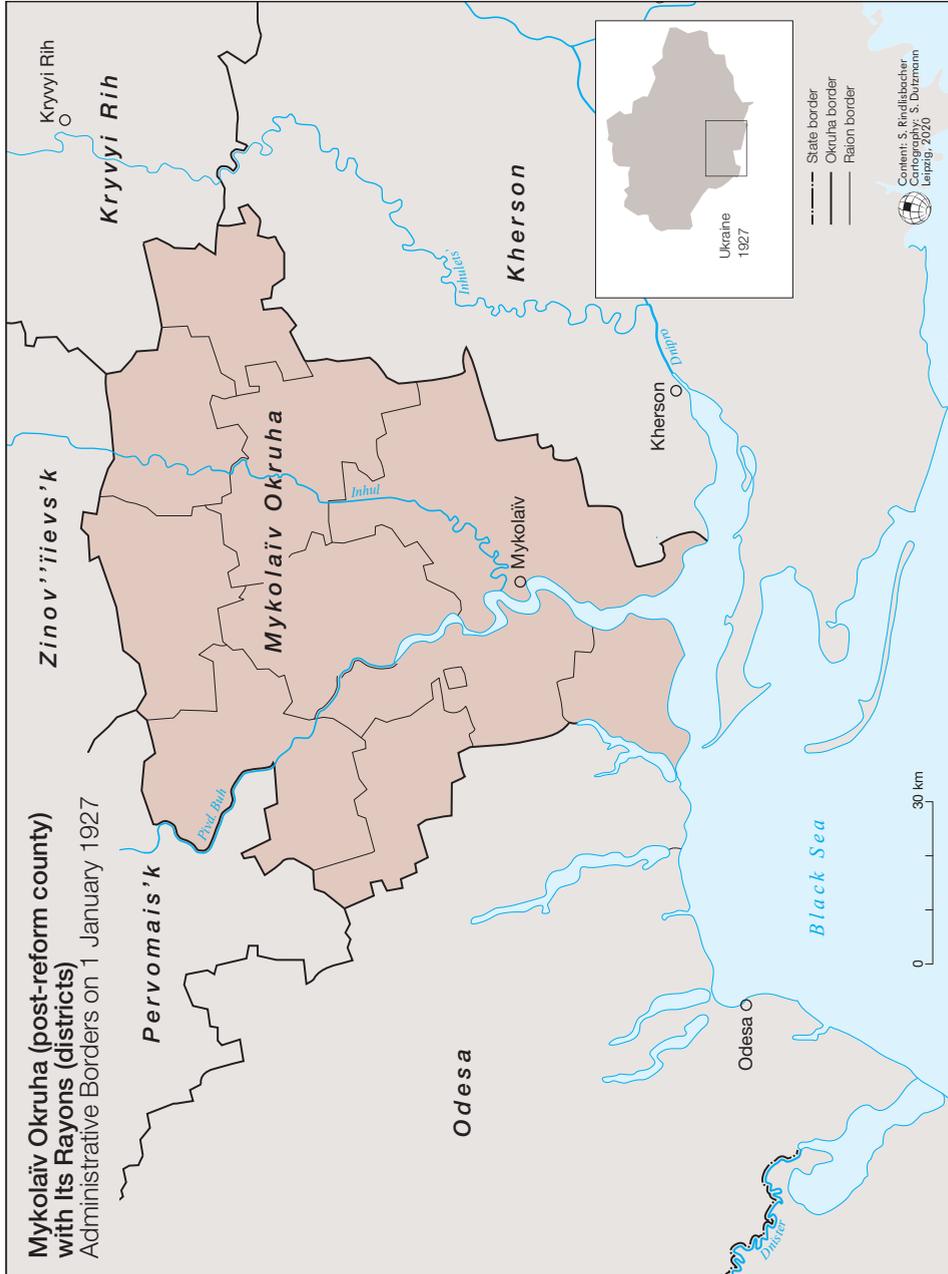
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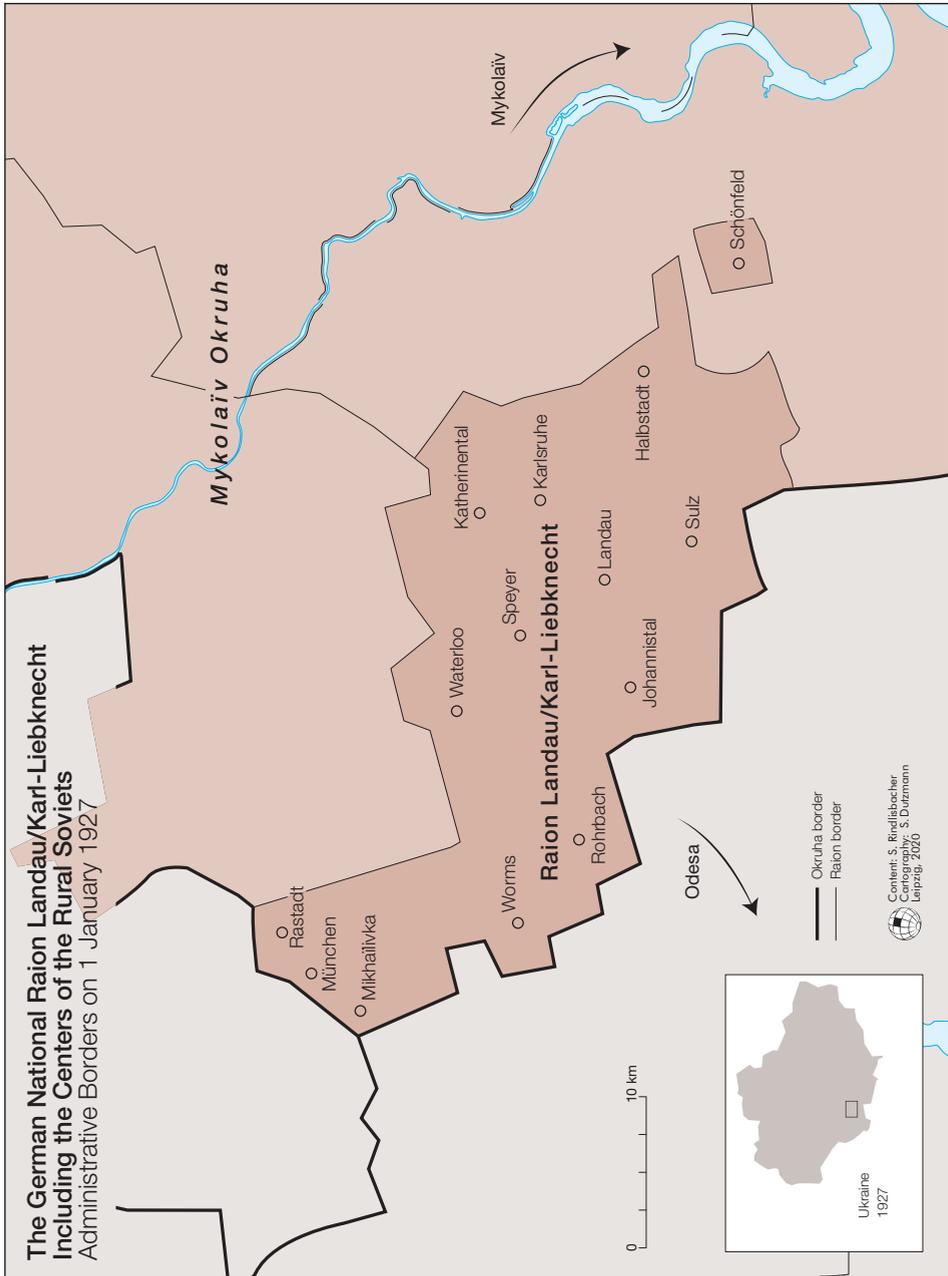
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Introduction

Frank Grelka and Stephan Rindlisbacher

“Our Work with the Masses Is Not Worth a Kopeck...”¹

In a June 1928 memo to the German Section at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, a leading German functionary, named Wogau, concluded that the desired mobilisation of the German- and Polish-speaking parts of the population was a political and ideological failure:

Arriving news indicate that in individual raions and villages there have been peasant demonstrations under the banner “Give us bread, we are starving.” [...] Our work with the masses is not worth a kopeck. [...] we see the inability of most rural soviets [...], we even see quite a number of chairmen and members of the rural soviets themselves walking at the head of the demonstrations. [...] We are forced to observe that our party cells and many party comrades are acting totally helpless. [...] We are forced to note that the emigration movement in the German village is increasing in scope again [...]. It must be made clear to the population that the salvation of the poor and middle peasants lies not in emigration but in the collectivisation of agriculture and in the struggle against the kulaks.²

Wogau was advancing a threat scenario fully unaware of the fact that in the wake of forced collectivisation and the Great Terror hundreds of thousands of ethnic Poles and Germans would “disappear” from socialist society in the decade to follow. Had nothing changed in the German and Polish villages even after an entire decade of Soviet rule?³

In the aftermath of 1917, the Bolsheviks were initially preoccupied with securing their claim to power by military means. The Red Army’s gradual conquest of Ukraine, which had declared independence in January 1918, laid the cornerstone for Bolshevik rule in what had been core areas of the former Russian Empire. With victory in the Civil War at hand, the Bolsheviks, whose programme was fixated on class-based urban society, found themselves confronted with the

1 Report by W. Wogau on the political situation of the German villages, 19 June 1928, DAMO, f. P-1, op. 1, spr. 533, ark. 45 (see document 4.11).

2 Ibid., ark. 45–47.

3 Bernd Bonwetsch, *Die Russische Revolution 1917: Eine Sozialgeschichte von der Bauernbefreiung 1861 bis zum Oktoberumsturz*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991, p. 219.

challenge of squaring the circle, namely ensuring that the peasants provided food to the country's towns and cities. Uncompensated expropriation and redistribution of land from large estates may have been in the peasants' material interest. But when it came to the allocation of the goods they produced, the peasants resisted Bolshevik agricultural policies. The forced requisitions deepened the sense of alienation between Soviet power, constituted in the urban areas, and the peasantry, rooted in the countryside.

Due to the sheer size of the Ukrainian territories alone, the Bolsheviks were dependent on the cooperation of the rural population. The Ukrainian countryside included not only Ukrainian and Russian majority populations, but numerous nationalities, among the largest of which were the Poles and Germans. Whereas previous collections of Ukrainian archival documents have mostly shed light on the situation of the German and Polish minorities in Ukraine during the Stalinist terror,⁴ this volume focuses on the NEP (New Economic Policy) era. By way of newly accessible archival sources and periodicals, it aims to show the extent to which the rural soviets provided the ground for state sponsored "affirmative action."⁵ From the perspective of the Ukrainian province, the years 1923 to 1929 were – all indisputably ideology-based, authoritarian claims of the Communist Party aside – a time of democratisation.

The overhaul of tsarist lower levels of administration, *raionirovanie* (literally regionalisation, "raion" being derived from "region"),⁶ had far more than administrative significance for these minorities. Although *raionirovanie* had a strong economic orientation, especially on the level of Soviet republics,⁷ the party at the local level pursued the goal of formally involving the population in the administration. According to Panas Butsenko, secretary in the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee (VUTsVK), the nominal leadership of Ukraine's state apparatus, *raionirovanie* was nothing less than the expression of non-Russian minority group rights via the institution of national rural soviets:

4 L. Yakovleva, B. Chyrko and S. Pyshko (eds.), *Nimtsi v Ukraïni. 20–30-ti rr. XX st: Zbirnyk dokumentiv derzhavnykh arkhiviv Ukraïny*. Kyiv: Instytut Natsional'nykh Vidnosyn i Politolohii NAN Ukraïny, 1994; Alfred Aisfeld, Aleksandr Rublëv (eds.), *Delo 'Natsional'nogo Soiuzu Nemtsev na Ukraïnie, 1935–1937. Dokumenty i materialy*. Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo Klio, 2016; Stanisław Stępień, *Polacy na Ukrainie: Zbiór dokumentów, cz. 1: Lata 1917–1939*, vol. I–VIII. Przemysł: PWIN, 1998–2014.

5 On the "affirmative action" aspect in the early Soviet state, see: Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001.

6 In the early Soviet discourse on *raionirovanie* the term *raion* could designate the largest as well as the smallest administrative unit. In this volume, the term *raion* refers exclusively to the smallest administrative unit above the rural soviets.

7 On this in detail, see Stephan Rindlisbacher, "Grenzziehungen als Stabilisierungsfaktor der jungen Sowjetmacht. Die Grenzregulierung zwischen der Russischen Föderativen und Ukrainischen Sowjetrepublik in den 1920er Jahren," in Tim Buchen and Frank Grelka (eds.), *Akteure der Neuordnung: Ostmitteleuropa und das Erbe der Imperien, 1917–1924*. Berlin: epubli, 2016, pp. 27–46.

In the field of national division of territory, magnificent work has been done in ensuring national minority rights by way of delineating administrative-territorial units, and the rural soviets and the raions for the Polish, German, Jewish, Greek, Bulgarian, and other nationalities.⁸

According to the 1926 All-Union Census, whose relatively reliable numbers will serve as the basis for demographic information in this volume, just under 29 million people lived in the territory of Soviet Ukraine. Some 80 percent were Ukrainians, while national minorities accounted for the remaining 20 percent.⁹ Among them, Poles and Germans made up the most populous segments after the Russians and the Jews. The vast majority of Poles and Germans lived in the countryside. The 1926 census data showed around 480,000 Polish and around 400,000 German inhabitants. With that, the share of these national minorities within the overall population of Soviet Ukraine amounted to 1.6 percent and 1.4 percent, respectively.¹⁰ Polish communities saw themselves as an autochthonous part of the population in those lands that had formerly belonged to the Polish crown, while the German settlers had come to the Russian Empire at the invitation of the tsarist government starting in the late 18th century.¹¹

At the start of the 1920s, both communities, the German as well as the Polish, were predominantly shaped by peasant life. In light of the catastrophic economic situation in early 1921, the Communist Party decided on the NEP at its Tenth Party Congress. This policy envisaged among other things the reintroduction of market-oriented elements in the production and allocation of food and

8 Circular by Panas Butsenko to all Okruha Executive Committees, 27 April 1927, DAKhmel' O, f. R-337, op. 1, spr. 1056, ark. 2.

9 Tsentral'noe statisticheskoe upravlenie (ed.), *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926 goda*, vol. 1–56. Moskva: TsSU SSSR, 1928. While Polish historiography uses the post-colonial term of “Poles in Ukraine” (*Polacy na Ukrainie*), old established concepts such as “Black Sea” or “Russian Germans” still find use in German historiography, here we use “national minority” as contemporary term, such as typical in the language of the sources for this collection. On the 1926 Census, see: Juliette Cadot, “Kak uporiadochivali raznoobrazie: Spiski i klassifikatsii natsional'nostei v Rossiiskoi Imperii i v Sovetskom Soiuzie (1897–1939 gg.),” *Ab imperio*, no. 4 (2001), pp. 177–206; Francine Hirsch, “The Soviet Union as a Work-in-Progress: Ethnographers and the Category Nationality in the 1926, 1937, and 1939 Censuses,” *Slavic Review* 56, no. 2 (1997), pp. 251–278.

10 Tsentral'noe statisticheskoe upravlenie (ed.), *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926 goda*, vol. 11: *Ukrainskaia Sotsialisticheskaia Sovetskaia Respublika: Polesskii podraion*. Moskva: TsSU SSSR, 1929, pp. 8–11; on the problem of national belonging in early Soviet Ukraine, see: Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2003, pp. 40–41.

11 On the Mennonites as a special group of German-speaking colonists, see Vasyli' Marochko, *Sil's'kohospodars'kyi Soiuz nashchadkiv hollands'kykh vykhodtsiv na Ukraïni, 1921–1927*. Kyïv: Soiuz Mennonitiv Ukraïny, 2000; cf. also Leonard G. Friesen, *Minority Report: Mennonite Identities in Imperial Russia and Soviet Ukraine Reconsidered, 1789–1945*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018.

consumer goods.¹² At the start of the NEP, it was Vladimir Lenin's (Ul'ianov's) conviction that socialist construction would be possible only by mobilising the non-Russian peasant population.¹³ Associated with this preeminent political goal was, on the one hand, the aforementioned *raionirovanie*, which sought to achieve a fundamental administrative reorganisation of the Soviet state. In Ukraine this territorial remodelling was introduced in 1923. Whereas the povit and the volost' structure was here already abolished and replaced with the okruha and raion frame in 1923, the old hubernii kept functioning until mid-1925. This transitional period of the old institutions not yet abolished and the new ones not yet functioning led to some confusion within the soviet administration. In the new territorial administrative order, the rural soviet (Rus. *sel'sovet*, Ukr. *sil'rada*) formed the lowest link of the state apparatus. A rural soviet could include one or more villages, whereas a raion contained as few as a dozen or as many as 50 rural soviets. On the other hand, national party cadres were trained in a targeted fashion to take the Bolsheviks' message to the minority populations. This approach later became known as *korenizatsiia* (literally *rooting*, figuratively *nativisation* or *indigenisation*) that will be discussed further down.

The rural soviet as an extension of the NEP

Although historians such as Manfred Hildermeier interpret the NEP as a temporary concession of the Bolsheviks,¹⁴ the comprehensive nature of the administrative reforms and the complex character of nationality policy pointed to a change of course conceived for at least the mid-term. Thus Alan Ball argued that the abrupt end of the NEP in 1928–29 was not initially foreseeable, and that the later policy of forced collectivisation was not foreordained from the start of the 1920s.¹⁵ At every level of Soviet state power and throughout the Communist Party, offices were created that were to agitate among the minority populations. If possible, these posts were filled with representatives of the minorities who came from the areas concerned. Thus autonomous areas (raions and rural soviets) emerged,

12 Paul R. Gregory, *The Political Economy of Stalinism: Evidence from the Soviet Secret Archives*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004, pp. 218–220; Alan Ball, "Building a New State and Society: NEP 1921–1928," in Ronald G. Suny (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Russia: The Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006, pp. 168–191.

13 Stanislav Kul'chyts'kyi, *Komunizm v Ukraini: Pershe desiatyrychchia (1919–1929)*. Kyiv: Osnovy, 1996, p. 188; Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (1994), pp. 414–452 (434–435).

14 Manfred Hildermeier, *Geschichte der Sowjetunion 1917–1991: Entstehung und Niedergang des ersten sozialistischen Staates*. München: C. H. Beck, 2017, pp. 169–170. See also Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Soviet State and Society between Revolutions, 1918–1929*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004, pp. 226–229.

15 Ball, "Building a New State and Society" (as cited in note 12), pp. 189–191.

German and Polish ones as well. While Victor Dönninghaus in his study of the non-indigenous populations rightly pointed out the structural weaknesses of national minority bureaus and their failure to mobilise the population,¹⁶ the issue in this volume is the local scope of action that this affirmative policy opened up.

The rural soviets created in the early 1920s had to find their way around a wide array of Soviet organisations and institutions. These included, inter alia, the Communist Party and its youth organisations (the Pioneers for children and the Komsomol for adolescents and young adults), rural cultural clubs, peasants' organisations, such as the *Kombid* in Ukrainian (the Poverty Committees, later rebranded in *Committees of Impoverished Peasants* (KNS)), the League of Atheists (*Spilka bezbozhnykiv*), as well as rural correspondents (*sil'kor*) for the organs of the communist press and various associations. The community centre (*sel'bud/sil'bud*), often a newly build house, became the locus for all the above-mentioned organisations. The fundraising for these community centres was itself an act of Soviet propaganda.¹⁷ Particularly the youth organisations had to take care that the population contributed "voluntarily" (in addition to the regular taxes) to this locus of the nascent socialist society.¹⁸ The term *rural soviet* itself is ambiguous. First it could mean the lowest organ of administration within the Soviet state. Second, it could also refer to the territory that this lowest organ of state power had to administer. In certain cases, the two aspects of the term, the spatial and the organisational one, can be easily distinguished. However, under other circumstances these two aspects can also appear blurred.

In the rural soviets different local activities came together: professional work, everyday life, education, culture, leisure, and recreation. With respect to the rural population, the soviets had considerable decision-making authority. They were able to shape rural politics with their own proposals. The Bolsheviks had planned the creation of such local soviets already in 1918. All citizens 18 years old and over were supposed to be entitled to vote with the exception of the "formers," the has-beens as it were, of the old order: employees of the tsarist police, White Guardists, clergy, or persons who had employed wage workers. On the local level, the people entitled to vote could choose the local administration. Most candidates for the rural soviets were no party members. Whereas the Communist Party kept the key administrative positions from the central government down to the raions, the local population could decide to a certain extent on their immediate representatives in the rural or town soviets. However, it was only after

16 Victor Dönninghaus, *Minderheiten in Bedrängnis: Sowjetische Politik gegenüber Deutschen, Polen und anderen Diaspora-Nationalitäten 1917–1938*. München: R. Oldenbourg, 2009, pp. 586–590.

17 Steven Coe, "Struggles for Authority in the NEP Village: The Early Rural Correspondents Movement, 1923–1927," *Europe-Asia Studies* 48, no. 7 (1996), pp. 1151–1171.

18 Pol'biuro commission inspecting the Hreczany Rural Soviet, 8 September 1927, TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 305, ark. 22–27 (see document 5.7).

the Civil War that these rural soviets could be installed throughout the Soviet state. In doing so, the new rural administrations tapped into the already existing traditions of the rural assembly (*sel'skii skhod* or *posel'kovoe obshchestvo*) and its leader (*starosta*) from the period before 1917. In the land commune (*zemel'noe obshchestvo*) by contrast, all of the heads of households (*khoziaeva*) had rallied to decide on land distribution. Under the new regime, these local peasant institutions had functions comparable to those of the pre-war era: tax collection and the maintenance of infrastructure.¹⁹

In the context of socialist transformation, however, gains in administrative agency as seen by the rural population are not to be underestimated.²⁰ Thus Tracy McDonald in her study of the local administration in Riazan', southeast of Moscow, has been able to work out how rural soviets in the 1920s took on a dual function: They represented both the interests of their voters; and were the implementing organ for instructions from on high. Caught between these conflicting expectations, the rural soviets could carve out, for example, their own power to act in budget-related issues, which all too often ran counter to the Bolsheviks' plans. Based on distinctions from pre-revolutionary times, all citizens entitled to vote came together in the rural assembly (*sel'skii skhod*) to decide in matters of local self-administration and to elect the members of the rural soviet. McDonald points out that, in practice, the people involved often had difficulties to differentiate between the institutions of the rural assembly, the rural commune and the rural soviet. Thus they themselves did not always observe the formal distinctions between them.²¹

A decree of the Council of People's Commissars of Ukraine from 1923 provided the legal basis for minority rural soviets in Ukraine. Their creation was envisaged for villages where no fewer than 1,000 people lived. In order to present the greatest possible number of such soviets, the necessary number of inhabitants was later lowered to 500.²² In localities with two dominant nationalities, mixed rural soviets were permissible. Preference, however, was given to mono-national

19 Tracy McDonald, *Face to the Village: The Riazan Countryside under Soviet Rule, 1921–1930*. Toronto: Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2011, pp. 99–101; Jane Burbank, "Thinking Like an Empire: Estate, Law, and Rights in the Early Twentieth Century," in idem, Mark von Hagen and Anatoly Remnev (eds.), *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700–1930*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2007, pp. 196–217.

20 Jane Burbank, "The Ties that Bind: Sovereignty and Law in Late Russian Empire," in Stefan Kirmse (ed.), *One Law for All? Western Models and Local Practices in (Post-)Imperial Context*. Frankfurt (M.): Campus, 2012, pp. 153–182 (155–159).

21 McDonald, *Face to the Village* (as cited in note 19), pp. 110–118.

22 Mykola Het'manchuk, "Politika Ukraïnizatsiï i Pols'ka natsional'na menshyna v Ukraïni u 1921–1939 rr.," in *Visnyk Derzhavnoho universytetu L'vivska Politekhniky: Derzhava ta prava*. L'viv 2000, pp. 31–40 (33); Afanasii [Panas] Butsenko, *K voprosu raionirovaniia Ukrainy*, Kharkiv: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo Ukrainy, 1925, pp. 33–34; paper prepared by Afanasii [Panas] Butsenko on the extension of the network of rural soviets in the USSR, Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (State Archive of the Russian Federation), f. 6892, op. 1, d. 8, l. 1–2.

rural soviets. Thus this volume also focuses on German and Polish rural soviets, because the Germans and Poles in these administrative units had a significantly higher share than in the “regular” state and party organs within Soviet Ukraine (including raions and town soviets).²³

New local scope of action

After the founding of the Soviet Union on 30 December 1922, the Bolsheviks’ socio-political concessions to the rural population during the NEP marked the start of a truce between the peasants and the state. With some caveats, the Bolshevik government guaranteed the peasants freedom of action and with that self-determination over a part of their harvest. Thus the state and party leadership won time to assess the needs of the cities and towns, to reorganise the supply chains, as well as to convince the peasantry of its political aims. The innovations of this economic policy constituted an offer to the non-Russian population groups to integrate themselves into the emerging state structure and at that the same time to consolidate the state party’s monopoly on power as well.

The installation of national rural soviets was not an initiative from Moscow, rather it first emerged in Soviet Ukraine, where the population was influenced by strong national movements. Moreover, according to Terry Martin, it lay in the interest of the Soviet-Ukrainian government in Kharkiv to develop an alternative to the post-imperial minority policy of the resurgent Polish state and the former German Empire by means of a generous domestic policy vis-à-vis the Polish and German minorities.²⁴ At the same time, the new line increased the pressure on the population to acknowledge the Soviet state. After all, the nationally autonomous units were supposed to enable the complete realisation of national interests under the conditions of the (proletarian) Soviet state, which perceived itself free of national oppression.²⁵

At its Twelfth Congress in April 1923, the Communist Party made *korenizatsiia* one of the central parts of its programme. In the border regions, party members still formed a tiny minority. The inclusion of national cadres was to ensure

23 Leonid Riaboshapko, *Pravove stanovyshe natsional'nykh menshyn v Ukraïni (20–30 roky XX stolittia)*. L'viv, 2001, pp. 87–88.

24 Terry Martin, “Borders and Ethnic Conflict: The Soviet Experiment in Ethno-Territorial Proliferation,” *Jahrbücher für die Geschichte Osteuropas*, no. 4 (1999), pp. 538–555 (540); Frank Grelka, “Gegen altes Unrecht in neuen Staaten: Nationaljüdische Akteure in Polen und Litauen nach dem Großen Krieg,” *Jahrbuch des Bundesinstituts für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa. Nach dem Großen Krieg: 1918–1923*, 25 (2017), pp. 65–86.

25 Valentyn Sadovs'kyi, *Natsional'na polityka sovitiv na Ukraïni*. Varshava: Ukraïns'kyi naukovyi Instytut, 1937, pp. 23–60.

that Soviet power in these areas would literally be able to put down roots. The institutionalised promotion of the previously oppressed nationalities by means of state and party offices formed the core of this approach. In individual autonomous republics of the Union, *korenizatsiia* was also called Ukrainisation, Uzbekisation, or Kazakhisation, according to context.²⁶

After the founding of the Soviet Union, the various forms of autonomy and the privileges associated with them became increasingly institutionalised. When possible, each nationality received an autonomous territory bearing its name. If a nationality within the area of another nationality formed a coherent minority, a national sub-unit was created. In the 1920s and the early 1930s, numerous territorial entities named for different nationalities surfaced across the Soviet Union. In principle, any nationality could form a Soviet republic, autonomous republic, autonomous region (*oblast'*), or rural soviet, commensurate with its size and social progress. The republics of the Soviet Union, or union republics, enjoyed the greatest number of privileges, while the rural soviets had the fewest. On paper, the administration of a national unit was supposed to take place in its respective language.²⁷ The nesting doll – the Russian wooden doll that holds a number of smaller wooden dolls within it – is well suited to provide vivid point of comparison: The Ukrainian republic contained the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Republic within its jurisdiction. Within it, the authorities established German rural soviets, inter alia. That is to say, a German rural soviet could form a part of the Moldavian unit, which itself was itself part of a Ukrainian unit. Moreover, Ukraine was in turn ultimately a part of the union as a whole.²⁸

While *korenizatsiia* was supposed to convey the party's ideological claim to power to the population, *raionirovanie* was the state's regulatory attempt to find economic and administrative unity and to create institutions that would embody

26 Bernhard V. Olivier, "Korenizatsiia," *Central Asian Survey* 9, no. 3 (1990), pp. 77–98 (77); George Liber, "Korenizatsiia. Restructuring Soviet Nationality Policy in the 1920s," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 14, no. 1 (1991), pp. 15–23 (16); On the policies of Ukrainization in general, see also: James E. Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation: National Communism in Soviet Ukraine, 1918–1933*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983; Jurij Borys, *The Russian Communist Party and the Sovietization of Ukraine: A Study in the Communist Doctrine of the Self-Determination of Nations*. Stockholm: Norstedt, 1960; Juliette Cadiot, *Le laboratoire impérial: Russie-URSS, 1860–1940*. Paris: CNRS Editions, 2007, pp. 134–138; Olena Palko, "Reading in Ukrainian. The Working Class and Mass Literature in Early Soviet Ukraine," *Social History* 44, no. 3 (2019), pp. 343–368. On *korenizatsiia* in different parts of the Soviet state, see: Per Anders Rudling, *The Rise and Fall of Belarusian Nationalism, 1906–1931*. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh UP, 2015, pp. 123–163; Ronald G. Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1993, pp. 102–112; Adeeb Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2015, pp. 280–286.

27 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire* (as cited in note 5), pp. 33–41.

28 TsSU USSR (ed.), *Natsional'nyi sklad sil's'koho naseleння Ukraïny*. Kharkiv: Vydannia TsSU USSR, 1927, pp. 198–199.

the Soviet state at the local level. In order to understand the political practice better, Jeremy Smith provides an important difference between state form and party hierarchy. The forms, the state institutions, represented a game that all party activists had to learn to play. Despite the flowery talk of “equality” and “self-determination,” all of the decision-makers had to adhere to party discipline and preserve political unity.²⁹ If the Bolsheviks’ new agrarian policy aimed first and foremost to overcome the nascent state’s food crisis, the federal constitution remained from the start only a promise of national autonomy. Despite the formally large local agency, the party continued to have the final say.

The role of German and Polish rural soviets in developing Soviet Ukraine

In Soviet Ukraine, Ukrainisation was not unanimously accepted and led to conflicts with non-Ukrainians living in the republic. Some Soviet functionaries even openly discriminated minority communities.³⁰ This is why the republican government in Kharkiv demonstrated considerable activity in two fields in particular. An educational offensive was supposed to promote literacy in the villages and the local population received a certain measure of rights to self-administration through the structure of the rural soviets. At the lowest level of administration in the Soviet state, one may not have made any far-reaching decisions, but the rural soviets had the authority and duty to collect taxes,³¹ to clarify questions of property law, to organise the education system, and to hold elections. Through the institutionalisation of national rural soviets, the Polish and German local populations could take part in the development of Soviet Ukraine, although dedicated communists remained extremely rare within these two communities.³² As a part of the total population, the number of party members in the countryside fell within the range of parts per thousand.³³

29 Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917–1923*. London: St. Martin’s Press, 1999, pp. 236–238.

30 German Section at the Odessa Gubispolkom, Report on a Field Visit by an Instructor Named Wehner, 10 April 1923, TsDAVO, R-f. 5, op. 1, spr. 2239, ark. 16–18 (see document 6.2).

31 Stephen Velychenko, *Propaganda in Revolutionary Ukraine: Leaflets, Pamphlets, and Cartoons, 1917–1922*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019, p. 208. Velychenko points out how the forced requisition of food stuffs during the era of War Communism was replaced by the imposition of taxes at the start of NEP.

32 S. Liakh, “Selo i vlada. Khyt’kyi al’ianc,” in Stanyslav Kul’chyts’kyi (ed.), *Suspil’stvo i vlada v radians’kii Ukraïni rokiv NÉPu (1921–1928)*, vol. 1. Kyiv: Instytut istoriï Ukraïny NAN Ukraïny, 2015, p. 301.

33 Lists of party members of the Karl-Liebknecht Raion, early 1928, DAMO, f. P-12, op. 1a, spr. 5, ark. 123–124. Thus Landau (Karl-Liebknecht) Raion in 1928 had only 128 party members and candidates for a population of almost 27,000 persons.

That Bolshevik ideology remained alien to the German colonists did not escape the attention of party cadres and the party's stance kept being ambiguous.³⁴ In the Soviet German-language magazine *Hammer und Pflug* (Hammer and Plough), it is said with respect to the "new tasks of the rural soviets" in June 1925:

Previously, the rural soviet was seen as [...] the local enforcement agency for regulations from soviet institutions with higher standing [...] to supervise the timely and exact implementation of tasks related to taxation and the peasants' other civic duties. The population was not enlisted in the work of the rural soviets, rather it stood off to the side of their activities, and [...] thus the population did not recognise the rural soviets as its representatives either [...]. The new provisions on the rural soviets seek to raise the prestige of rural soviet and seek to create above all a rural soviet that enjoys the full and universal trust of the population [...]. The rural soviet is to give very special attention to the enlistment of the population in the work of the soviets [...] and by means of reports about its activity give the population the opportunity to evaluate it, to familiarise itself with it, and, most importantly, to participate in it.³⁵

Also the Polish Section of the Communist Party took note of the initial positive results of its policies among the Polish-speaking villagers. It was reportedly just a matter of finding the proper economic and culture methods, and then the Polish villages would begin to produce their own Soviet cadres. This was, it was said, the consequence of a "more intensive Sovietisation of the Polish peasantry at its core."³⁶ At the same time, Polish activists were aware that they could attain their goals in the villages only with the most extreme means: "The dissolution of the class structure in the Polish village is to be noted where collectivisation takes hold, but the tempo of this dissolution differs from that of the Ukrainian village due to the greater national and religious cohesion between the poor and the prosperous."³⁷ The party's distrust of the peasants remained unmitigated, especially if they belonged to the Polish or German minority.

During the NEP the agency of the Polish and German rural communities improved in various aspects. First, as minorities, who the Bolsheviks had persecuted during the Civil War as "counter-revolutionary parts of the population,"³⁸

34 McDonald also underlines that the rural population was beyond the direct control of the Bolsheviks in the 1920s, *Face to the Village* (as cited in note 19), pp. 299–300.

35 "Die Erweiterung der Aufgaben der Dorfräte," *Hammer und Pflug*, no. 81, 13 June 1925.

36 See the report prepared by the Assembly of Polish Communists and Komsomol members [Communist Youth League] regarding the activity of the Polish population in Proskuriv Okruha, March 1928, DAKhmel'O, f. R-301, op. 41, spr. 176, ark. 97.

37 Ibid.

38 Alexander Beznosov, "Zur Frage der Beteiligung der deutschen Kolonisten und der Mennoniten am Bürgerkrieg im Süden der Ukraine," in Alfred Eisfeld et al. (eds.), *Deutsche in Russland und in der Sowjetunion 1914–1941*. Münster: LIT, 2007, pp. 145–158 (154–156).

they received a share in the local administration. The politicians in Kharkiv tried to cool down national conflicts and let the power of the state no longer appear to be the enemy of a certain national minority. Second, peasants were allowed to administer state property through national rural soviets, which conveyed to the Polish- and German-speaking communities in Ukraine a feeling of personal security and acceptance. Third, the peasants were able to keep their traditional role as independent actors in trade between town and country. Ultimately, this reformed institutional setting created new political and economic opportunities.

From the vantage point of the villages, this practice left room for administrative co-determination that can hardly be called colonial or imperial. In this respect, the NEP in Ukraine was thoroughly epochal in its meaning, because it signified a fundamental break with the centuries-old ruling practice of the Russian Empire.³⁹ The documents collected here are able to show this in much detail. In this respect, this collection is in line with Terry Martin, Francine Hirsch, Yuri Slezkine, or Jeremy Smith, which have reassessed nationality policies at the time of the NEP in a positive light.⁴⁰ Even though the NEP, *raionirovanie*, as well as *korenizatsiia* did not provide the results the party desired, these policies offered the Polish and German minority populations in Ukraine diverse opportunities. For them, they provided greater room for manoeuvre in political and economic matters.

Three thematically oriented articles accompany the 65 source documents. First off, the contribution by Yevhen Sinkevych offers an overview of the decision-making process within the Soviet-Ukrainian state apparatus. Stephan Rindlisbacher then examines the Soviet administrative reforms in the Karl-Liebkecht (Landau) Raion within Mykolaïv Okruha in southern Ukraine. Rindlisbacher dwells in particular on the increased opportunities for manoeuvre available to the German peasant population in political and economic matters. In the third contribution, Stanisław Stępień then illustrates the economic development of a Polish rural soviet in the western part of Soviet Ukraine, using the example of Hreczany (Ukr. Hrechany; Rus. Grechany), a village of 3,675 inhabitants in 1926, 3,415 or roughly 93 percent of whom were Poles.⁴¹ Given the new sales

39 For a different viewpoint, see Stephen Velychenko, who draws a line of continuity of imperial rule under the Romanovs to the Bolsheviks in the example of Ukrainian Marxists: *Painting Imperialism and Nationalism Red: The Ukrainian Marxist Critique of Russian Communist Rule in Ukraine, 1918–1925*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015, pp. 13–17. In contrast Olena Palko refers to the intricate development of a Soviet Ukrainian culture that was not simply imposed by Moscow: *Making Ukraine Soviet: Literature and Cultural Politics under Lenin and Stalin*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020.

40 See also: Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2005; Jeremy Smith, *Red Nations: The Nationalities Experience in and after the USSR*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013; Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994.

41 TsSU USRR (ed.), *Natsional'nyi sklad* (as cited in note 28), p. 146.

opportunities for their agricultural products at the markets of nearby Proskuriv (today Khmel'nyts'kyi), Hreczany between 1924 and 1928 experienced the most prosperous period in its 300-year history of settlement. The village's Polish residents, Stępień asserts, helped shape the transformation set in motion by the NEP and for the first time developed a feeling of self-determination.

The source documents edited and annotated here are grouped into six general topics. 1. biographies of local and regional actors, 2. everyday business in rural soviets, 3. the state and party's minority policies, 4. Soviet modernisation in rural areas, 5. creation and supervision of national minority institutions and 6. outside views on the national rural institutions. The documents are ordered partly thematically and partly chronologically. Specific terms, such as old units of measurement, are explained in the glossary.

The collection of sources focuses on contemporary documents produced by a diverse array of actors in Soviet Ukraine. Later testimonies, for example, the extensive literature of memoirs by former German colonists are omitted.⁴² Especially of interest are the records of the VUTsVK in the Central State Archives of Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of Ukraine (TsDAVO) and the documents of the Central Commission for National Minority Affairs in the Central State Archives of Public Organisations of Ukraine (TsDAHO), both in Kiev. The files of the minority rural soviets as well as those of the minority raions are in the state archives at the regional *oblast'* level. Central to this project are the documents for German rural soviets found in the state archives in Mykolaïv (DAMO) and Kher-son (DAKhersO) as well as the documents for Polish rural soviets located in state archives in Khmel'nyts'kyi (DAKhmel'O) and Vinnytsia (DAVinO). Reports from the diplomatic representative offices of the German Reich or the Polish Republic, both of which closely followed Soviet minority policy, were likewise drawn on for the present collection. These records are held in the Political Archive of the Foreign Office (PA AA) in Berlin or, as the case may be, in the Archives of Modern Records (AAN) in Warsaw. The documents in this collection represent only a fraction of the archival records that could be evaluated in the course of this project. The editors, in cooperation with Arkadiusz Danszczyk, George Müller and Katharina Saprygin from the Martin-Opitz-Library in Herne (MOB), Germany, made a large selection of around 850 scanned original sources available online.⁴³ In addition, Tetiana Zhelezniak organised an insightful virtual exhibition on the German colony of Landau also hosted by the MOB.⁴⁴

42 Meir Buchsweiler provides an overview of the literature from and on former German colonists in his monography *Volksdeutsche in der Ukraine am Vorabend und Beginn des Zweiten Weltkriegs: Ein Fall doppelter Loyalität?* Gerlingen: Bleicher, 1984.

43 <https://digital.martin-opitz-bibliothek.de> (this link will be available from November 2021).

44 <https://dorfsowjets.martin-opitz-bibliothek.de/>

Part I:

Soviet Nationality Policies in Early Soviet Ukraine

Yevhen Sinkevych

Nationality Policies in the Early Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic. The Cases of the Polish and German Minorities

Linguistic and cultural pluralism formed an integral part of Ukraine's history. For a long time the regions of today's Ukraine have been home to people of different languages, cultures and faith. The beginning of the 1920s saw an increase in inter-ethnic tension, resulting directly from the catastrophic worsening of economic conditions and from hunger.¹ The consequences of World War I were keenly felt, in addition to the policy of War Communism, a fratricidal Civil War, and the agrarian question that remained unresolved from imperial times. In Ukrainian historiography, research still needs to be done on socioeconomic and cultural development in the context of Soviet nationality policies, as well as the role of the rural soviets. It has not been determined to what extent these soviets served as a major structural element in the expansion of Soviet authority. The shift to the New Economic Policy (NEP), the transfer of powers to the rural soviets, and the policy of *korenizatsiia* (literally *rooting, indigenisation*) had the aim of improving the management of the agrarian sector and strengthening the Communist Party in the countryside. How did legislation and concrete actions of central and local authorities support these changes? What role did the rural soviets play? These questions will be considered here based on the examples of the Polish and German minority institutions in the years between 1923 and 1929.

Historiography and research problems

The nationality question in general, the situation of the national minorities, and the socioeconomic transformations in rural areas in the 1920s have gained the attention of both Ukrainian and foreign scholars. Leonid Novokhatko researched general problems related to the socioeconomic and cultural transformations of the Ukrainian countryside in the 1920s and 1930s.² However, he paid only

1 Larysa Yakubova, "Tsentral'na komisiia natsional'nykh menshyn (TsKNM) pry VUTsVK ta ii mistsevi orhany. 1924–1934 rr.," *Problemy istorii Ukraïny* 14 (2005), pp. 329–365 (329).

2 Leonid Novokhat'ko, *Sotsial'no-ekonomichni i kul'turni protsesy v Ukraïni u konteksti natsional'noji polityky radians'koi derzhavy (20-ti – seredyna 30-kh rr. XX st.): Avtoref. dys., d-ra ist. nauk*. Kyïv: Kyïvs'kyi un-t im. Tarasa Shevchenka, 1999.

superficial attention to the activities of the rural soviets, issues concerning national minorities, and the effects of *korenizatsiia*. Moreover, Mykhailo Marchuk has examined the cultural and national revival of the 1920s; he analyses statistical data and traces the development of national minority schools.³ Other scholars have also studied the central and local administrative structures of national minorities that were established between 1924 and 1934.⁴ Particularly Andrea Graziosi explored the complex relations between the peasants and the Soviet state, armed risings and other forms of resistance.⁵ He brought to light a number of documents presenting a general picture of the events in which peasants in the Ukrainian lands were involved. Furthermore, Bohdan Chirko, Volodymyr Yevtukh and Ivan Kulynych have focused on the German national raions and rural soviets in Ukraine.⁶ In turn, Taïsiia Zarets'ka examined the question of how the Polish minority institutions operated,⁷ while Liudmyla Hutsalo focused on the formation of nationally based administrative units.⁸ An important complement to all the aforementioned works is a paper by Nataliia Titova,⁹ in which she makes a historical and legal analysis of Ukrainisation in Podolia Hubernia between 1920 and 1923, whereas Elena Borisënok analyses the impact of the "Polish question" on the policies of the Ukrainian Bolsheviks.¹⁰ Borisënok also describes the Bolshevik programme for building socialism in Soviet Ukraine, and the interdependency of the policies of *korenizatsiia* for national minorities and the policies of Ukrainisation. Iryna Mironova, a scholar from Mykolaïv, makes a general analysis of nationality questions in Ukraine, and provides additional information about the Polish and German rural soviets.¹¹ Stanislav Kul'chyts'kyi

3 Mykhailo Marchuk, "Osvitnia polityka v Ukraïni v umovach natsional'no-kul'turnoho vidrodzhennia: Etonatsional'ni aspekty (1917 – kinets' 1920-kh rokiv)," *Etnichna istoriia narodiv Yevropy* 12 (2002), pp. 96–100 (98).

4 Yakubova, "Tsentral'na komisiiia natsional'nykh menshyn" (as cited in note 1), pp. 329–365.

5 Andrea Graziosi, *The Great Soviet Peasant War: Bolsheviks and Peasants, 1917–1933*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1997.

6 Bohdan Chirko, "Natsional'nye nemetskie raiony i sel'skie sovery," in S. Bobileva (ed.), *Nemcy Ukrainy: Pilotnyi sbornik: Materialy k encyklopedii 'Nemcy Rosii'*, vol. 7. Moskva: ERN, 2002, pp. 160–163 (162); Volodymyr Yevtuch, *Nimtsi v Ukraïni (1920-i – 1990-i roku)*, Kyïv: INTEL, 1994; Ivan Kulynych, *Narysy z istorii nimets'kykh kolonii v Ukraïni*. Kyïv: Instytut istorii Ukraïny, 1995.

7 Taïsiia Zarets'ka, "Pol's'ke naseleattia USRR u 1920-ti roky: Perekhid do radians'koho sposobu zhyttia," *Problemy istorii Ukraïny* 15 (2006), pp. 73–84 (73–76).

8 Liudmyla Hutsalo, *Natsional'no-terytorial'ne raionuvannia v USRR (20–30-ti roky XX st.): Avtoref. dys., d-ra ist. nauk*. Kyïv: Kyïvs'kyi un-t im. Tarasa Shevchenka, 2007.

9 Nataliia Titova, "Polityka 'ukraïnizacii' na terytorii Podil's'koi hubernii USRR (1920–1923): Istoryko-pravovyi analiz," *Naukovyi visnyk Uzhhorods'koho natsional'noho universytetu, seriia 'Pravo'* 30, no. 1 (2015), pp. 55–59 (57).

10 Elena Borisënok, "Vliianie pol'skogo faktora na politiku bol'shevikov po natsional'nomu voprosu: Bol'sheviki i ukrainskii vopros v 1917–1939 godach," in M. Volos (ed.), *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia 1917 goda i pol'skii vopros: Novye istochniki, novye vzgliady*. Moskva: Institut Slaviano-vedeniia, 2009, pp. 179–194.

11 Iryna Mironova, "Natsional'ne pytannia v URSR (1920–1980-ti rr.): Problemy ta shliakhy vyryshennia," *Istorychnyi archiv* 17 (2017), pp. 63–69.

has edited a collective volume containing a comprehensive study of the agrarian sector in the 1920s.¹² Thus researchers have already studied separate aspects of the topic, but newly discovered source materials offer even more differentiated insights into the NEP era.

The NEP and its legal impact

After the conquest of Ukraine, the Soviet authorities began to create rural soviets as the basic administrative body. They were known by the name *sel'sovet* in Russian, and *sil'rada* in Ukrainian.¹³ In March and April 1920, the first elections to such local soviets took place. The government created Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies in villages and hamlets, with a standard of one deputy for every 100 residents, but with not less than five and not more than fifty deputies for each locality.¹⁴ It also ordered the establishment of different sections within the rural soviets to deal with agricultural matters, culture and education, finances, administration and management, order, and sanitation.

The policies of so-called War Communism did not encourage the peasants to expand production. Consequently, at the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (RKP(b)), the delegates took the decision to move to a new economic policy, by which they intended to mobilise private initiative in all spheres of economic life. The introduction of the NEP in 1921 not only triggered individual economic activity among the rural population, but also provided a new and more authentic form of rural self-government.¹⁵ Despite state and party supervision, the rural soviets had a fairly broad range of competences relating to the organisation of village life.¹⁶ In Ukraine, the Bolshevik government completed the set of rural soviets in 1923.¹⁷ As a rule, a soviet would cover one village, although if a village was too small, the government allowed the formation of soviets covering two or more villages. For the purposes of election campaigns and the holding

12 Stanislav Kul'chyts'kyi (ed.), *Suspil'stvo i vlada v radians'kii Ukraini rokiv nepy (1921–1928). Kolektyvna monohrafiia*, vol. 2. Kyiv: Instytut istoriï Ukraïny NANU, 2015.

13 In full: *sel'ski soviet and sil's'ka rada*.

14 Volodymyr Korets'kyi (ed.), *Istoriia derzhavy i prava Ukraïns'koi RSR (1917–1960)*. Kyiv: Vyd. AN URSR, 1961, p. 173.

15 "Przegląd pracy rad i zadania jaczejek LKZMU we wsi polskiej," *Głos Młodzieży*, no. 33, 7 September 1927, p. 8 (see document 2.7).

16 Viktor Krasnikov, *Organizatsionno-pravovye osnovy deiatel'nosti mestnykh organov vlasti v nachale 1920-kh gg: Na materialakh Tambovskoi gubernii: Dissertatsiia na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni kandidata yuridicheskikh nauk*. Tambov: Tambovskii gosudarstvennyi universitet imeni G. Derzhavina, 2007, p. 17.

17 Stanislav Kul'chyts'kyi, "Lyenins'kyi nep: Tymchasovi vidstup chy vtrachena perspektyva? Chym bula prodyktovana nova ekonomichna polityka Lyenina i chomu bil'shovyky zhodomo zhorhuly ii," *Ukraïns'kyi tyzhden'*, 24/500, 16 June 2017, pp. 36–39.

of the elections themselves, the higher-level authorities appointed rural election commissions. Their tasks included selecting and registering candidates for the soviets, announcing the date of the election, and organising election meetings and the voting itself.¹⁸

A rural soviet was elected for a period of one year, by all residents entitled to vote. Usually the election commissions determined the number of candidates in such a way that a majority of them were “class disadvantaged” persons, i.e. people coming from the less wealthy sections of village society, referred to as “the poor.” The election commissions had the right to deprive the wealthiest peasants of their electoral rights on a charge of previous engagement in anti-Soviet activity or the use of hired labourers on their farms.¹⁹ If a local election commission did not manage to prevent “kulak” candidacies for rural soviets, the raion election commissions could remove them from the lists. In this way, the party tried to ensure a particular class makeup of the rural soviets. In everyday practice, state and party authorities manipulated the elections in such a way as to exclude “class enemies.”²⁰ However, in the early 1920s the level of party membership in the villages was so low that all they could do was try to ensure that a majority of seats on the soviet went to peasants with small landholdings, and that some seats went to landless peasants who had previously worked on manor farms.

The members of the rural soviet elected an executive committee (*vykonkom*), also known as the presidium. This was a permanent executive body and included the chair and deputy chair, a secretary, and selected soviet members. The first three officials were full-time employees. The soviet also employed an accountant, usually one or two administrative workers, and a caretaker. It supervised the village schools, medical assistance points, libraries and other cultural establishments. Its competences also included the registration of marriages, divorces, births and deaths.²¹

Superior authorities awarded the rural soviet’s budget, but each soviet could decide on its allocation. The NEP laws permitted rural soviets to conduct business activity. They could even set up enterprises (such as brickyards) and co-operatives, and supervise the work of the police on their territory. The state and party institutions paid much attention to the economic development of rural areas, and the stimulation of individual and collective activity. The regional Soviet

18 Valerii Beloramenskii, “Osobennosti sovremennoi kontseptsii mestnogo samoupravleniia,” *Pravovedenie* 5 (1993), pp. 36–44 (40).

19 “Shchob ne pomyltys’, zapytai! Pro pozbavleniia vyborchykh prav,” *Chervonyi Pluhatar*, no. 140, 4 February 1927, p. 1.

20 TsKNNM, Findings relating to the pre-election campaign to Polish selsoviets in Proskuriv Okruha in 1928/1929, 4 March 1929, TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 468, ark. 29–30.

21 Nataliia Kamins’ka, *Mistseve samovriaduvannia: Teoretyko-istopychnyi i porivnial’no-pravovyi analiz*. Kyiv: KNT, 2010, p. 65.

administration encouraged the use of fertilisation, modern farming methods, mechanisation and good-quality seed.²² In 1922, the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee (VUTsVK) and the Ukrainian Soviet of People's Commissars (RNK) had abolished local tax authorities and tasked the rural soviets with creating lists of taxpayers and supervising the payment of taxes – of course, under the overall direction of the regional tax authorities.²³

A characteristic feature in the NEP period was that the rural soviets supported entrepreneurial activity among peasants. First the authorities attempted to end the serious food shortages in the towns, and later to provide sufficient quantities of food to workers on industrial projects. Hence the rural soviets undertook initiatives to modernise cultivation methods and to encourage the use of fertilisers and mechanisation and to set up machinery and tractor stations.²⁴ Soviet propaganda also rewarded “exemplary farmers,” particularly those with small and medium-sized holdings.²⁵ During the NEP there was no active struggle against “kulaks” as such – attempts were made merely to collect all taxes due from them and not to allow them to hold public positions. Election commissions prevented “kulaks” from being elected to the rural soviets.²⁶ State and party propaganda spread the view that large or even medium-sized farms were the result of class exploitation, rather than inheritance or the resourcefulness and hard work of their owners.²⁷

The policy of *korenizatsiia*

Early in the 1920s the Ukrainian state administration also decided that rural soviets could have a national character. This was in accordance with the principles of the Leninist attempt to show that there was no oppression of national minorities in the Soviet state. In Ukraine, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVS) and the People's Commissariat for Education, Narkompros, initially implemented these policies, but soon the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (TsK KP(b)U) set up separate national minority sections, particularly

22 “Coraz lepiej,” *Głos Młodzieży*, no. 36, 28 September–2 October 1927, p. 8 (see document 2.6);

“Trzeba stanąć bliżej do mas,” *Głos Młodzieży*, no. 37, 5 October 1927, p. 8.

23 *Sobranie uzakonenii i raspriazhenii raboche-krest'ianskogo Pravitel'stva Ukrainy* (ed.), *Biuletten'*, no. 17 (1922), p. 279.

24 “Coraz lepiej” (as cited in note 22), p. 8; “Trzeba stanąć bliżej do mas” (as cited in note 22), p. 8.

25 “Pidvyshchuite robotu rad,” *Chervonyi Pluhatar* 187, 15 July 1927, p. 3.

26 “Pidvyshchuite robotu rad” (as cited in note 25), p. 3; Findings relating to the re-election campaign to Polish selsoviets in Proskuriv Okruha in 1928/1929, 4 March 1929, TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 468, ark. 29–30. See e.g. “Shchob ne pomyltys', zapytai!” (as cited in note 19), p. 1.

27 “Praca idzie kulawo. Wieś Stare Hucisko, okr. szepetowski,” *Głos Młodzieży* no. 34, 14 September 1927, p. 8.

at the level of the okruha party committees (*okruzhkomy*). The VUTsVK tried to regulate this intricate web of competing minority institutions in 1924, when it created an additional body to supervise the coordination of national minority matters: the Central Commission for National Minority Affairs (TsKNM). In conducting a fairly strong policy of Sovietisation, the authorities took certain steps in what was known as *korenizatsiia*,²⁸ or in the UkrSSR, *Ukrainisation*.²⁹ Their political aim was to mobilise the non-Russian Soviet population for the socialist project.

Since its founding in 1918, the KP(b)U had to struggle with factional divisions. With the end of the Civil War in 1920, these rivalries were carried out with particular severity. In principle, three groups competed for hegemony. The “Left,” the “Katerynoslav Group,” and the “Centrists.” While the “Left” and the “Katerynoslav” factions were critical of affirmative nationality policies, the “Centrists” advocated using the potential of the national question for party interests.³⁰ In the mid-1920s, the “Centrists” rose to become the dominant faction. While the other two factions were weakened in the wake of power struggles after Lenin’s death, the “Centrists” were able to invoke the resolutions of the Twelfth Party Congress and thus use the official party line in day-to-day political debates. The Centrists also advocated for the interests of the numerous national minorities within Ukraine.³¹

The “Centrists” attempted to combine communism with national movements. In particular, party leaders such as Mykola Skrypnyk and the former Borot’bist³² Oleksandr Shums’kyi, represented this faction. Panas Butsenko, from 1923 to 1927 secretary of the VUTsVK, was their close ally. Shums’kyi described his vision to the Plenum of the TsK KP(b)U in April 1925. There he complained that the party apparatus saw Ukrainisation as an unwelcome obligation, often

28 Oleg Chistiakov, “Korenizatsiia gosudarstvennogo apparata natsional’nykh raionov v pervye gody sovetsoi vlasti,” *Pravovedenie*, no. 1 (1965), pp. 164–168 (165).

29 Elena Borisënok, *Kontseptsii ‘ukraïnizatsii’ i ikh realizatsiia v natsional’noi politike v gosudarstvakh vostochnoevropetskogo regiona, 1918–1941 gg: Dis. D-ra ist. nauk*. Moskva: Rossiiskaia Akademiia Nauk, 2015; Elena Borisënok, “Obhovorennia problem ukraïnizatsii vyshchym partiinym kerivnychtvom u 1922–1923 rr.,” *Ukraïns’kyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, no. 4 (2000), pp. 90–99; Titova, “Polityka ‘ukraïnizatsii’” (as cited in note 9), pp. 55–59.

30 Memo by Afanasii [Panas] Butsenko on the national moment in the process of *raionirovanie* in Ukraine, July 1924, TsDAVO, f. 1, op. 2, spr. 1807, ark. 6–7; Elena Borisënok, *Fenomen sovetsoi’koi ukraïnizatsii, 1920–1930-e gody*. Moskva: Evropa, 2006, pp. 52–4; Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001, pp. 78–86.

31 Mykhailo Doroshenko, “Borot’ba za vladu rad u bil’shovyts’kii partii v 1923–1925 rokach ta ii vplyv na rozstanovku syl u partiino-derzhavnii verkhivtsi USRR,” *Problemy istorii Ukraïny*, no. 10 (2004), pp. 92–102; Panas Butsenko, Speech on the re-election campaign among the national minorities, 14 December 1927, DAMO, f. R-161, op. 1, spr. 701, ark. 4–5 (see document 3.2).

32 The Ukrainian Communist Party (Borotbists) was active from 1918 to 1920; see also: Jurij Borys, *The Russian Communist Party and the Sovietization of Ukraine: A Study in the Communist Doctrine of the Self-Determination of Nations*. Stockholm: Norstedt, 1960, p. 92.

sabotaging the process. He thus proposed to replace party personnel sent from Moscow with locals. Moreover, the use of the Ukrainian language should be extended to all areas of life.³³ Later, Stalin postulated that Shums'kyi was confusing the Ukrainisation of the Party apparatus with Ukrainisation of the proletariat.³⁴ Thus Shums'kyi became the target of criticism, and in February 1927 he lost his post as people's commissar for education.

Mykola Skrypnyk, Shums'kyi's successor as people's commissar for education, believed that Ukraine needed to have its own language, literature and art. He criticised the Stalinist vision of stepping up the class struggle and Moscow's interference in the internal Ukrainian affairs.³⁵ However, in 1930 *korenizatsiia* policies would begin to be rolled back, and the struggle against "nationalism" within the party would intensify. Two years later Skrypnyk would lose his position, and a subsequent party campaign would drive him to suicide.³⁶

Along with Ukrainisation in the mid-1920s, the state and party institutions supported the national minorities' political and cultural development. In enabling the use of the Ukrainian language within the administrative and party apparatus, there were also changes in favour of national minorities. One decisive step was the introduction of minority languages at the level of rural soviets and national raions. Gradually, they were empowered to interact in these languages with the central authorities (reports, regulations, etc.).³⁷

Political and legal regulation of the situation of national minorities

The class principle and the dictatorship of the proletariat provided the framework for relations between the Soviet authorities and national minority institutions. Hence the "free development" of the national minorities that Lenin proclaimed in 1917, could take place only within this setting. The NKVS's Department of National Minority Affairs, the TsKNM and the People's Commissariat for Education provided appropriate protection of the rights of national minorities. Moreover, the KP(b)U supervised and advised these institutions constantly. As a result, national administrative units took shape, a network of national prosecution authorities was set up, national languages were used in the work of the state apparatus, a network of national schools developed and literature was published

33 James E. Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation: National Communism in Soviet Ukraine, 1918–1933*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983, pp. 87–100.

34 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire* (as cited in note 30), pp. 85 and 214.

35 Matthew D. Pauly, *Breaking the Tongue: Language, Education, and Power in Soviet Ukraine, 1923–1934*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014, pp. 153–164.

36 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire* (as cited in note 30), pp. 345–356.

37 Okryvkonkom Vinnytsia to the TsKNM, 27 June 1927, TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 347, ark. 8.

in the languages of national minorities. In the 1924–25 school year there were 1,565 Russian schools operating in Ukraine, 566 German, 342 Jewish, 255 Polish, 43 Bulgarian, ten Czech, three Armenian and one Swedish school.³⁸

The state and party leadership created a network of special administrative units to direct the processes of *korenizatsiia*, including cultural, educational and scientific institutions. Administrative and court authorities began to operate in minority languages. In 1926 there were already more than 200 courts and prosecution bodies keeping documentation in minority languages, which according to the People's Commissariat for Justice, fully satisfied the requirements.³⁹

The ending of the Civil War, the move to peaceful construction, the start of the rebuilding of the economy, the dissatisfaction of the peasantry with the *prodrazvērstka*⁴⁰ – all this led to resistance against Soviet power, particularly in rural regions. In this context, party and state activists propagated their achievements. The minorities received their own periodicals, where the advantages of the new social order were set forth, alongside descriptions of everyday life and the problems faced. For example, publications in Polish included the weekly *Sierp* (The Sickles) with 3,000 copies printed, the biweekly *Głos Młodzieży* (Voice of the Youth) with 2,000 copies, and the children's magazine *Bądź gotów* (Be Prepared) again with 2,000 copies. In German there were *Das Neue Dorf* (The New Village) with 8,000 copies and the youth magazine *Die Saat* (The Seed) with 2,000 copies.⁴¹

The organisation of national administrative units began even before 1923, with the organisation of German, Bulgarian, Greek and Czech rural soviets. The Ukrainian government set up Polish, Jewish and Russian soviets slightly later. Nevertheless, the central authorities still shared a certain distrust towards certain national minorities. Polish and German communities were regarded as a potential “fifth column” (for Germany or Poland), and consequently the authorities attempted to resettle “unreliable elements” from the borderlands to more central regions of the Soviet state.⁴² Moreover, the authorities paid particular attention to the struggle against religion – associated with the preaching of clergy of various confessions – which they perceived as a relic of the bourgeois order.

38 Marchuk, “Osvitnia polityka” (as cited in note 3), p. 98.

39 Tetiana Ivanova, “Natsional'na polityka v SRSR u 1920-ti rr.,” *Naukovyi visnyk MNU im. V. O. Sukhomlyns'koho* 38/110, no. 3 (2014), pp. 104–109 (107).

40 *Prodrazvērstka* was between 1918 and 1921 a policy of confiscation of grain and other agricultural produce from peasant farms. Peasants were obliged to give up to the state, at fixed prices, surplus bread and other products (in excess of the norms established per person and per farm).

41 Report of the TsKNM to the Ukrainian Narkompros, 1925, TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 20, spr. 2172, ark. 11.

42 Report of the TsKNM, 1923, TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 347, ark. 3–4.

The central authorities were constantly seeking an optimum model for territorial division and administration. At the start of the *raionirovanie* (regionalisation) in 1923, they abolished the *volosti* (shires) and *uezdy* (pre-reform counties) of the Russian imperial era, and replaced them with a set of *okruhy* (post-reform counties) and *raions* (districts). Generally, they increased the size of all administrative units. This applied also to the rural soviets, which were to correspond to populations of not less than 1,000.⁴³ The distance between localities and the rural soviet to which they were subject was around three to six versts.⁴⁴ These indicators could be reduced only when the majority of inhabitants were not of Ukrainian nationality. In Kherson Huberniia, it was often hard to satisfy these demands because of the uneven distribution of the population. It was also necessary to consider the national composition of the population, the material situation of inhabitants of separate localities, and other factors. Nevertheless, in most cases the soviets were distributed more or less uniformly. At the end of 1924, the Odessa Bureau for National Minority Affairs expected that the targets for Odessa Huberniia could finally be met. The numbers of national rural soviets created in the huberniia were as follows: 42 German (covering a total of 163 localities), 31 Bulgarian (47 localities), two Polish (two localities), one Belarusian, one Albanian, one Moldovan, one Czech, and four Jewish ones (with six localities).⁴⁵

The central authorities tried to intensify their supervision of the national minorities. After 1924, the TsKNM played a very important role in organising their communal life.⁴⁶ On 19 February 1925, the VUTsVK adopted a resolution, which strengthened the lower-level administrative division and the creation of autonomous national administrative units. It also declared the task of extending the network of rural soviets to be urgent. Thus localities with a minority population of more than 500 could now form a rural soviet. In exceptional cases, with the approval of the *okruha* executive committees concerned, rural soviets could be organised for localities with populations of less than 500, if the distance to other rural soviet seats exceeded five versts. To give national minorities the opportunity to develop their culture and language, the Ukrainian Bolsheviks continued to promote the creation of national *raions* and rural soviets.⁴⁷ The 1925 Constitution of the UkrSSR provided a broad set of competences and privileges to the rural soviets.

43 "Osnovnye printsipy novogo administrativnogo deleniia," *Biulleten' NKVD USSR* 9 (1922), p. 8.

44 One *verst* corresponds to 1.07 kilometres.

45 Odessa Huberniia Bureau for National Minority Affairs, Report for the time period from 1 October to 31 December 1924, TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 17, ark. 92.

46 Marchuk, "Osvitnia polityka" (as cited in note 3), p. 98.

47 *Sobranie zakononii i raspriazhenii Raboche-Krest'ianskogo Pravitel'stva Ukrainy, Biulleten' 13-14* (1925), p. 99.

German rural soviets

In the course of the raionirovanie, the party and state administration considered it necessary to set up autonomous raions and rural soviets encompassing German colonies, particularly in the south. The raions were to consist of at least 300 farms or 12,000 people; in other localities with smaller German populations, national rural soviets were formed. In Mykolaïv Okruha, the German share of the population was particularly large, but following the new administrative division in 1923, some of the existing German rural soviets were abolished, while some were separated and transferred to other raions. On the one hand, the German population was no longer sufficiently represented within the local administration. Activists who did not know the lifestyle or language of the German population often headed the rural soviets and raion executive committees in the area.⁴⁸ On the other hand, Germans were not eager to swell the party's ranks. In Varvivka Raion (Mykolaïv Okruha), where most of the German settlements were concentrated, the party and state institutions had managed to build only three village community centres (*sel'buds*) by 1924.⁴⁹

Facing the neglect of the German population in Mykolaïv Okruha, the party and state institutions urged certain changes. On 30 April 1925, the VUTsVK and RNK thus approved the previous establishment of the German Landau Raion, soon after, it was renamed Karl-Liebnecht Raion. There, rural soviets were formed for Sulz, Johannistal, Karlsruhe, Katherinental, Landau, Speyer, Rohrbach, Worms and Rastadt.⁵⁰ While Mykolaïv Okruha consisted of nine raions and contained 141 rural soviets in May 1925, the Administrative Commission at the Mykolaïv Okrvykonkom proposed to increase the number of rural soviets to 160, including 35 national ones (14 German, six Moldovan, three Jewish, one Belarussian, one Bulgarian and ten Russian) in June 1925. This led to the abolition of six rural soviets and the creation of 25 new ones.⁵¹ In late August 1925, a session of the Odessa Okrvykonkom adopted a proposal to create a German national raion of Gross-Liebenthal.⁵² Later in 1926, the German national raion of Vysokopillia (Kronau) was created within Kherson Okruha.

48 Liudmyla Hutsalo, "Stanovlennia ta rozvytok systemy natsional'noho raionuvannia v Ukraïni v 20-kh rokakh XX stolittia," *Volyns'ki istorychni zapyski* no. 1 (2008), pp. 70–78 (72).

49 Zel'tser, Report of the Mykolaïv BNM, 02.1924–11.1924, DAMO, f. 1, op. 1, spr. 116, ark. 7–9.

50 Sobranie uzakonenii i rasporiashchenii Raboche-Krest'ianskogo Pravitel'stva Ukrainy, *Biuletyn'* 24 (1925), p. 178.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 179.

52 Protocol of the Odessa Okrvykonkom, August 1925, TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 145, p. 57.

Polish rural soviets

The Polish population was distributed all over Ukrainian territory, although 85 percent lived in the Right-Bank (Pravoberezhna) region. Soviet authority among peasants of Polish origin was mainly grounded in the poorest part of the population. Hence, Committees of Impoverished Peasants (KNS) organised in collective farming societies with the support of the rural soviets were expected to become the basis for the expansion of the Soviet system in the Polish-speaking countryside.⁵³

According to data from an incomplete census of 1920–1922, there were 309,800 Poles living in Ukraine, 53 percent of them in Volhynia Huberniia. Part of the Polish population migrated to Poland following the signing of the Riga Treaty in 1921, and some were resettled from the borderlands to the east and beyond the borders of Ukraine. The first to leave Ukraine, voluntarily, for Poland were urban residents and the intelligentsia: among them scientists, writers, journalists and artists. According to a 1924 census there were 239,429 persons of Polish nationality in Ukraine, with 31,672 living in Podolia Huberniia, 16,133 in Odessa Huberniia, 42,203 in Kiev Huberniia, 6,190 in Kharkiv Huberniia, 100,407 in Volhynia Huberniia, 1,331 in Chernihiv Huberniia, 30,370 in Donets'k Huberniia, 21,307 in Poltava Huberniia, and 8,818 in Katerynoslav Huberniia.⁵⁴ The attitude of the Soviet authorities to the Polish minority population was markedly affected by the events of the Polish-Soviet War. As Taïsiia Zarets'ka pointedly concluded:

For a whole decade the Soviet authorities constantly aroused anti-Polish sentiment. Poland was presented as an empire of absolute evil, one of the Soviet Union's chief enemies. Soviet newspapers, literature, films and the like kindled enmity towards the western neighbour and towards Poles as a nation.⁵⁵

Strengthening of the role of rural soviets in building socialism

In the years 1926–1929, the state and party institutions paid much attention to the management of rural soviets. One of the primary tasks in the building of the Soviet system was their administrative strengthening, because they “stood at the fore in the battle for the socialist transformation of agriculture, for the liquidation of the ‘kulaks’ as a class.”⁵⁶ To this end, in September 1926 the VUTSVK and

53 Preliminary instructions for the Polish KNM at the Gubispolkoms, January 1925, TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 99, ark. 10–12.

54 Extract from the protocol of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (UkrSSR), 8 August 1927, TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 10, ark. 30; Six-monthly report of the TsKNM to the VUTSVK, 1 April 1925, TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 10, ark. 88.

55 Zarets'ka, “Pol's'ke naseleння USRR” (as cited in note 7), pp. 73–74.

56 Korets'kyi (ed.), *Istoriia derzhavy* (as cited in note 14), p. 400.

the RNK approved a document titled “Instructions on the work of committees of rural soviets,” followed in October 1927 by a new “Decision on rural soviets,” which significantly increased the competences of the soviets, giving them powers in administrative and budgetary management. The soviets’ competences now included all organisational, administrative, financial and tax matters, the management of agriculture and of local industry and trade, regulation and protection of employment, and cultural and educational work. These decisions significantly increased the rights of the rural soviets in relation to land use and the land system, and gave them the competence to resolve land disputes.

Following the introduction in December 1929 of the “Decision on agricultural meetings at rural soviets,” they received broader management powers over agricultural societies, and they thus had to prepare and perform tasks directed towards the collectivisation of agriculture (creation of *sovkhos* and *kolkhoz* farms, machinery and tractor stations, cooperatives, etc.). The state and party activists also urged them to diversify crops, increase yields, and develop livestock breeding. In the end, the rural soviets practically ran the agricultural societies, implementing the party’s policies on the ground.

The process of creating national rural and neighbourhood soviets in Ukraine was carried on most intensely in the years between 1924 and 1927. In 1927, the country’s leadership considered the task of creating national rural soviets to be almost complete. Besides rural soviets, the number of neighbourhood soviets (in urban areas) also increased. National raions were created at a relatively fast rate. In 1925 there were seven such raions, in 1926 there were 11, and by 1931 there were 25 of them.⁵⁷

The main element of socio-political life in the national raions and rural soviets became the spreading of Soviet ideology. The National Sections in the KP(b)U had to carry out this task. Despite such propagandistic efforts, the Party never enjoyed the support it expected to gain. There were few party branches in minority areas. Nonetheless, each year, increased numbers of representatives of those minorities (Poles and Germans) became involved in the soviets at all levels, indicating increased socio-political activity among national minorities.

Conclusions

In the NEP era, the Bolsheviks expected to provide national minorities with “real” authority, exercised through their representatives in the rural soviets. For the communist government, however, the national-territorial units were

⁵⁷ Hutsalo, *Natsional'no-terytorial'ne raionuvannia v USRR* (as cited in note 8), p. 9.

simultaneously a means of strengthening its authority. Those units were to play an important role in the political, ideological and social stratification of the national minorities, the revealing of class enemy elements, and the intensification of the class struggle. Hence, the *korenizatsiia* policies were a part of a general plan for the ideological integration of the Union's republics. Objectively it favoured the growth of national awareness among minorities, their consolidation, and the loyalty of some of their representatives towards the new order. At the same time, *korenizatsiia* had an openly propagandistic character, aiming to transform national minorities into obedient builders of socialism. This was the main political motive behind the creation of national administrative units. The introduction of *korenizatsiia* was also linked to class ideology, although we should not overlook certain positive aspects in the spheres of education, culture, and the strengthening of minorities' national identities.

To the outside world, the Soviet authorities wished to demonstrate that they had solved the nationality question "fairly." The setting up of national rural soviets and raions made it possible to create a positive image abroad, as well as enabling the Sovietisation of national minorities, the ideologisation of their lives, and the identification and neutralisation of "class enemies," "nuisances," "spies" or simply "suspicious" persons. In a broader context, some of the national minorities were treated as a base for the dissemination of socialist revolution to the West. Hence the Soviet authorities directed their main attention towards socioeconomic development and the distribution of propaganda.

Thus we can conclude that Soviet nationality policies in the 1920s had a dual nature – attractive slogans, but also a totalitarian ideology and methods of implementation. On the one hand the Soviet government introduced universal compulsory primary education, created networks of schools, reading rooms, libraries and clubs, and founded periodicals and books in minority languages. On the other hand the Bolsheviks strictly controlled their content and ideological orientation, and tried to steer the cultural life of the rural population. One element of socio-political activity was participation in the elections to the soviets. The electoral process was carried out in the interest of a state under party control. National minorities wanted to preserve their traditions of economic life, but they came up against policies of nationalisation, ideologisation and schematisation. Alongside the Ukrainians, the representatives of national minorities lived through all of the trials of totalitarianism: political, socioeconomic and cultural experiments, as well as the mass repression and the great famine of the 1930s.

Stephan Rindlisbacher

The Reorganisation of Local Administration in Soviet Ukraine. The Example of Karl-Liebknecht Raion, 1924–1929

Introduction

The Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic became a laboratory for experimentation in state reorganisation during the New Economic Policy (NEP) era. On the one hand, the state economic planning agency *Gosplan* advanced ideas aimed at revitalising the economy by reorganising the administration (*raionirovanie*).¹ On the other hand, at its Twelfth Congress in 1923, the ruling Communist Party resolved to enhance its authority in the borderlands by promoting in targeted fashion representatives of the national minorities. In concrete terms, that meant compact minority communities in a certain territory were to be able to administrate themselves in their native language. Therefore, the party promoted the recruitment of national party cadres. Later, this approach became known under the catchword *korenizatsiia* (i.e., the rooting or indigenisation of Soviet power).² Ultimately, *korenizatsiia* as well as *raionirovanie* aimed to mobilise the entire population of the Soviet state for the party's socialist project.

In this chapter, I address the situation of the German minority in Soviet Ukraine in general terms, before moving on to examine the creation of minority institutions more closely. Next, I introduce actors entrusted with posts of responsibility in minority administration. I afterwards investigate the role of the party minority bureaus assigned to popularise the Bolshevik message. In addition, I look into the creation of the rural soviets and their tasks in order to provide a discussion of the general challenges of minority administration in Soviet Ukraine. Finally, I introduce three subordinate individuals of different biographical backgrounds who had all been involved in minority institutions. Thus, I am able to show that the German colonies saw *korenizatsiia* and *raionirovanie* as an

1 Konstantin Egorov, *Raionirovanie SSSR: Sbornik materialov po raionirovaniu s 1917 po 1925 god*. Moskva: Planovoe khoziaistvo, 1926, p. 11.

2 Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001, pp. 177–181; Bernhard V. Olivier, "Korenizatsiia," *Central Asian Survey* 9, no. 3 (1990), pp. 77–98 (77).

opportunity to achieve a *modus vivendi* with a Soviet state that ceased to treat them as enemies. The colonies went about their life as usual and ignored the agitation and propaganda on behalf of constructing socialism.

The German Landau Raion, later Karl-Liebkecht Raion, in Mykolaïv Okruha serves here as an example of how local self-administration was realised in practice. Today (in 2021) the previous centre Landau is named Shyrokolanivka. The village is part of the Mykolaïv Raion of the Mykolaïv Oblast'. Most of the former German settlements are now deserted. The Karl-Liebkecht Raion lends itself to analysis in particular, because its records from the 1920s are especially well-preserved in contrast to those of Vysokopillia (Kronau) Raion in Kherson Okruha, and because the number of Germans in Karl-Liebkecht Raion was in relative and absolute terms greatest in comparison with all of the other German raions in Ukraine.³ However, the fragmentary files for, say, Vysokopillia Raion help put conditions in Karl-Liebkecht into a context that allows comparison.

Favourable political preconditions in Soviet Ukraine

In 1926, just under 29 million people lived in the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. Of them, around 400,000 were of German nationality.⁴ These Germans resided in particular in the southern part of Ukraine. They were the descendants of German settlers who had come to the Russian Empire at the invitation of the tsars and tsarinas in the 18th and 19th century. The Russian government's reasoning behind such settlements was to establish a loyal layer of free peasants to help consolidate its own rule in territory recently seized from the Ottoman Empire. Further, the

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- 3 Population figures in the German minority raions according to the calculations by Meir Buchsweiler based on the 1926 census: *Volksdeutsche in der Ukraine am Vorabend und Beginn des Zweiten Weltkriegs: Ein Fall doppelter Loyalität?* Gerlingen: Bleicher, 1984, p. 147–148:
- | | |
|--|---|
| Karl-Liebkecht/Landau (Mykolaïv): | 24,200 Germans (90.0 percent of the population) |
| Gross-Liebental/Spartakus (Odessa): | 15,300 Germans (81.3 percent of the population) |
| Selz/Kuchurgan/Friedrich-Engels (Odessa): | 14,500 Germans (70.0 percent of the population) |
| Vysokopillia/Kronau/Petrovskiyi/Fritz-Heckert (Kherson): | 11,200 Germans (65.7 percent of the population) |
| Prischib/Pryshyb (Melitopol'): | 12,500 Germans (78.9 percent of the population) |
| Molochans'k/Halbstadt (Melitopol'): | 22,200 Germans (63.2 percent of the population) |
| Grunau/Rosa-Luxemburg (Mariupol'): | 15,300 Germans (81.3 percent of the population) |
| Pulin/Pulyny (Volyn') | 15,000 Germans (28.5 percent of the population) |

The Pulyny Raion counted as nationally mixed. There was a German national raion in planning for Khortytsia (Zaporizhzhia Okruha), but never realised.

- 4 Tsentral'noe statisticheskoe upravlenie (ed.), *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926 goda*, vol. 11: *Ukrainskaia Sotsialisticheskaia Sovietskaia Respublika: Poleskii podraion*. Moskva: TsSU SSSR, 1929, pp. 8–11; on this also, report of the Foreign Office and the Reich Ministry of the Interior on the population figures and the national minorities in Ukraine, 25 May 1925, PA AA, R 84264.

economic methods of the German settlers were considered progressive and, over time, were supposed to influence the indigenous population.⁵

German colonists were often members of Christian movements such as the Mennonites, who hoped to escape religious repression in their homelands. The imperial Russian government held out the promise of autonomy in questions of religion and education. The German settlers also enjoyed additional privileges, such as exemption from military service.⁶ German colonists felt a deep sense of religious belonging, which was passed down from generation to generation. Such feelings led them to close themselves off from their Ukrainian neighbours as well as from German speaking colonies of other confessions. The aforementioned Mennonite communities were particularly inclined to set themselves apart. Thus, in Melitopol' Okruha, the Mennonites of Molochans'k (Halbstadt) Raion refused – ultimately with success – to merge with the German colonies of Pryshyb Rayon. As a result, the colonies of Pryshyb Raion were excluded from the German national raion centred on Molochans'k.⁷ Many Mennonite colonists spoke a Low German dialect, common to northwest Germany, which enabled them to identify as German or Dutch, as was politically opportune.⁸ At the same time, however, they also maintained contacts to other Mennonite colonies, especially in North America. In light of the political upheaval caused by the Civil War, many Mennonites sought to use these ties and emigrate from southern Ukraine to North America. The Soviets did not deny them permission to leave outright, but they certainly encumbered the process by bureaucratic means.⁹

5 Buchsweiler, *Volksdeutsche in der Ukraine* (as cited in note 3), p. 109; Benjamin Pinkus, Ingeborg Fleischhauer and Karl-Heinz Ruffmann, *Die Deutschen in der Sowjetunion: Geschichte einer nationalen Minderheit im 20. Jahrhundert*. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1987, pp. 40–49.

6 Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Khersonskoi oblasti et al. (eds.), *Nemtsy Khersonshchiny: Annotirovannyi perechen' del Gosudarstvennogo arkhiva Khersonskoi oblasti (1919–1930)*. Odessa: Astroprint, 2002, pp. 3–14; Buchsweiler, *Volksdeutsche in der Ukraine* (as cited in note 3), p. 109; Alfred Eisfeld, *Deutsche Kolonien an der Wolga 1917–1919 und das Deutsche Reich*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1985, pp. 19–20.

7 Buchsweiler, *Volksdeutsche in der Ukraine* (as cited in note 3), p. 149; on the resistance of the Mennonites against German activists from the party: German General Consulate Kharkiv, On Resistance of the Mennonites against *Raionirovanie*, 25 September 1924, PA AA, R 84284 (see document 6.5).

8 Alfred Eisfeld, “Deutsche Autonomiebewegungen in der Ukraine und in Westsibirien 1917–1918,” in idem. et al. (eds.), *Deutsche in Russland und in der Sowjetunion 1914–1941*. Münster: LIT, 2007, pp. 127–144 (133).

9 Larysa Yakovleva et al. (eds.), *Nimtsi v Ukraïni: Zbirnyk dokumentiv derzhavnykh archiviv Ukraïny*. Kyiv: Instytut Istorii, 1994, pp. 7–8; Pinkus, Fleischhauer, and Ruffmann, *Die Deutschen in der Sowjetunion* (as cited in note 5), pp. 126–128; Buchsweiler, *Volksdeutsche in der Ukraine* (as cited in note 3), pp. 111–116; Viktor Chentsov, “Deutsche in der Südukraine. Analyse von Gerichtsakten,” in Eisfeld et al. (eds.), *Deutsche in Russland* (as cited in note 8), pp. 288–306, here pp. 298–299; resolution of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee on the emigration of Mennonite communities, 6 March 1926, TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 2, spr. 10, ark. 5; German Consulate in Kharkiv, measures against the mass migration of Mennonites, 25 June 1924, PA AA, R 84264.

In many respects, the German colonies stood out from their surroundings. Although the overwhelming majority of the Germans lived in the countryside, their average level of education was nonetheless considerably higher than among persons who professed to be of Ukrainian or Russian nationality in the 1926 census.¹⁰ Furthermore, the German colonies were often economically more successful than neighbouring villages. In the 19th and early 20th century the German peasants in southern Ukraine, and in Crimea, had steadily increased the size of their acreage. Many of them had also had the means to employ day labourers in their fields, mostly Ukrainians. Even though they had become targets of tsarist anti-German policies during the Great War, the German colonists were mostly sceptical of the revolutionary Soviet government. Relatively well-educated and economically influential in southern Ukraine, the Germans were also hardly receptive to Bolshevik ideas out of religious conviction. Furthermore, many colonists had organised self-defence formations during the occupation by the Central Powers and cooperated with the German or Austrian armies. Ultimately, many of these formations actively resisted the Red Army's advance.¹¹

In the years between 1917 and 1923, none of the state powers paid much attention to the German colonies in southern Ukraine (aside from suppressing uprisings). Administrative boundaries were shifted without taking into account national points of view. The Bolshevik policy of nationalising land left the German colonies in an especially precarious situation, since the surrounding Ukrainian villages appropriated large parts of the land that Germans had used beforehand. All of these factors contributed to a general impoverishment among the colonies.¹² This trend was what the Soviet government hoped to offset with the creation of German rural soviets and raions.¹³

The formation of German national rural soviets

Between 1923 and 1925, the leadership of the Soviet-Ukrainian state apparatus dissolved the administrative units that stemmed from the pre-revolutionary era.

10 TsSU SSSR (ed.), *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926 goda*, vol. 11 (as cited in note 4), p. 9.

11 Yakovleva et al. (eds.), *Nimtsi v Ukraïni* (as cited in note 9), pp. 4–5; Buchsweiler, *Volksdeutsche in der Ukraine* (as cited in note 3), pp. 117–122, 134; Eisfeld, “Deutsche Autonomiebewegungen” (as cited in note 8), pp. 137–140; Alexander Beznosov, “Zur Frage der Beteiligung der deutschen Kolonisten und der Mennoniten am Bürgerkrieg im Süden der Ukraine,” in Eisfeld et al. (eds.), *Deutsche in Russland* (as cited in note 8), pp. 145–158 (147–152).

12 Alfred Eisfeld and Larisa Levchenko (eds.), *Nemtsy v Nikolaevshchine 1918–1931 gg. // Deutsche der Region Nikolaev 1918–1931*. Donetsk: Donbass, 2013, pp. 8–9; Chentsov, “Deutsche in der Südukraine” (as cited in note 9), pp. 292–294.

13 Wehner's field trip report, 10 April 1923, TsDAVO, R-f. 5, op. 1, spr. 2239, ark. 17 (see document 6.2).

The provincial-level *huberniia*, or *guberniia* in Russian, the county-level *povit*, or *uezd* in Russian, and commune-level *volost'*, the same in Russian, were gradually replaced by a simplified system of *okruha* (Rus. *okrug*) at the primary level, the *raion* at the secondary level, and *sil'rada* (Rus. *sel'sovet*), the rural soviet, at the tertiary level. The urban areas such as Mykolaïv or Kharkiv had distinct town soviets.¹⁴ The general goal of this process, called *raionirovanie*, was carried out, for one, to save money in administration, and, for another, to bring the administration closer to the people. In an ideal situation, the lower administrative levels were supposed to be able to finance themselves by tax revenues. These goals may have been seldom realised, but *raionirovanie* provided a suitable opportunity for creating minority institutions. Moreover, the government in Kharkiv lowered the minimum size for national-territorial vis-à-vis “regular” Ukrainian administrative units. For this reason, Karl-Liebknecht Raion was somewhat smaller in terms of people and area in comparison with neighbouring raions in Mykolaïv Okruha.¹⁵

By February 1930, six further German raions were created in Ukraine in addition to the Karl-Liebknecht Raion. These embraced most of the 254 German rural soviets that existed on the territory of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic at the time.¹⁶ Not long after the establishment of the Landau Raion at the end of 1924, the district was renamed Karl-Liebknecht Raion.¹⁷ This change, however, was not implemented evenly. Consequently, the designations “Landau” and “Karl-Liebknecht” were often used parallel to one another. About 27,000 people (of which about 24,200 were Germans) lived in this raion, distributed over an area of somewhat more than 900 sq km (347 sq miles) in 12, later 14 rural soviets.¹⁸ A rural soviet encompassed respectively several settlements and hamlets around a central village. The rural soviets were usually named for the central village. These in turn often leaned on the names of towns from the colonists' previous

14 Afanasii [Panas] Butsenko, *K voprosu raionirovaniia Ukrainy: Kratkii obzor rabot po raionirovaniu USSR*. Khar'kov: Gusudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1925, pp. 11–13.

15 A regular raion was supposed to have at least 25,000 inhabitants. See: Egorov, *Raionirovanie SSSR* (as cited in note 1), pp. 241–242; Meir Buchsweiler, *Russlanddeutsche im Sowjetsystem bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg: Minderheitenpolitik, nationale Identität, Publizistik*. Essen: Klartext Verlag, 1995, pp. 46–50; TsSU USRR (ed.), *Natsional'nyi sklad sil's'koho naseleattia Ukrainy*. Kharkiv: Vydannia TsSU USRR, 1927, pp. 110–113.

16 The total number of 254 German rural soviets follows a statistic of the TsKNM: Growth dynamic of national rural soviets and raions in the Soviet Union, 21 February 19[30], TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 451, ark. 36 (see document 3.3).

17 Eisfeld and Levchenko (eds.), *Nemtsy v Nikolaevshchine* (as cited in note 12), p. 23.

18 TsSU USRR (ed.), *Natsional'nyi sklad sil's'koho naseleattia* (as cited in note 15), pp. 111–112; investigation into the national minorities in Mykolaïv Okruha, DAMO, f. P-1, op. 1, spr. 116, ark. 16–18; file on the creation of Landau Raion, 16 December 1924, DAMO, f. R-161, op. 1, spr. 201, ark. 3–5 (see document 5.3); Eisfeld and Levchenko (eds.), *Nemtsy v Nikolaevshchine* (as cited in note 12), pp. 11–17; cartographic sketch of the projected Landau Raion, 20 December 1923, TsDAVO, f. 5, op. 1, spr. 2239, ark. 116.

homeland: München, Rastadt, Worms, Waterloo, Speyer, Sulz, Landau, Schönfeld, Johannistal, Katherinental, Karlsruhe, and Halbstadt. The size of the population of the rural soviets in Karl-Liebknecht Raion could vary considerably: for example, the area of the Rohrbach Rural Soviet contained somewhat more than 3,100 inhabitants, while about 650 persons lived within the area of the Schönfeld Rural Soviet.¹⁹ The Communist Party did not have deep roots among the raion's population. However, the local party branch could manage to increase the numbers of German party members and candidates from 21 in 1924 to 42 in the end of 1926 and then to 128 in early 1928.²⁰

The administrative language within the Karl-Liebknecht Raion may have been German, but communication with the okruha administrative centre in Mykolaïv and the republic capital in Kharkiv was conducted in Russian or Ukrainian. By contrast, documentation within party structures on the ground took place almost exclusively in Russian. For this reason, the written documents from this raion are to be found in three languages: depending on the situation, they appear in Russian, but also in part in German and sometimes in Ukrainian as well.

“Alien” functionaries

Between 1924 and 1929, Johann Merz and Rudolf Anson were the most influential political actors within Karl-Liebknecht Raion. The former occupied the post of the chairman of the Raion Executive Committee (Rayon Vollzugskomitee, RVK),

19 According to TsSU USRR (ed.), *Natsional'nyi sklad sil's'koho naseleennia* (as cited in note 15), pp. 111–112, the individual rural soviets showed during the 1926 census following population figures:

Worms	2,013 (1,915 Germans)
Waterloo	1,595 (1,362 Germans)
Halbstadt	1,119 (807 Germans)
Sulz	2,562 (2,435 Germans)
Johannistal	1,295 (1,160 Germans)
Karlsruhe	2,431 (2,199 Germans)
Karl-Liebknecht	2,788 (2,528 Germans)
Katherinental	2,372 (2,009 Germans)
München	1,050 (1,005 Germans)
Mykhailivka	668 (423 Germans)
Rastadt	2,623 (2,439 Germans)
Rohrbach	3,135 (2,907 Germans)
Schönfeld	707 (554 Germans)
Speyer	2,534 (2,450 Germans)

20 Activity Report of the German Section within the Mykolaïv Okruha Party Committee, 24 September 1924, DAMO, f. P-1, op. 1, spr. 120, ark. 52 (see document 3.6); Report of the German Section at the Mykolaïv Okruzhkom, December 1926, DAMO, f. P-1, op. 1, spr. 300, ark. 21; List of party members from the Karl-Liebknecht Raion, early 1928, DAMO, f. P-12, op. 1a, spr. 5, ark. 123–124.

while the latter was active both within the RVK as well as the *raipartkom*, the highest party organ in the raion. Most petitions from the rural soviets and village party cells were directed to them, and they in turn represented the raion vis-à-vis their superiors in the state and party hierarchy.

Johann Merz was born in Riga in 1885 and, in 1905, became an active member of the local Social Democrats. That same year, he was sentenced to 20 years forced labour for membership in a terrorist association and sent to Siberia. After the February Revolution in 1917, he returned to Russia and joined the Bolsheviks. During the Civil War, he served in the Red Army. When the war was over, he led the executive committee in a *volost'* and, after the reorganisation of the administration, a raion of Odessa Okruha respectively. Recognised for his zealous engagement on behalf of the party, Merz ultimately received the post of secretary of the Karl-Liebknecht RVK.²¹

Rudolf Anson was significantly younger than Merz. Born in 1897, in what would later be part of Latvia, he had completed locksmith training and then joined the Red Guards in 1917 during the revolution. In the Red Army, he quickly rose to become a non-commissioned officer. By 1918, he was a party member and in 1924, barely 28 years old, held a leading position within the land administration of the Karl-Liebknecht minority raion. In May 1926, he advanced to secretary of the *raipartkom*. Anson saw himself as a Latvian, but claimed German as his native language.²²

It was no coincidence that these two top posts within the local administration were not entrusted to locals, but instead to German-speaking cadres from the workers' milieu who had already proven their loyalty vis-à-vis the party before 1917.²³ In the German raion administration they had to busy themselves above all with the construction and maintenance of a network of schools and other educational facilities, as well as with the partitioning of land. By contrast, the party cells coordinated agitation and propaganda in the German colonies.

Leading functionaries like Anson and Merz had two main tasks. First, they had to popularise the idea of forming collective enterprises. Second, the party sought to win over new members for the organisations close to the party. The Committees of Impoverished Peasants (KNS) and the mutual assistance associations (KOV, KVP) received particular attention. Even though the response from the population was not that excited, to say at least, the rural soviet administration had to advertise these institutions. In case they failed to do so to the extent their

21 Personnel questionnaire for Johann Merz, [1925], DAMO, f. R-161, op. 1, spr. 853, ark. 356-357 (see document 1.1).

22 Personnel questionnaire for Rudolf Anson, DAMO, f. R-161, op. 1, spr. 853, ark. 51-52 (see document 1.3).

23 Buchsweiler had already pointed this out: *Volksdeutsche in der Ukraine* (as cited in note 3), pp. 154-155.

superiors required, the latter intervened. For instance, after asserting a lack of activity in the Rohrbach KNS and KOV, Johann Merz and Rudolf Anson went together to Rohrbach on 28 September 1925 to compile a catalogue of shortcomings regarding the rural soviet's work there. Afterwards they formulated precise requirements as to what the chairman of the Rohrbach Rural Soviet would have to do better.²⁴

Aside from the rural poor, the rural youth was a particular target group for the party organisations, as their worldview was still considered fluid. The Pioneers and Komsomol organisations served as a means of mobilising children as well as adolescents and young adults, respectively.²⁵ Meetings and public events were performed to show the party's presence in the village. Local party activists sought to equip the rural community centres with propagandistic literature to bring the youngsters in contact with Bolshevik ideas.²⁶

Among cadre functionaries, however, disputes and outright power struggles emerged. In the spring of 1925, a certain Hubert was appointed to lead the *raipartkom* in Karl-Liebkecht. Shortly after taking office, it must have come to a clash with Johann Merz, as the latter then tried to use a control commission to discredit Hubert as "unstable and fickle." Hubert knew how to take care of himself and maintained his post as party secretary for the time being.²⁷ In 1926, however, Anson replaced him.

The autonomous national rural soviets seemed at first glance to contradict the Bolsheviks' claim to establishing a centralised state. However, the Soviet government of the 1920s recognised therein a dialectical relationship. The national rural soviets were supposed to make it possible for the Soviet state to gain access to all segments of the population. The people on the ground were not supposed to perceive the state as alien, rather they were supposed to be able to identify with it by means of their own language and culture. However – and herein lay the dialectical moment as well – only those persons who seemed suitable from the point of view of Kharkiv or Moscow were supposed to attain decisive positions. The rigid selection of cadres was one of the essential features of "democratic centralism."²⁸

24 Johann Merz, Rudolf Anson, file on the evaluation of the administration of the Rohrbach Rural Soviet, 28 September 1925, DAMO, f. R-161, op. 1, spr. 1158, ark. 9–11 (see document 5.6).

25 German Consulate in Odessa, On the German Section in the Party Leadership of Odessa, 3 June 1924, PA AA, R 84282 (see document 6.4).

26 Activity Report of the German Section in Mykolaïv Okruha, DAMO, f. P-1, op. 1, spr. 120, ark. 52 (as cited in note 20); Wehner's Report on a field trip (as cited in note 13), TsDAVO, R-f. 5, op. 1, spr. 2239, ark. 17.

27 Hubert, Raion Party Secretary in Landau, Report to the German Section in Mykolaïv, 6 September 1925, DAMO, f. P-12, op. 1a, spr. 1, ark. 129 (see document 3.9).

28 Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917–1923*. London: St. Martin's Press, 1999, pp. 51–52; Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2005, pp. 7–8.

Minority institutions

From the start of *korenizatsiia*, Soviet Ukraine was covered in its entirety with a net of minority affairs bureaus and commissions. Although this net was not tightly knit, officials travelled from the towns to the countryside again and again to inquire about the state of affairs. During one trip through German villages, religious practices attracted the attention of staff members from the German Section at the Mykolaïv Okruha Party Committee (Okruzhkom):

As characteristic [of the situation], it is to be noted that in all of those colonies where the [youth] organisations work poorly or are united with other organisations, religious cults exist for the most part, e.g. in the colony JOHANNISTAL, a movement that was until now not known in the German colonies, namely the following: they may recognise communism, but with a God. We have not yet succeeded in finding the leaders of these cults. There then follows the colony WATERLOO – where there is a Baptist movement.²⁹ Colony NEUDANZIG³⁰ – where almost all of the Lutherans and Catholics have become Baptists. The matter is very serious.³¹

Two major actors in the Central Bureau of the German Sections of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (Bolsheviks) (KP(b)U) in the mid-1920s were Josef Haftl and Ignaz Gebhart. Both hailed from Austria-Hungary and subsequently ended up as Russian prisoners of war during the First World War. After the war, they remained in Ukraine and ultimately found work in the rapidly growing state and party apparatus. While Haftl was above all active in publishing, Gebhart preoccupied himself with building up party structures in areas with a German minority.³²

In his publishing activity, Haftl was able to draw on considerable resources. To reach the German-speaking population and make it receptive to the message of the Soviet authorities, the KP(b)U launched in October 1925 a German newspaper that appeared twice a week: *Das Neue Dorf* (The New Village). In mid-1927, this newspaper had approximately 10,000 subscribers, among them around 360 in Mykolaïv Okruha, which, as a share of German-speaking inhabitants, was a relatively small number.³³ The newspaper *Die Saat* (The Seed) was published

29 I.e. Mennonites.

30 Neu-Danzig was a German rural soviet in Mykolaïv Raion.

31 Activity Report of the German Section at the Mykolaïv Okruzhkom, DAMO, f. P-1, op. 1, spr. 120, ark. 52 (as cited in note 20).

32 Alfred Eisfeld and Aleksandr Rublëv (eds.), *Delo 'Natsional'nogo soiuzn nemtsev na Ukraine' 1935–1937 gg: Dokumenty i materialy*. Kyïv: Vydavnytstvo Klio, 2016, pp. 71–72.

33 Overview of Subscribers to *Das Neue Dorf* (The New Village), April and May 1927, DAMO, f. R-161, op. 1, spr. 701, ark. 256 (see document 4.4).

for adolescents.³⁴ This paper's young readers kept abreast of the latest legislation, the regular elections to the rural soviets, as well as opportunities for organising cooperative enterprises. Furthermore, these newspapers served as a platform for denouncing local functionaries and rural soviets that had ostensibly or objectively failed to meet the party's expectations.³⁵ The case of the authorised representative of the trade union association in Rastadt, a certain Steinhardt, provides a vivid example. In October 1926, it was reported in *Das Neue Dorf*:

[...] He is often drunk. If the peasants come to him in order to conclude contracts for their workers, Steinhardt usually has "no time."

[...] [T]he agricultural workers also complain about him, as he does not represent their interests as members of the association. It is high time to relieve this authorised representative of his office, for he represents only the interests of large peasants. It would also be appropriate for the trade union organisation in the raion to take up this matter, as the association's work here is being subverted under the prevailing circumstances.³⁶

Further, *Das Neue Dorf* also offered a forum for praising model rural soviets, as well as for complaining about grievances on the part of the population.³⁷

Elections and the tasks of the rural soviets

Election for representatives to the rural soviets were held regularly. This was a managed process, during which the higher authorities orchestrated election propaganda.³⁸ Moreover, persons who seemed suspicious to the Soviet state, for example, so-called kulaks or clergy lost their active or passive right to vote. The

34 On the circulation of the newspaper *Die Saat* (The Seed) among German youth in Ukraine, 26 October 1926, DAKhmel'O, f. 1602, op. 1, d. 163, l. 171.

35 On this: "Zur Umwahl der Dorfräte," *Das Neue Dorf*, no. 1, 17 October 1925, p. 1; "Die Entwicklung der landwirtschaftlichen Kollektive in der Ukraine," *Das Neue Dorf*, no. 22, 13 March 1926, p. 1; "Zuschriften aus dem Dorfe," *Das Neue Dorf*, no. 78/28, 15 January 1927, p. 5.

36 No. 363, "Aus dem Nikolaewer Kreise, Rastadt. Ein feiner Bevollmächtigter," *Das Neue Dorf*, no. 55/5, 20 October 1926, p. 3.

37 "Der Landauer Dorfrat an der Arbeit," *Das Neue Dorf*, 11 March 1928, no. 42 (188), p. 5; Dorfkorr. Nr. 410, "Katharinental. Landfragen," *Das Neue Dorf*, 5 May 1927, no. 57 (107), p. 3 (see documents 2.5).

38 Panas Butsenko, instructions for the election to the rural soviets, 1 December 1925, DAKhersO, f. R-311, op. 1, spr. 7, ark. 20–25; Panas Butsenko, provisions for the implementation of the instructions for the election of rural soviets, 14 December 1925, DAKhersO, f. R-311, op. 1, spr. 7, ark. 29–30; Panas Butsenko, provisions for the implementation of the instructions for the election of rural soviets, 16 December 1925, DAKhersO, f. R-311, op. 1, spr. 7, ark. 34–35. Letter from Johann Merz to the rural soviets of the Karl-Liebknecht Raion, 28 December 1925, DAMO, f. R-262, op. 2, spr. 40, ark. 2–3.

remaining electorate had often the choice between different candidates many of whom were no party members. They could vote in favour or against a certain candidate or abstain from their vote. Unlike their counterparts in liberal democracies, local election commissions in the early Soviet state did not function primarily to assess the lawful conduct of an election, rather to determine who was allowed to participate in elections. These commissions were an important means of power for the Soviet state to influence local politics in its spirit.³⁹ The peasants' distrust of these commissions was correspondingly high. Many of Waterloo's citizens abstained from voting when they were supposed to determine the make-up of their rural soviet election commission in late 1925. Although Jakob Huhn, the chairman of the Waterloo Rural Soviet, ran for a seat on the commission, the assembled citizens ultimately preferred other candidates.⁴⁰ Within this limited framework, the electorate could then designate their local political representatives.⁴¹ However, higher authorities could also annul the respective election results in the event of an outcome that seemed unfavourable to them.⁴²

Alongside questions of land distribution and taxation, the rural soviets were also responsible for promoting culture and ensuring that the villagers lived in peace with one another. Only the chairman, the deputy chairman, and the clerk of the rural soviet were paid a salary (albeit a tiny one). All of the other members worked on a volunteer basis. Drawing from its members, the rural soviet would form a commission that concerned itself with a certain area of local administration and had to file regular reports. Thus, the Waterloo Rural Soviet had a finance commission for matters of taxation, a land commission for the distribution of land, a culture commission for the village school, the local community centre (*sel'bud*), and reading room (*khata chital'nia*), and a sanitation commission, which acted as a kind of public works board, for road maintenance, the fire brigade, as well as public health matters.⁴³

39 Tracy McDonald, *Face to the Village: The Riazan Countryside under Soviet Rule, 1921–1930*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011, p. 106.

40 Elections to the Waterloo Election Commission, 28 December 1925, 28 December 1925, DAMO, f. R-262, op. 2, spr. 40, ark. 26 (see document 2.3).

41 Josef Haftl, "Die Resultate der Umwahlen in den deutschen Dorfräten," *Das Rote Dorf*, no. 1, 17 October 1925 [?], pp. 1–2.

42 "Teilweise Kassierung der Sowjetwahlen," *Das Neue Dorf*, 28 February 1925, No. 46, p. 1.

43 Protocol of the rural soviet meeting no. 7 of Waterloo, 18 March 1925, DAMO, f. R-262, op. 2, spr. 2, ark. 16–17 (see document 2.2.); Protocol no. 11 of the meeting of the cultural section of the Waterloo Rural Soviet, 8 December 1925, DAMO, f. R-262, op. 2, spr. 7, ark. 5; Letters of Glaubrecht Klein, village school principal in Vysokopillia/Kronau, to the Vysokopillia/Kronau Rural Soviet, 24 April–3 May 1926, DAKhersO, f. R-336, op. 1, spr. 17, ark. 101 and 103 (see documents 2.9).

The rural assembly (*sel'skii skhod*) where all citizens entitled to vote came together and the land commune (*zemel'noe obshchestvo*) where all of the heads of households (*khoziaeva*) met could impose taxes and levies in order to finance local projects. As mentioned in the introduction of this volume, in everyday practice, it was often difficult to differentiate between these institutions and local actors themselves did not always observe the distinctions between them.⁴⁴ Local taxes and levies could, for example, finance amelioration projects or the maintenance of roads, bridges, and wells.⁴⁵ These extra funds served many rural soviets also as a back-up means for fulfilling its tasks, as the soviets themselves were often underfinanced.⁴⁶

Alongside maintenance of the village school and apartments for teachers, the rural soviets had many additional responsibilities. They had to keep track for births and for all legal questions arising from the death of a community member.⁴⁷ Moreover, the rural soviets had to look after orphans within their jurisdiction and see to their well-being.⁴⁸ Finally, rural assemblies were also able to issue police clearance certificates to individuals upon request. The certificates could then be used in correspondence with other state offices.⁴⁹

Party and state officials also mobilised women despite opposition on the ground.⁵⁰ Committees emerged to advocate on behalf of the concerns of peasant women. A priority issue of such initiatives was the elimination of illiteracy. However, the emancipation of women in and of itself was not an end, rather the means of winning over the population for the Bolshevik project, in particular for collectivisation.⁵¹ Under this policy, women were promoted to take on local leadership functions. The election of the cook Eva Pfaff as chairwoman of the Karl-Liebnecht Rural Soviet was a premiere. She became the first chairwoman of a German rural soviet in Ukraine. Accordingly, Soviet propaganda celebrated this as a tremendous success for its emancipation policy.⁵² Pfaff fulfilled the

44 McDonald, *Face to the Village* (as cited in note 39), pp. 110–118.

45 File of the Waterloo Commune on the collection of money for land management, 4 January 1926, DAMO, f. R-262, op. 2, spr. 97, ark. 1.

46 McDonald, *Face to the Village* (as cited in note 39), pp. 114–116.

47 Emanuil' Vunderse, inventory of the property of the deceased Gotlib Freiberger, citizens of Kniazevka, DAKhersO, f. R-336, op. 1, spr. 10, ark. 128.

48 List of orphans from the village Ol'gino in the area of the Vysokopillia Rural Soviet of, between 9 May 1924 and 1 August 1927, DAKhersO, f. R-336, op. 1, spr. 10, ark. 179

49 Police certificates for Andreas Huhn and Frederika Mann from the Waterloo Rural Assembly, 24 November 1925, DAMO, f. R-262, op. 2, spr. 9, ark. 38–39 (see document 2.1).

50 McDonald, *Face to the Village* (as cited in note 39), p. 107.

51 Protocol no. 4 of the assembly of the Landau women's organisation, 14 June 1925, DAMO, f. P-12, op. 1a, spr. 1, ark. 62 (see document 4.5).

52 "Die erste Frau als Vorsitzende eines deutschen Dorfrats," *Das Neue Dorf*, no. 91/41, 5 March 1927, p. 3 (see document 4.6).

expectations placed in her and was expressly praised in *Das Neue Dorf* for her energetic service a year later.⁵³

Challenges confronting German-language administration

In practice, the planned change in the administrative language from Russian to German did not proceed without problems. For example, the correspondence of party members as well as the minutes of the meetings within the German Section of the Mykolaïv Okruha were kept in Russian.⁵⁴ This state of affairs could be justified by the fact that documents were supposed to be written in a language understood by superiors. However, if one sets aside areas of party activity and considers, for example, legally binding agreements for the exchange of land between citizens of the German rural soviets, then these were likewise written in Russian.⁵⁵

If one looks at the German-language documents found among the records of the party and state administration, then it also becomes clear that many who wrote in German clearly had difficulty with the standard German language.⁵⁶ The words in these documents may be German, but the syntax is very close to Russian. Over and over, Russian loanwords also surface in these documents. Thus, the Russian word *remont* is often used instead of *Reparatur* for repair.⁵⁷ The lack of qualified German-speaking personnel was repeatedly lamented by different sides.⁵⁸ After all, it was the goal of *korenizatsiia* to reach the population through language, to enlighten it regarding the Soviet government's socialist aims, and ultimately to mobilise it. In doing so, party and state functionaries were supposed to avoid offending the local population in matters of language as much as possible, by appearing non-alien where nationality was concerned.⁵⁹

53 "Aus dem Nikolajewer Kreise. Der Landauer Dorfrat an der Arbeit," *Das Neue Dorf*, no. 188/42, 11 March 1928, p. 5 (see document 2.5).

54 For instance, protocol of the Karl-Liebknicht Raion party conference, 22 October 1927, DAMO, f. P-12, op. 1a, spr. 6, ark. 1–6.

55 File on land exchange between the two Waterloo citizens Johann Schuh and Gottlieb Scheck, 23 November 1926, DAMO, f. R-262, op. 2, spr. 77, ark. 5.

56 An especially illustrative example is the appeal of Johann Merz regarding homeless children, 1926, DAMO, f. R-262, op. 2, spr. 53, ark. 18 (see document 2.10).

57 For example, Johann Merz, "Der Rayon Karl-Liebknicht an der Wirtschaftsfrent," *Das Neue Dorf*, no. 178/32, 2 February 1928, p. 6.

58 Activity Report of the German Section in Mykolaïv Okruha, DAMO, f. P-1, op. 1, spr. 120, ark. 52 (as cited in note 20); German Consulate Odessa on the German Section (as cited in note 25), PA AA, R 84282.

59 Karl-Liebknicht Raipartkom to the central office of the German Section in Kharkiv, 1925, TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 20, spr. 2019, ark. 197.

Nonetheless, even the best German-language propaganda could fail when confronted by local resistance. Starting in 1927, for example, a large-scale campaign was launched to encourage the rural population to join cooperatives and collective enterprises.⁶⁰ This, however, did not yield any visible success, as many peasants feared that joining a collective enterprise would entail considerable losses. As usual, the Soviet functionaries made the so-called kulaks and the clergy responsible for the propaganda campaign's failure.⁶¹

In the German colonies, many inhabitants had grown up bilingual, learning Russian in school at the latest. The tsarist government had used various measures to promote the Russification of the colonies starting in the 1860s.⁶² Ultimately, Russian was used more in public, German by contrast was more common in private settings and on religious occasions. With the creation of the national rural soviets and national raions, German peasants were also supposed to speak German in political matters.⁶³ However, for that, they often lacked the necessary vocabulary. Furthermore, minority schools faced a shortage of qualified German-speaking teachers throughout the 1920s.⁶⁴

Regional and local actors

The fate of Friedrich Helbig is exemplary for many minority functionaries recruited from among former prisoners of war. Helbig was born in Weimar in 1888, and upon completing school, worked as a waiter. At age 20, he became a member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany. He was drafted into the Imperial Army in 1914 and then ended up a Russian prisoner of war. After 1917, he was recruited by the Bolsheviks and initially assigned to POW affairs. Between 1918 and 1920, he was active on behalf of the party in the area that later became Volga German ASSR, before moving on to southern Ukraine. Despite his inadequate knowledge of Russian, he held various executive posts in the German colonies. By 1926, he

60 S. Rabitschanowitsch, "Die Frau und die Kooperation," *Das Neue Dorf*, no. 91/41, 8 March 1927, p. 3; "Die Kooperation im deutschen Dorfe," *Das Neue Dorf*, no. 122/72, 30 June 1927, p. 3; "Über die Klassenpolitik auf dem Dorfe und in der Kooperation," *Das Neue Dorf*, no. 149/3, 13 October 1927, p. 3; "Die Kollektivwirtschaften in der Ukraine vor neuen Aufgaben," *Das Neue Dorf*, no. 160/14, 27 November 1927, p. 2.

61 W. Wogau, On the Political Situation of the German Village, 19 June 1928, DAMO, f. P-1, op. 1, spr. 533, ark. 45–47 (see document 4.11).

62 Wladimir Süß, "Deutsch und Russisch im Widerstreit: Die Schulsituation in den 'Odessaer Kolonien' 1803–1917," *Nordost-Archiv* 12 (2003), pp. 247–270 (268–269).

63 Report of the German Consulate Kharkiv, On the Resistance of the Mennonites (as cited in note 7), PA AA, R 84284.

64 Pinkus, Fleischhauer and Ruffmann, *Die Deutschen in der Sowjetunion* (as cited in note 5), pp. 132–134; Buchsweiler, *Volksdeutsche in der Ukraine* (as cited in note 3), pp. 111–116.

was a member of the Bureau for National Minority Affairs at the Kherson Okrispolkom.⁶⁵

Unlike Helbig, Egon Hoffmann, the son of a peasant from Vysokopillia, had a noteworthy career. Born in 1892, he grew up in poverty, after his father died early. Nonetheless, he attended the village school and then secondary school. Subsequently, he worked as a clerk. After the Civil War, he found employment in various cooperatives founded by the Soviets. By 1925, he was head of the land administration office (*raionnoe zemel'noe upravlenie*) within Vysokopillia Raion and coordinated the distribution of state land among the rural soviets. He was not a party member himself, but his superiors described him as reliable and possessing initiative. Nonetheless, they faulted him for lacking an understanding of Marxist ideas and therefore considered him ill-suited for tasks with greater responsibility.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, Hoffmann is an example how Germans from the region could find job opportunities in the new Soviet administration.

Although a good number of records have survived to this day to shed light on subaltern functionaries such as Hoffmann and Helbig, information about volunteer actors from the rural soviets is quite sparse. Heinrich Borbus, a bricklayer from Waterloo, is an exception. Unfortunately, the available information about Borbus was handed down to posterity through the tragic circumstance that he wound up in the clutches of the NKVD in 1937. Born in Waterloo in 1886, Borbus had grown up to take over his parents' farm. He married and had two daughters. The family was not bad off. They owned two horses and had enough land. Borbus was also active in Waterloo's Baptist community.⁶⁷ In the mid-1920s, he also assumed tasks on behalf of the rural soviet and served in its land commission. There, together with other citizens, he had to coordinate the planting of trees or monitor the upkeep of commonly shared meadows.⁶⁸ In 1930, during forced collectivisation, Borbus joined the local collective farm along with the other peasants of Waterloo. In 1937, the fact that he had participated in the local self-defence force during the Civil War years became his undoing. His unit had fought the advance of the Red Army. In addition, he had received parcels from abroad through his contacts with foreign Baptist congregations. Ultimately, local functionaries

65 Personnel questionnaire for Friedrich Helbig, 4 June 1926, DAKhersO, f. R-2, op. 1, spr. 1034, ark. 4 (see document 1.8).

66 Personnel questionnaire for Egon Hoffmann, 1925, DAKhersO, f. R-2, op. 1, spr. 1034, ark. 56; Evaluation of Egon Hoffmann, 1925, DAKhersO, f. R-2, op. 1, spr. 1034, ark. 55 (see document 1.9).

67 Inquiry regarding Heinrich Borbus by the Waterloo Rural Soviet, 25 July 1937, DAMO, f. R-5859, op. 2, spr. 761, ark. 6; protocol of the interrogation of Heinrich Borbus by the head of the Karl-Liebkecht Raion NKVD Kumis, 13 September 1937, DAMO, f. R-262, op. 2, spr. 50, ark. 4 (see documents 1.11).

68 Protocol no. 5 of the meeting of the land section of the Waterloo Rural Soviet, 8 March 1926, DAMO, f. R-262, op. 2, spr. 50, ark. 3.

accused him of wasting agricultural funds. For this reason, Borbus was suspended from his employment at Waterloo's Rosa-Luxemburg Kolkhoz in late July 1937. A little more than a month later, on 13 September, he was arrested. His activities on behalf of the Baptists and his participation in the self-defence force in 1919 were considered proof of his anti-Soviet views.⁶⁹ On 3 November 1937, Heinrich Borbus was shot by the NKVD in Odessa.⁷⁰

Conclusion

In the course of *raionirovanie* and the implementation of *korenizatsiia* in the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic, numerous minority institutions emerged at the local and raion level so that party activists could exert influence on the German colonies. In February 1930, 254 German rural soviets existed in Ukraine, most of which were clustered in seven German raions. Although the composition of the rural soviets could be determined by citizens with the right to vote, their autonomy was limited. If the rural soviets did not fulfil their duties of collecting taxes and disseminating Soviet propaganda to the extent deemed necessary, the rural soviets could be dissolved from above and elected anew with little fuss. In most cases, not local but "alien" Germans held the responsible positions within the minority institutions.

However, the NEP and the political measures associated with it did open up opportunities for the Germans colonists to find a certain *modus vivendi* with the Soviet state and at the same time to ignore ideologically driven campaigns and the KNS, KOV, KVP and newly established community centres (*sel'bud*). The German villages were not alone in this. At the end of the 1920s, the leaderships of both party and state were forced to realise that they would not be able to rely on *raionirovanie* and *korenizatsiia* to attain the desired goals to the extent expected – namely, mobilising the population for the socialist project. This disappointment was a contributing factor for the party's change of course in 1928 and 1929. This was directly linked to Stalin's emergence as the undisputed party leader. Within the Stalinised state and party apparatus, resolutions on, say, collectivisation, which until then had relied on the voluntary compliance of all participants, were now implemented in the villages by violent means.⁷¹ The rights of autonomy for

69 Details for the arrested Heinrich Borbus, 13 September 1937, DAMO, f. R-5859, op. 2, spr. 761, ark. 5 (see documents 1.11).

70 Inquiry regarding Heinrich Borbus by the Odessa Oblast' NKVD, DAMO, f. R-5859, op. 2, spr. 761, ark. 30 (see documents 1.11).

71 Manfred Hildermeier, *Geschichte der Sowjetunion 1917–1991: Entstehung und Niedergang des ersten sozialistischen Staates*. München: C. H. Beck, 1998, pp. 367–368.

national minorities that had existed until then, including those of the Germans in Ukraine, were either sharply curtailed or completely quashed.

In 1929 and 1930, the individual national raions in Ukraine were subordinated to strict control and leading civil servants often replaced. Therefore, it is not surprising that Johann Merz was recalled from his post in Karl-Liebnecht Raion in 1929. In the summer of 1935, the state and party leadership in Ukraine began dissolving “inefficient” national raions.⁷² On 4 April 1939, the Politburo of the Communist Party of Ukraine resolved to disband all of the remaining national rural soviets and raions in Ukraine, as their administration allegedly required too many resources and sheltered anti-Soviet elements. Among them was the Karl-Liebnecht Raion as well.⁷³ Many German minority functionaries such as Josef Haftl or Ignaz Gebhard, but also simple employees of the rural soviets such as Heinrich Borbus of Waterloo, fell victim to the Great Terror between 1936 and 1938.⁷⁴

The years after forced collectivisation proved devastating for the German colonies. The Bolsheviks classified them as especially dangerous in light of their relative prosperity, their relatively good education, their religious convictions, but also their resistance during the Civil War.⁷⁵ The events of the Second World War ultimately ended the existence of the German colonies in southern Ukraine.⁷⁶

72 Einfeld and Rublëv (eds.), *Delo 'Natsional'nogo soiuza nemtsev'* (as cited in note 32), p. 61.

73 Decision of the Politburo KP(b)U on the dissolution of “artificially formed” national raions and rural soviets in Ukraine, 4 April 1939, in Yakovleva et al. (eds.), *Nimtsi v Ukraïni* (as cited in note 9), pp. 212–215; E. P. Malysheva, “Administrativno-territorial'noe ustroistvo Svetskogo gosudarstva,” in A. Pyzhikov (ed.), *Administrativno-territorial'noe ustroistvo Rossii: Istorioa i sovremennost'*. Moskva: Olma-Press, 2003, pp. 202–241 (224–225); Liudmyla Hutsalo, “Reformuvannia ta likvidatsiia natsional'nykh administratyvnykh odynyt's,” *Visnyk Akedemii pratsi i sotsial'nykh vidnosyn Federatsii profsilok Ukraïny* 5 (2005), pp. 146–150; Buchsweiler, *Russlanddeutsche im Sowjetsystem* (as cited in note 15), p. 54; Bogdan Čirko [Bohdan Chyrko], “Die Liquidierung des Systems der nationalen Rayons der Ukraine in den Jahren 1934–1939,” in Einfeld et al. (eds.), *Deutsche in Russland* (as cited in note 8), pp. 271–276.

74 Einfeld and Rublëv (eds.), *Delo 'Natsional'nogo soiuza nemtsev'* (as cited in note 32), pp. 71–72.

75 Buchsweiler, *Volksdeutsche in der Ukraine* (as cited in note 3), p. 222; Alfred Einfeld et al. (eds.), *Der “Große Terror” in der Ukraine. Die “Deutsche Operation” 1937–1938*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021.

76 Some German colonists were later active in collaborating with the Nazis in southern Ukraine: Eric C. Steinhart, “Policing the Boundaries of ‘Germandom’ in the East. SS Ethnic German Policy and Odessa’s ‘Volksdeutsche,’ 1941–1944,” *Central European History* 43(2010), pp. 85–116.

Stanisław Stępień

Hreczany.

A Flourishing Polish Rural Community in Early Soviet Ukraine

The village of Hreczany was one of many in Ukraine inhabited by people of Polish descent. The history of this village may serve as a lens, illuminating both the politically unstable past of the Ukrainian lands, and the shaping of a multi-ethnic structure there. In the Soviet era the village experienced periods of development in the 1920s, stagnation and decline in the times of forced collectivisation, followed by a volte-face in ethnic policy, the apogee of which was the so-called Polish Operation in Ukraine.¹ The most prosperous period in the history of this village, and of many others in Ukraine, was the time of what was called the New Economic Policy (NEP). The permitted operation of a free market, though in a limited and controlled form, triggered great activity among the villagers, particularly since the nearby market in the town of Proskuriv (formerly Polish Płoskirów; Russian Proskurov; now Khmel'nyts'kyi in Ukraine), following the period of War Communism, was able to absorb any quantity of foodstuffs. The NEP not only stimulated private economic activity among the rural population, but also provided a new form of self-government.² An important role came to be played by the rural soviets that were elected in the villages. This process was interrupted at the end of the 1920s and in the early 1930s by decisions of the central state authorities and the Communist Party. The ending of the NEP led to economic breakdown in the Soviet state, as well as regression in the sphere of cultural development. After World War II Hreczany ceased to exist as a rural administrative unit; in 1946 it became part of the town of Proskuriv.

1 The "Polish Operation" was one of the largest campaigns of repression carried out by the NKVD against national minorities in the USSR. Taking place in 1937–1938, it was directed against close to 140,000 Soviet citizens of Polish origin. See Tomasz Sommer, *Operacja antypolska NKWD 1937–1938: Geneza i przebieg ludobójstwa popetnionego na Polakach w Związku Sowieckim*. Warszawa: 3SMedia, 2014.

2 "Przegląd pracy rad i zadania jaczejek LKZMU we wsi polskiej," *Głos Młodzieży*, no. 33, 7 September 1927, p. 8 (see document 2.7); on Polish minority institutions, see: Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2003, pp. 18–51.

A Polish island in a Ukrainian sea

When and how did the village of Hreczany come into existence? In the 17th century the Ukrainian lands, then part of the Polish state called officially the Republic of Two Nations, suffered huge destruction due to continuous warfare. This occurred during the Cossack rebellion of 1648–1657 led by Bohdan Khmel’nyts’ky, and between 1655 and 1660 because of the Swedish invasion and the ravages known as the “Deluge.” Further destruction and depopulation came twelve years later, in 1672, at the time of the Polish-Turkish war, when the Podolia region came under Ottoman rule. Thus, when in late 1699 Ottoman forces left Podolia, the starost of Płoskirów, Tomasz Józef Zamoyski (1678–1725), wishing to repopulate the deserted areas, began to bring in Polish settlers from the regions of Kuyavia and Masuria, who became popularly known as Masurians. At that time new villages were established in the neighbourhood of Płoskirów: Maćkowce, Szaróweczka, Zarzecze, and Hreczany. The last of these appears in Latin documents of the period under the name *Reczana*; in Polish and Ukrainian sources it is referred to as *Greczany*, *Hreczana* or *Hreczany*.³ It is the last of these names that became best established.

Over the following centuries these villages retained a Polish character; even if individual Ukrainian families settled there, they fairly quickly became Polish and Catholicised. The Polish villagers were marked by a strong isolationism in terms of their identity. They retained the Roman Catholic religion, certain traditions and customs, and above all the Polish language.⁴

Administratively, Hreczany first belonged to the *starostwo* of Kamieniec, but in the second half of the century it was assigned to the newly created *starostwo* of Płoskirów.⁵ Following the Second Partition of Poland in 1793, the area became part of the Russian Empire. In 1795 a Podolia Guberniia was established there, with its administrative centre in Kamieniec. A year later Płoskirów became a regional administrative seat, and its name – which Russians found difficult to pronounce – was changed to Proskurov (with the Polish form Proskurów). Until

3 Iwona Cechosz-Felczyk, *Słownictwo gwary Oleszkowiec i Hreczan (Greczan) na Podolu*. Kraków: Lexis, 2004, passim.

4 Marcelina Jakimowicz, “Mazury na Podolu Wschodnim: pamięć, tożsamość i dziedzictwo,” *Sprawy Narodowościowe: Seria Nowa* 49 (2017): https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322207329_Mazury_na_Podolu_Wschodnim_pamiec_tozsamosc_i_dziedzictwo_Sprawy_Narodowosciowe_Seria_Nowa_2017_49_s_1-18, accessed 20 November 2020; Julia Jehrowa, “Dwie Anny, dwie moje babcie – łączy je jedno, Greczany. Wspomnienia Anny Dereżańskiej z domu Kozak i Anny Bujar z domu Dereżańska,” *Kurier Galicyjski*, no. 19 (335), 16–28 October 2019, p. 22; Vasyl Holovatiuk et al., *Mazury: Zhyvi istorii*. Khmel’nyts’kyi: Ukraïns’kyi kul’turni fond ‘Ploskuriv’, 2019, p. 41.

5 Filip Sulimierski, Bronisław Chlebowski and Władysław Walewski (eds.), *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich*, vol. 5. Warszawa: Wędrowiec, 1884, pp. 589, 888. Cf. also Komisja Sejmowa, Sejm Rzeczypospolitej, *Lustracje dóbr ziemskich z osiemnastego wieku*, 1789, Archiwum Akt Dawnych w Warszawie, Metryki Koronne, ref. 74, s. 276–277.

almost the end of the 18th century Hreczany belonged to the Zamoyski family, but in 1796 Empress Catherine II awarded it, along with the neighbouring villages of Iwankowce, Leśniów, Maćkowce, Oleszyn, Szaróweczka and Zarzecze, to Field Marshal Ivan Gudovich.⁶ Hreczany later came into the hands of his successors, of the Russian Lizogub family.

After the abolition of serfdom and the granting of property rights to peasants in 1861, the village began to expand and to become wealthier, no doubt partly as a result of its suburban location. It became a bread basket for Proskurov, particularly because the local soil was fertile. The proximity of the town also had a positive impact on the villagers' cultural development. In 1882 Hreczany had a population of 1,130.⁷ At the start of the 20th century it took on new significance in terms of transportation: in 1913 the Podolian Railway Company built a station there, connecting the village not only with nearby Proskurov, but also with Shepetovka and Kamenets, and thereby also with the rest of the empire. The station became an important hub for freight transport, providing still greater opportunities for the village's economic development. Since the mid-19th century Proskurov had been an important centre for trade in grain, and also salt. In 1891 a sugar factory was built there, encouraging the cultivation of sugar beet in the neighbouring villages.

The liberated, though controlled, energy of the villagers

After World War I, and subsequently the fall of the Ukrainian People's Republic in 1920, the village found itself in the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic (UkrSSR), and from that time on its destiny was determined by the policy of the communist state. In the first post-war years its development stagnated. The war had left the local economy in ruin, and the Bolsheviks' policies of War Communism had led to the serious impoverishment of the rural population.

In Soviet Ukraine, there occurred food shortages of such seriousness that people suffered hunger on a large scale.⁸ There were peasant uprisings in the countryside, brutally put down by the Red Army. In the towns, the new government was losing the support of the hungry workers. In these circumstances, in spite of the resistance of many leading communists, the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (RKP(b)) in March 1921 adopted Lenin's proposed doctrine of the NEP. This was based on a partial return to a market economy, and

6 *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego* (as cited in note 5), vol. 3. Warszawa: Wędrowiec, 1882, p. 176.

7 *Ibid.*

8 Richard Pipes, *Rosja bolszewików*. Warszawa: Magnum, 2005, pp. 439–440 and 448.

also brought significant changes in agriculture. The first decision made under the NEP was the abolition of high compulsory food levies, to be replaced with a unified agricultural tax, paid initially in kind, but later in cash. The value of state levies was significantly reduced, and moreover the contributions required – whether in money or in kind – were calculated in early spring, before the time of sowing. This allowed farmers to calculate how much grain and other seeds, as well as potatoes, would remain at their disposal. After the crops had been sown, surplus quantities could be sold on the free market.

The size of the tax depended on “profitability norms,” which differed between the various Soviet republics. They were determined by the Ukrainian Soviet government, but could be adjusted for particular localities by the *Huberniia* and *Povit* (later *Okruha*) Executive Committees. The norms were set higher in the UkrSSR than in the Russian SFSR or the Belarusian SSR.⁹

Table 1. General profitability norms in the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic in 1922–1929 (figures in roubles)

UkrSSR	Per desiatina of land							Per head of livestock					From apiary		
	sown crops	agricultural field	meadow	garden	vineyard	orchard	tobacco plantation	horse, mule, camel	large horned cattle	ox	donkey	sheep, goat	pig	frame hive	log hive
Income in roubles	50	35	26	150	220	140	200	26	21	20	5	1.6	7	5	2

Source: Stanisław Przybyłowski, *Chłopi pod panowaniem bolszewickim. Notatki, wrażenia i refleksje z pobytu w Rosji Sowieckiej*. Przemysł: PWIN, 2001, p. 36.

Calculation of amounts of tax based on these norms, and the collection of the tax, were the responsibility of local and raion executive committees and the rural soviets.¹⁰ Administrative or court penalties were imposed for non-payment or late payment. The individual “tax cards” issued annually to each private farmer contained the warning that:

⁹ Stanisław Przybyłowski, *Chłopi pod panowaniem bolszewickim: Notatki, wrażenia i refleksje z pobytu w Rosji Sowieckiej*. Przemysł: PWIN, 2001, p. 36.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Non-payment of the tax by the due date leads to a fine of 1/5 of a kopeck per rouble for each day of arrears. The penalty is added to the sum of the overdue tax. Moreover, the legally provided measures are used to enforce collection of the tax. On payment of the tax, the sum remitted is first reduced by the amounts owing from previous years and the fine, and the remainder goes to the payment of the imposed tax.¹¹

The taxes were therefore a somewhat restrictive measure, and provided the local authorities ample opportunity to manipulate them so that they would be a greater burden on the wealthier farmers. Through the rural soviets, complaints and applications could be submitted with the aim of having the tax reduced or deferred. According to the authorities' instructions, such requests were never accepted in the case of *kulaks* – the derogatory name given to peasants with larger landholdings.¹² After 1926, when it was desired to speed up the collectivisation of agriculture, the scope of this term was expanded to include peasants in the middle category – the *seredniaks*.¹³

Hreczany, with its almost exclusively Polish population, was a large village by Ukrainian standards at the time. According to official data from 1926 it had 3,445 inhabitants, of whom Poles accounted for as many as 98 percent.¹⁴ The report for the following year puts the village's population higher by more than 200, although the percentage of Poles is smaller. It gives Hreczany's population as 3,656, including 3,408 Poles, accounting for more than 93 percent of the total. The remainder are 187 Ukrainians, 53 Russians, and eight persons assigned to other nationalities (*narodnosti*).¹⁵ The increase may have resulted from the employment of a greater number of persons, sent from elsewhere, at the local railway station. It would be otherwise surprising that a Russian population was recorded, not having figured in previous reports.¹⁶

Hreczany was not only a large village in terms of population, but it was also wealthy, with a significant area of cultivated land. In 1927, besides a collective farm of still modest size, there were 802 private farms, having a total

11 Rural Soviet in Hreczany, to Michał Kozina, tax cards from 1928–1932, Archiwum Południowo-Wschodniego Instytutu Naukowego (PWIN) w Przemyślu, n. pag. (see document 2.11).

12 See e.g. "Praca idzie kulawo. Wieś Stare Hucisko, okr. szepetowski," *Głos Młodzieży*, no. 34, 14 September 1927, p. 8.

13 Przybyłowski, *Chłopi pod panowaniem bolszewickim* (as cited in note 9), p. 36; Dmytro Nytychenko, *Vid Zin'kova do Mel'bornu. Iz khroniky moho zhyttia*. Mel'born: V-vo 'Baida', 1990, p. 88.

14 Proskuriv Okruha BNM to TsKNM, Report for January–March 1926, TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 192, ark. 16. See also Stanisław Czarnecki, "Podział administracyjny Ukrainy," *Wiadomości Służby Geograficznej*, no. 1 (1931), pp. 21–42 (41).

15 Pol'biuro Commission Inspecting the Hreczany Rural Soviet, 8 September 1927 (see document 5.7), TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 305, ark. 25.

16 Proskuriv Okruha BNM Report (as cited in note 14), TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 192, ark. 16.

2071.71 desiatinas of used land. Moreover, although the forests had been nationalised, there were still 11 desiatinas of forested areas belonging to local farmers. Villagers could also make use of a communal forest covering 32.93 desiatinas.¹⁷ This was especially important in view of the fact that wood was the only fuel available for burning at that time, and was also still an important building material.¹⁸

Table 2. Private farms in Hreczany by amount of land (according to 1927 figures)

Farm size	Number of farms
up to 1 desiatina	47
up to 2 desiatinas	396
up to 3 desiatinas	172
up to 4 desiatinas	97
up to 5 desiatinas	65
up to 6 desiatinas or more	25

Source: TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 305, ark. 24–25.

Private farms in Hreczany were thus diverse in terms of size, but fewer than 6 percent of them had areas of one desiatina or less. The majority of farms – 83 percent of the total – covered from two to four desiatinas. Considering the fertility of the local soil, these would produce crops that satisfied the family's own needs and provided greater or smaller surpluses, which could be sold at the nearby town market to gain some income. There were not many larger farms in Hreczany; only slightly over 11 percent had more than four desiatinas.¹⁹ The owners of these can be classed as wealthy farmers, able to afford not only to construct buildings from brick, but also to send their children to school in the town.

In the period of the NEP, the Soviet nationality policies decisively influenced the life of villagers in Ukraine. They were comprehensively regulated in a legal and political sense in 1924, when under the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee (VUTsVK) there was established a Central Committee for National Minorities, having a permanent executive body called the Central Commission for National Minority Affairs (TsKNM), with corresponding Bureaus for National Minority Affairs (BNM) attached to the bodies of local administration. In Kiev,

17 Commission inspecting the Hreczany Rural Soviet (as cited in note 15), TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 305, ark. 25.

18 Only at the end of the decade was this forest incorporated into the local collective farm.

19 Commission inspecting the Hreczany Rural Soviet (as cited in note 15), TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 305, ark. 22–27.

Podolian and Volhynian Huberniias, where significant numbers of Poles lived, regional Polish BNM were set up, popularly known as *Pol'biuro*.²⁰ Preparations for the organisation of such institutions had already been made earlier in the decade: in 1922–1923 there were two campaigns of registration of communists in Ukraine who could speak Polish.²¹ In 1925 the Julian-Marchlewski Polish National Raion was created, with its administrative seat in Dolbysz, which a year later was renamed Marchlewsk.²² In 1925–1926, in the whole UkrSSR, 139 Polish rural soviets were established.²³ These were most densely concentrated in Proskuriv Okruha, where as many as 17 Polish rural soviets existed within a small area.²⁴

A Polish rural soviet was elected in Hreczany in 1926.²⁵ In the first election, held in February 1926, the turnout was too low to allow a soviet to be constituted. The local population, taking advantage of the policy of liberalisation, was directing the whole of its energy into economic matters, attempting to profit as much as possible from the Proskuriv market. It was also feared that the new institution would be an instrument of the regime, serving to oversee or even regulate the villagers' economic activity, and also to interfere in their active religious life.²⁶ However, because a soviet had to be chosen, the election was repeated in March, with various types of propaganda pressure being exerted on the village community. This time the turnout, even assuming that it was not overstated in the official figures, was still not high, amounting to just 51.2 percent.²⁷ The election produced a rural soviet consisting of 40 members, including seven women. In accordance with the statutes, 12 reserve members were also elected, to be eligible for full membership in case of a vacancy on the soviet. In terms of social categories, the 40 soviet members included 26 poor peasants, so-called *bedniaks*, nine *seredniaks* and five "officials." The latter category included persons with full-time

20 See Bohdan Chyrcio, *Natsional'ni menshyny v Ukraïni, 20–30 rr. XX stolittia*. Kyiv: Asotsiatsiia Ukraïno, 1995; Olena Bystryts'ka, *Rozvytok systemy osvity natsional'nykh menshyn v Ukraïni u 1917–1939 rr.* Kharkiv: Diss. Kharkivs'koho derzh. universyteta, 1998; Ol'ha Slesarenko, *Tsentral'na Komisiia Natsional'nykh Menshyn v USRR, 1924–1934 rr: Stvorennia, funktsionuvannia, personalii*. Kyiv/Cherkasy: RVV ČNU im. B. Khmel'nits'koho, 2017.

21 Boleslav Skarbek (Bolesław Skarbek-Szacki), On the Registration of Communists Knowing Polish Language, 26 February 1923, TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 7, spr. 36, ark. 29–29 rev (see document 3.5).

22 For more on the Julian Marchlewski National Raion see e.g. Janusz Marian Kupczak, *Polacy na Ukrainie w latach 1921–1939*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1994; Henryk Stroński, *Represje stalinizmu wobec ludności polskiej na Ukrainie w latach 1929–1939*. Warszawa: Wspólnota Polska, 1998; Brown, *Biography* (as cited in note 2), pp. 19–24.

23 Taiiia Yeremenko, *Pol's'ka natsional'na menshyna v Ukraïni v 20–30-ti rr. XX stolittia*. Kyiv: NANU, 1994, p. 16.

24 TsKNM, Findings relating to the pre-election campaign to Polish rural soviets in Proskuriv Okruha in 1928/1929, 4 March 1929, TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 468, ark. 30.

25 Report of the Proskuriv Okrvykonkom for January–March 1926, 6 April 1926, TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 192, ark. 14.

26 Ibid.

27 Proskuriv Okruha BNM Report (as cited in note 14), TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 192, ark. 16.

posts at the rural soviet (chairman, deputy, secretary, accountant, administrative clerks); they could also be local teachers, nurses employed at the medical assistance point, and policemen.²⁸ Efforts were made to ensure that there were some women on the rural soviets. Where there were few of them, attempts were made to draw attention to that fact, with a recommendation to elect more women in the future.²⁹ The Hreczany Rural Soviet included only three members of the Communist Party, indicating that the level of party recruitment there was very low. At that time the village still did not have any party cell of the KP(b)U. There were four members of the Committee of Impoverished Peasants (KNS) which was required to exist in every village, and was officially promoted.³⁰

The next rural soviet in Hreczany, elected in 1927, was composed more in line with social class policy. During the election campaign Party and Komsomol branches made efforts to maximise the number of bedniaks on the soviet, at the cost of the seredniaks. As a result, as many as 88.4 percent of seats went to bedniaks, and only 11.5 percent to seredniaks, barely half the figure of a year previously. There was also a very significant increase in the number of members of the KNS elected to the soviet: while in the previous year there had been four, there were now 16. The 1927 soviet, in contrast to its predecessor, also included a representative of the Ukrainian community.³¹ Previous soviets had included only Poles. It is hard to ascertain whether this person's election resulted from his activity and standing in the local community, or from the insistence of the authorities.

In view of the village's size and ethnic makeup, the rural soviet in Hreczany was of great significance for the minorities policy conducted in Soviet Ukraine.³² Consideration was even given, bearing in mind the closeness of the Polish villages, to creating another Polish national raion like the one centred on Marchlewsk, this time with its administrative seat in Hreczany.³³ Villages in the vicinity of Hreczany with a predominantly Polish population included Maćkowce (called Mats'kivtsi in Ukrainian), Szaróweczka (Sharovechka), Zarzecze (Zarichchia), Kraczk (Krachki), and – newly established by local inhabitants in 1900 – Oleksandrówka

28 Proskuriv Okruha BNM Report (as cited in note 14), TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 192, ark. 16.

29 See e.g. "Wzorowa praca. Wieś Krzyżanówka, rej. ułanowski, okr. berdyczowski," *Głos Młodzieży*, no. 32, 31 August 1927, p. 8; "Perevybory rad – politychnyi ispyt," *Chervonyi Pluhatar*, no. 135, 18 January 1927, p. 2; "Wyprosił kobiety z zebrania," *Stroniczka Kobiety* (supplement to the newspaper *Sierp*), no. 10, 1928, p. 3.

30 Proskuriv Okruha BNM Report (as cited in note 14), TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 192, ark. 16.

31 Commission inspecting the Hreczany Rural Soviet (as cited in note 15), TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 305, ark. 22.

32 Panas Butsenko, Circular from the secretary of the VUTsVK to all Hubvynkoms on the creation of Polish rural and raion soviets, 16 September 1924, TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 6, ark. 61 (see document 5.1).

33 Yeremenko, *Pol's'ka natsional'na menshyna* (as cited in note 23), p. 17; Kupczak, *Polacy na Ukrainie* (as cited in note 22), p. 153.

(Oleksandrivka).³⁴ In another village, Martynówka (Martynivka), Poles accounted for a half of the inhabitants.³⁵ The region's demography was also influenced by the fact that people of Polish descent made up almost 10 percent of the population of Proskuriv, which totalled around 32,000 in 1926, and more than 10 percent of the population of Proskuriv Okruha.³⁶

Fig. 1. Ethnic structure of Proskuriv in 1926

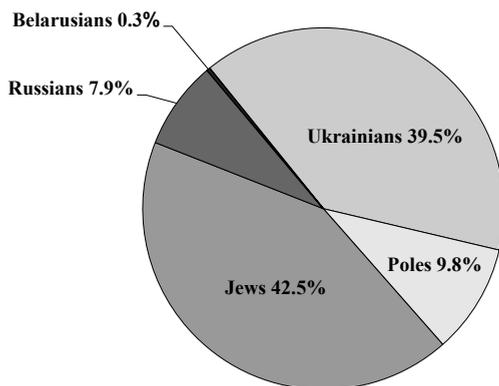
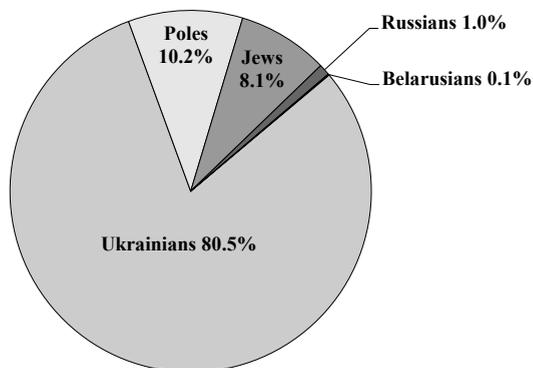


Fig. 2. Ethnic structure of Proskuriv Okruha in 1926



³⁴ The last-mentioned village was established in 1900 by former inhabitants of Szaróweczka and Maćkowce.

³⁵ Karpiński, to the VUTsvK, Report on activity among the Polish working population in Proskuriv Raion, 31 January 1932, TsDAVO, f. 166, op. 10, spr. 1191, ark. 67.

³⁶ According to the 1926 Soviet census, Poles made up 10 percent of the population of Proskuriv, which totalled almost 32,000. See, Tsentral'noe statisticheskoe upravlenie (ed.), *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926 goda*, vol. 12: *Ukrainskaia Sotsialisticheskaia Sovetskaia Respublika: Levoberezhnyi podraion. Pravoberezhnyi podraion*. Moskva: TsSU SSSR, 1929, p. 32.

In the end no Hreczany National Raion was created. After the first few years of the NEP the authorities became concerned by the fact that the Poles in Hreczany and other nearby villages were not readily submitting to Sovietisation, were unwilling to join the Communist Party, and moreover were strongly attached to the idea of private landownership and the Catholic religion.³⁷

Nonetheless, the authorities did not object to the appointment of new Polish rural soviets, or even to the renaming – at locals' request – of existing soviets with Ukrainian or mixed ethnic composition to Polish soviets. This happened, for instance, in 1927 in the village of Zarzecze near Hreczany, even though one in three of its population was Ukrainian. The request made by residents of Zarzecze was strongly supported by the Proskuriv Okruzhkom.³⁸ It seems that the official attitude in the NEP period may have been influenced by the fact that, on the one hand, such moves created the illusion that democratic institutions functioned in public life, and on the other, they weakened the Ukrainian character of the republic.

In the NEP period there was also no determined battle against the Church, although the Bolsheviks still pursued a policy of atheisation. As they desired to stimulate economic activity among rural communities, they did not subject the clergy to major campaigns of repression. Moreover, they realised that the poorer peasant families were also highly religious. The villagers of Hreczany had a strong attachment both to the faith of their ancestors, and to the associated religious traditions and customs. In 1925 the villagers even initiated the building of a large Catholic chapel, contrary to the will of the authorities. Since the parish (*parafia*) church was in the town, the villagers decided to build a place of worship closer to home. They successfully built the chapel over a period of almost three years.³⁹

The authorities continually bemoaned the fact that people known for religious activity were elected to the rural soviet, but while wealthy peasants could easily be excluded from public functions based on a property criterion, this was much harder in the case of people of strong religious faith. The poor are often particularly zealous believers. This was also the case in Hreczany, where even

37 The reluctant attitude of Poles towards Sovietisation was noted by Tomasz Dąbał, a Polish communist in the USSR, who in 1929, under the pseudonym Włodzimierz Tęgoborski, published a brochure titled *Polacy Związku Radzieckiego. Ich pochodzenie, udział w rewolucji październikowej i w budownictwie socjalistycznym. Szkic historyczno-opisowy*. Moskwa, 1929; see also Kupczak, *Polacy na Ukrainie* (as cited in note 22), p. 153.

38 Minutes of a meeting of the Polish Bureau of the Proskuriv Okruzhkom, 28 August 1928, DAKhmel'O, f. P-301, op. 41, spr. 176, ark. 89.

39 On religious life in Hreczany in Soviet times, see e.g. Holovatiuk et al., *Mazury* (as cited in note 4), pp. 41–47; Jakimowicz, "Mazury na Podolu Wschodnim" (as cited in note 4), pp. 142, 147–148. Today the former chapel has been reconstructed and serves as a Roman Catholic church in Khmel'nyts'kyi.

members of the local KNS, the authorities' bulwark, were highly religious. In spite of official pressure and various incentives, it did not prove possible to establish a branch of the League of Militant Atheists (*Spilka vojovnychykh bezbozhnykiv*). In the annual post-election reports it was noted as reprehensible that "clerical elements" had been elected to the rural soviets of Hreczany and other local villages. For example, in 1928 one of the official reports noted:

Significant activity in the pre-election campaign was manifested by the Catholic clergy and religious groups in the countryside, which together with the kulaks hampered the development and course of the campaign. The Catholic clergy took advantage of the deep religiousness in the okruha to dissuade people from participating in the election and to weaken the class struggle in the countryside. On many occasions priests visited the Polish villages on the eve of and during elections. On their rounds of visits, bread was distributed to the poor (Hreczany, Szaróweczka, Maćkowce, Zarzecze and others). All this took place with the purpose of disrupting the pre-election campaign and bribing the poor.⁴⁰

The task of preventing such situations was given to local members of the Communist Party and Komsomol.⁴¹ At organised meetings, in distributed leaflets and in the press great effort was made to discredit the clergy, and believers were accused of lacking scientific knowledge on the development of life on earth and the process of evolution. All types of superstition were classified as manifestations of religious life, even if they ran counter to the Church's teaching. Attempts were made to ridicule people active in various church clubs and societies, and to provoke members of the clergy into immoral behaviour. Children and young people attending school were forbidden to take an active part in religious life.

Because of the low level of recruitment to the Party in Hreczany, a Komsomol branch was established there only in 1927,⁴² and a cell of the KP(b)U a year later.⁴³ The principal task of class struggle was thus assigned to the KNS. In 1928, in a supplement to the Polish-language newspaper *Sierp* (The Sickle), appearing under the name *Stroniczka Kobiety* (Woman's Page), a rural correspondent from Hreczany wrote:

40 Proskuriv Okruha BNM Report (as cited in note 14), TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 192, ark. 16; Report of the Proskuriv Okryvkonkom (as cited in note 25), TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 192, ark. 14

41 "Przegląd pracy rad" (as cited in note 2).

42 Commission inspecting the Hreczany Rural Soviet (as cited in note 15), TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 305, ark. 22.

43 Okruha Meeting of Polish Communists and Komsomol Members, Report on activity among the Polish population and youth in Proskuriv Okruha, 1 March 1928, *DAKhmel'Ō*, f. P-301, op. 41, spr. 176, ark. 97-98.

[...] the election to the soviets is a battle between the kulaks and the working peasantry over who will control the village. The kulak finds it hard to bear collectives, cooperation and other paths allowing the poor to escape from penury. The kulak does not want machinery or money credit for the poor or moderately wealthy peasants, but wants them for himself. The kulak is the enemy of the building of socialism, the enemy of the cultural revolution – he is the friend of the former masters, speculators and bourgeoisie.⁴⁴

In spite of its failure to meet the authorities' expectations, the rural soviet in Hreczany became over time an authentic body of management in the village. Although there were clashes between different political tendencies, usually fuelled from outside, the soviet's everyday work led to the village's development in various spheres of social life. Its activity encompassed all areas of the local community's existence, and was founded on work done by five appointed special committees: 1) management, order and sanitation; 2) rural economy; 3) financial management; 4) culture, protection of motherhood and children; 5) assistance to social organisations. In Hreczany each of the committees had from nine to eleven members.⁴⁵ Every member of the rural soviet was obliged to work in at least in one of the committees.

The rural soviet, like all others, managed a budget that came from a subsidy awarded by the okruha and raion institutions. In the NEP period, the soviets were encouraged to supplement this income by undertaking various forms of economic activity, and they were even assessed on that basis during the annual inspections, commonly known as visitations. Those soviets in the raion that had achieved the highest additional income were held up as an example to others.⁴⁶ For this reason the rural community in Hreczany undertook various kinds of additional work to generate extra income for the village, such as forest planting, leasing of the communal pond, and voluntary work on the building of a school and community centre, and later on renovations carried out there, which reduced the amounts that would have to be paid for those projects out of the soviet's budget.⁴⁷ The authorities thus encouraged the formation of cooperatives of various kinds. In 1924

44 "Sprawa hreczańska, a kobiety pracujące," *Stroniczka Kobiety* (supplement to the newspaper *Sierp*), no. 10, 1928, p. 1 (see document 4.8).

45 Commission inspecting the Hreczany Rural Soviet (as cited in note 15), TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 305, ark. 23.

46 *Ibid.*, ark. 23–24. The inspecting committees usually consisted of seven persons. In the case of ethnic rural soviets, the committee had to include representatives of the okruha and raion bureaus for national minority affairs (BNM) in question, a representative of the raion executive committee, a raion political inspector, the head of the raion agriculture department, and two representatives of the village in question: a member of its audit committee and a member of the committee of impoverished peasants.

47 *Ibid.*, ark. 25–26.

an Agricultural Credit Society was founded. From its initial membership of 25, by 1927 it had grown to 738 members, including 430 in Hreczany itself (the society also encompassed neighbouring villages such as Maćkowce and Szaróweczka). In that same year a brickyard was opened.⁴⁸ A year later a Food Produce Society was formed, initially with 52 members, and growing still larger in subsequent years.⁴⁹ On 1 October 1926 a Rural Mutual Assistance Society (TVD) was set up. This began with 70 members, and again would gradually grow larger.⁵⁰

An important educational institution was the school founded in Hreczany in 1922. A campaign to eliminate illiteracy had been begun there in 1920, but this was based on short courses held in winter (popularly called by the Ukrainian acronym *liknep*).⁵¹ The school began with three classes, providing food for children aged 8 to 10. Because school attendance had not been compulsory in imperial Russia, there was no perception in the village of a need for children to be educated. Many parents were not easily persuaded that their offspring required schooling, particularly in the case of older children. To overcome parents' resistance, teaching began at the school only in late September, after the main harvest work had been completed, and the school year ended at the beginning of June. The first 10 pupils completed their schooling in 1925.⁵² In 1926 the school was expanded to seven classes, and attendance became compulsory for children aged 8 to 14. Some parents still did not send their children to school, although they did so more willingly in the case of younger children. In 1929, for example, 87 percent of children aged 8 to 10 were attending the school, compared with only 61 percent of older children.⁵³

With the elimination of illiteracy there came an increase in reading, better understanding of the need for education, and improved hygiene and health protection.⁵⁴ In line with the nationality policies on education and culture, these were conducted in the Polish language, subject to the condition that they represented the values of the class struggle and anti-bourgeois ideology. Works of Polish literature selected for the teaching programme and for the library collections were those that could be interpreted as proletarian, expressing rebellion against class and national oppression, referring especially to Polish achievements, but

48 Ibid., ark. 22–27; Kupczak, *Polacy na Ukrainie* (as cited in note 22), s. 163.

49 Commission inspecting the Hreczany Rural Soviet (as cited in note 15), TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 305, ark. 22–27.

50 Ibid.

51 From Ukrainian *likvidatsiia nepys'mennosti*, shortened to *liknep*.

52 Commission inspecting the Hreczany Rural Soviet (as cited in note 15), TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 305, ark. 22–27.

53 Ibid., ark. 25.

54 J. Stokrocki, "Rada pracuje dobrze, udział zaś komsomolców słaby," *Głos Młodzieży*, no. 34, 21 October 1932, p. 8.

also Ukrainian and Russian ones. They came from the era of Romanticism, and to some extent that of Positivism. There was also intensive promotion of the proletarian literature and culture.⁵⁵

Residents of Hreczany undertook a variety of social initiatives. In the mid-1920s a Polish community centre (*sel'bud*) started to be built. Villagers worked on the construction on a voluntary basis and even organised a money collection. However, the Komsomol branch, wishing to make a show of its activism, set the rate of contributions at the fairly high level of five roubles per household. Many people were not able to find such an amount; nonetheless, the building was successfully completed. The centre became an important meeting place for local residents, a Polish choir met, and Polish customs and traditions were cultivated.⁵⁶ An integral part of the Polish community centre was the library, which in 1927 held a total of 350 Polish books. It also subscribed to Polish and Ukrainian magazines – among others, it held copies each of *Sierp, Głos Młodzieży* (Voice of the Youth) and other titles.⁵⁷

There was a clear improvement in health in the Ukrainian countryside. Principles of hygiene and health protection were propagated.⁵⁸ High importance was assigned to sporting development. A medical assistance point was established in Hreczany as early as 1924, employing a nurse; a doctor visited once a week from Proskuriv. Emergency assistance was provided there, and vaccinations against smallpox and scarlet fever were given.⁵⁹ In 1927 a nursery was established in the village, providing care for 35 infants and pre-school children. It operated annually during the main harvest season, from 10 June to 11 September.⁶⁰

55 Szturc Dionizja, for the GPU representative in Kiev, supplement to statement by teachers at Polish School no. 11 in Kiev accused of propagating Polish literature of an anti-Soviet nature, after 12 January 1931, TsDAHO, f. 263, op. 1, spr. 57003, ark. 5–15; HA Pogrebinski [Matwiej], GPU operational representative, to the head of Vinnytsia Provincial Branch of GPU, final report in the case of the Polish Military Organisation in Podolia, 23 February 1934, Haluzevyi Derzhavnyi Archiv Sluzhby Bezpeky Ukraïny, printed materials collection, spr. 78, ark. 23; spr. 60830-FP, t. 44, ark. 15.

56 Holovatiuk et al.: *Mazury* (as cited in note 4), p. 37; “Przegląd prasy polskiej na Ukrainie,” *Kurier Galicyjski*, no. 17, 16–29 September 2016, p. 10; Commission inspecting the Hreczany Rural Soviet (as cited in note 15), TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 305, ark. 22–27. The centre ceased functioning in 1936, when the institution was abolished, and the building was taken into state ownership. It later housed the seat of the rural soviet, a shop, and various Soviet institutions.

57 Commission inspecting the Hreczany Rural Soviet (as cited in note 15), TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 305, ark. 25.

58 “Praca idzie kulawo” (as cited in note 12); “Wzorowa praca” (as cited in note 29).

59 Commission inspecting the Hreczany Rural Soviet (as cited in note 15), TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 305, ark. 25–27.

60 Ibid.

By late 1927 there were increasing signs of abandonment of the NEP. In the press and in party propaganda, it came to be more expressly signalled that dekulakisation was needed in respect of both the wealthier residents of the countryside, and those that were not among the wealthy, but were able to increase their means through hard work and enterprise. There was also an intensified campaign to persuade farmers to join the collective farm. The Hreczany *kolkhoz* had been set up in late 1924, initially being joined by only seven of the poorest farmers. The assets contributed to the collective by its members up to 1927 consisted of just 31 *desiatinas* of land, only 19 being arable, in addition to two horses, one pig, a sow-er, a horse-powered thresher, two harrows, two ploughs, and two feed silos.⁶¹

It was only in 1928, as a result of pressure from the central authorities, that actions towards collectivisation were intensified. They applied various forms of propaganda pressure and substantially increased tax burdens. To deter those who publicly criticised the collective farming system, advantage was taken of an accidental fire at Hreczany's school in 1928. Without waiting for the results of an investigation, accusations of arson were made against actively religious members of the community, particularly those belonging to the rosary group and other religious communities. The Proskuriv communists decided to exploit the case by making a report to Moscow, from where an order was shortly received to make it known that the act had been committed by:

[...] a clerical and kulak element, and therefore the incident should be used to show to the Polish working masses what the religious zealots are really engaged in, namely that they are carrying out counter-revolutionary activity.⁶²

The fates of villagers viewed through the lens of a single family

To follow the experiences of typical inhabitants of Hreczany, we may take Michał Kozina as an example. He had a medium-sized farm, with a total area of 2.85 *desiatinas* (about 3.11 hectares) of arable land, garden and meadow. He had one horse and a cow.⁶³ This meant that, according to the Soviet categorisation of the 1920s, he belonged to the *seredniaks*. In the NEP period his farm annually produced certain surpluses of agricultural products, which not only sufficed to feed the family and pay its taxes, but could also be sold freely at the market in nearby Proskuriv. With a view to the sale of surpluses, he grew quite a wide variety of

61 *Ibid.*

62 Henryk Stroński, "Skazany na milczeniu. Kościół rzymskokatolicki na Ukrainie radzieckiej w latach 1920–1930," *Więź*, no. 10 (1996), pp. 96–129 (111).

63 Rural Soviet in Hreczany (as cited in note 11).

crops. He sowed winter and summer cereals: wheat, rye, barley, oats, millet and buckwheat, as well as maize, hemp, potatoes, and sugar beet for the sugar factory in Proskuriv. Of the grains, he used the greatest amount of land – about half a hectare – for rye, barley, buckwheat and millet.⁶⁴ This diversity of production resulted in better harvests and the ability to spread his sales over time. The NEP was thus very favourable to him. For this reason as well, like other villagers, he involved himself in various social initiatives, such as the building of the chapel and the community centre, and renovation of the school.⁶⁵ As the owner of a profitable, though only medium-sized, farm, Kozina did not wish to join the collective farm established in the village in 1926. As long as the free market operated, he was able to resist collectivisation, as he had the funds to pay the required taxes regularly and to comply with the levies of agricultural goods. The situation changed from 1929 onwards. To compel him to join the collective farm, the authorities began to subject Kozina to various restrictions. First, he was deprived by administrative decision of some pieces of land that were important for the functioning of the farm as a whole, such as the meadow and garden, on the grounds that land of this type was essential for the proper operation of the local collective farm. Another restrictive measure was the gradual increase in taxes and levies in kind (chiefly of grain) that he and other private farmers were required to contribute.⁶⁶ This was done to make these burdens increasingly onerous, exceeding the farms' productive and financial capabilities.⁶⁷

In 1930, by reason of the supposed needs of the collective farm, Michał Kozina was deprived of almost the whole of his meadow, being left with just 0.05 of the original 0.5 desiatinas. This was a particularly harsh measure, since without the meadow the farmer was not able to keep his horse through the winter. For the lost 0.45 desiatinas of meadow, he received in compensation 0.65 desiatinas of arable land, but this was of poor quality.⁶⁸ In the following year, again by reason of the collective farm's requirements, Kozina's farm was reduced by the remainder of the meadow and 0.07 desiatinas of orchard, a total of 0.13 desiatinas. This time he received no compensation. In the next year, 1932, the farm lost a further 0.71 desiatinas, this time consisting of arable land adjoining the collective farm, and again no compensation was received.

64 Rural Soviet in Hreczany (as cited in note 11).

65 Holovatiuk et al., *Mazury* (as cited in note 4), pp. 41–47; Taïsiia Zarets'ka, "Polityka radians'koï vlady shchodo stvoriennia pol's'lykh natsional'nykh raioniv v USRR," *Problemy Istorii Ukraïny* 16 (2007), no. 2, pp. 203–219 (216).

66 Przybyłowski, *Chłopi pod panowaniem bolszewickim* (as cited in note 9), pp. 83–87.

67 Nytychenko, *Vid Zin'kova do Mel'bornu* (as cited in note 13), p. 88.

68 Rural Soviet in Hreczany (as cited in note 11).

Table 3. Size of farm (land area and livestock) belonging to Michał Kozina in 1929–1932

Year (data as at 31 December)	Arable land (desiatinas)	Meadow (desiatinas)	Garden (desiatinas)	Animals	
				horse	cow
1929	2.03	0.50	0.32	1	1
1930	2.03	0.05	0.23	1	1
1931	2.68	–	0.25	1	1
1932	1.97	–	0.25	1	1

Source: Michał Kozina's tax cards from 1928–1932, Archiwum PWIN (see footnote 12).

Thus, over four years, the size of Michał Kozina's farm was reduced by 22 percent, from 2.85 to 2.22 desiatinas.⁶⁹ At the same time, the amount of tax he was required to pay was increased year by year. At the end of the 1920s the most burdensome was the so-called state loan, which was voluntary, although rural soviets were evaluated according to the amount collected from local farmers.⁷⁰ Also voluntary, though collected by coercive means, were various types of contribution for the construction and renovation of village buildings, such as community centres, schools, nurseries and medical assistance points, as well as *ad hoc* collections for defence needs, such as the purchase of a tank or other military equipment.⁷¹ The amounts paid were announced publicly along with the names of their "donors," stigmatising those who had not contributed or, in the view of the collectors, had paid too little. Such propaganda was usually entrusted to the local Komsomol branch, whose activists not only gave notice of the collections, but also set up competition between donors, and published the names of the "reluctant" on special boards and even in the press. In effect, as the NEP ended, taxes were so high that farmers were not able to pay them. Unable to meet their obligations, they saw signing up to the collective farm as the sole way out. The final period of the liquidation of private farms (collectivisation) was called "dekulakisation," by way of humiliating the most resistant peasants. The authorities applied not only coercion, but also the confiscation of property. The People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVS) intensified its activity, starting to investigate the past of the wealthiest peasants, to determine whether between 1917 and 1920 they had served in the forces of General Anton Denikin, Symon Petliura or

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Kaloszin, Polish Bureau of the TsK KP(b)U, Report on the status of public work and on current campaigns in Polish villages in Proskuriv Okruha, 29 May 1928, *DAKhmel'Ō*, f. P-301, op. 41, spr. 176, ark. 3.

⁷¹ Sławek, "A nasza rada śpi," *Głos Młodzieży*, no. 34, 21 October 1932, p. 8.

even Nestor Makhno. If found to have done so, they were arrested and summarily convicted, and their property was confiscated. The criterion for classification as a kulak was lowered, so that the category now included peasants who in the times of the NEP had been classed as *seredniaks*, and norms were even laid down stating what percentage of farmers in a village were to be classed as kulaks.⁷² This in turn meant the imposition of higher taxes.⁷³ An eye-witness recalling these times wrote that those who tried to hold on to their farms for longest brought to the marketplace everything they could possibly sell – antique tapestries, scarves, napkins, embroidered shirts, rugs – in order to pay taxes that had been increased several times over.⁷⁴

Michał Kozina was one of those who held out against collectivisation. In 1931, when according to the authorities' plans the process of collectivisation in Ukraine was to have been completed, he received an order to pay tax for 1932. The annual sum had tripled, rising from a previous level of 4.07 roubles to 12.68 roubles.⁷⁵ Like other private farm owners in Hreczany, he was not able to pay this amount, and so he, along with the great majority of the others, joined the collective farm. In 1933 there were only sporadic private farms left in the village. In the following year, all of them were finally "dekulakised."

This was all the more tragic given that dekulakisation in Ukraine was associated with mass starvation. In Hreczany, thanks to the locals' prudence and the possibility of working on the railway, where small food rations were given as pay,⁷⁶ the effects of famine were milder than in other regions of Ukraine. Nevertheless, even there, various kinds of human tragedy were suffered.⁷⁷

Epilogue

A tragic finale to the history of the village began in 1934, with the trial, on charges fabricated by the NKVS, of members of a supposed Polish Military Organisation existing in Podolia. The first repressions in Hreczany affected wealthy peasants

72 Przybyłowski, *Chłopi pod panowaniem bolszewickim* (as cited in note 10), p. 79.

73 The uniform agricultural tax imposed on private farmers in the USSR. It was calculated according to centrally defined profitability norms per *desiatina* of land, and could also be dependent on land quality, weather conditions in a particular year, and the availability of markets to sell produce. The tax was paid at the end of the year, and could be split into two or three instalments.

74 Nytchenko, *Vid Zin'kova do Mel'bornu* (as cited in note 13), p. 88.

75 Rural Soviet in Hreczany (as cited in note 11).

76 Each railway worker received 400 grams of bread daily, and each family member received 200 grams. Henrikh Strons'kyi, "Pol's'ke naseleння USRR v umovach Holodomoru 1932–1933 rr.," *Ukrains'kyi Istorychnyi Zhurnal* 4 (2017), pp. 95–128 (102–103).

77 *Ibid.*, p. 102.

and the small numbers of intelligentsia there. In Proskuriv Raion, at that time it was chiefly teachers and students that were interrogated, as well as several officials, clergy, and even policemen of Polish origin.⁷⁸ In 1935 the Polish status of the rural soviet was abolished, the Polish school was changed to a Ukrainian one, and the Roman Catholic chapel was closed and turned into a granary for the local collective farm. The first arrests and deportations to Kazakhstan began. In 1937 the “Polish operation” was launched in Ukraine, which by the end of 1938 had almost totally swept away the remnants of Polishness in Hreczany and in the neighbouring villages with Polish communities. Most of the inhabitants there were deported to Kazakhstan. There people from Hreczany mostly settled in the town of Taincha⁷⁹ and the village of Zhanashar, where their descendants live to this day.⁸⁰ Only a few of them were able to return to their homeland as a result of the amnesty granted during World War II.⁸¹

Conclusions

The period of the New Economic Policy was the most prosperous in the history of Hreczany. It saw not only the economic development of the farms there, but also the development of education and the cultural life of the inhabitants. Significant efforts were made towards eliminating illiteracy, including among adults. This arose not only from the demands that the Bolsheviks had been making since before the revolution, but also from the country’s economic needs. Wishing to modernise the Soviet economy, and to increase productivity in agriculture as well as industry, the authorities needed both qualified workers and managers who were able to apply modern production methods. The policy was also of functional importance for the ruling Communist Party, since the widespread teaching of reading and writing facilitated the planned ideological moulding of society – including the battle against religion, which was regarded as especially important.

In spite of the aforementioned ideological constraints, the Ukrainian countryside saw the development of democratic local government in the form of rural soviets. Awareness of the importance of hygiene gradually increased, and people began to value the expansion of rural infrastructure, particularly roads, bridges,

78 For documents from the investigation and trial see Stanisław Stępień (ed.): *Polacy na Ukrainie. Zbiór dokumentów*, part 1: *Lata 1917–1939*, vol. 6, Przemyśl: PWIN, 2012, p. 230; Michał Mastowski et al. (eds.), *‘Operacja Polska’ NKWD 1937–1938*. Kraków: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2017, p. 97.

79 Between 1961 and 1997, the town was named *Krasnoarmeisk*, since 1997 its name is *Taiynsha*.

80 www.studiowschod.pl/operacja-polska-zapomniane-ludobojstwo-na-polakach-w-zsrr, accessed 26 February 2020.

81 Holovatiuk et al., *Mazury* (as cited in note 4), p. 23.

and modern farming techniques.⁸² All of this led the majority of Hreczany's inhabitants to sense that they were actors in ongoing transformations, that much depended on them, both in their own village and more broadly, in the country in which they lived. There was a perception of the possibility of professional advancement, not only in connection with the village's railway station, but also through employment in sugar manufacturing and services in the neighbouring town of Proskuriv, as well as in major industrial developments throughout the Soviet Union.

After the collectivisation of agriculture, the rural soviets lost their previous importance in activating the local population. In February 1930 the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union (TsIK) adopted a resolution titled "Basic assumptions on the organisation of rural soviets in the USSR."⁸³ On this basis, in 1931 the government of Soviet Ukraine adopted a new law "On rural soviets," which significantly reduced their competences, although they were not abolished, and for several more years they still retained a national character. Gradually, however, their competences were almost entirely taken over by the executive boards of the local collective farms.⁸⁴

Today, Hreczany no longer exists as a separate unit. As mentioned earlier, on 1 June 1946 the village was made part of the town of Proskuriv (renamed Khmel'nyts'kyi in 1954) and became one of its districts, although retaining its traditional name. Its historical ethnic and religious structure underwent significant changes in the late 1930s. Family bonds, formed over the centuries, were broken. Many people began to search for their relatives only after Stalin's death. Although in the former village there still live people who remember their Polish descent, and even still practise the Roman Catholic religion, in terms of culture and language they have undergone a process of Ukrainisation.

82 "Komsomolcy biorą udział w pracy. Wieś Woroszyłówka, okr. winnicki," *Głos Młodzieży*, no. 34, 14 September 1927, p. 8.

83 Iryna Volokhova, *Mizhbiudzhetni vidnosyny v Ukraïni: Suchasnyi stan ta perspektyvy rozvytku*. Odesa: Atlant, 2010, pp. 66–67.

84 The strength of the Polish population's resistance to collectivisation is evidenced by the fact that even by the mid-1930s not all Polish villages had been successfully collectivised. On the eve of the abolition of the Polish national raion (which took place on 17 August 1935) collectivisation there was only 85 percent complete (at the same time, in the Spartakovka German national raion, collectivisation had been fully completed). See W. U., "Mniejszości narodowe na Ukrainie Sowieckiej," *Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński* 36 (1935), p. 400.

Illustrations

1. Picture of the "First Congress of the Workers' and Peasants' Delegates from the Polish Julian Marchlewski Raion in Volhynia"
2. Propaganda for the collectivisation of agriculture. The woman in front of the edifice signed with "rural soviet" points to a building with the sign "cooperative"
3. "A cartoon of what the small and middle peasants have to do in the upcoming elections." Hand: "Rural organisations" – Man: „Kulak“
4. Cartoon on the occasion of *Sierp*'s 5th anniversary
5. Advertisement of the Agricultural Loan Cooperative in Worms
6. Advertisement of the bricklayer artel' "Red Mountain" in Johannestal
7. Advertisement of the vineyard loan association "Sel'vinsad" in Rohrbach
8. Picture of the "First Exhibition of Polish Wall Newspapers in Ukraine"
9. Portraits of "well-deserved correspondents of *Sierp*"
10. A map of Mykolaïv Okruha in Russian language

Figure 1. Picture of the “First Congress of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Delegates from the Polish Julian Marchlewski Raion in Volhynia”

1-szy Zjazd Rad Delegatów Robotniczych i Włościańskich

— REJONU POLSKIEGO —

imienia JULJANA MARCHLEWSKIEGO na Wołyniu.



30 marca 1926 r. zakończył swą pracę 1-szy Zjazd Rad Dołbyszańskiego rejonu polskiego.

Rejon ten został utworzony przez Władzę Radziecką we wrześniu 1925 roku ze wsi z ludnością polską.

Urzędowym językiem w tym rejonie jest język polski.

Pierwszy Zjazd Rad jednogłośnie postanowił nazwać rejon polski imieniem Juljana Marchlewskiego, który był założycielem Komunistycznej Partii Polski i wodzem polskich mas pracujących w ich walce przeciw burżuazji i obszarnikom

Na fotografii, prócz delegatów z miejscowych wsi i fabryk, widzimy gości z Kijowa, Charkowa, Moskwy i innych miejscowości.

W środku grupy siedzą: 1) tow. FELIKS KON—przedstawiciel Komitetu Centralnego Wszeczwiązkowej Komunistycznej Partii Bolszewików i Komitetu Centralnego Komunistycznej Partii Polski, 2) tow. B. SKARBEK—członek Wszeczwiązkowego Centralnego Komitetu Wykonawczego Rad, 3) tow. SŁIMCOW—przewodniczący Komitetu Wykonawczego okręgu Żytomierskiego, 4) tow. OŁDAKOWSKI—przewodniczący Komitetu Wykonawczego rejonu polskiego, 5) tow. DZIERŻYŃSKA—kierownik Biura Polskiego Komitetu Centralnego Wszeczwiązkowej Komunistycznej Partii Bolszewików, 6) tow. ŁAZOWERT—kierownik Biura Polskiego Komitetu Centralnego Komunistycznej Partii Ukrainy, 7) tow. STRUSIŃSKI—sekretarz Komitetu Partyjnego rejonu polskiego, 8) tow. SZMIDT—przedstawiciel polskiej ludności pracującej na Berdyczowszczyźnie.

Figure 2. Propaganda for the collectivisation of agriculture. The woman in front of the edifice signed with "rural soviet" points to a building with the sign "cooperative"

K. 4022

106(47.711), 1926*

Robo tnicy i chłopi wszystkich krajów, łączcie się!

SIERP

TYGODNIK POPULARNO-LUDOWY.

Cena numeru 5 kop.
 Prenumerata miesięczna:
 I rodzaju:—zwykła . . . —20 kop.
 II " z dodatkiem i
 książeczką pol-
 skiej co mie-
 siąc —35 kop.
 Wysyłajcie prenumeratę
 odrazu za parę miesięcy.

№ 10 (163). Rok 5-ty — ADRES REDAKCJI: —
 KIJÓW, ul. Worowskiego 38 KIJÓW, 7 marca 1926 r.

1926
 132 9/2

Lenin nam mówił...

Każda włościanka powinna
 umieć rządzić państwem.

Rozpoczęte przez Władzę Ra-
 dzieńską dzieło budownictwa so-
 cjalistycznego może być znacz-
 nie posunięte naprzód jedynie
 wówczas, kiedy nie setki, ale
 miliony kobiet wezmą w tym
 udział.

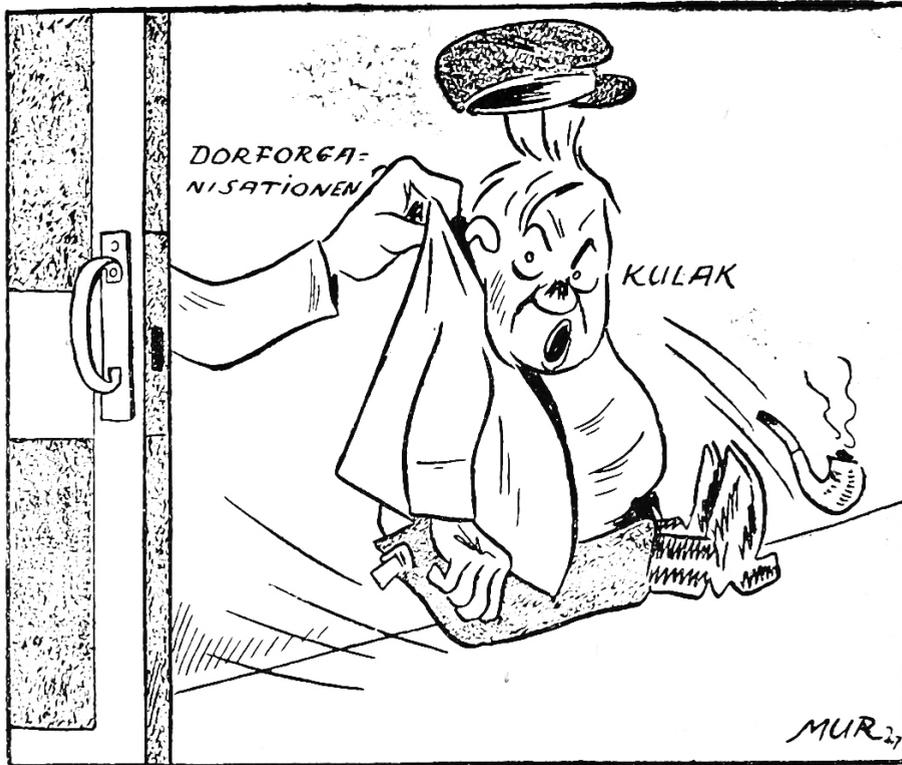
59

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 inv. № 122801/10

K. 4022

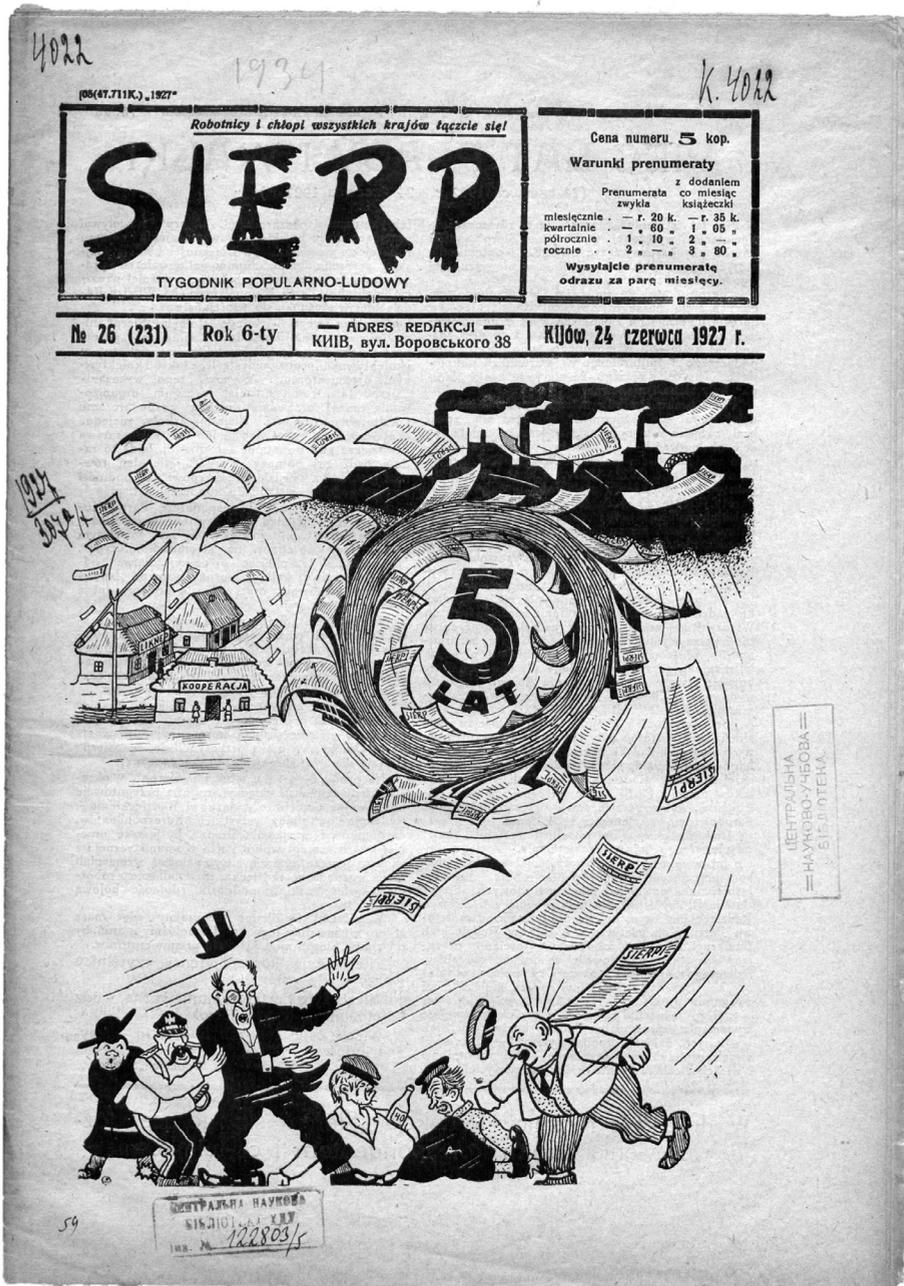
Source: Sierp, 6 March 1926, no. 10/163, p. 1.

Figure 3. "A cartoon of what the small and middle peasants have to do in the upcoming elections." Hand: "Rural organisations" – Man: „Kulak“



Ein Bild davon, was die Klein- und Mittelbauern bei den bevorstehenden
Umwahlen der Dorforganisationen zu tun haben.

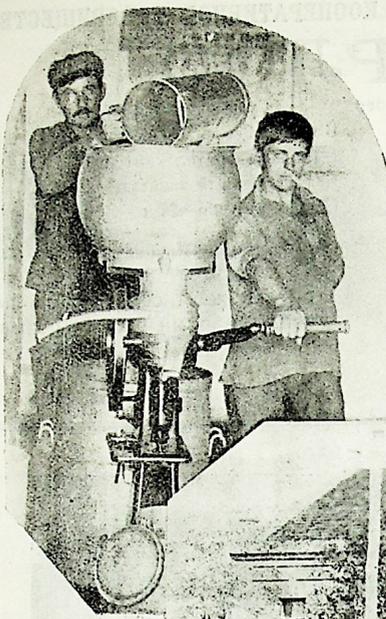
Figure 4. Cartoon on the occasion of Sierp's 5th anniversary



Source: Sierp, 24 June 1927, no. 26/231, p. 1.

Figure 5. Advertisement of the Agricultural Loan Cooperative in Worms

Вся Николаевщина

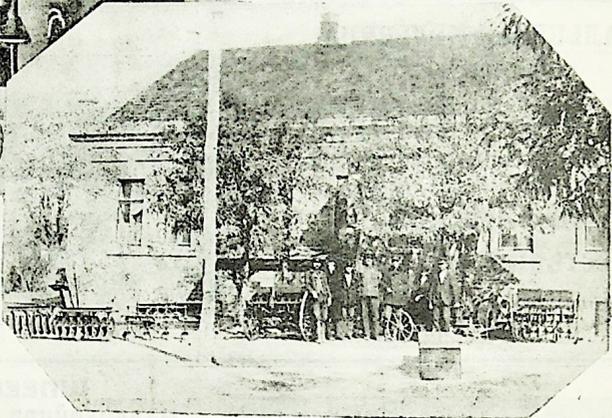


ВОРМСКОЕ С.-Х. КРЕДИТНОЕ КООПЕРАТИВНОЕ Т-ВО

Находится в с. Вормском, К.-Либки р-на, Ник. окр.
Существует с 23 января 1923 года.
Объединяет 488 членов, в том числе организ.—1.
Паевой капитал—2.861 руб. 33 коп.

**Операции т-ва: снабжение членов
т-ва строительным материалом, с.-х.
машинами.**

Кредитует исключительно членов т-ва —
на 5.655 руб
заготовлено различн. культур около 300.000 п.
Т-во имеет молочную ферму, которая пере-
рабатывает до 300 ведер молока в день.
Оборот за 1926—27 год—1.634.291 руб.
По вкладным операциям на 1-е октября 1927 года
в остатке—513 руб. 60 коп.



Наверху: молочна.
ферма—сепаратор
Внизу: склад с.-х.
машин т-ва.

Председ. правления
ОКСИЕР П. П.

Члены правления
ФРАНЦ Г. Я.,
ФЕР П. Г.

Source: *Spravochnaia kniga 'Vsia Nikolaevschchina' 1928 goda*, Nikolaevskoe okruzhnoe obshchestvo "Doloi negramotnost'" (ed.), Mykolaïv 1928, p. 30.

Figure 6. Advertisement of the bricklayer artel 'Red Mountain' in Johannestal

Карло-Либнехтовск. район

**ИОГАНЕНСТАЛЬСКАЯ
АРТЕЛЬ КАМЕНЬЩИКОВ КРАСНАЯ ГОРА**

Находитесь в Иоганенстале, К.-Либнехт. р-на, Никол. округа.
Существует с 1926 года. Артель состоит из 42 членов.
! Годовая продукция по выработке плит=60.000 штук.
Выработка камня-известняка для разных построек
Размеры: 6×12 вершк., 5×14 вершк., 5×10 вершк.,
6×14 вершков.
Принимаются заказы на камень разных размеров.



Наверху: вход в карьеру
каменоломни.
Внизу: члены артели.

Пред. артели ДИДЕ Х. Х.
Члены правления
МЕДИНСКИЙ Н. Г.
ТАРАБАЧУК Ф. Л.
ГНЬЦ В. И.

Source: *Spravochnaia kniga 'Vsia Nikolaevschchina' 1928 goda*, Nikolaevskoe okruzhnoe obshchestvo "Doloi negramotnost'" (ed.), Mykolaïv 1928, p. 31.

Figure 7. Advertisement of the vineyard loan association “Sel’vinsad” in Rohrbach

Карло-Либкнехтский район

**РОРБАХСКОЕ САДО-ВИНОГРАДНОЕ
КРЕДИТНО-КООПЕРАТИВНОЕ ТОВАРИЩЕСТВО „СЕЛЬВИНСАД“**

Находится в кол. Рорбах, К.-Либкнехт. р-на
Николаевского округа.
Существует с 1925 года.
Объединяет членов—502 чел.

Наверху: ви-
ноградник т-ва
Средина: члены
правления.
Низ: сад т-ва

Паевой капитал	3 063 р.
Оборот за 1926—27 год	473.823 р.
Прибыль за 1926—27 год	4.771 р.

Объединяет 563 десят. сада и виноградников

Имеется собств. подвал разлива. Имеются в про-
даже разные сорта чисто-виногр. вин: 1) Али-гоге,
2) Пино, 3) Гаме, 4) Бурдо и др.

Председатель т-ва Герцель В. Я.
Чл. правл. Бахман И. И., Добродь В. С.

Source: *Spravochnaia kniga 'Vsia Nikolaevschchina' 1928 goda*, Nikolaevskoe okruzhnoe obshchestvo “Doloi negramotnost” (ed.), Mykolaïv 1928, p. 33.

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Source: *Sierp*, 2 August 1925, no. 29, p. 3.

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Source: *Sierp*, 24 June 1923, no. 22/23, p. 5.

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Source: *Spravochnaia kniga 'Vsia Nikolaevschchina' 1928 goda, Nikolaevskoe okruzhnoe obshchestvo "Doloi negramotnost'"* (ed.), Mykolaïv 1928, inside front cover.

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1. Biographies of Local and Regional Actors

1.1 Iogan Merts (Johann Merz), Landau, Personal Questionnaire, [1925]

Translation from Russian and Ukrainian¹

[356]

USSR [Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic]

Personal Questionnaire No. _

of a responsible employee

Place *Village of Landau, Nikolaev Okrug*

District *Landau, institution Raiispolkom, occupation chairman*

A

1. Last name *Merts [Merz]* first name *Iogan [Johann]*, patronymic *Gotgardovich*
2. Year of birth *1885* place of birth *The city of Riga*
3. Nationality *German*
4. Native language *German*
5. What languages, other than your native language, do you speak? *Russian and Latvian*
6. What other areas of the USSR do you know from work? *Don Oblast', Khar'kov Guberniia, Yekaterinoslav Guberniia, Odessa Oblast'*
7. Which foreign countries have you visited? When and for how long? What was the purpose of your visit? *I was in Germany in 1904 for four months, looking for a job, I also worked in Königsberg.*
8. Social origin (former)? *Worker*
9. a) Main occupation? *Locksmith*
b) How long have you been engaged in this work and when did you stop? *For six years, I stopped in 1905.*
10. Marital status and family members? *I am married and have children.*

¹ The questionnaire is in Ukrainian, but the handwritten answers (in italics here) are in Russian.

11. Education (Where did you study? Did you complete the course of studies? How many classes, courses did you complete?) *Self-taught*
 - a) General
 - b) Special
12. Did you serve in the army? When, which branch of arms were you in and what position did you hold? Did you participate in the war and when were you demobilised? *I served from 1917 to 1920, recalled on 20 June; I was a Red Army soldier in the armoured forces, head of housekeeping and military commissar.*
13. Which party do you belong to and since when? What organisations do you belong to and since when? *KP(b)U since 1917; Khar'kov organisation, Petinskii Raion; since August 1917.*
14. Which parties did you belong to before and since when? Which organisations did you belong to and since when?
To the Social Democratic Party [S.D.] since 1905, in the Latvian organisation in the city of Riga since June 1905.
15. Participation in revolutionary and social work:
 - a) until 1917 *in an underground organisation in Riga in 1904–1905*
 - b) after 1917 *I took part in the October Revolution and other events.*

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16. Have you ever been tried in court? If so, when, why and what verdict was delivered? *By the tsarist government in 1905, for belonging to the party and for a terrorist act, sentenced to 20 years of hard labour.*
17. Physical defects? *None*
18. a) When did you first join a trade union? Which one? *In 1917*
 - b) Which union do you belong to and since when? *Union of metalworkers since August.²*
19. a) Were you a Russian subject before 1917? *Yes*
 - b) Are you now a subject of the Soviet Union? *Yes*

B

20. Since when have you been working in the field? *Soviet and party*
21. Details on your soviet and party work in time periods of not less than 6 months:

² Without indication of a year.

Time period	Place of service	State, trade union, party, cooperative troops and private institutions	Occupation	Elected, hired or appointed
<i>from July 1920 to December 1920</i>	<i>Odessa Uezd</i>	<i>soviet</i>	<i>Chairman of the Volost Revolutionary Committee [Volrevkom]</i>	<i>appointed</i>
<i>from December 1920 to July 1921</i>	<i>Odessa Uezd Party Committee [Uparkom]</i>	<i>party</i>	<i>instructor</i>	<i>appointed</i>
<i>from July 1921 to March 1922</i>	<i>Odessa Uispolkom</i>	<i>soviet and party</i>	<i>Head of the National Minorities [natsmen] Department</i>	<i>appointed</i>
<i>from 1922 to present</i>	<i>Odessa and Nikolaev Okrug</i>	<i>soviet</i>	<i>Chairman of the RIK</i>	<i>elected</i>

22. Have you worked on any materials (written and printed) related to Soviet construction? If so, what are their names, where and when were they issued?
Printed in newspapers
23. Have you participated in congresses, conferences? If so, when, where and by whom were you delegated? *Civil and military units of the Soviets and of the Party.*
24. In what field of *soviet and party* activities would you consider yourself to be most efficient? *Soviet*
25. Work details before 1917:

Time period	Place of service	State, trade union, party, cooperative troops and private institutions	Occupation	Elected, hired or appointed
<i>from 1905 to 1917</i>	<i>in penitentiary</i>			

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26. Work details after 1917:

Time period	Place of service	State, trade union, party, cooperative troops and private institutions	Occupation	Elected, hired or appointed
<i>from February 1917 to 1920</i>	<i>in Khar'kov and on different fronts</i>	<i>in the 5th, 3rd, 10th and 14th army</i>	<i>Red Guard soldier Red Army soldier, Head of Housekeeping, Head of the Military Committee [Voenkom]</i>	<i>joined voluntarily</i>
<i>from June 1920 to December 1920</i>	<i>Nikolaev Volost'</i>	<i>soviet</i>	<i>Head of the Volost' Revolutionary Committee [Volrevkom]</i>	<i>appointed</i>
<i>from December 1920 to July 1921</i>	<i>Odessa Uezd</i>	<i>party</i>	<i>Instructor</i>	<i>appointed</i>
<i>from 1921 to 1922</i>	<i>Odessa Uispolkom</i>	<i>soviet and party</i>	<i>Head of the National Minorities [natsmen] Department</i>	<i>appointed</i>
<i>from 1922 to June 1923</i>	<i>Ovidiopol'</i>	<i>soviet</i>	<i>Chairman of the RIK</i>	<i>elected</i>
<i>from 1923 to 1924</i>	<i>Tsebrikovo</i>	<i>soviet</i>	<i>Chairman of the RIK</i>	<i>elected</i>
<i>from 1924 to present</i>	<i>village of Landau</i>	<i>soviet</i>	<i>Chairman of the RIK</i>	<i>elected</i>

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C

27. Participation in congresses and executive committees (number of times):

	All-Union	All-Ukrainian	Huber-niia	Okruha	Raion	Rural soviet
Congresses	2 times	2 times	6 times	7	7	4
Executive Committees	-	1	2	5	7	6
	2	3	8	12	14	10

Signature /Merz/

Source: DAMO, f. R-161, op. 1, spr. 853, ark. 356–357.

1.2 Evgenii Oldakovskii (Eugeniusz Otdakowski),³ Chernihiv, Autobiography, 20 February 1924

Translated from Russian

Evgenii Petrovich Oldakovskii

Autobiography

I was born on 1 December 1897 in Warsaw. My father had come to Warsaw from the countryside at age 14 to “seek his fortune.” Self-taught, he qualified as a sewerage technician. My mother was the daughter of a manual worker – a bricklayer. As regards to social class, I am of Polish noble ancestry. My great-grandfather, a Polish lord of the manor, took part in the Polish rising of 1863, for which he was sentenced to death, and all of his property confiscated. At that time his oldest son, my grandfather, was aged about 10. My great-grandmother died not long after the death of her husband, and my grandfather became a farm labourer. At age 18 he married a peasant’s daughter and settled down in the countryside, receiving as a dowry

³ From August 1925, Eugeniusz Otdakowski headed the organisational committee for the creation of a Polish National Raion, and after it was established, became head of the Raion Executive Committee in Marchlewsk. In July 1935 he was arrested and in February 1936 was sentenced to death by a military tribunal, commuted to 10 years’ hard labour. He was shot on 29 October 1937.

2.5 desiatinas of land, which he farmed for the whole of his life. My father had two brothers, one elder and one younger. The elder brother remained in the countryside; the younger, a metal worker, worked for a long time as a Warsaw tram driver.

Until 1909 nothing particularly noteworthy happened in my life. It was in that year that I finished primary school and began to plan my future life. My parents wanted me to get a good education, but in a situation where the family consisted of 10 people, including my elderly grandmother, and I was the eldest child, I had to forget about continuing my studies and think about ways of earning a crust.

I first worked at a barber's, but that lasted a month or two, after which I became a printer's apprentice.

Here I need to say something about the environment in which I grew up. All of the women in my family, apart from one aunt who married a commissioner, worked in a factory. One of my male cousins was hanged in 1905, and another was sent to Siberia, where he remained until 1912.

In February 1913 I was involved in an unpleasant incident. One Saturday, during the celebrations of the 300th anniversary of the Romanov dynasty, my cousin, who in the autumn of 1912 had returned from exile in Siberia, gave me a packet of leaflets and told me to distribute them in the cathedral during mass, as there would be many workers there. In the church, however, just as I had taken out half of the package, put it under my knees and reached for the other half, I was grabbed by the collar and taken out, with the leaflets under my arm, first to the police station, and from there to the Security Department. I was released a month and a half later; however, I was not allowed to continue my apprenticeship at the printer's. But then I caught tuberculosis, and on doctor's advice went to live with my grandfather in the countryside. I stayed there for the whole of the summer and winter of 1913 and spring of 1914. For a long time after returning from the countryside I could not find any work, because the doctors categorically forbade me to return to the printer's. Only when the war started did I find a job as a digger, working on the construction of fortifications near Warsaw.

I worked there from August 1914 to May 1915. In May I found employment in a bar at the railway station, and from there in July 1915 I moved to Moscow.

At the start of 1916 I was called up and sent to the front.

In early February 1917, shortly before the February Revolution, I was assigned to train for three months as a medic in the division's hospital. The February Revolution took place while I was there. Soon after the Revolution, at the Division Congress of Medics and Trainee Medics, I was elected secretary of the Executive Committee of Medics of the 8th Turkestan Infantry Division, and in May I became a member of the Division Executive Committee of Military Deputies and Officers. Shortly afterwards, at the Corps Congress of Medical Workers, I was elected a member of that body.

At that time I did not yet have specific political beliefs, although my views were close to those of the SRs⁴ – the name attracted me. The July events in Petrograd, news of which reached the front at great speed, turned my sympathies towards the Bolsheviks. Soon after that I got appendicitis and was taken to Moscow. On arrival I was sent to the field hospital, and immediately joined the military section of the Moscow Soviet [of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies]. I started to attend meetings organised by the Bolsheviks, and after a certain incident that occurred on a tram, between the tram driver and an officer, I became a committed Bolshevik. The elections to the Moscow Municipal Dumas were approaching. I conducted political agitation among the sick troops in the hospital, encouraging them to support the Bolsheviks. As a result of that, among the 500 patients who went to vote under my leadership, approximately 450 cast their votes for the Bolsheviks. At the time of the "Kornilov putsch"⁵ I organised a meeting of sick soldiers. During discussion of the putsch, fist fights broke out with the medical personnel, who firmly supported Kornilov. One of the nurses, whom a patient struck with a crutch, even suffered slight head injuries. News of the incident appeared in the Moscow papers, and I was discharged from hospital as a result.

After leaving hospital, thanks to the Labour Exchange, I worked for a few days in the office of the Okulovka Stationery Factory in Novgorod Guberniia. I arrived there in late September. I was soon elected as a member of the Raion Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, and joined the ranks of the United Social Democrats. Together with one Menshevik,⁶ I was delegated to the second All-Russian Congress of Soviets. At the congress in Petrograd I finally joined the Bolsheviks. After my return from the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, eight persons from the Okulovka United Social-Democratic Organisation formed a Bolshevik group. On 4 November those persons were admitted as members of the party by the Party Committee of Novgorod Guberniia.

In November and December 1917 I was busy organising the Red Guard in Okulovka Raion, where I was chief of staff. In January 1918 I was elected to the Presidium of the Raion Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers', Peasants' and Red Army Deputies [sic]. Then a conference of seven Bolshevik factory organisations from the raion was called, where a Raion Party Committee was appointed, and I was elected its chairman. At the same time our Raion Executive Committee abolished all of the Volost' Land Offices in the raion, replacing them with Volost' Executive

4 The Socialist Revolutionaries, or SRs, were one of the left-wing parties in Russia.

5 Lavr G. Kornilov (1870–1918) was a general in the tsarist army. In 1917 he became commander-in-chief of the Russian army. In August 1917 he launched a failed coup or "putsch." He then commanded the counter-revolutionary Volunteer Army and died in 1918 during an offensive in Kuban'.

6 The autor confuses Raion and Volost'. Raions, as administrative units, were not established until 1923.

Committees. In late February of that year, in connection with the Polish parliamentary election, I wanted to relocate to Poland, but as a result of a conversation I had at the Ostrov refugees' quarantine (Pskov Guberniia, then under German occupation), I had to escape back to Russia, which I did in late April. On returning to Okulovka I worked on amalgamating the party organisations, renamed in RKP [(b)] at that time, in the re-established small Malaia Vishera Uezd.

That uezd, stretching along the Nikolaev railway,⁷ occupied a 30-verst strip of land on both sides of that railway, including large stations such as those of Okulovka, Malaia Vishera, Bol'shaia Vishera and Chudovo. The uezd contained several large factories and works, and many small enterprises. Most of the population consisted of workers.

In June, at the initiative of our Raion Committee of the Russian Communist Party, an Uezd Conference was called, at which an Uezd Committee was elected, and I was elected its deputy chairman.

Several days after this I was elected chairman of the Uezd Congress of Soviets and of the Uezd Soviet of Workers', Peasants' and Red Army Deputies. Because of the Volga uprising⁸ we had to organise a Communist Volunteer Unit, with which in August 1918 I went to the front as an agitator. On the eastern front, by decision of the Unit's General Meeting, I was placed at the disposition of Poarm.⁹ From the time of the capture of Kazan' and other towns along the Volga – that is, from the autumn of 1918 – I became a member of the Revolutionary Committee in Chistopol' and editor of a newspaper there. In November, Poarm appointed me to the editorial committee of the military newspaper *Grazhdanskaia Voina* [Civil War]. In February 1919 I became deputy commander of the Political Section of the 27th Division, and in March I became its commander. This coincided with the time of a heavy offensive by Kolchak¹⁰ on the eastern front. At the same time a military conference was called, at which I, on behalf of the division workers, made charges against Comrade Trotskii,¹¹ blaming him for causing destruction to the Red Army.

Most of those at the conference supported our point of view, and a suitable resolution was adopted. Due to this turn of events at the conference, Comrade Rozengol'ts¹² was assigned to us as a member of the Revolutionary Military Council, and he removed the most active members of the conference to positions in the rear.

7 The railway connection between Moscow and St. Petersburg/Petrograd was known until 1923 as Nikolaev railway, named after Tsar Nikolai I.

8 In 1917, Bolshevik uprisings took place in six guberniias alongside the Volga (Kazan, Simbirsk, Saratov, Samara, Penza and Astrakhan).

9 Poarm was the short name for the army's Political Section (politotdel armii).

10 Alexander Kolchak (1873–1920) was from 1917 to 1920 one of the leaders of the White Armies.

11 Lev (Leon) Trotskii (1879–1940) was between 1918 and 1925 People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs.

12 Arkadii Rozengol'ts (1889–1938) had a high ranking position in the Red Army.

I was among those removed from the front. I awaited orders, and was finally given the post of assistant to the commander at the Red Army Sanatorium near Samara. In autumn 1919 I returned to the army and was appointed a member of the Army Tribunal.

In early 1920 I became head of the Political Bureau, a member of the Guberniia Committee, and editor of *Gazeta Polska* [Polish Gazette] in Krasnoiarsk.

Also at this time the period of my party membership was shortened. This took place in the following way: in mid-1919 I had lost my party membership card, and because of the rapid movement of the front line I did not manage to have a new one issued. During re-registration in 1920, by decision of the Registration Commission at Poarm, I was issued with a new card, with my membership counted from 1 January 1919, and I was ordered to pay the membership fees for that period. In August 1920 I was placed at the disposition of the Political Bureau at the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. There I worked for the Central Directorate of the Polish Bureau of that Committee and the Foreign Bureau of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party [PKP], and also for the editorial office of *Sztandar Komunizmu* [Banner of Communism]¹³ in Minsk. After the Polish Bureau was moved from Minsk to Smolensk, and later to Moscow, I was appointed deputy editor of the organs of the Polish Bureau at the Central Committee of the Belarusian Communist Party. After our paper was closed, I was nominated a member of the Military Council of the Eastern Front Tribunal, and in December 1920 a member of the Military Council of the Ukraine Tribunal. On 31 July 1921 I was demobilised, and was appointed Chairman of the Yekaterinoslav Guberniia Revolutionary Tribunal. In October 1922, due to a merger of offices, I also received the post of chairman of the Yekaterinoslav Guberniia Soviet People's Court [Gubsovnarsud].

On 1 March 1923 I became the chairman of the Chernigov Guberniia Court [Gubsud], and I hold that post to this day.

For the whole of my time in the party I was a speaker and agitator.

20 February 1924

E. Oldakovskii
[handwritten signature]

Signature: TsDAVO, f. 288, op. 7, spr. 1157, ark. 34–36.

This Document has been published earlier in: Stanisław Stępień (ed.), *Polacy na Ukrainie: Zbiór dokumentów*. Part 1: *Lata 1917–1939*, vol. 3. Przemysł: PWIN, 2001, pp. 41–46.

¹³ *Sztandar Komunizmu*: A Polish daily edited by the Soviet government in 1919.

**1.3 Rudol'f Anson (Rudolf Anson), Landau, Personal Questionnaire,
16 October 1925**

*Translation from Russian and Ukrainian*¹⁴

[51]

**Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic [USRR]
Personal Questionnaire No. _
of a responsible worker**

Place *Village of Landau, Nikolaev Okrug*

District *Landau*, institution *Raiispolkom*, occupation *Head of the Raion Land Administration [RZU]*

A

1. Last name *Anson*, first name *Rudol'f [Rudolf]*, patronymic *Fridrikhovich*
2. Year of birth *1897* place of birth *Latvia*
3. Nationality *Latvian*
4. Native language *German*
5. What languages, other than your native language, do you speak? *Russian and Latvian*
6. What other areas of the USRR do you know from work? *Odessa and Taurida Gubernii*
7. Which foreign countries have you visited? When and for how long? What was the purpose of your visit? *In Germany, in the city of Königsberg and in Latvia, in the city of Riga, I visited my relatives.*
8. Social origin (former)? *Worker-peasant*
9. a) Main profession? *Locksmith*
b) How long have you been engaged in this work and when did you stop? *For four years, I stopped in 1916.*
10. Marital status and family members? [...] ¹⁵ *wife*
11. Education (Where did you study? Did you complete the course of studies? How many classes, courses did you complete?)
a) General *4 classes of town school and 5 classes of vocational school in the city of Riga.*
b) Special *5 [...] ¹⁶ school in the city of Zinov'evsk*

14 The questionnaire is in Ukrainian, but the handwritten answers (in italics here) are in Russian.

15 Two words are illegible.

16 One word is illegible.

12. Did you serve in the army? When, which branch of arms were you in and what position did you hold? Did you participate in the war and when were you demobilised? *I served in the Red Army from 1918 to 1924.*
13. Which party do you belong to and since when? What organisations do you belong to and since when? *KP(b)U since 30 April 1918 (accepted in the Political Division [politdiviziia])*
14. Which parties did you belong to before and since when? Which organisations did you belong to and since when? *I was not a member of any other parties.*
15. Participation in revolutionary and social work:
 - a) until 1917 *in the Red Guard*
 - b) after 1917 *in the Red Army and Soviet service*

[51 zv]

16. Have you ever been tried in court? If so, when, why, and what verdict was delivered? *No*
17. Physical defects? *None*
18. a) When did you first join a trade union? Which one? *Union of metalworkers in 1917*
 b) Which union do you belong to and since when? *Union of Soviet Trade Employees [Soiuz Sovtorgsluzhashchikh] since 1924*
19. a) Were you a Russian subject before 1917? *Yes*
 b) Are you now a subject of the Soviet Union? *Yes*

B

20. Since when have you been working in the field? *Since 1917*
21. Work details (not less than 6 months):

Time period	Place of service	State, trade union, party, co-operative troops and private institutions	Occupation	Elected, hired or appointed
<i>from 1917 to 23 February 1918</i>	<i>Red Guard</i>	<i>second lieutenant of the Red Guard</i>	<i>company commander [komroty]</i>	<i>elected</i>
<i>from 23 February 1918 to 1920</i>	<i>Red Army</i>	<i>13th Latvian and 15th division</i>	<i>squad commander [komvzvod]</i>	<i>appointed</i>

from 1920 to 1921	Taurida Guberniia	volispolkom	Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee [Predrevkoma]	appointed
from 1921 to 1924	Red Army	15th Siv. [?] division	squad commander [komvzvod]	appointed
from 1924 to 1925	Varvarovka Raion	rural soviet	chairman of the rural soviet	elected
1925-...	Landau Raion	raiispolkom	Head of the District Land Administration [RZU]	elected

22. Have you written any works (on what subjects, handwritten or printed, title, where and when published) ----
23. Have you participated in congresses, conferences? If so, when, where, and by whom were you delegated? *Party, Soviet and cooperative*
24. In what field of Soviet activities would you consider yourself to be most efficient? *Administrative work*
25. Work details before 1917:

Time period	Place of service	State, trade union, party, co-operative troops and private institutions	Occupation	Elected, hired or appointed
from 1910 to 1914	City of Riga	"Folzer" state factory	apprentice	hired
from 1914 to 1916	Yekaterinburg Guberniia	"Revdinskii" mining plants	locksmith [...] ¹⁷	hired
from 1916 to 1917	Rifle division of the army	60th division	junior officer [unterofitser]	appointed

[52]

17 One word is illegible.

26. Work details after 1917:

Time period	Place of service	State, trade union, party, co-operative troops and private institutions	Occupation	Elected, hired or appointed
from 1917 to 1918	Red Guard, near Petrograd	second lieutenant of the Red Guard	company commander [komroty]	elected
from 1918 to 1920	Red Army	13th Latvian and 15th division	squad commander	appointed
from 1920 to 1921	Taurida Guberniia	volispolkom	Head of the Military Revolutionary Committee [Predrevkoma]	appointed
from 1921 to 1924	Red Guard	15th Siv. [?] division	squad commander	appointed
from 1924 to 1925	Varvarovka RIK	rural soviet	Chairman of the rural soviet	elected

16 October 1925

Signature /Anson/

Source: DAMO, f. R-161, op. 1, spr. 853, ark. 51–52.

1.4 Stanislav Kozlovskii (Stanisław Kozłowski), Shepetivka, Autobiography, 27 June 1925

Translation from Russian

Résumé of an Okrispolkom employee (surname, forename and patronymic)

Kozlovskii Stanislav [Kozłowski Stanisław] Leonardovich: I was born on the Lubar estate of Count Vodzitskii, in the uezd of Novograd-Volinskii in Volhynia Guberniia, on Alfredovo farm, and lived there with my father until age 10. When I was 10 my father, having no means to support his children, gave all of us away. To begin with I grazed calves and pigs for a landowner, and later grazed cattle until I was 15. From age 15 to 21 I served as a farmhand. When I was 21 I went into military service, and

when I returned from military service I worked until age 27 for Count Komorovskii in the village of Berezna, now in the Polonne Raion in the Shepetovka Okrug. At 27 I got married in Labunskie Khutory, now Dobroloz Rural Soviet, Polonne Raion. My wife received as a dowry 2 desiatinas of land and a house, where I still live.

Where I have worked and in what positions:

For some time I travelled away, then returned, for three years I worked in Polonne as a warehouseman for Count Karvitskii, and then went to America to earn money; I spent three years there and worked in various places – in a brickyard, in the forest, on the railways. When I returned from America I went to the war. I fought until 1917, and after the war of liberation I began to do community work in the countryside, where I still work.

I am the chairman of the village Committee of Impoverished Peasants.

Signature *Kozlovskii*

Accompanying signature [...]¹⁸

Authenticated by staff manager [...]¹⁹

27 June 1925

Source: DAKhmel'O, R-f. 766, op. 1, spr. 444, ark. 81–81 zv.

1.5 Evgenii Perkovich (Eugeniusz Perkowicz), Kiev, Autobiography, 27 January 1928

Translated from Russian

To
Central Committee of the Communist
Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine

Autobiography

I was born in Kiev on 6 October 1875. My parents, Petr Yul'ianovich Perkovich and Elena Ivanovna (maiden name also Perkovich), were both of noble descent, but for a long time had not owned land. My grandfather on my mother's side was

¹⁸ No signature.

¹⁹ No signature.

a doctor, and that on my father's side a pharmacist. I spent my childhood and youth with my parents in the village of Kashperovka in Tarashcha Uezd, Kiev Guberniia, where my father worked in the office of the Kashperovka sugar factory.

In 1884 I was enrolled at the secondary school in Belaia Tserkov', which I did not complete. In 1892, after completing the fourth grade, I began working as an apprentice in a pharmacy. I completed the required three-year apprenticeship at the pharmacy of L. F. Vezhbitski in Zolotonosha in Poltava Guberniia. In 1896 I received the title of assistant pharmacist from Kiev University.

I worked as an assistant pharmacist in Yelizavetgrad (1896–97), in Odessa (1897), in Yekaterinoslav (1897–98), in Tetiev (1898–99), in Kiev (1899–1900), and in Bar in Kamenets-Podol'sk Guberniia (1900–1901).

In 1901 I began studying pharmacy at Kiev University, at the same time working at pharmacies in Kiev. However, I did not complete those studies, as in 1902 I entered the Roman Catholic Seminary in Zhitomir.

In 1907 I completed the Seminary, receiving holy orders, and served for four months in Belaia Tserkov' (until November 1907) and then in Uman' (until September 1908) as a curate, and later as a parish priest: at Aleksandriia in Rovno Uezd (until August 1909), and in the village of Nesvich in Lutsk Uezd, Volhynia Guberniia (until June 1916). I later worked as a catechist in Berdichev (until June 1917), and later in the village of Tereshki in Staro-Konstantinov Uezd, Volhynia Guberniia (until September 1922) and finally in Proskurov (until 3 January 1927).

Already in 1915, when I found myself almost on the very battle lines, seeing with my own eyes all the horrors of war – fruits of the capitalist-bourgeois order – I underwent a complete ideological transformation. Observation of life and the reading of antireligious literature convinced me of the explicit falsehood of the religious worldview, turning me to a committed supporter of the idea of the liberation of mankind. For this reason, on 3 January 1927 I left the priesthood and broke with religion, and from April of that year began antireligious activity, organising readings and discussions. I have so far visited 52 localities, where I have given 57 lectures, mostly for Catholic populations – Germans and Poles.

Apart from that I am engaged in writing. I work for the *Bezvirnyk* [Atheist]²⁰ in Kharkiv and for the Kiev-based Polish magazines *Sierp* [The Sickle]²¹ and *Głos Młodzieży* [Voice of the Youth].²² I have also published one brochure.

27 January 1928, Kiev

Evgenii Perkovich
[handwritten signature]

20 *Bezvirnyk*: A journal in Ukrainian language, edited between 1924 and 1935.

21 *Sierp*: A weekly in Polish language, edited between 1922 and 1937.

22 *Głos Młodzieży*: A bi-weekly in Polish language, edited between 1925 and 1935.

Appendix I.

As regards my military service status, I declare that I did not perform such service, having received the second category for family reasons – as the eldest son in the family.

During the war of 1914–1917 I also did not serve in the army, and during the war with Poland I did not leave my parish in Tereshki and did not go into hiding.

During the period of Soviet rule I have not been tried in court and no investigation has been made against me.

I have not been a member of any party.

Appendix II.

During the period of the tsarist regime I was not tried in court and no investigation was made against me. On one occasion I was fined 25 roubles by a justice of the peace for inexact compliance with the Edict of Toleration.

E. Perkovich
[handwritten signature]

Appendix III.

I have never owned any real property.

E. Perkovich
[handwritten signature]

Source: TsDAVO, f. 1, op. 12, spr. 239, ark. 170–171.

This Document has been published earlier in: Stanisław Stępień (ed.), *Polacy na Ukrainie: Zbiór dokumentów*. Part 1: *Lata 1917–1939*, vol. 2. Przemyśl: PWIN, 1999, pp. 97–98.

**1.6 Anton Bergner, Vysokopillia (Kronau), Personal Questionnaire,
24 April 1926**

*Translated from Ukrainian and Russian*²³

[23]

**Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic [USRR]
Personal Questionnaire No. _
of a responsible employee**

Place *Vysokopol'e, Kherson Okrug*

District *Vysokopol'e*, institution *Raikom*, occupation *secretary*

A

1. Last name *Bergner* first name *Anton*, patronymic *Vasilevich*
2. Year of birth *1889* place of birth *February 24*²⁴
3. Nationality *German*
4. Native language *German*
5. What languages, other than your native language, do you speak? *Russian (poorly) and Czech*
6. What other areas of the USRR do you know from work? *Donbas-Kherson*
7. Which foreign countries have you visited? When and for how long? What was the purpose of your visit? *Before 1922 I lived abroad in Czechoslovakia.*
8. Social origin (former)? *Worker*
9. a) Main occupation? *Lathe operator*
b) How long have you been engaged in this work and when did you stop? *For 19 years, stopped on 1 September 1923*
10. Marital status and family members? *Married, 2 children*
11. Education (Where did you study? Did you complete the course of studies? How many classes, courses did you complete?) *See below*
a) General *5 classes of public school, 3 classes of town school*
b) Special ---

²³ The questionnaire is in Ukrainian, but the handwritten answers (in italics here) are in Russian.

²⁴ Bergner misunderstood the question. *Mistse narodzhennia* refers to the place of birth, not the date of birth.

12. Did you serve in the army? When, which branch of arms were you in and what position did you hold? Did you participate in the war and when were you demobilised? *Austria – 1918.*
13. Which party do you belong to and since when? What organisations do you belong to and since when? *1905–1919 Old Social-Democratic Party; 1 January 1920 – Communist Party of Czechoslovakia*
14. Which parties did you belong to before and since when? Which organisations did you belong to and since when? –
15. Participation in revolutionary and social work:
 - a) until 1917 *worked underground abroad*
 - b) after 1917 *abroad until 1922*

[23 zv]

16. Have you ever been tried in court? If so, when, why, and what verdict was delivered? *Abroad in 1921 for an uprising in Chomutov and Most.*
17. Physical defects? *None*
18. a) When did you first join a trade union? Which one? *In 1918, in the Austrian union*
 b) Which union do you belong to and since when? *1920, Union of Educational Workers [“Rabotpros”]*
19. a) Were you a Russian subject before 1917? *No*
 b) Are you now a subject of the Soviet Union? *Yes, since 1922.*

B

20. Since when have you been working in the field? -
21. Details on your party work in time periods of not less than 6 months:

Time period	Place of service	State, trade union, party, cooperative troops and private institutions	Occupation	Elected or appointed
<i>from 1 October 1923 to 1 March 1924</i>	<i>Artemovskii Okrug</i>	<i>Okrpartkom</i>	<i>Head of the German Section</i>	<i>appointed</i>
<i>from 1 March 1924 to 1 August 1924</i>	<i>Mariupol' Okrug</i>	<i>-//-</i>	<i>-//-</i>	<i>-//-</i>

from 15 September 1924 to 1 February 1926	Kherson Okrug	-//-	-//-	-//-
from 1 February 1926 to present	-//-	-//-	Secretary of the Raipartkom	elected

22. Have you worked on any materials (written and printed) related to ____? If so, what are their names, where and when were they issued? *None*
 a) Have you written on some other issues? *I have written on general economic and party issues in the newspaper Nemgazeta, from 1924 until today.*
23. Have you participated in congresses, conferences? If so, when, where, and by whom were you delegated? *Yes, at various times since 1921.*
24. In what field of activities would you consider yourself to be most efficient?
Party work
25. Work details before 1917:

Time period	Place of service	State, trade union, party, cooperative troops and private institutions	Occupation	Elected, hired or appointed
from 1904 to 1905	city of Chomutov, Czech lands	Schlenker and Kienzle Clock Factory	lathe operator's apprentice	hired
from 1905 to 1908	-//-	Mannesmann Steel Tube Plant	lathe operator	-//-
from 1908–1912	in Holland	at a peasant farm	day labourer	-//-
from 1912 to 1915	in the Ruhr region, city of Markelo ²⁵	in the mines	?	-//-
from 1915 to 1918	Czech lands, the city of Pilsen	Škoda Arms Factory	lathe operator	[...]

[24]

25 Town in the Netherlands.

26. Work details after 1917:

Time period	Place of service	State, trade union, party, cooperative troops and private institutions	Occupation	Elected, hired or appointed
from 1 June 1919 to 1 October 1919	city of Chomutov, Czech lands	Schlenker and Kienzle Clock Factory	lathe operator	hired
from 20 October 1919 to 20 October 1920	-//-	Mannesmann plant	Chairman of the Factory Trade-Union Committee [Predzavkom]	elected
from 15 November 1922 to 1 October 1923	Donbas	"Kalinin" plant	lathe operator	hired

24 April 1926

Signature /Bergner/

[24 zv]

C

27. Participation in congresses and executive committees (number of times):

	All-Union	All-Ukrainian	Huberniia	Okruha	Raion	Rural soviet	Town
Congresses	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
Executive Committees							

Signature /Bergner/

[25]

REPORT
of the Presidium member Bergner Anton V.

<p>Does he act as actual chief of the work? Does he show initiative or does he just formally perform his tasks?</p> <p>His ability to cover the duties and plan in the process of work execution. Persistence in carrying out his duties. Ability to assess the significance and value of his work, linking it to common tasks / narrow or [...], broad general outlook.</p> <p>Does he show the ability to select employees and lead them?</p> <p>Does the work performed correspond to his abilities? Is it appropriate for him / does he tend to other kinds of work / would it make sense to redirect him closer to places/enterprises, uezd / without removing the responsible employees from the register? Is it possible to assign him to more demanding work / if so, what kind of work would it be and what are the possibilities of promotion?</p>	<p><i>shows initiative</i></p> <p><i>persistent in carrying out his duties</i></p> <p><i>yes</i></p> <p><i>The work performed corresponds to his abilities. It is possible to assign him to more demanding work related to party activities. Currently he is the secretary of the RPK KP(b)U.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">b) Marxist background</p> <p>Has he received a systematic Marxist education / school, circle / or non-systematic / circle of self-education /, are his political awareness and background sufficient?</p> <p>Does he demonstrate the ability to familiarise himself with the political situation and to lead by Marxist methods?</p> <p>Are there any of his own works, articles, etc. on Marxism and on specific issues?</p>	<p><i>yes</i></p> <p><i>yes</i></p> <p><i>yes</i></p>

c) Personal qualities	
His party insistence at the present time. Have there been any deviations or tendencies to shift from Bolshevism and Marxist ideology in the past?	no
Organisational and administrative skills.	he does have
Self-control / self-restraint.	he does have
Ability to admit mistakes and draw appropriate conclusions.	he does have
General discipline and involvement in party activity	good
Involvement in disputes and factionalism [...] ²⁶	no
Particular strengths or weaknesses.	no

Signature /XXX/

Source: DACHersO, R-f. 2, op. 1, spr. 1038, ark. 23–24, 25.

1.7 Kazimir Alsher (Kazimierz Alszer), Vinnytsia, Autobiography, June 1923

Translation from Russian

Autobiography

I was born on 18 October 1890 in the village of Driglovo in the Volhynia Guberniia. My father was a miller at a small roller mill. At age 10 I was sent to secondary school, which I completed in Odessa in 1912. At the time of the Revolution of 1905 I was attending secondary school in Zhitomir. For my part in school riots I was expelled from the school, and three years later I succeeded in enrolling at a private secondary school. I was not able to obtain a higher education, because I was an Austrian subject, and for that reason at the start of 1914 I was subject to resettlement to Astrakhan Guberniia. After much wandering I began working

²⁶ Two words are illegible.

at a sugar factory in Pogrebishche, and later as an office worker in Andrushovka. From the February Revolution of 1917 I devoted myself entirely to political work. Organising the workers of factories and mills, I instigated a number of revolutionary demonstrations. Under my leadership, after a fire at a mill, the entire stock of timber (500,000 puds) was shared out among the workers, and three months' compensation was paid to the mill owners. For that I was arrested by the Petliurian authorities, but following an impressive workers' demonstration I was released. I joined the party in 1918. During the Germans' offensive I hid in the village of Belashki, and when visiting my parents I was arrested as a wanted person and sent to Germany, where I was imprisoned until the time of the German Revolution. At the start of 1919 I returned to Ukraine, and I was elected to the Pogrebishche Revolutionary Committee. For two months, as military commissar in Pogrebishche, I organised workers and peasants into a Red Cavalry, and with them engaged in an incessant fight with bandits. Being recalled to Kiev, I was sent by the Polish Military Section to perform underground work in Poland, where I served as a liaison between the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party and occupied localities in Volhynia. In March 1920 I was arrested by the Poles in Rovno and transported to Warsaw. In April 1921 I was nominated by the Soviet government and exchanged. After arriving in Moscow, at my own request I was placed at the disposition of the TsK KP(b)U, from where I was sent to work at the VUChK, where I worked until September 1922 in the following posts: secretary of the Foreign Sub-Department, plenipotentiary's assistant, and plenipotentiary in September 1922. I was then delegated to the GPU²⁷ as plenipotentiary for foreign travel at the Gubispolkom, and in June 1923 as head of the Foreign Administrative Department at the Kharkiv Raion Executive Committee.

Source: DAKhmel'O, R-f. 766, op. 1, spr. 443, ark. 125–125 zv.

1.8 Fridrikh Gel'bikh (Friedrich Helbig), Kherson, Autobiography, 4 June 1926²⁸

I was born on 16 May 1888 in Weimar, Germany. My father was a brewer; my mother took care of the household. Between 6 and 14 I went to the eight-grade public school. After that I served an apprenticeship as a waiter. Since I was 16, I have been a union member. In 1908 I worked in Berlin, Leipzig and Hamburg. Between 1908 and 1913 I served as a waiter on a passenger liner. Between 1913 and 1914, I worked

²⁷ State political administration, i.e. the political police, 1922–1934.

²⁸ Friedrich Helbig's autobiography is written in Russian with many spelling errors. The poor quality of his language makes it difficult to translate accurately.

in [...] ²⁹ (America). Between 1914 and 1916 I was in my old country (Germany). From 1916, I was a POW in Russia. Between 1908 and 1920 I was a member of the Social-Democratic Party (Germany). Since 1920, I have been a member of the RKP(b). Since 1920, I have been a member of the KP(b)U. In 1918, I worked for the Central Committee of Internationalist POW. I have been a union member in the Soviet Union beginning in 1918–20. I worked for the Red Army Police in the German Volga Republic. Between 1920 and 1926 I worked in Odessa Guberniia, at the town, raion and village levels. I was instructor secretary at volpartkom and raipartkom level, president of volispolkoms, president of rural soviets among the German minority. At present I am a member of the Bureau for National Minority Affairs at the Kherson Okrispolkom. I have never been tried in court during the time of my service.

F. K. Gel'bikh

Kherson, 4 June 1926

Source: DAKhersO, R-f. 2, op. 1, spr. 1034, ark. 4.

1.9 Egon Gofman (Egon Hoffmann), Vysokopillia (Kronau), Personal Questionnaire and Autobiography, 18 April 1926

*Translation from Russian and Ukrainian*³⁰

[53]

**Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic [USRR]
Personal Questionnaire No. _
of a responsible employee**

Place: *Vysokopol'e, Kherson Okrug*

District *Vysokopol'e*, institution *Raiispolkom*, occupation *Head of the Raion Land Administration [RZU]*

A

1. Last name *Gofman [Hoffmann]*, first name *Egon*, patronymic *Teodorov*
2. Year of birth *1891* place of birth *village of Vysokopol'e*

²⁹ One word is illegible.

³⁰ The questionnaire is in Ukrainian, but the handwritten answers (in italics here) are in Russian.

3. Nationality *German*
4. Native language *German*
5. What languages, other than your native language, do you speak? *Russian*
6. What other areas of the USSR do you know from work? *Vysokopol'e*
7. Which foreign countries have you visited? When and for how long? What was the purpose of your visit? *I have not been to foreign countries*
8. Social origin (former)? *Peasant*
9. a) Main occupation? *Book-keeping*
b) How long have you been engaged in this work and when did you stop? *From 1913 to July 1925*
10. Marital status and family members? *Married, 3 children*
11. Education (Where did you study? Did you complete the course of studies?³¹ How many classes, courses did you complete?) *Central School*
a) General *4 classes of a gymnasium*
b) Special
12. Did you serve in the army? When, which branch of arms were you in and what position did you hold? Did you participate in war and when were you demobilised? *From June 1916 to July 1917, in a workers' company, [...],³² dismissed on grounds of health.*
13. Which party do you belong to and since when? What organisations do you belong to and since when? -
14. Which parties did you belong to before and since when? Which organisations did you belong to and since when? -
15. Participation in revolutionary and social work:
a) until 1917 *I served in a cooperative*
b) after 1917 *I served in a cooperative*

[53 zv]

16. Have you ever been tried in court? If so, when, why, and what verdict was delivered? *No*
17. Physical defects? *None*
18. a) When did you first join a trade union? Which one? *Vysokopol'e Raion Land Trade Union [VRZP] since 1925.*
b) Which union do you belong to and since when? *Vysokopol'e Raion Land Trade Union [VRZP] since 1925.*
19. a) Were you a Russian subject before 1917? *Yes*
b) Are you now a subject of the Soviet Union? *Yes*

³¹ Hoffmann underlined this part in the original.

³² One word is illegible.

B

20. Since when have you been working in *book-keeping*?

21. Details on your *book-keeping* work in time periods of not less than 6 months:

Time period	Place of service	State, trade union, party, cooperative troops and private institutions	Occupation	Elected, hired or appointed
from 21 July 1913 to July 1916	Vysokopol'e	cooperative	book-keeper	hired
from 3 July 1917 to August 1925	-//-	-//-	-//-	-//-
from 3 August 1925 to present	-//-	Sel'bud	secretary	elected

22. Have you worked on any materials (written and printed) related to ____? If so, what are their names, where and when were they issued? No

a) Have you written on any other issues? No

23. Have you participated in congresses, conferences? If so, when, where, and by whom were you delegated? *Raion Congresses [...]*³³, *delegated by the rural soviet and community*

24. In what field of activities would you consider yourself to be most efficient?
Land issues

25. Work details before 1917:

Time period	Place of service	State, trade union, party, cooperative troops and private institutions	Occupation	Elected, hired or appointed
from 1909 to 1910	Ufa Guberniia	private teacher	teacher	hired
from 1910 to 1911	Vysokopol'e	community	scribe	-//-
from 1911 to 1913	Kazanka	mill	clerk	-//-

³³ One word is illegible.

<i>from 1913 to 1916</i>	<i>Vysokopol'e</i>	<i>cooperative</i>	<i>-//-</i>	<i>-//-</i>
<i>from 1917 to 1925</i>	<i>-//-</i>	<i>-//-</i>	<i>-//-</i>	<i>-//-</i>

[...]

[54]

26. Work details after 1917:

Time period	Place of service	State, trade union, party, cooperative troops and private institutions	Occupation	Elected, hired or appointed
<i>from 1917 to 1925</i>	<i>Vysokopol'e</i>	<i>cooperative</i>	<i>book-keeper</i>	<i>hired</i>
<i>from 1917 to 1925</i>	<i>-//-</i>	<i>Sel'bud</i>	<i>secretary</i>	<i>elected</i>

18 April 1926 Signature

[54 zv]

C

27. Participation in congresses and executive committees (number of times)

	All-Union	All-Ukrainian	Huber-niia	Okruha	Raion	Rural soviet	Town
<i>Congresses</i>	-	-	-	-	2	3	-
<i>Executive Committees</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Now</i>	-	-	-	-	2	3	-

Signature /

[55]

REPORT
on the Presidium member Gofman E. T.

<p>Does he act as actual chief of the work? Does he show initiative or does he just formally perform his tasks?</p> <p>His ability to cover the duties and plan in the process of work execution. Persistence in carrying out his duties. Ability to assess the significance and value of his work, linking it to common tasks / narrow or [...], broad general outlook.</p> <p>Does he show the ability to select employees and lead them?</p> <p>Does the work performed correspond to his abilities? Is it appropriate for him / does he tend to other kinds of work / would it make sense to redirect him closer to places/enterprises, uезд / without removing the responsible employees from the register? Is it possible to assign him to more demanding work / if so, what kind of work would it be and what are the possibilities of promotion?</p>	<p><i>shows initiative</i></p> <p><i>persistent in carrying out his duties</i></p> <p>yes</p> <p><i>The work performed corresponds to his abilities. It is possible for him to perform duties involving strength. There is no necessity to assign him to more demanding work.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">b) Marxist background</p> <p>Has he received a systematic Marxist education / school, circle / or non-systematic / circle self-education /, are his political awareness and background sufficient?</p> <p>Does he demonstrate the ability to familiarise himself with the political situation and to lead by Marxist methods?</p> <p>Are there any of his own works, articles, etc. on Marxism and on specific issues?</p>	<p><i>insufficient</i></p> <p>no</p> <p>no</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">c) Personal qualities</p> <p>His party insistence at the present time. Have there been any deviations or tendencies to shift from Bolshevism and Marxist ideology in the past?</p>	<p><i>non-party</i></p>

Organisational and administrative skills.	yes
Self-control / self-restraint.	yes
Ability to admit mistakes and draw appropriate conclusions.	he does have
General discipline and involvement in party activity	–
Involvement in disputes and factionalism [...] ³⁴	no
Particular strengths or weaknesses.	–

Signature

[56]

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

of Gofman E. T., Vysokopol'e Raion Head of Land Department [RZO] ³⁵

I was born in 1892 in the village of Vysokopol'e, Kherson Okrug, into a peasant family. My father was engaged in arable farming on 30 desiatinas of land. When I was three-and-a-half years old my father died and left the family of 7 people, with large debts, to his brothers for the 30 desiatinas of land inherited from the grandfather. As a consequence, we had to live in dire need, which forced our mother into constant labour; my sisters, and later myself during the summer months also had to engage in hired labour at an early age.

At the age of 14, I graduated from a public school and for one year after that I worked as an apprentice for a local scribe of the volost' administration, without payment.

When I was 16 and 17 years old I spent the winters at the 3-class Central School, from which I graduated, and in the summers I worked in the fields.

As an 18-year-old, I was a teacher at a farm in Ufa Guberniia. At the age of 19, I was a rural clerk.

When I was 20 and 21 years old, I served at the mill's office in Kazanka settlement.

From 1913 to 1925, without interruption, except for the time period from July 1916 to July 1917, when I served in the Tsar's army in Turkey, I served in a local

³⁴ Two words are illegible.

³⁵ In the questionnaire, Hoffmann identified himself as *Head of the Raion Land Administration (upravlenie)*; here he refers to the *Raion Land Department (otdelenie)*.

institution under the following names: first, Mutual Loan Society, then Loan Society, finally, Agricultural Loan Cooperative Society, and in the Consumer Society as a scribe, clerk and then a book-keeper. During my military service, I was a copyist in the office.

HEAD OF THE RAION LAND DEPARTMENT /GOFMAN/

Source: DAKhersO, R-f. 2, op. 1, spr. 1034, ark. 53-54, 55.

1.10 Vasilii Grzhenda (Wasył Grzędą), Shepetivka, Personal Questionnaire, December 1925

*Translated from Ukrainian and Russian*³⁶

[165]

Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic [USRR]

Personal Questionnaire no. [...] ³⁷

of a responsible employee

Town *Shepetivka*, okruha *Shepetivka*, raion, institution – *Okrispolkom*, position – *organisational instructor in the Training Sub-Department of the Okruha Executive Committee*, since 8 July 1925

A

1. Last name *Grzhenda* [*Grzędą*], first name *Vasilii* [*Wasył*], patronymic *Ivanovich*
2. Year of birth 1899 place of birth *Odessa*
3. Nationality *Pole*
4. Native language *I do not know Polish, I speak Russian*
5. What languages, other than your native language, do you speak? *Russian only*
6. What other areas of the USRR do you know from work? *The southern okruhas*
7. Which foreign countries have you visited? When and for how long? What was the purpose of your visit? *I have not been abroad.*
8. Social origin (former)? *Now an official, I come from the countryside.*

³⁶ The questionnaire is in Ukrainian, but the handwritten answers (in italics here) are partly in Russian partly in Ukrainian.

³⁷ No number entered.

9. a) Main profession? *I do not have one.*
b) How long have you been engaged in this work and when did you stop? –
10. Marital status and family members? *Bachelor*
11. Education (Where did you study? Did you complete the course of studies? How many classes, courses did you complete?)
a) General *4 grades of railway transport vocational school, but I did not complete it.*
b) Special *None*
12. Did you serve in the army? When, which branch of arms were you in and what position did you hold? Did you participate in the war and when were you demobilised? *I did not serve in the old Austrian army, but served in the Red Army, in the infantry, as head of Special Point³⁸ of the 74th Brigade, demobilised on 21 December 1922.*
13. Which party do you belong to and since when? What organisations do you belong to and since when? *KP(b)U, since October 1919*
14. Which parties did you belong to before and since when? Which organisations did you belong to and since when? *I did not belong to any.*
15. Participation in revolutionary and social work:
a) until 1917 *None.*
b) after 1917 *In the Red Guard and the Red Army.*

[165 zv]

16. Have you ever been tried in court? If so, when, why, and what verdict was delivered? *None.*
17. Physical defects? *None.*
18. a) When did you first join a trade union? Which one? [...] ³⁹ *since 1923*
b) Which union do you belong to and since when? *Ditto*
19. a) Were you a Russian subject before 1917? *Yes*
b) Are you now a subject of the Soviet Union? *Yes, I am a subject of the Soviet Union.*

B

20. Since when have you been working in the field? [...] ⁴⁰ *since 1925*
21. Work details:

38 Rus. *osobpunkt*.

39 One word illegible.

40 Two words illegible.

Time period	Place of service	State, trade union, party, cooperative troops and private institutions	Occupation	Elected, hired or appointed
-	-	-	-	-

22. Have you written any works (on what subjects, handwritten or printed, title, where and when published) *I have not.*

23. Have you participated in congresses, conferences? If so, when, where, and by whom were you delegated? *Raion party conferences.*

24. In what field of Soviet activities would you consider yourself to be most efficient? *In soviet work*

25. Work details before 1917:

Time period	Place of service	State, trade union, party, cooperative troops and private institutions	Occupation	Elected, hired or appointed
<i>from to</i>	<i>Before 1917 I was still at school.</i>			
<i>from to</i>				
<i>from to</i>				
<i>from to</i>				

26. Work details after 1917:

In what period	Where	State, trade union, party, cooperative, military, and private institutions and enterprises	Position	By election, by appointment, or hired work
<i>from 1 May 1917 to 1 February 1918</i>	<i>in Odessa</i>	<i>in the Red Guard</i>	<i>soldier</i>	

from 1 March 1918 to 21 December 1922	_____	In the Red Army	[...] ⁴¹	appointed
from 21 December 1922 to 1 February 1923	in Poltava	Guberniia GPU	[...] ⁴²	appointed
from 1 February 1923 to 1 August 1923	in Odessa	Guberniia Police	ditto	appointed
from 1 August 1923 to 1 July	in Odessa	Guberniia party sch[ool]	student	appointed

12 December 1925.

Signature Grzhenda
[handwritten signature]

C.

[...]

27. Participation in congresses and Executive Committees (how many times).

	All-Union	All-Ukrainian	Huberniia	Okruha	Raion	Rural soviet	Town
Congresses	I have not attended any.						
Executive Committees	I have not been elected.						
At present	Ditto.						

Signature Grzhenda
[handwritten signature]

Source: DAKhmel'O, R-f. 766, op. 1, spr. 443, ark. 165–166 zv.

⁴¹ Three words illegible.

⁴² Three words illegible.

1.11 NKVD File on Geinrikh [Heinrich] Borbus from Waterloo, 1937

Translated from Russian

[5]

NKVD Directorate of the Ukrainian SSR
for Odessa Oblast'

Form No. 20/USO
Sheet No. _____
to case No. _____

Prisoner's profile⁴³

1. Last name *Borbus*
2. Name and patronymic *Geinrikh [Heinrich] Davidovich*
3. Date of birth: day 8 month *March* year *1886*
4. Place of birth *Village of Waterloo, Karl-Liebknecht Raion, Odessa Oblast'*
5. Residence (address) *Village of Waterloo, Karl-Liebknecht Raion, Odessa Oblast'*
6. Occupation *bricklayer – stucco worker*
7. Place of service and position or occupation *He works in the "R.-Luxemburg" village artel' of the Waterloo Rural Soviet.*
(indicate the name of the enterprise or institution without abbreviation as well as the type of production)
8. *Passport for 5 years. Issued by K.-Liebknecht RIK in 1936.*
(when and by which authority it was issued and the category in which it is registered)
9. Social origin *seredniak peasant*
(occupation of parents and their property status)
10. Social status *seredniak peasant.*
(occupation and property status of the arrested person)
 - a) before the revolution *seredniak peasant.*
 - b) after the revolution *seredniak peasant.*
11. Education (general and special) *rural school, 3 classes*

[5 zv]

12. Party membership (past and present) *non-party, he has never been a party member.*
13. Nationality and citizenship *German, citizen of the Soviet Union.*
14. Category of registration for the military reserve and place of current registration *he has been removed from the register.*
15. Service in the white and other counter-revolutionary Armies, participation in gangs and uprisings against the Soviets (when and in what capacity) *he took part in the uprising against the Soviets in 1919.*

⁴³ Handwritten responses in the printed questionnaire in italics.

16. Whether they had been subject to repressions under Soviet authority, which kinds of repression: conviction, arrest, etc. (when, by what body and for what reason) *by his own statement, no.*
17. Family composition *Wife Ekaterina Geinrikhovna 49 years old, lives in the village of Waterloo. Daughters: Margarita Vetsel [Wetzel], 27 years old. Marta German [Hermann], 20 years old, works in the "R.-Luxemburg" village artel'. Sister ... Khris-ta [Christa]. 46 years old, works in the "R.-Luxemburg" artel' also.*
(close relatives, their names, last names, addresses and occupation)

Signature of the arrested person *Borbus Heinrich*

1. Special features of appearance *normal.*
2. By whom and when were they arrested *K.-Liebknecht District Department [R.O.] [...] ⁴⁴ on 4 September 1937.*
3. Where were they kept in custody *K.-Liebknecht District Department [R.O.] [...] ⁴⁵*
4. Special notes

Signature of the responsible employee who filled out the questionnaire / XXX /⁴⁶

13 September 1937

NOTE: The questionnaire must be filled out clearly and legibly in accordance with statements of the arrested person and verified against documents.

F. 131 OGU 1138–7600

[7]

Extract

from the minutes No. 128 of the General Meeting of members of Rosa Luxemburg Agricultural Artel' and Waterloo Rural Soviet, which took place on 30 July 1937.

Chairman of the meeting: I. I. Flimann [Fliehmann]

Secretary: K. K. Vanner [Wanner]

I. Speakers: 1) Comrade Sosnovskii:

Mistakes were made in relation to the loan, for example the Baptist (Baptist preacher) Borbus Genrikh [Heinrich] Davidov. took part in the distribution of the loan. It was a mistake that such Baptists were allowed to distribute the loan.

⁴⁴ One word is illegible.

⁴⁵ One word is illegible.

⁴⁶ The signature is illegible.

- 4) Fellauer Yulius [Julius] Beniam.: when the loan was distributed, there were distortions on the part of authorised representatives, such as G. D. Borbus. He wanted to distribute the loan in a forceful manner; he advised some people to take bonds, whereas others did not receive such advice from him.
- 8) Comrade Braun G.: many collective farmers say that G. D. Borbus received a suit from abroad as a reward for his Baptist work. All collective farmers must take part in the Baptist work and conceal all deficiencies.

II. Decision: 4) to exclude Borbus Genrikh [Heinrich] Davidov. from the Revision Commission as he has failed in his duties.

(Translation from German into Russian)

Chairman of the Meeting (signature) / Flimann /

Secretary (signature) / Vanner /

Certified true copy

Artel' Chairman / XXX /

Bookkeeper / XXX /

1 August 1937

[8]

U.S.S.R.

Landwirtschaftliches

ARTEL

R. Luxemburg

Waterlover Dorfrates

Karl Liebknechter

Rayons⁴⁸

2 August 1937

No. 465.

URSR

“R. Lukseburg”

Agricultural Artel'

Waterloo Rural Soviet

Karl-Liebkecht Raion⁴⁷

Case report

It was reported by the Agricultural Artel' “Rosa Luxemburg,” village of Waterloo, that Borbus Genrikh [Heinrich] Davidovich worked as a Baptist preacher from 1917 to 1930 and had connections to Baptist organisations abroad, which rewarded him with a suit. In 1930 he entered the *kolkhoz* [collective farm]. He failed in

⁴⁷ In Ukrainian.

⁴⁸ In German.

his duties. Throughout his entire stay in the collective farm, he was in every way engaged in agitation against the activities of the party and Soviet authorities; this was proven.

Chairman of the artel' / Flimann /

Bookkeeper / XXX /

[30]

REFERENCE⁴⁹

By decision of the NKVD of the UkrSSR (minutes No. 9 of *October 18, 1937*), *Borbus Genrikh [Heinrich] Davidovich* was convicted by order of the NKVD UkrSSR No. 00439 dated 25 July 1937 under the "I" category.

The sentence was carried out on 3 *November 1937*

HEAD OF THE 8th DEPARTMENT OF NKVD, JUNIOR LIEUTENANT OF STATE SECURITY (FIGMAN) / *Signature* /

5 *August 1938*

[note in another hand] 20 *September 1942*

Source: DAMO, R-f. 5859, op. 2, spr. 761.

⁴⁹ Handwritten annotations in the document here in italics.

2. Everyday Business in Rural Soviets

2.1 Assembly of Waterloo Citizens Entitled to Vote, 24 November 1925

Translated from German

25th general assembly, 24 November 1925

[Present] 78 citizens entitled to vote

Huhn has the chair, secretary Müller

Agenda

1. Authorised representative Fischer's report about the ruling of the People's Court, 14th Chamber, in Landau, regarding subsequent payment of wages to cowherds for 117 head of cattle, which by law were too many to have been herded.
2. Ongoing matters

§ 1

Fischer's report on the ruling of the People's Court

Resolved

Since the commune does not agree with the ruling of People's Court no. 14 in Landau, Urlacher, Wilhelm Josephs,⁵⁰ is empowered by the commune to appeal in the Waterloo Commune's case involving the cowherds to a court of higher instance, for which he is empowered to submit a complaint to court authorities, to attend court hearings and represent the case, to receive copies of court rulings [...] as well as information, certificates, and documents, to submit appeals, and to transfer his power of attorney to other persons.

2. Ongoing matters

Verbal application of the citizen Huhn, Andreas Andreas,⁵² for a reference concerning [his] social situation in the past and present.

Resolved

At the request of the citizen Huhn, Andreas Andreas, the Waterloo Commune confirms that the father of the same

50 Notation for patronymic in Russian and Ukrainian: son of Joseph.

51 Two words are illegible.

52 Notation for patronymic in Russian and Ukrainian: son of Andreas.

[38 zv]

owned one hundred desiatinas of his own land, which he had partly inherited from his parents and partly purchased. He distributed this land among his children in the following manner: the oldest son Jakob, born 1896 – 40 desiatinas, his oldest daughter Rosina, born 1900 – 5 desiatinas, the second daughter Elisabetha, born 1902 – 5 desiatinas, the third daughter Emilia, born 1916 – 5 desiatinas; his youngest son Andreas was called up for military service in 1910 and returned in 1913, managed his father's farm until 1914, and was then called up for wartime service, from which he was discharged in 1918; so that he was not economically independent (from [...])⁵³ and not directly separated from the father until the revolution. – At present, the family of Andreas Huhn consists of 9 persons, the two parents who are unable to work, and two orphans who were taken into his family at childhood: within the Waterloo Commune, Huhn is considered an honest citizen, [he] has not been prosecuted in court, has always complied willingly with all ordinances of the state and commune, so that no administrative measures of the authorities have been taken against him. In the payment of state and communal taxes, [he] has yet to be in arrears to date, which we confirm by our signatures.

Verbal application of the citizen Mann, Friederika

My late husband, Heinrich, Friedrich-Wilhelms,⁵⁴ owned 90 desiatinas. He died in 1912. The widow Mann, Friederika, was left with seven children, the oldest of whom was 15 years old. During the period up to 1918,

[39]

the widow Mann, Friederika, was without outside help and looked after her children on her own. Her two oldest sons both died in 1918. – The widow Mann lives at present in her own house, which she inherited from her husband, with three children, one of which is able to work. Within the commune, Mann is considered an honest citizen, has never been prosecuted in court, has always complied willingly with all ordinances of the state and commune, so that no administrative steps have been undertaken against her on the part of the authorities. In the payment of all state and communal taxes, [she] has yet to be in arrears to date, which we confirm with our signatures.

// 78 signatures //

⁵³ One word illegible.

⁵⁴ Notation for patronymic in Russian and Ukrainian: son of Friedrich-Wilhelm.

The personal signatures of these 78 citizens are confirmed by the Waterloo Rural Soviet with signature and seal

Stamp of the Rural Soviet

Chairman /Huhn/
Secretary

Source: DAMO, R-f. 262, op. 2, spr. 9, ark. 38–39.

2.2 Minutes of a Rural Soviet Meeting in Waterloo, 18 March 1925

Translation from German

[16]

Protocol No. 7

of the meeting of the members of the Waterloo Rural Soviet. In attendance are Huhn, Wentz, Mann, Ziegele, Schwertfeger, Lutz, Schirjaew, Borbus, Müller, Burd of the Waterloo initiative group. Not in attendance due to illness Schaytan, for reasons unknown – Senn, Hobaschenko, Kopp, a. Makelke.

1925, 28 March. Huhn has the chair, secretary Müller

Agenda

1. Financial report: chairman of the Waterloo AK [Committee of Impoverished Peasants], administrator of the department of the Credit Society “Forward.”
2. Election of a member to the Commission for the Welfare of Needy Demobilised Red Army Soldiers.
3. Review of the protocols of the land, sanitation, and finance sections.
4. Ongoing matters

<p>Heard Financial report of the chairman of the Waterloo AK and the manager of the department of the Credit Society "Forward"</p> <p>2. Election of a member to the welfare committee for needy & demobilised Red Army soldiers</p> <p>3. Review of the protocols of the sections</p>	<p>Ordered Since the two rapporteurs are absent for official reasons, the reports must be given at the rural soviet's next meeting</p> <p>Betz, Heinrich // Heinrichs⁵⁵ unanimously elected</p> <p>The resolutions are adopted. With regard to paragraph 1 of the minutes of the sanitation section, it is ordered: to apportion funding</p>
--	---

[16 zv]

<p>b) Protocol of the land section</p> <p>c) Protocol of the finance section</p> <p>d. Discussion of the instructions of Com. Anson concerning Anton Schuh's petition, for the purpose of land allocation</p>	<p>for the acquisition of the materials necessary for repairing the fire-fighting pumps to the local budget; to submit the matter to the general assembly for consultation. The rural soviet assigns the sanitation section to assign all home owners to keep chimneys in good order so as to prevent fire. Persons who do not submit to this regulation are to be brought before the RVK [Raion Executive Committee]. In the course of a week, all wells are supposed to be in good order, in this regard the sanitation section has to present a report to the rural soviet.</p> <p>Accepted. Certain roads are to be indicated [by] furrows, and care is to be taken to ensure that wagons adhere strictly to the furrowed roads.</p> <p>Accepted</p> <p>The rural soviet appoints Comrade Anson to remark that similar instructions will give rise to misunderstandings in the rural soviet and thus work in the village will be impeded. In the opinion of the rural soviet, such petitions</p>
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⁵⁵ Notation for patronymic "Heinrichs Sohn," son of Heinrich.

[17]

e) Petition from the head of the post office in Landau about donation to the former postilion Frank, residual earnings in total of 5 pud wheat.	have to be discussed in the rural soviet first; in the event the person concerned is not satisfied with the rural soviet's resolution, [he] can of course appeal to a higher authority at any time. Since there is no data regarding arrears in the chancellery archive, and the rural soviet is unaware of such arrears, it is asked that proof be presented.
---	---

Chairman

Secretary

Source: DAMO, R-f. 262, op. 2, spr. 2, ark. 16-17.

2.3 Elections to the Waterloo Election Commission, 28 December 1925

Translation from German

Protocol N.

of the II. convened general assembly of Waterloo citizens on 28 December 1925
Present: Representative of the Landau RVK [Raion Executive Committee], Com. Hubert, and 60 citizens entitled to vote of a general number of 507 [persons in all]. Huhn has the chair, secretary Müller

Agenda

1. Familiarisation with the election law
2. Election of the election commission
3. Ongoing matters

Heard: 1. Familiarisation with the election law

Ordered: 1. Duly noted

Heard 2. Election of the election commission

No.	Surname, name and father's name of the candidates	Vote			Remarks
		for	against	abstained	
1.	Schöck Peter Peters. ⁵⁶	28	11	21	Candidate from Rural Soviet
2.	Huhn Jakob Franz.	12	16	32	"
3.	Schwertfeger Eduard Karls	8	6	46	"
4.	Mann Friedrich Josephs	5	21	34	"
5.	Reichert Sophie Philipps	5	19	36	" AK ⁵⁷
6.	Schönk Jakob Philipps	38	7	15	"
7.	Bettger Karolina Joh.	9	20	31	"
8.	Polubinskii Vasilii Konst.	5	18	37	"
9.	Klein Joseph Wilhelms.	29	15	16	" KGH ⁵⁸
10.	Bettger Jakob Ludwigs.	2	–	–	"
11.	Wetzel Jakob Jakobs	13	24	23	"
12.	Ruff Johann [...]	20	14	26	" Commune
13.	Lutz Jakob Adams	1	–	–	"
14.	Wentz Andreas Antons	10	12	38	"
15.	Huhn Jakob Franz	8	6	46	"
16.	Huhn Peter Peters	11	8	41	"

Elected by majority vote: 1) Schönk, Peter Peters, 2) Schönk, Jakob Philipps, 3) Klein, Joseph Wilhelms, and Ruff Johann [...]

Heard: 3. Ongoing matters

a) Election of five authorised representatives for signing the present protocols

Ordered: unanimously elected: Peter Menkel, [...] Adam Martin, Gottlieb Wentz, Leib Sery, and Jakob Rifinius

⁵⁶ Here and throughout the list, this notation is made for patronymic in Russian and Ukrainian: son of Peter, son of Franz, son of Karl, etc.

⁵⁷ Ger. Abbreviation for Committee of Impoverished Peasants (*Armutskomitee*).

⁵⁸ Ger. Abbreviation for Mutual Assistance Committee (*Komitee für gegenseitige Hilfe*).

Chairman:

Authorised representatives: 1. /L. Seryi /
2.
3.
4.
5.

Secretary: /Müller /

Source: DAMO, R-f. 262, op. 2, spr. 40, ark. 26.

2.4 V., How the Polish Rural Soviets Are Working, 7 February 1926.

Translation from Polish

How the Polish Rural Soviets Are Working

We now have 95 Polish rural soviets in Ukraine, 33 of them in the Polish Dołbysz Raion⁵⁹ in Zhytomyr Okruha. The number of these soviets will increase still further, as the Polish population is making a new application for the creation of Polish soviets.

Comrade **J. Dzikowski** writes that in **Majdan**, Mankivka Raion, Kamianets' Okruha, a new Polish rural soviet has been organised. On 24 January a general meeting of peasants was held for that purpose. The peasants are greatly interested in the matter of their own rural soviet.

Comrade **Blemer** from **Berdychiv** writes: "The peasants of the village of Krzyżanówka want to have their own Polish rural soviet. But Krzyżanówka has only 404 residents, and therefore by law cannot be split off into a separate rural soviet. Also the people demand the building of their own school. Given our present budget it is not possible to build a school, while in the neighbouring village of Osiczna, just a kilometre from Krzyżanówka, there is also a Polish school. And would it not be better to join Krzyżanówka to the Polish rural soviet in Osiczna?"

There are also cases where some Polish rural soviets use the Ukrainian language. The reason for this is a lack of suitable secretaries.

⁵⁹ In 1925 the Polish Dołbysz Raion was renamed in *Polski Rejon Narodowy im. Juliana Marchlewskiego* (or short *Markhlewski Rejon*).

Unfortunately, the Rejwykonkom [Raion Executive Committee] takes secretaries for itself, without realising what consequences this will have for the rural soviet.

Comrade **Kmieć** writes in this matter: “In the village of **Dermanówka** (Dołbysz Raion) a Polish rural soviet was opened three months ago. But even in that short time it would have been possible to put the soviet office in order; however, unfortunately, the raion pays no attention to that at all. In these three months Dermanówka has already had three secretaries, but sadly the raion took them for itself. And in Dermanówka the voter lists, description of the raion and many other important matters remain uncompleted. Now the soviet has been left without a secretary. Is the raion not aware that we have an election campaign just ahead of us?”

Comrade **Kmieć** also points to the rural soviet’s small budget. Comrade Kmieć writes: “For the Dermanówka rural soviet the raion spends 10 złoty [i.e. Soviet roubles] monthly, which barely suffices to pay the rent. It is cold in the house, there is no fuel to burn and nothing to buy it with. Raion! Is it not possible to squeeze another few grosz from the budget to prevent this?”

It should also be noted that many Polish soviets **still do not have their own premises**. This circumstance greatly constrains the work of the rural soviet.

Comrade **Zwiernik** informs us that the peasants of the village of **Widły** (Dołbysz Raion) are now renting premises for the school, the rural soviet and the cooperative for a third year. They spend 140 roubles a year on that! Which means 420 roubles for the three years. Would it not have been better, with the help of the Rejwykonkom, to erect a building for themselves? It would pay to do that, after all.

The work of the rural soviet **committees** is still inadequate in many places.

Comrade **A. Kamieniecki** notes in his correspondence that the cultural and educational committee of **Anżelin** rural soviet (Korosten’ Okruha, Emilchyn Raion) is working poorly: “The Anżelin rural soviet covers three villages. None of them has a school, a reading room, or newspapers. The rural soviet committees exist only on paper, and do absolutely nothing.”

Also, comrade **Zgryźliwy** writes that the committees of **Czernice-Słobudka** rural soviet (Dołbysz Raion) are working poorly: “The school committee is barely alive. It has done nothing in fact.”

Comrade **Kazio Poźniak** writes about the consequences of neglect on the part of the sanitary committee of the rural soviet in **Zaścianek Ściepury** (Kopyly Raion, Sluch Okruha): “Not long ago a rabid dog was killed in our village, but it

wasn't buried, just left in the street. Dogs and pigs from the whole village started to gnaw on it, and one pig became rabid from that dog. The pig came close to biting people. And where was the sanitary committee?"

But the situation is worst with bridges and roads. *Sierp* [The Sickle]⁶⁰ has already written about this several times.

"Near the village of **Adamowka** (Dołbysz rural soviet) is a small stream," a comrade "**Passing Through**" writes. "There is a bridge over the stream, but it has been dilapidated for several years, and it has to be used as a crossing. It's time to set about repairing the bridge!"

Comrade **Gruntkowski** writes from the **Polish raion**: "The roads in the vicinity of **Olszanica** rural soviet are in a terrible state, the bridges are in disrepair. If a hole appears in a bridge, the people make an even larger one, by taking the poles for fuel. The rural soviet should deal with this matter. The soviet committees hardly do any work," etc.

And one more complaint: "Near the **Lewada** rural soviet is a road that can't even be driven down, since there are ditches on both sides five sazhen's deep, and the road itself is two-and-a-half arshins wide. One peasant has already injured his horses. The rural soviet should pay attention to that road." Thus writes Comrade **Intadz**.

We shall quote here one more interesting piece of correspondence from Comrade **Nowy** of the village of **Majdan Werbecki** (Letychivka Raion, Proskuriv Okruha):

"Once a fire broke out in our village. People ran to put it out. A hook was needed to bring down a burning house. Everyone started to shout 'Give us hooks!' but it turned out that there were no hooks at all. Then they brought a fire pump, but it proved useless. So they set about repairing it, but when they finished, it turned out there was no longer any need for the pump, because the fire was out. There was not a single horse during the fire, and the head of the fire brigade, they say, had got drunk at a wedding and was asleep. Such neglect from the rural soviet costs our village dear."

A **primary role** in the work of rural soviets is **played** above all by the **chairman and secretary**. If the chairman and secretary work conscientiously and harmoniously, then others also work following their example, and the people respect them.

Comrade **Piła** writes about such a chairman and secretary of the rural soviet in **Stary Bobryk**. Comrade Jewmenczuk, the chairman of the soviet, and the

60 *Sierp*: A weekly in Polish language, edited between 1922 and 1937.

secretary Wachowski, work perfectly: they fight illiteracy, hooliganism, etc. The office is in order. People don't wait several hours for a matter to be dealt with, like at other soviets. Thus the poor and the seredniaks are highly satisfied with them."

The better workers of rural soviets are given responsible posts by the Soviet authorities.

Comrade **J. P.** of **Dołbysz** writes that Comrade Karpiński, the former chairman of the rural soviet in Dołbysz, worked very well. At that time there were sittings of the soviet, general meetings, etc. All the peasants were satisfied with him.

And Comrade **Sowa** of **Dołbysz** notes that Comrade Karpiński has now been moved to a higher post: that of a judge in agricultural cases at the Rejwykonkom. The peasants are most satisfied that their comrade from the fields is now in charge of court cases. They say that Soviet power is truly in the hands of our comrades of the hammer and plough.

But there are also many complaints about rural soviet chairmen and secretaries.

Comrade **N.** writes that in **Dołbysz** it is as if there were no rural soviet, because it is hard to find the chairman Marczewski, or the secretary, at the soviet. Sittings of the soviet do not take place, because the chairman is out with his double-barrelled gun hunting hares. The Rejwykonkom has three times ordered a general meeting of peasants in the matter of a KWP [Mutual Assistance Committee], but the chairman pays no attention.

Comrade **A. Kamieniecki** notes that the chairman and secretary of **Anże-
lin** rural soviet (Korosten' Okruha) often don't come to the soviet for 2-3 days. People arrive, wait from morning to evening, and leave without having their matters dealt with.

Comrade **Plażek** states that the former secretary of the rural soviet in **Dzi-
kunka** (Dołbysz Raion), citizen Sinicki, often came at midnight in drunken company and demanded the soviet chairman give him a stamp for the documentation office. Papers arriving from the raion were not registered by Sinicki, even from October 1925. Moreover, when the cash box was handed over to the new secretary, it was about 27 roubles short. Comrade Plażek rightly notes here that not only the former secretary Sinicki should be brought to account for such matters, but also the chairman, on account of his negligence.

Comrade **M. Julczenko** writes that the chairman of the rural soviet in **Pus-
tocha** (Berdychiv Okruha) is neglectful in his duties. The report at the meeting was made by the secretary, not the chairman. The chairman sat there as if the whole matter did not concern him, and the peasants complained about the irregularities.

Such chairmen and secretaries, as well as rural soviet members, who do not wish to work for the good of the village, should not be elected in the present elections.

Comrade **M. Julczenko** rightly notes that at the upcoming elections, the candidates for the soviets should be carefully scrutinised, and only those who are going to work for the general good should be elected.

Comrade **Zgryżliwy** is also right in saying that: "We must elect to the soviet not painted dolls who will do nothing, but people who work hard and have initiative." Careful attention should be paid not to allow bribe-takers, thieves and dealers onto the soviets. Let the poor and the seredniaks pick out beforehand the best candidates to be members of the rural soviet.

The **pre-election campaign** is currently taking place almost everywhere. The peasants understand its importance. The poor and the seredniaks are preparing jointly for the elections.

Comrade **L. Buczyński** of **Susły** (Zviahel' Raion) writes that a raion meeting of rural election commissions was called on 27 December. All voting rights were announced, as well as the duties of the commissions in the matter of the elections to the soviets. Also village representatives were elected to the raion electoral commission, as well as one representative each for the Poles, Germans, and Jews.

Comrade **K. Woj.** of **Listopadówka** (Berdychiv Raion) writes that the electoral commission began work in December. On 28 December a general meeting of the village was held, at which the soviet chairman, Comrade Zdzitowiecki, gave a report on the soviet's work. In the discussion 12 peasants spoke, and all of them showed that much had been done by the soviet. The meeting acknowledged the work of the rural soviet and its chairman as satisfactory.

Comrade **J. Tarnawska** writes that in **Burkowce** (Bila Tserkva Okruha) the preparations for the soviet elections are proceeding with great interest from the whole village. Even those who paid little attention to the matter of the soviet in the past year are now very much interested in the matter. There have already been three meetings, at which the matter of candidates to the soviet was discussed. It can be assumed that the elections this year will bring good results.

The fact that the people are becoming more and more interested in rural soviet affairs is also mentioned by other correspondents. Comrade **Śmiały** of **Dąbalówka** (Berdychiv Raion) rightly notes that as long as the rural soviets restrict themselves just to performing orders from the centre, a soviet will not work well and will not gain authority among the peasants of its village. Apart from that, the soviet should itself govern the village and ensure that its condition improves. This is the soviet's second main task.

And this requires the active participation of everyone. This year, the people are taking up the matter of the soviets energetically. We can expect good crops.

V.

2.5 Denunciations, praise, and complaints in *Das Neue Dorf* [The New Village]⁶¹

Translation from German

“Old wounds hurt”

From Nikolaev Okruha
Worms. Old wounds hurt.

When the presidium of the Raion Executive Committee in Worms held its final session, local citizen Johann Heinle spoke up during the report of the raion land department and in a long diplomatic speech tried to depict the weal and woe of Worms's peasants.

In his opinion, the agricultural tax was excessively high this year, for which only the Raion Executive Committee was to blame. For example, he, Heinle, had to pay 35 roubles tax for sowing 10 desiatinas land, with one horse and one cow [to his name], which is just outrageous. We leave it up to our esteemed reader to assess what is outrageous, the size of the tax or the Heinle's impudence.

The outlays for the maintenance of technical personnel within the Raion Executive Committee as foreseen in the local budget for 1926/27 were something that Heinle found useless. In his view, the Raion Executive Committee is made up purely of Akakii Akakievichis.⁶² He maintains the Soviet government is suppressing the Germans.

What a shame, you lackey, that the October Revolution finished off Nicholas II so early; he would have shown you how fond he was of you Germans. We understand quite well why Heinle feels so offended, for he has had to endure many a blow to the ribs from the Soviet government via the newspapers or the electoral law.

However, it is entirely incomprehensible to us, when a “Soviet teacher” in the person of local school principal Bletsch steps up and comes to the defence of the counterrevolutionary lackey and maintains that he [Heinle] was only performing his “civic duty” in a hearty discussion about what concerns the peasants.

Dear Mr. Beltsch, what has become of your work in enlightening [people] as to the substance of the agricultural tax, the importance of which you know all too well? Or is it not beneath your dignity as a teacher if a simple peasant has

⁶¹ *Das Neue Dorf*: Ukrainian Newspaper in German language, 1925–1936.

⁶² Grotesque civil servant from Nikolai Gogol's *The Overcoat*.

to remind you of your duty at a public assembly? Or... perhaps the old wounds still hurt?

A Wormser

Source: *Das Neue Dorf*, 27 November 1926, no. 66 (16), p. 5.

“The Landau Rural Soviet at Work”

From the Nikolaev Okruha
The Landau Rural Soviet at Work

A year ago, when it was proposed that agricultural worker Eva Pfaff run for rural soviet chair, many were of the view that a “broad” would be useless in this office and would not work productively. But as always, the psychology of the kulak erred considerably in this instance as well.

In the entire existence of our rural soviet, such hard work as now has yet to be seen. The meetings of the rural soviet were regularly attended in full and proceed in an active manner. We had before us the task of raising funds to cover social needs. The matter is currently resolved. The means raised (10,500 roubles) were distributed by the rural soviet prudently and purposefully. 1,500 roubles were designated for furnishing the House of the Peasants, 2,200 roubles for the school, 1,000 roubles for the veterinary station, 1,000 roubles for the fire brigade, 800 roubles for the repair of two bridges, 1,000 roubles for the purchase of a community bull, and 3,000 roubles for the maintenance of 20 wells. The hospital issue is not yet settled, for there is a hospital in Landau, which is supposed to be expanded at the request of some villages.

For the purpose of properly carrying out these tasks, the rural soviet has set up special committees, which have already taken up their work.

Source: *Das Neue Dorf*, 11 March 1928, no. 42 (188), p. 5.

Kath[e]rinal, Land Issues

From Nikolaev Okruha
Kath[e]rinal. Land Issues.

All the peasants’ thoughts and efforts are now focused on the arable land. [...] Will the land utilisation survey finally be carried out this year or is the old sluggishness to go on? Already in the autumn of 1924, a group from the commune

concluded a contract with the okruha department, in June 1925, the entire commune did the same and raised the necessary money, and to date, the story is not yet over. The peasants' patience is being tried, and if they ultimately start to grumble, it'll be no wonder.

The raion administration, the Raion Executive Committee have made every effort to finally bring the land utilisation survey to an end, but something always goes wrong.

Already in autumn 1926, the commune Kath[e]rinal leased from the raion land department the entire acreage of the state fund, which on the basis of the new land utilisation survey is supposed to pass to the commune. The land was proportionally distributed among the individual commune members.

A part of this quantum of land lies on the other side of the rail line that cuts through the state fund and runs along the border to the commune of Pokrovs'ka, Voznesens'k Raion.

In a rush, some of this village's citizens arbitrarily sowed this land in the spring, as a consequence of which a part of our commune's members, who had likewise registered their lease money, remained without land. The commotion over this in the village is dreadful.

What does the responsible agency have to say about this? Will a settlement of this matter once again drag out until the harvest is in full swing? They should finally do away with such mischief once and for all, most vehemently, by punishing in exemplary fashion such land thieves as a warning.

Village correspondent no. 410

Source: *Das Neue Dorf*, 5 May 1927, no. 57 (107), p. 3.

From Kherson Okruha

Neu-Mannheim. Who surveys better?

Our land division has been moving forward for almost a year. From the start, we were agreed that surveyors would cut the land down to size for each farm.

At the last assembly of the commune, the group of former large peasants opposed this and wanted to carry out the internal partitioning themselves. They feared that, with surveyors, there will not be large *desiatinas* (for the rich) and small ones (for the poor).



Poor and mid-sized peasants in New Mannheim! If you do not want to be cheated, then insist unanimously that the land is measured only by surveyors.
Rural correspondent no. 234

Source: *Das Neue Dorf*, 17 November 1926, no. 63 (13), p. 5.

2.6 F. Ozimek, Better and Better. The Village of Rypno, Yurynts'kyi Raion, Proskuriv Okruha, 28 September 1927

Translation from Polish

Better and better The Village of Rypno, Yurynts'kyi Raion, Proskuriv Okruha⁶³

The rural soviet consists of 12 persons, including 8 poor peasants, 2 seredniaks, and 2 village teachers. Those elected to the soviet include 3 Komsomol members and one party member.

The Komsomol members on the soviet conscientiously perform the duties entrusted to them by that body. One of them works as the secretary of the soviet, and another on the cultural and educational committee. Meanwhile the other members of our Komsomol branch have been engaged in work in various village organisations: the KNW [Committee of Impoverished Peasants], the cooperative, the TWP [Mutual Assistance Society], and others.

To facilitate the work of Komsomol members in village organisations, resolve misunderstandings that may arise, or overcome difficulties encountered by Komsomol members in their work – the branch discusses reports on their work and issues guidelines for the future.

Komsomol members' reports have been discussed both at sittings of the bureau and at general meetings of the branch.

In the economic field, Komsomol members have done a number of things. It was they who first practised the treatment of seeds, and thanks to their initiative almost the whole village now applies such treatment. The same also applies to the introduction of technical crops on peasant farms, particularly grasses.

Komsomol members began the use of grasses, demonstrating their suitability for feeding cattle and increasing the fertility of the soil.

At the branch's initiative and under its leadership, an agricultural club was organised at the reading room. We invited teachers from the agricultural school

63 Bold print according to the original.

located in our village to work at the club. The agricultural club functions well, and its work has brought substantial results.

All Komsomol members have shares in the local cooperative. A Komsomol member with an interest in the functioning of the cooperative was assigned to work there. In discussions and conversations with peasants, Komsomol members explained to them the importance of the campaign to lower prices. Prices at our cooperative have been reduced by 9 to 10 percent.

In cultural and educational work Komsomol members play an active part. The Komsomol branch makes suitable preparations for every campaign. In cultural and educational work we have contact with teachers and we assist the school in its work. **Komsomol members drew up a list of illiterate persons**, thus contributing to the organisation of a "liknep" and accelerating the elimination of illiteracy in our village.

We have an OSO-Aviochem [Rus. *Osoaviakhim*] club⁶⁴ in the village, which has 57 members.

The rural soviet dealt with the matter of the cleaning (desilting) of the pond and repair of roads. Komsomol members played an energetic part in that matter. The cleaning of the pond is a particularly important matter, because if a fire breaks out, the pond will be the only source of water to extinguish it.

Komsomol members threshed the whole of this year's TWP crop using a hand threshing machine, and harvested buckwheat.

Public work. The branch organised several public evening events. We set up courts for cases of drunkenness, hooliganism, etc. There were also performances by a drama club.

F. Ozimek

Source: *Głos Młodzieży*, 28 September 1927, no. 36, p. 8.

2.7 Szumel, The Review of the Work of the Soviets, and Tasks of Komsomol Branches in Polish Villages, 7 September 1927

Translation from Polish

The Review of the Work of the Soviets, and Tasks of Komsomol Branches in Polish Villages

A mass review of the work of the Polish soviets is currently taking place. In relation to that campaign, *Głos Młodzieży* [Voice of the Youth]⁶⁵ is conducting a review

⁶⁴ Society for the Assistance of Defence, Aircraft and Chemical Construction, 1927–1948.

⁶⁵ *Głos Młodzieży*: A bi-weekly in Polish language, edited between 1925 and 1935.

of the work of Komsomol members on Polish rural soviets. It is a task for all Komsomol members, as well as young people with no party affiliation, together with the whole of the peasant masses, to discuss on the pages of *Głos Młodzieży* the positive and negative sides of the soviets' work.

A Komsomol branch in a Polish village should set itself the goal of bringing together all young activists working in social organisations in the village (the rural soviet, reading room, club, cooperative, KWP [Mutual Assistance Committee] and KNW [Committee of Impoverished Peasants]). At the same time, the activists should sum up their practical contribution to the work of the soviet, paying attention to the authority of the Komsomol branch among the peasantry, as well as that of individual comrades.

Apart from that, in the summing up of the contribution of the Komsomol branch to the work of the soviet, attention should be turned to the economic and cultural growth of the Polish village, namely: agricultural equipment, the use of tractors, clubs, schools, reading rooms, etc., the help given by the soviet to the poor and to farm labourers, and the peasants' participation in and attitude to the work of the soviet. In this summary and description of the positive and negative sides of the soviet's work, a path should be sketched out leading to mass involvement in and revitalisation of that work, improved economic and cultural growth, and the closer involvement of Polish youth in the building of socialism.

In this action, the Komsomol branch should by all means avoid designating individual members, forming committees, etc., but should try to draw in all Komsomol members and working young people in the Polish village. The Komsomol branches in Polish villages should provide help to young activists who, through working in the rural soviet and other social organisations, are well familiar with that work – hence it is necessary to reinforce that group so that through further practice it can gain still greater experience, and to aim further to promote a new group of activists with the help of the present one.

An important role in this campaign is that of the rural correspondents, who should receive assistance from the Komsomol branch and activists working in social organisations in the village. One of the expressions of this assistance should be close contact with those organisations, as that will make it easier for the rural correspondent to report the course of the campaign on the pages of the paper.

In discussing all aspects of the soviet's work, we should not forget about the defence of our country. The military education of the population, and of the youth of Polish villages in particular, must stand at the head of all tasks, as it is one of the main factors in the defence of the USSR from attack by the bourgeois states. Along with the review of the work of the soviets, each Komsomol branch should ascertain what results have been achieved in the field of military education and what has been done further in that matter.

The whole review of the soviets' work should bring about a revitalisation of work in the soviet and social organisations in the Polish village, as well as intensifying the activity of the young in building the Soviet system in the countryside.

Szumel

Source: *Głos Młodzieży*, 7 September 1927, no. 33, p. 8.

2.8 Podróżny, Participation by the Young in the Work of Rural Soviets, 5 August 1927

Translation from Polish

Participation by the Young in the Work of the Rural Soviets⁶⁶

When reviewing the work of the Polish rural soviets, it should be noted what part was played in that work by our Polish youth, because if we are to speak seriously about the work of a soviet (and a soviet has only serious matters to deal with), then it might seem that where older people cannot cope with the tasks, it is necessary to send in young, fit forces.

Meanwhile we can see cases where the rural soviets do not involve their youth in communal work, nor do the young themselves take matters in hand and ensure that they participate in the soviets' work.

That this is the case and not otherwise, I had the opportunity to see for myself at the Polish **rural soviets of Buda Makarowska in Makariv Raion, and Józefówka in Brusyliv Raion, in Kiev Okruha.**

Having taken a closer look at the work of those two soviets, I have the impression that in both villages **there are no young people at all.** They (the young) can be found in the evening here and there, around the houses or sitting on logs. They collect in groups for unsuccessful attempts at singing, or waste their time telling tall stories. But at the rural soviet – in its work, or the work of its committees – there isn't a boy or girl to be seen.

The young, whose task it is to take the place of the old, who should strengthen and lift the agricultural economy, are completely standing aside. And while in the case of Buda Makarowska this might still be forgiven, as in truth there is nobody there to deal with the affairs of adolescents, nobody who could make use of

⁶⁶ Bold print according to the original.

their young energy and turn it to the advantage of the village community, in Józefówka, where there is a Komsomol branch, the young people – apart from the secretary – take no part in the work of the rural soviet, and this is truly inexcusable.

Perhaps the reason is that the older people undervalue the abilities of the young and the benefits that youth can bring by participating in all areas of village life. But the old can underestimate the capabilities of the young only where the young fail to get down to anything, where they have no thoughts at all of making themselves a new and better tomorrow.

We cannot always follow the ways of our elders, particularly those who not merely uphold traditions (customs) in the celebration of holidays and the like, but try to maintain traditions on the farm, in crop growing, in the garden and in the cowshed, although everyone has long been tangibly persuaded that even if our grandfather ploughed the land with a wooden ard, we prefer to go against all tradition and use a good iron plough. We cannot be surprised that an old man, after working the whole day, has no wish to go to a meeting of the soviet; but let him send his son or daughter in his place, at least to advise; let the young gradually grow familiar with communal matters, let them explain to their father what matters were discussed and what was decided at the sitting of the soviet.

We must prove to the old, persuade them, that if a son and daughter can take their father's place in any work on the farm, then they can do the same on the soviet or at a meeting; they may sometimes cope better than older people, if only because the young have a better memory and, being literate, understand social matters with greater ease.

As an example we may take those entrusted with village tasks. These tasks are almost everywhere given to young, energetic boys, who generally do a satisfactory job. So why, at the rural soviet, can the young not also satisfactorily perform the duties given to them? Perhaps, indeed, they should.

Both in Buda Makarowska and in Józefówka, the young are not backward, and if we are only able to engage them in the work of the rural soviet, they will bring significant benefit to the common cause. Given their young, healthy energy, the village economy will raise itself up all the sooner.

Podróżny

Source: *Głos Młodzieży*, 5 August 1927, no. 31, p. 8.

2.9 Letters of Principal Glaubrecht Klein, Vysokopillia (Kronau), 1926

Translation from German

Letter of the village school principal in Kronau, Glaubrecht Klein, to the Kronau Rural Soviet

To the Kronau Rural Soviet

Pursuant to your letter of 26 March, which I unfortunately received only today, 29 March, I report herewith the following about the [seven-level] trade school.

[1.] Trade schools: one – seven-levels

[2.] Which of these are in the local budget: same

[3.] Which are contracted: –

[4.] The number of children: 187

[5.] The number of teachers: 6

1. Klein Glaubrecht, 45 years, 25 years practical experience, teacher training, attended re-qualification courses in Kryvyi Rih in 1925.
2. Schlecht Johann, 33 y, 6 y practical experience, attended agricultural school and 1 year Western People's University⁶⁷ in Moscow, attended re-qualification courses in Khortitsa '25.
3. Jedig Olga, 27 years, 7 years practical experience, gymnasium with 8-grades, re-qualification in Khortytsia 1925 and Kronau '24
4. Frey Theorphil, 41 years, 10 y practical experience, completed Khortytsia Central School, re-qualification in Khortytsia '25.
5. Rausch Karl, 34 y, 15 y practical experience, Orlov Central School, re-qualification in Kronau 1924.
6. Hein Alwine, 24 y, 2 y practical experience, gymnasium education, re-qualification in Nikopol '20

School Principal: Klein, G.

Kronau, 29 March 1926

Source: DAKhersO, R-f. 336, op. 1, spr. 17, ark. 47.

⁶⁷ Shorthand for Communist University of the National Minorities of the West, a school for training cadres from among the minorities in the western part of the Soviet Union. It existed from 1921 to 1936.

Letter of the village school principal in Kronau, Glaubrecht Klein, to the Kronau Rural Soviet

USRR
Kronau
[Seven-level] school
Kherson Okruha
No. 5
24 April '26

To the Kronau Rural Soviet

Regarding your letter of 23 April, under no. 687, I inform you that at present three teachers from the Kronau [seven-level] school have yet to receive an apartment. Since at least two more teachers will be employed with the start of the next school year and since the teachers are by law able to claim fuel as well, rent for five teacher apartments and heating for eight teachers is to be included in the next annual budget.

School Principal: Klein

Source: DAKhersO, R-f. 336, op. 1, spr. 17, ark. 101.

Letter of the village school principal in Kronau, Glaubrecht Klein, to the Kronau Rural Soviet

To the Kronau Rural Soviet

In the courtyard of the [seven-level] school, there is a cellar, in which the citizen Joffe keeps the hides of animals. Since the hides of animals that perished due to contagious diseases are among them and the school's well is next to [the cellar], where the bacilli can be transferred by hand washing or otherwise, I ask the rural soviet to have the cellar mentioned cleared out and not to rent it for such purposes any longer.

School Principal: Klein
Kronau, 3 May 1926

Source: DAKhersO, R-f. 336, op. 1, spr. 17, ark. 103.

2.10 Johann Merz, Appeal to Help Homeless Children, 1926

Translation from German

APPEAL

to all toiling citizens of the Karl-Liebknecht Raion

Despite the energetic and dogged work of the organs – “Help the Children,” the situation of the child population in our land and okruha, still remains a difficult one nonetheless. The insufficient funding does not allow us to develop the front in the struggle with homeless children broadly enough. The government created thousands of children’s homes and spent large [amounts of] funding on them each year, however, these are inadequate. The existing children’s home are not able to take in more children; they are overcrowded and the state of sanitary measures is inadequate. The children are not provided with clothing, footwear, and teaching materials. It is necessary to improve their situation, to expand the network of children’s institutions, to open new children’s homes so that they can take in all children in need of shelter and nutrition. The government and the local organs are not in a position to manage this task. Regarding the work of “Help the Children,” not only do [Soviet] organs have to be enlisted, rather the broad mass of workers and peasant population or our [Soviet] republic is most important. It is necessary so that the slogan “Help the Children” acquires the same deep meaning and attention and achieves the results as the slogan “Help the Starving” did in its time.

In Mykolaïv Okruha, the situation in the struggle with homeless children is far from good despite all the measures that have been carried out in this field. Our okruha presently counts more than 5,000 homeless children. Winter is coming, and the children thrown out onto the streets remain without clothes, footwear, food, and shelter. They must all be picked up and accommodated in the children’s institutions. There is no special funding for this, rather it can only be found through the active participation of the Soviet Party and association organisations.

Pursuant to the resolution of the All-Ukr. TsVK⁶⁸ of 15 September, a month-long campaign with homeless children will be carried out on an all-Ukrainian scale. The main tasks of this campaign consist of: 1) enlisting the broad masses of workers and peasants in the cause – “Help the Homeless,” joining the association

⁶⁸ VUTsVK, All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, the nominal state leadership within the Ukrainian republic.

“Friends of Children” as active members, 2) expanding the material means for the struggle with the homeless, 3) picking up homeless children from the streets and other whereabouts and accommodating them in children’s homes.

For the realisation of this task, corresponding commissions will be organised in the village soviet as on the all-Ukr. okruha and raion scale.

With com. regards
/Merz/

For the Raion Commission: /Franz/

Source: DAMO, R-f. 262, op. 2, spr. 53, ark. 18.

2.11 Michał Kozina’s Tax Card, Rural Soviet Hreczany, 1928–1929

Translation from Polish

Proletarians of all countries, unite!

1928 [Printed emblem of the Ukrainian SSR]

Tax card
No. 310/4
concerning uniform agricultural tax for the year 1928/29
Kozina Michał Janowicz

Locality	<i>Hreczany</i>
Rural soviet	<i>Hreczany</i>
Raion	<i>Proskuriv</i>
Okruha	<i>Proskuriv</i>

Tax card delivered: [...] 1928

The tax card must be presented when paying the tax.

Citizens having lost their tax card are obliged to obtain a second copy for a fee of 50 kopecks.

Receipts for paid tax must not be detached from the tax card.

[...]

REGISTERED ON THE FARM			
Dependants 3		Number	Sum of income (roubles)
Desiatinas of land granted, subject to taxation according to the norms	Arable land	2.03	110.64
	Meadow	0.5	1.65
Desiatinas of land leased	Arable land	[...]	[...]
	Meadow	[...]	[...]
Horses 1, oxen [...], cows 1, bulls [...]		2	45
Sheep and goats [...] pigs [...]		[...]	[...]
Special branches of farming <i>gardens</i>		0.32	48
Total income from farming (...)			205.29
From side sources			[...]
Total income from all sources			205.29
Taxable income after deduction of 20 roubles per dependant			145.29
	Roubles	Kopecks	
Tax imposed	10.75	10.75	
Reductions granted	[...]	[...]	
Tax payable	10.75	10.75	
Overdue amounts for previous years	[...]	[...]	
Total payable	10.75	10.75	

Ten roubles 75 kopecks

Additional fines to [...] 1928: [...] roubles [...] kopecks

[Round stamp with the emblem of the Ukrainian SSR surrounded by the given text in Ukrainian, which translates as: Proskuriv Raion Executive Committee of the Councils of People's Deputies of Proskuriv Okruha]

Chairman of the Raion Executive Committee
[illegible handwritten signature]

Secretary
[illegible handwritten signature]

2-68 kop.

TO BE PAID BY THE FOLLOWING DATES:

According to tax card	Overdue amounts for previous years		Tax 1928/29						Signature of person certifying a change of amounts
			To 1 Oct		To 1 Nov		To 1 Dec		
	Roubles	Kopecks	Roubles	Kopecks	Roubles	Kopecks	Roubles	Kopecks	
After additions or reduction	[...]	[...]	[...]	[...]	[...]	[...]	[...]	[...]	[...]

[...] Okruha Proskuriv Cash desk No. 3601 cash book	[Printed emblem of the Ukrainian SSR]	
Received	Roubles	Kopecks
Tax	4	84
Overdue amounts	[...]	[...]
Fines	[...]	[...]
Total	4	84

Four roubles 84 kopecks
21 Oct 1928

[Round stamp with central text in Ukrainian: Cash desk of department [remainder illegible], and surrounding text: Proskuriv Raion Executive Committee, Proskuriv Okruha.]

Signature
[illegible handwritten signature]

[...] Okruha Proskuriv Cash desk No. 18312 cash book	[Printed emblem of Ukrainian SSR]	
Received	Roubles	Kopecks
Tax	2	71
Overdue amounts	[...]	[...]
Fines	[...]	[...]
Total	2	71

Two roubles 71 kopecks

21 Nov 1928

[Stamp]⁶⁹

Signature

[illegible handwritten signature]

[...] Okruha Proskuriv Cash desk No. 8654 cash book	[Printed emblem of Ukrainian SSR]	
Received	Roubles	Kopecks
Tax	3	20
Overdue amounts	[...]	[...]
Fines	[...]	03
Total	3	23

Three roubles 23 kopecks

10 Dec 1928

[Stamp]⁷⁰

Signature

[illegible handwritten signature]

69 All payments were confirmed with the same stamp of the cash desk of the Raion Executive Committee.

70 All payments were confirmed with the same stamp of the cash desk of the Okruha Executive Committee.

RULES ON PAYMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL TAX

1. The tax may be paid in cash and peasant loan bonds through the rural soviet, the cash desk of the Rejwykonkom [Raion Executive Committee], or the cash desk of the People's Commissariat of Finance. The tax may also be paid through the state savings bank or sent by post to the Rejwykonkom of the raion in which the farm for which the tax is being paid is located.

2. It is permitted for the tax to be paid collectively by persons authorised by the payers. Those persons are responsible to the payers for paying the tax on the appropriate date and for the security of the sums entrusted to them.

3. Non-payment of the tax by the date indicated on the tax card leads to a fine of 1/5 of a kopeck per rouble for each day of arrears. The penalty is added to the sum of the overdue tax. Moreover, the legally provided measures are used to enforce collection of the tax.

4. On payment of the tax, the sum remitted is first reduced by the amounts owing from previous years and the fine, and the remainder goes to the payment of the imposed tax for the year 1928/29.

5. Any complaints and applications (with the exception of applications resulting from natural disasters) should be submitted through the rural soviet to the Rejwykonkom within one month of the date of delivery of the tax card to the payer.

6. Applications resulting from natural disasters should be submitted through the rural soviet to the Rejwykonkom within one month of the date of the disaster.

7. The submission of a complaint or application does not suspend the collection of the sums due from the payer. [...]

Source: Archive of the South-Eastern Research Institute in Przemyśl (APWIN), Tax cards, n.pag.

2.12 Ika, School or Chapel, 1 September 1923

Translation from Polish

School or Chapel (A Story Similar to Many)

The village of Marianivka belongs to Baranivka Raion, Zhytomyr Okruha. The population of our village is almost exclusively Polish. Our school in Marianivka has existed since 1917 and was developing quite well until the Romaniv *Parafia* [parish] was taken over by Father Słowiński,⁷¹ who as a professional propagator of ignorance and a “cassock-wearing scandal-monger” known throughout the powiat [pre-reform county], began his mission by taking up battle against the school.

It began when the teacher did not run out to kiss his hand when he came to conduct a service at the local chapel (unfortunately the chapel and school were housed in the same building). Later Fr. Słowiński forbade the school to cut grass in the small meadow next to the chapel, as he preferred to collect the hay for himself rather than give it up to the school.

Priestly intrigues started among the people of the village, where the priest had his agents in the form of “bratczyks.”⁷² For example, our “chaplain” comes to Marianivka and says:

– My dears! Until the chapel is ‘cleaned,’ I will not be conducting services there.

– How is that? – reply the fearful and humble bratczyks – surely the chapel has been swept and tidied...?

– That is not what I mean – replies the vile cassocked figure – I’m thinking of the teacher and her mother...

Such a provocation against a defenceless person coming from a “servant of God” had its effect on the peasants, and the teacher was forced to move the school to a private flat, where no more than five children were taught.

However, the times of conflict came to an end... The people got down to peaceful construction. Thus, among many other matters, the question of the school in Marianivka was brought up once again. Our schoolteacher did not concede defeat, and made a request to the Rajispolkom [Rus. *Raiispolkom*] to give its

71 Stanisław Słowiński (1898–1938), Roman Catholic priest. In early 1922 he illegally crossed the Polish-Soviet border and was acting as a priest in Soviet Volhynia. In 1926 he was arrested and sentenced to three years’ hard labour. In 1937 he was arrested again on a charge of spying. He fell victim to the Stalinist repressions in 1938.

72 Bratczyks – members of a church confraternity.

attention to the matter of education in Marianivka. The result of these efforts is that in spring of this year our peasants began to renovate a house designated for use as a school.

During that time the “benevolent” priest announced that anyone who did not contribute puds of grain for the chapel would not be allowed to enter it. No matter! For the school only a few pounds are collected from each person, but while the puds for the chapel find their way to the bottomless stomach of the shark-priest and bring no advantages to the donors, the pounds for the school will shine a light of knowledge into our sheltered nook, and thereby bring Marianivka an inestimable benefit.

1 September 1923

Ika

Source: Sierp, 1 September 1923, no. 32–33, p. 11.

2.13 V. P. Iliuchenko, On the Volhynian Poles, January 1925

Translation from Ukrainian

To the TsK Natsmen

Volhynian Poles

Statistical data from years ago showed that Poles accounted for 6% of the population of Volhynia. At the time of the revolution that percentage had risen to 10%. The latest information from our statistical offices already speaks of 15%.

At the same time, not so long ago, one of the responsible personnel of this okruha stated very persuasively that there are no longer any Poles. Why is this the case?

As an example, I would like to refer to the village of Novyi Zavod in Zhytomyr Okruha. According to the official statistics 95% of the people here are Poles, the remainder being Ukrainians and Germans. It turns out that the village is Polish. But when you come here, you will be surprised by the ordinary Ukrainian character of the place: the Ukrainian building style, the character of the villagers, the Ukrainian language. There exists here a Polish school. During lessons it can

be noticed that the children talk among themselves in Ukrainian, although they try to address their teachers in Polish.

At a sitting of active members of the rural soviet, where apart from the chairman, there are also representatives of the KNS [Committee of Impoverished Peasants], the cooperative and the school, the Polish inspector of schools of people's education poses questions concerning the nationality of the persons present. The KNS representative replies: "We are Ukrainians, because we live in Ukraine, but we also cannot forget our own Polish language."

The representative of the cooperative, answering the questions in Russian, says: "Here the whole population, the whole of its life and customs, are the same as with all Ukrainians, but in spirit they are all true Poles from Warsaw."

– How do you understand the concept of 'spirit'? I ask.

– By 'spirit' I mean religion. There is a beautiful church here, which was built by a former landowner, there is an influential priest, and the Catholic faithful make up 95% of the population.

It is no surprise when some of the responsible personnel of Komsomol (because we do not have any party members) assert that Novyi Zavod is a pure Polish village, that the population consists exclusively of Poles, that cultural and educational work here is conducted in the Polish language.

And in a situation when matters concerning Polish schools, rural soviets and raions are settled through official channels in a very simple manner, in practice in the region these matters cause a great number of misunderstandings, inaccuracies and errors, and provide the widest possible space for the anti-Ukrainian activities of various anti-Soviet elements.

Answers to these questions could and must be given by the Volhynian Scientific Research Museum, in the form of scientifically conducted ethnographic studies concerning the populations of certain localities in Volhynia.

V. P. Iliuchenko, Zhytomyr, Dubienska 20

Source: TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 45, ark. 1.

3. The State and Party's Minority Policies

3.1 Jan Saulewicz,⁷³ On Results of Elections to the Polish Soviets in Proskuriv Okruha, 15 March 1927

Translation from Polish

Results of Elections to the Polish Soviets in Proskuriv Okruha

The elections to the Polish soviets in the okruha ended on 3 March.

Depending on how the reporting campaign and preparatory work were conducted, the elections to the Polish soviets saw greater or less activity. In general, however, the elections to all Polish soviets gave total victory to the bedniak-seredniak block, and showed a great rise in the authority of party organisations and confidence in them among working Polish peasants. In most villages there were no active kulak or clerical elements, although in the case of some soviets they did everything to defeat the list of poor peasants and Soviet activists (Jachnowce, Szaróweczka⁷⁴): attempts to interrupt pre-election meetings, prevention of women from voting, threatening letters to Soviet activists (Marchlówka, Oleszkowce), attempts to interrupt voting, etc. However, these actions did not bring their intended results. The elections proved that the KNW [Committee of Impoverished Peasants] organisations have become much stronger politically and organisationally compared with last year.

It should be noted that both Polish and Ukrainian teachers fully supported the bedniak-seredniak block. Teachers were readily elected to the soviets, which did not always please the wealthier villagers. In economically weak villages too few seredniaks were elected (20–30 percent).

At pre-election and election meetings much interest was aroused by the international position, price reduction policy, industrialisation, and improvement of the rural economy. In the orders adopted, items were included concerning assistance to the poor, the development of cooperative production, etc.

In the 15 Polish soviets of the okruha, those deprived of voting rights account for 1.93% of the total (half of the average figure for the okruha).

Out of 9,911 voters for those soviets, those voting in the election numbered 4,408, about 45%. The lowest participation (below 45%) occurred in the large villages (Hreczany, Jachnowce), due to the fact that these villages were not divided into

⁷³ Jan Saulewicz (1897–1937), a Polish communist from Ukraine, member of the Central Pol'biuro in Ukraine, Polish representative at the Central Commission for National Minority Affairs. He was shot by the NKVD in 1936.

⁷⁴ In the original: Szaraweczka.

settlements. More than 50% of voters participated in Łąki, Marchlówka, Majdan Werbecki, Kaniówka, Stara Huta, Oleszkowce, Wojtowce. In Szaróweczka the election was annulled due to non-participation by women, but in general women played an active part in the elections. Of 206 soviet members elected, women account for 17.4%. Communists account for 7.8% of those elected, Komsomol members 4.8%, KNW members 35.4%. In the village of Zielona, Comrade Pietrowski was elected an honorary member of the soviet. Former Red Army soldiers were readily elected to the soviets. 50% of existing soviet members were re-elected. During the election campaign in the town of Horodok and in the village of Zarzecz (Proskuriv Raion) the matter of organising Polish soviets there was raised.

KNW members and *seredniaks*, having authority, were elected to the presidia of soviets. In soviets with Komsomol branches, Komsomol members were elected as secretaries of the soviets.

The first steps undertaken by the newly constituted soviets in their work show that they will be capable of working fruitfully on engaging the Polish population further in the building of the soviet system, and on the economic and cultural development of the Polish villages.

J. Saulewicz

Source: *Sierp*, 15 March 1927, no. 11, p. 4.

3.2 Afanasii [Panas] Butsenko⁷⁵, On the Election Campaign in Areas with National Minorities, 14 December 1927

Translation from Russian

[4]

SPEECH BY A. BUTSENKO AT THE SESSION OF THE TsKNM ON THE QUESTION OF MEASURES FOR CONDUCTING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN AREAS WITH NATIONAL MINORITIES

Appendix to Protocol No. 5/115 of 14 December 1927.

Our campaign to conduct soviet elections coincides with campaigns that are held by a number of organisations, in particular, through the KNS [Committees

⁷⁵ Panas [Rus. Afanasii] Butsenko (1889–1965) was from 1923 to 1928 secretary of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee.

of Impoverished Peasants], KVP [Mutual Assistance Committee], Cooperative Society, the Red Cross, and Trade Unions. At this very moment we are running a number of these public campaigns and, in my opinion, the TsKNM should not only be concerned about the soviets, but also about the re-election of public organisations among national minorities.

The main work on the soviet elections is carried out by the Tsentribirkom [Central Election Commission]. We will have to promote in every possible way the successful re-elections among national minorities, as well as strengthen the influence of the proletariat and its ally, the poor-middle peasant bloc, in the countryside among the national population. I fully and completely agree with Comrade Saulevich [Saulewicz],⁷⁶ who states, on the basis of figures, that the well-off group is fairly well represented on the soviets of some national minorities. This, of course, is not entirely pleasant for us, and, in my opinion, it is necessary to think about giving appropriate instructions. In addition to the circular which has been sent to the presidium of the VUTsIK for signature, it will be necessary to issue another practical circular to the Natsmen Bureau and point out all the irregularities detected last year.

One of the main irregularities is that last year the local authorities did not sufficiently absorb the individual points of the instruction, and in this connection there were, in particular, many unreasonable deprivations that mainly fell in the category of "former." We must help the poor and middle peasants in every possible way to restore their electoral rights through the election commissions, and at the same time, we must strive to ensure that the kulaks, the prosperous elements exploiting the labour of others, cannot creep into the soviets and influence the poor masses. When drawing up the lists, one needs to have a very good knowledge of the region, the area, its population and all those elements that, according to our instructions and those from the union, belong to the category of those deprived of voting rights, and they should be included in the corresponding lists.

Our task is to assimilate our legislation as much as possible. The law on the equality of languages, issued in 1927, has not yet been published in the languages of national minorities. It should be published in all languages as soon as possible. In my opinion, through our national policy, through our native language, we must serve the proletariat and the poor peasants as effectively as possible, in alliance with the middle peasants, and put them in the forefront at the time of the election campaign, both in the soviets and in public organisations.

76 Jan Saulewicz (1897–1937), a Polish communist from Ukraine, member of the Central Pol'biuro in Ukraine, Polish representative at the Central Commission for National Minority Affairs. He was shot by the NKVD in 1936.

We have just celebrated the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution and are preparing to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the existence of the Ukrainian SSR. Both of these events give us the opportunity to take stock of the strengthening of our proletarian statehood, the results of Ukrainisation, the revival of Ukrainian culture, and at the same time, the results of the implementation of national policy among national minorities.

[4 zv]

We made a report in Moscow, we gained approval, but this should not be an excuse for us to fold our hands and stand still. There are still a lot of problems at the local level. For instance, I was in Kalinindorf Raion.⁷⁷ They showed great engagement. But to my deep regret, I had to hear and observe chauvinistic tendencies. A Jew gave a speech in Ukrainian, and the audience shouted at him – “why are you speaking in Ukrainian, you know that you are in a Jewish Raion!” I think that similar cases occur not only among Jews, but also among Germans and others. These incidents must be eliminated in the most categorical way. Without a doubt, in national administrative-territorial units, office work should be conducted in the language of the national minority, but at the same time, clerks or secretaries must speak the Ukrainian language.

As far as the [rural] soviets are concerned, I think that we will need to pay special attention to the Russians, since the Russian villages were distinguished by the lowest engagement, and this should be noted, in particular, with respect to the Lugansk region. The comrades who work with the Russian population need to address this issue.

About the [voters'] lists – I have already said that they need to be drawn up in advance, announced at general meetings, displayed in plain sight so that everyone is aware of them. The list should be drawn up in the native language of the population.

The same applies to cards. If there were shortcomings last year, they need to be eliminated this year in advance – the cards should be printed in sufficient quantity and sent to the localities.

Regarding the verification campaign, one must first of all make sure that verification assistance is provided. We listened to a number of reports from national raions and rural soviets that stressed a variety of shortcomings. One should take them into account when inspecting particular national soviets, as well as try to assist the executive committees during the check. It must also be borne in mind that some tasks are of a double nature – on the one hand, to eliminate

⁷⁷ The Jewish Kalinindorf Raion was part of Kherson Okruha.

bureaucracy, red tape, arrogance, bungling, bribery, etc. On the other hand, to monitor the execution of orders, the implementation of the resolutions adopted at congresses, etc.

And the third point is purely national: how the national policy is carried out, how it is implemented and what are the defects.

It should be ensured that reporting at the local level is done in the native language. We saw last year that the national soviets reported in Russian or Ukrainian, while the population demanded that they report in their native language. When reporting, it must be borne in mind that the report should not be abstract, based solely on the Chinese revolution⁷⁸ or Chamberlain;⁷⁹ the attention should be shifted to the reporting of campaigns, in order to specify what the soviets have achieved in the field of culture, in agriculture, in the area of everyday life, where they dug a well, where they built a barn for depositing bread. These are local matters, something that the local soviet has to put into practice, and this needs to be said, for example, how much the budget has grown, how many schools were built. It is necessary that the soviets indicate what they have not yet fulfilled and why, whether there are neglected matters, and whether they are at the local level, or there are obstacles that need to be discussed at okruha congresses of rural soviets.

[5]

Moreover, they must not only report on the work of the soviet, but also on the work of individuals, that is, what soviet members and candidates have done, their participation in practical work, in the implementation of the measures outlined by the soviet. This task should be assigned to our national soviets during the reporting campaign.

At the same time, one needs to pay attention to the mandate. It is necessary that this mandate should include points arising from the general line of the Soviet government and the party, decisions of congresses concerning the national minorities, and that the mandate should also be published in the languages of the national minorities, as well as being widely distributed. When reporting, it is necessary to publicise the decisions of the sessions, the manifesto, benefits to the peasantry, the 7-hour working day, a number of measures regarding tax policy. This must be borne in mind and it is necessary to mention these decisions again

78 Reference to the so called Autumn Harvest Uprising after September 1927 in China that led to the civil war between the communists under Mao Zedong and the nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek.

79 Reference to Neville Chamberlain (1869–1940), a conservative and prominent anti-socialist British politician.

when carrying out the reporting campaign. I would also like to draw attention to the mixed regions, to the mixed administrative-territorial units, where different nationalities live. In my opinion, the spotlight of our attention should be the polling stations; both the national and the territorial basis should be considered. In these mixed raions, in my opinion, polling stations should be very carefully worked out, with respect to the specific features of the life of the nationalities that live there.

As for the press, there is a general plan here, we will adhere to it, but I think that comrades will need, on their part, in their area of work, to make sure that there are enough articles and notes published, correspondence is regularly posted and materials are provided, which we will work through and publish in minority languages.

I think we need to discuss how to campaign in the case of public organisations. For national minorities, the development of Soviet public life is particularly important. Of course, attention is centred around the soviets, but public organisations, when they are re-elected, require our attention and our participation.

Specifically, I think that it is necessary to issue a general circular to the appropriate bodies, since trade unions, cooperatives, the KOV [Peasant Mutual Aid Societies], the Red Cross, Osoaviakhim⁸⁰, all of these organisations work among national minorities. We need to generate incentives and enthusiasm for the implementation of those measures that are planned by the party and the Soviet government. And therefore, it would be advisable to address this issue from all sides at meetings, inviting representatives of the KNS, cooperatives, trade unions, Osoaviakhim and the KOV. Thus they can inform us about how the elections among national minorities are run in their case.

A. Butsenko

Source: DAMO, R-f. 161, op. 1, spr. 701, ark. 4-5.

⁸⁰ Society for the Assistance of Defence, Aircraft and Chemical Construction, 1927-1948.

3.3 Statistics on National Rural Soviets and National Raions in Soviet Ukraine, 1930

Translation from Russian

GROWTH RATES OF NATIONAL RURAL SOVIETS AND RAIONS IN THE UKRAINIAN SSR

	National rural soviets										National settlement councils				
	Rus- sian	Ger- man.	Polish	Jewish	Mol- davian	Bul- garian	Greek	Czech	Alba- nian	Belorus- sian	Swed- ish	Total	Russian	Jewish	Total
1924	-	98	15	19	-	25	26	5	-	-	-	188	-	-	-
1925	69	117	61	19	9	28	27	13	-	1	-	344	-	19	19
1926	122	221	129	34	57	43	27	13	-	1	1	648	-	52	52
1927	292	337	139	56	57	42	30	13	3	2	1	872	-	52	52
1928	388	251	143	77	57	42	30	13	3	2	1	1007	39	53	92
1929	410	254	151	88	90	45	30	12	3	4	1	1088	41	68	109

National raions					
Russian	German	Bulgarian	Greek	Polish	Total
1924	5	1	-	-	6
1925	5	3	-	-	8
1926	5	3	-	1	10
1927	7	4	-	1	22
1928	9	4	3	1	24
1929	9	4	3	1	26*

NOTE

x) Establishment of the following national raions is currently at the final stages of planning: Jewish in the Krivoy Rog Okrug, German in the Volyn Okrug, Russian in the Izium Okrug, and Greek in Mariupol Okrug. With regard to national rural soviets, there are still possibilities to create new ones.
21/II-rg. 3 ex.

Source: TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 451, ark. 36.

3.4 Minutes of a Polish Communist Meeting in Vinnytsia, Podolia Hubernia, 11 May 1922

Translation from Polish

Minutes
of a general meeting of Polish communists
held on 11 May 1922 in Vinnytsia

Present: Comrades Radecki, Marecki, Gregorowicz, Dolasiński, Szeliga, Rybicki, Kalinowski, Darczyński, Nowicki.

Chairman: Gregorowicz⁸¹

Secretary: Marecki

Agenda:

1. Report from the Polish Bureau of Podgubkom.⁸²
2. Report from the Polish Bureau of the Gubnarodobraz.⁸³
3. Organisational matters.
4. Current matters.

ITEM:	DECIDED:
1. Report of the Polish Bureau, comrade Gregorowicz.	1. Accept, noting that the work was not in fact completed. It is necessary to put the work back on track. The lack of work was in fact due to the lack of a manager and personnel who were free and fully committed to the organisational matter, as all Polish personnel in Vinnytsia are overloaded with general soviet work. It is necessary, in order to revive the work in Podolia, to bring in strong comrades from the Polish Bureau of the Central Committee. To this end, make energetic representations to the Polish Bureau of the TsK KP(b)U.

⁸¹ Andrzej Grygorowicz (Gregorowicz) (1878–after 1934) joined the RKP(b) in 1918. He worked as inspector for Polish Affairs in Vinnytsia Hubernia. He was sentenced to five years' hard labour by a NKVD Special Court in 1934. His subsequent fate is unknown.

⁸² The Podolia Hubkom KP(b)U.

⁸³ The Hubernia Education Department.

<p>2. Report of the Polish Bureau of the Gubnarodobraz.</p>	<p>2. Approve in full the work of the Bureau within the scope of the report. To remedy and regulate schooling in Vinnytsia, appoint commissions consisting of Comrades Szeliga, Dolasiński and Radecki. Obligate all Polish communist comrades in Vinnytsia to participate as extensively as possible in educational work.</p>
<p>3. Organisational matter.</p>	<p>3. Due to the late hour, carried over to the next meeting. The head of the Bureau should prepare an organisational plan for future work.</p>
<p>4. Current matters. a) On withdrawal of an accusation erroneously made in the press against Comrades Szeliga, Radecki and Nowicki. For failure to hold a meeting.</p>	<p>4. Withdraw the accusation against the listed comrades in the local press.</p>
<p>b) Management board of Polish Club.</p>	<p>Elected to the management board of the club: Comrades Dolasiński, Jermak and Darczyński.</p>
<p>c) On the library.</p>	<p>Library to be placed under the administration of the Polish Bureau of the Gubnarodobraz. For this purpose, appoint a commission consisting of Comrades Barczyński, Gregorowicz and Marecki.</p>
<p>d) On the dismissal of Comrade Barczyński.</p>	<p>Leave in place until a suitable replacement is found.</p>

Meeting declared closed at 11 o'clock at night.

SECRETARY [no signature]

PRESIDENT [no signature]

Certified as a true copy:

Secretary

of the Polish Bureau of Podolia Gubkom:

Rybicki

[handwritten signature]

On the day 11 May 1922.

Source: TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 20, spr. 1550, ark. 42-42 zv.

3.5 Boleslav Skarbek (Bolesław Skarbek-Szacki),⁸⁴ On the Registration of Communists Knowing Polish Language, 26 February 1923

Translation from Russian

Official note

To the TsK KP(b)U

With reference to the telegram received from you concerning the need to intensify activity, particularly in the guberniias near the border, I request the following:

1) allocation of 25,000 (twenty-five thousand) roubles for the publication of periodical literature, namely appeals, leaflets, information concerning agricultural law and the conditions of peasants and workers in Poland and in Soviet Russia, the tax policy of the Soviet government, the international situation, etc.;

2) Allocation to the Pol'biuro TsK KP(b)U of one post, with a salary according to category 16, for Comrade VISHNEVSKII,⁸⁵ who has been brought from Warsaw especially for this purpose.

3) Reinforcement of existing posts at the different Pol'biuro in Volhynia Guberniia and Podolia Guberniia, and the establishment of additional posts in Kiev Guberniia in Radomisl' Uezd and Uman' Uezd.

4) Announcement in all Gubernii of Ukraine of a repeated registration of communists knowing the Polish language, followed by the sending of the collected data to the Uchraspreds⁸⁶ of party committees with proposals as to the posts in which particular comrades might be best employed. Notification of the Pol'biuro of this.

Head of the Polish Bureau
Skarbek

[handwritten signature]

26 February 1923

Source: TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 7, spr. 36, ark. 29–29 zv.

This Document has been published earlier in: Stanisław Stępień (ed.), *Polacy na Ukrainie: Zbiór dokumentów*. Part 1: *Lata 1917–1939*, vol. 3. Przemyśl: PWIN, 2001, pp. 36–37.

⁸⁴ Bolesław Skarbek-Szacki (1888–1937) was a communist activist, co-founder of KP(b)U. From 1922 he was plenipotentiary for assistance to the Polish Communist Party in Ukraine. He was a member of party and state authorities in Kharkiv, Kiev and Chernihiv. In 1933 he was arrested for spying and sentenced to 10 years' hard labour, but was later shot.

⁸⁵ Konstancy Teofil Wiszniewski (1893–1937), a Polish Soviet activist. He joined the RKP(b) in 1919, and from 1923 was editor of the Sierp newspaper. Before being arrested he worked as Vice-Rector of the Communist Agricultural College in Smolensk. He was sentenced to death and was executed on 17 September 1937.

⁸⁶ *Uchraspred*: Registration and Distribution Department of the TsK KP(b)U.

3.6 Activity Report of the German Section within the Mykolaïv Okruha Party Committee, 24 September 1924

Translation from German

Activity report of the German Section at the Mykolaïv Okrkom [Okruha Party Committee]

Above all, it is to be noted that the section's work to date could not be carried out according to plan. As reasons for this, the following are to be mentioned. 1. The low status of the section, as there is only one employee, who works on three [policy] lines. 2. The summer period and with it the field work, as [well as] 3. the turnover in secretaries, as of course some time passes until the new comrade in place has made himself known and familiarised himself with the work. The secretaries were replaced on 5 August of the current year[. T]hose are [the] 2 months about which my report will follow.

On 1 August and September, 4 instructional trips were made, namely to the following raions 1. Varvarivka, 2. Mykolaïv,⁸⁷ and 3. Novyi Buh. The purpose of these trips was purely just to get to know the situation of the colonies, economically as well as culturally. In Mykolaïv Okruha, there is only one party cell in the colony Landau. In this okruha,⁸⁸ we have 9 party members, 12 candidates. 4 office meetings were held, at which various matters were handled, and work distributed among the party members.

Among the town's party members, no work could be conducted to date save for an assembly, which was conducted together with non-party members. In the countryside, i.e. in Landau, the following work was done. There were 8 assemblies, 2 closed [to the public]. Following matters were handled. 1. Circulars no. 4 and 5 of the TsK[. F]ollowing reports were made: on the 10th anniversary of the imperial war, the economic situation and party work in the German colonies, cultural work in the countryside, professional movement, organisation of the KNS and its significance, the significance of the women's movement, and accounting report of different sections. Also 5 comrades were assigned to the [trade union cells], which are organised mainly in mills and private enterprises. An organiser for the youth cell⁸⁹ was also confirmed. 6 comrades, 1 candidate, 2 KNS, and 3 comrades [from the Komsomol] were commandeered to the party school in Odessa.

87 Meant is the rural raion outside the city of Mykolaïv. The city of Mykolaïv was its own entity.

88 The author says "Kreis" again, but he almost certainly meant the raion or the commune of Landau or had meant to reference the okruha in a general manner as in the previous sentence.

89 Cell of the Communist Youth League, the Komsomol, which was for young people aged 14–28.

Work with women. Among the women, the work cannot be shaped intensively due to a shortage of personnel, as we do not have any German-speaking woman in the entire [raion] who could be used for this work[. An] extremely wide field of work is open along the entire line. Apart from that, it is to be noted that there are very many available women who are in the KNS [Committee of Impoverished Peasants] organisation [and] among whom work would have to be done first and foremost.

For the time being, there is in Varvarivka Raion a female Russian comrade [from the Komsomol], who works among women. In all, 5 women's organisations are organised in the colonies LANDAU, KARLSRUHE, KATHERINENTAL, JOHANNISTAL⁹⁰ and SULZ. The [campaign for the] liquidation of illiteracy among women begins on 15 October[. F]or this purpose, teachers were enlisted where such are not available.

Youth work. Until August of this year no work has been carried out among the youth, but a cell did indeed exist without members, i.e. on paper, in Landau. For this work, a comrade [from the Komsomol] who worked as a [trade union organiser]⁹¹ was simultaneously enlisted as organiser. Now a cell of 17 members exists – and an initiative group. For additional organisation [of the youth], 2 more cells are foreseen. The non-party youth is also being pulled into the trade unions[. B]esides that, in all larger colonies “red corners” are organised, unfortunately, we lack the necessary

[52 zv]

personnel and literature in order to shape the work intensively. During the summer, work was also carried out among the *doprizyvniki*⁹² (recruits), for which 2 demobilised Red Army soldiers were enlisted. After the exercises, this work is partially carried out in yet another colony. Comrades [from the Komsomol] are busy with diverse general work, e.g. Selbudinok,⁹³ [inter alia]. It can be noted that we observe a movement among the village youth lacking land is ready to join the Communist Youth League[. U]nfortunately, we cannot organise cells everywhere where such [movements] germinate, as we lack responsible workers and functionaries incl[. T]herefore, it is necessary to concentrate [the aforementioned movement] in larger cells[. A]mong the German youth that lives among [other nationalities], one does not note any [such] movement, first, as no

90 In the original: Johannestal.

91 i.e. trade unionists.

92 Youth undergoing pre-conscription military training.

93 Rus. *sel'skii budinok*, the “village building,” i.e. akin to a cultural centre.

German organisations are in place, and no work is being conducted by the other nationalities, as it is known that nationalism is still present. As characteristic [of the situation], it is to be noted that in all of those colonies where the [youth] organisations work poorly or are united with other organisations, religious cults exist for the most part, e.g. in the colony JOHANNISTAL, a movement that was until now not known in the German colonies, namely the following: they may recognise communism, but with a God. We have not yet succeeded in finding the leaders of these cults. There then follows the colony WATERLOO – where there is a Baptist movement.⁹⁴ Colony NEUDANZIG – where almost all of the Lutherans and Catholics have become Baptists. The matter is very serious. In JOHANNISTAL, we to date had a Russian chairman in the s/soviet,⁹⁵ in WATERLOO, there's merely an authorised representative, and in NEUDANZIG, the soviet is Russian, and the Germans have only a few members in the s/soviet. The section has come to the following conclusion that these phenomena are to be noted in all of the colonies where the Germans are not autonomous or the lowest organisations work poorly.

Work in the soviets. Recently, a non-party peasants' conference was carried out. For this purpose, 3 comrades were mobilised, preparatory work was done first, namely in the following colonies: KARLSRUHE, JOHANNISTAL, KATHERINENTAL, SPEYER,⁹⁶ WATERLOO, SULZ, LANDAU. The conference was attended by all of the delegates. The following matters were on the agenda: 1. the international situation, 2. the situation in Germany, 3. the nationality question in the SSSR,⁹⁷ 4. tax matters, and 5. miscellanea. For the most part, the delegates were poor village [peasants], members of the [trade union association], teachers, and several mid-size peasants as well.

As there were comrades as chairmen and secretaries in many *selsoviets*⁹⁸ who carried out their work poorly, these were dismissed in 3 soviets and replaced by others. No new rural soviets were organised in the period of reporting[. S]ome petitions from the population were indeed submitted, which have not yet been addressed to date and must lie with BUZIK.⁹⁹

With the forthcoming election campaign, our first task was to introduce the secretary of the German Section to the election commission of the *okrispolkom* [Okruha Exekutive Committee]. Corresponding comrades have been earmarked for carrying out the election campaign as well.

94 I.e. Mennonites.

95 Rus. *s/sovet* for *rural soviet*.

96 In the original: *Speier*.

97 Rus. *SSSR* for *USSR*.

98 Rus. *sel'sovet* for *rural soviet*.

99 The author had probably Rus. *VUTSIK* in mind, the All-Ukrainian Executive Committee.

Due to the distribution of land, nothing to date has been undertaken on the part of the section, as the section did indeed receive a communique, but the implementing organs so far have not. Thus the section could of course do nothing in this matter.

[...]

POPULAR ENLIGHTENMENT

Schools: we have 21 in the okruha

Techno-agricultural: 1

Employed teachers: we have 51 in all

Children's home: we have 1

Libraries 4, peasant homes 5, red corners 4

[53]

[...]

Among teachers, primarily among the old ones who are already rooted in their posts, one notes an antagonism between the population and them. Therefore, we are eager to transfer the teachers. We have cases where we have hired new teachers that [show] school attendance as high as 90% [of school-age children]. By contrast, [where there are] other teachers who have been in one and the same village for 15 years or longer, [they] have only 15-20% of children who attend school. Pursuant to the materials mentioned, it is of greatest importance to transfer teachers, but to dismiss those who do not comply with our resolutions for economic reasons and to replace them with other personnel.

[...]

/XXX/

/XXX/

/XXX/

/XXX/

[illegible signatures]

Source: DAMO, f. P-1, op. 1, spr. 120, ark. 52-53.

3.7 Samuil Lazowert (Samuel Łazowert),¹⁰⁰ Report of the Polish Bureau (Pol'biuro) of the TsK KP(b)U for 1924, January 1925

Translation from Russian

Report on the activity of the Pol'biuro TsK KP(b)U for the period from the 8th Party Conference to 1 January 1925

[...] Organisational activity

Contact with the regions is maintained by means of local reports, directions from the centre, local visits and summonses to the Central Committee. In July 1924, under the leadership of the Pol'biuro, a meeting took place of party workers present at the All-Ukrainian Conference of Polish Cultural and Educational Workers and Teachers.

The Pol'biuro TsK summoned the editor of the paper *Sierp* [The Sickle],¹⁰¹ who is also manager of the *Trybuna* publishing house.¹⁰² [...]

In the period covered by the report, separate Pol'biuros were organised at the Guberniia Committees in Podolia, Kiev and Kharkiv and at the Okruha Party Committees of Komsomol in Proskurov, Shepetovka and Kamenets-Podol'sk. [...] Local party conferences took place: at guberniia level in Volhynia, as well as three at okrug level (in Shepetovka, Zhitomir and Korosten'). In Podolia, a conference took place in Vinnitsa Okrug.

Agitprop work

In towns where Polish clubs exist (Kiev, Kharkiv, Odessa, Vinnitsa, Proskurov) there are politgramots¹⁰³ for workers. Besides, communist Poles are trained by similar clubs at sugar and porcelain factories. In the villages, "Sierpowcy"¹⁰⁴

100 Samuel Łazowert (1885–1937) was an activist in the Polish workers' movement and took part in the October Revolution. From December 1917 he was plenipotentiary of the Commissariat for Polish Affairs in the Moscow area. In September 1919 he became a member of the Executive Bureau of Groups of the Polish Communist Workers' Party in Russia and secretary of the Polish Agitprop Bureau of the TsK RKP(b). From 1923 to 1930 he was secretary of the Pol'biuro of the TsK KP(b)U, and from 1926 was also a member of the Pol'biuro of the TsK VKP(b). In the second half of the 1930s he was subjected to repression along with other Polish communists. In 1937 Łazowert was sentenced to death and executed.

101 *Sierp*: A weekly in Polish language, edited between 1922 and 1937.

102 *Trybuna* was a Polish publishing house founded in Kiev in 1923 to produce press publications and agitation literature in the Polish language.

103 Political education clubs organised by the Communist Party.

104 The name was derived from that of the Polish weekly *Sierp*.

clubs are organised, bringing together village activists. The activity of the clubs involves discussion on articles that have been previously read in that newspaper, usually led by a rural correspondent of *Sierp* or a Sovietised teacher.

In Kiev, apart from one functioning school of the political education system, there is also a Polish Section at the Guberniia Party School, with 40 students. The new year groups of students fully meet the set requirements. Selection was carried out among the last year group, after which only 10 students were left. Given the poor preparation of rural staff, a 10% limit is set for admissions of non-party members.

[...] Campaigns were carried out following the admission of students to the following schools: the Red Communards School in Moscow (90% of places were filled), the Polish Technical College in Kiev (100% of places filled) and the Polish Section of the Kiev Guberniia Party School (60% of places filled). Students were not admitted to other colleges due to a lack of suitable candidates.

Non-fulfilment of the target for recruitment to the Party School is explained by this year's increased requirements, in terms of both preparation and length of party membership.

Activity among teachers

Particular attention was paid to activity among teachers at Polish schools. Requalification courses were run: for 80 persons in Kiev (all Ukrainians), for 25 persons in Berdichev and for 20 each in Kaments and Shepetovka. Moreover 11 persons were sent on courses in Moscow for requalification.

Teachers' conferences were held: at all-Ukrainian level, at guberniia level in Volhynia, Podolia and Kiev, and at okrug level in Berdichev, Shepetovka, Zhitomir and Korosten'.

[...] This was reflected not only in a number of resolutions and written protests against "bourgeois Poland," but also [...] in activity by Polish teachers in rural soviets, *komnizams* [Committees of Impoverished Peasants] and their presidia, the cooperative movement, KVP [Mutual Assistance Committee], *Sel'buds* [Community Centres] and lik[...]punkty.¹⁰⁵

The influence of priests on teaching has significantly decreased. Among teachers, we also now have a network of active workers taking action against the influence of the clergy on schools and on the populace.

105 Likpunkts: Points for Liquidation of Illiteracy.

Activity among youth and the Young Leninists¹⁰⁶

Thanks to the organisation of Pol'biuro at Komsomol Partkoms [Party Committees], this activity has been significantly improved. Polish Komsomol activists are among those particularly distinguished.

Inspection activity

The Pol'biuro took on the permanent supervision of some Polish villages. This campaign was conducted in staff centres, and involves supplying the villages in question with literature and press publications, and making visits to the villages as frequently as possible. [...]

Publishing and printing activity

The weekly *Sierp* has 3000 subscribers and close to 100 correspondents; moreover it is increasing in popularity among farmers year by year.

Unfortunately, continual delays in the sending of financial subsidies for *Sierp* from the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party create a real risk of interruption to the paper's publication, which has already happened several times (for example, when funds were not received for the first quarter of the new financial year). There is also a children's magazine, *Sztandar Pioniera* [Pioneer's Banner],¹⁰⁷ of which six issues have so far been published. It reaches all Polish schools and children's homes, and in some is used as a book to teach reading. It always arouses significant interest among children (particularly *Yula* [Spinning Top])¹⁰⁸, some of whom become its correspondents. [...]

Apart from the aforementioned magazines, every day there are distributed in Ukraine the Polish newspapers *Młot* [Hammer],¹⁰⁹ *Gwiazda Młodzieży* [Star of the Youth]¹¹⁰, and also, before its closure, *Trybuna Komunistyczna* [Communist Tribune]¹¹¹ – the organ of the Pol'biuro of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. *Młot* is distributed mainly among workers.

Apart from the aforementioned titles, the Polish-language weekly *Stronica* [Leaflet] appears in Soviet Volhynia, and a Polish page appears occasionally in the local paper in Berdichev. [...]

106 I.e. Komsomol; here, the Leninist Communist Youth League of Ukraine.

107 *Sztandar Pioniera*: A journal for Polish schoolchildren edited in Kiev, 1924–1925.

108 *Yula*: A children's weekly in Russian language.

109 *Młot*: A magazine published in Ukraine between 1918 and 1926.

110 *Gwiazda Młodzieży*: A Polish magazine published in Ukraine between 1918 and 1926.

111 *Trybuna Komunistyczna*: A Polish newspaper published in Moscow between 1922 and 1925.

Activity with respect to the KNS [Committees of Impoverished Peasants], KVP
[Mutual Assistance Committees] and cooperatives

The Polish population, like the whole Catholic population of Ukraine, is unfortunately insufficiently engaged in the organisation of KNS. This is explained on the one hand by the particular agitation by priests against the KNS, manifested in threats of exclusion from church for members of the organisation, but on the other hand by the inappropriate attitude of some KNS members to the religious poor, as shown by cases where people attending church have been excluded from its ranks (e.g. in Malin Okrug).

The greatest problem is the weak engagement of the Polish poor in this organisation. [...] Activity with regard to the KVP and cooperatives is inadequate. Moreover the latter are often taken over by elements with a kulak background, as happened, for example, in Podolia Guberniia.

Sovietisation activity

In relation to the organisation – in local units and the TsKNM at VUTsVK, action has been undertaken to engage the Polish population in the building of the Soviet system. The organisation of Polish rural soviets and the last elections to them aroused significant interest among the Polish population.

[...] In the last elections to the rural soviets, there was a significant increase in the number of Poles participating in them and being elected to the soviets.

The following numbers of persons were elected to rural soviets:

Gubernii	Volhynia	Kiev	Podolia	Total
1924/1925	1447	482	904	2833
1923/1924	1097	242	375	1714
% increase	33.9%	90.9%	141%	65.2%

It was planned to organise four Polish rural soviets in each of Kiev Guberniia and Podolia Guberniia, and 14 in Volhynia Guberniia. The further organisational process will be continued in 1925. The Pol'biuro TsK KP(b)U, based on observations made in particular localities, has issued directions to its local units concerning the organisation of Polish rural soviets.

To give a reliable characterisation of the conditions in which the local Pol'biuro operate, mention must be made of the dangerous religiousness of the rural Polish population and the influence of priests, who act as agents of bourgeois

Poland. In villages with a Polish, or generally Catholic, population, religious groups are active, such as the Tertiaries, the Rosary of Maidens and others.

Head of the Pol'biuro

Lazovert

[typed and handwritten signature]

Source: CDAHO, f. 1, op. 20, spr. 1841, ark. 40-44.

3.8 Scope of Action for the Employees of the Okruha Commission for National Minority Affairs in Kherson, 9 April 1925

Translation from German

To the Okrug Natsmen Commission USRR¹¹²

Huberniia Executive Committee
of the Peasants, Workers and Red Army Deputies
9 April 1925
Odesa
Tel. No. 89 and 92¹¹³

Instructions about the work of the Okrug Natsmen Commission¹¹⁴

To the Commission for National Minorities of the Kherson Okruha Executive Committee

Comrade Bergner

I'm sending you herewith instructions that establish the framework in which the work of the members with respect to the authorised representative of the Commission for National Minorities is to be completed. Inter alia, we are informing you that current instructions were already sent to you some time ago, however, taking into consideration that these were delivered in the Ukrainian language,

112 In Russian.

113 In Ukrainian.

114 In Russian.

and we assume that you understand these poorly, we have thus decided to translate them into Russian and are thus sending you a copy as an appendix. We underscore the fact [that] the current instructions were confirmed by the All-Ukr. Central Executive Committee¹¹⁵ and are thus valid as a legal decree and [that] our comrades have left nothing out of consideration so that the enclosed regulations are to be carried out in every instance.

Further, we feel compelled to inform you that every month a report is to be submitted to us about the work you have done. Likewise, every 3 months, a more detailed activity report is to be sent, which we have to send to the Central Commission. We ask you to focus on the following areas of work in reporting.

1) Organisation work, 2) mood of the national minorities, 3) friction between nationalities and their causes, 4) initiatives of the national minorities to participate in Soviet construction, 5) work in the national territorial raions and village [administrative] units, 6) the work of the national people's and district courts, 7) status of work with the poor peasants' committees as well as other social organisations, 8) cooperative work among the national minorities; 9) how is the process of enlisting the Jewish population in agriculture being put into effect? 10) how is the process of solving the land question in the German colonies proceeding? 11) separation of church and state in the national minority areas. By underscoring the importance of these reports in the aforementioned form, the committees are requested to send us the reports by the specified time (monthly and quarterly) without orders or further request on our part.

REPRESENTATIVE of the CHAIRMAN OF THE GUB. COM. FOR NAT. MINORITY AFFAIRS /XXX/

SECRETARY /XXX/

Source: DKhersO, f. R-2, op. 1, spr. 1409, ark. 65.

115 I.e. the VUTSVK.

3.9 Hubert, Raion Party Secretary in Landau, Report to the German Section in Mykolaïv, 6 September 1925

Translation from German

Raion Party Committee of the Landau Raion, 6 September 1925

To the German Section in the Mykolaïv Okruha Party Committee, copy to ZB¹¹⁶
Kharkiv

Esteemed Comrades,

At the time I was at the monthly course in Odessa, an audit took place in Landau Raion, which was forced to rely on nothing other than materials that had been submitted to it. [I] claim, however, that the material was unilaterally submitted to the commission, since Com. Beutel, a member of the commission, [and] Com. Merz, who was my deputy though, were biased against me. Since the words *unstable and fickle*¹¹⁷ in the minutes are used against me, which I regard as a political judgment, I therefore demand an opportunity to defend myself or to be summoned before the KK [Control Commission], which, in the event it finds me to be such a communist, should expel me from the party. I am certain that if the other two members of the commission, who are objective, listen to me as well, they will resolve to have these words struck from the minutes. In the minutes, it is stated that I was not able to exert communist influence against the influence of the intelligentsia.... One could also blame the party, since I have only been working [there] for 4 months and used to be in Varvarivka Raion. It is then claimed that the population is strongly influenced by the clergy. What the former Mykolaïv Huberniia and present-day Mykolaïv Okruha has yet to do in 5 years is to tear the population from the influence of clergy, and I presumably am supposed to accomplish this in 4 months. It is further claimed in the minutes that I possess little authority. Among a religiously fanatical population, the secretary of the party committee is supposed to possess the authority that the party possesses. The commission said that there were no complaints regarding the secretary. Is that not already proof that he already possesses some authority? Everything that is claimed in the minutes can be found in my report. Since the verdict of the commission is known to all and my authority has been fully destroyed and my being here is useless, I ask in the interest of our work that another comrade be put in my place. I would like

¹¹⁶ Central Office of the German Section in the TsK KP(b)U.

¹¹⁷ In the original given in Russian: *nevyderzhannyi i nastoikii*.

to propose the candidacy of Com. Beutel. [I] have also written a letter to Com. Dubovoi in the TsKK [Central Control Commission] and have demanded that the commission give me the opportunity to defend myself.

With com. regards

Secretary of the Raion Party Committee: /Hubert/

Source: DAMO, P-f. 12, op. 1a, spr. 1, ark. 129.

3.10 Raion Party Committee in Landau, On Enemies of the Party, 1925

Translation from German

To the [Central Office] of the German Section at the TsK KP(b)U

Esteemed Comrades,

...The raion's political situation is nothing special. The padres' are at work and by all appearances, they are rather well provided for with financial means. Probably at the padres' instigation, some colonies in the raion have submitted petitions for permission to hold assemblies at which the delegates want to vote on asking the VUTs[V]K¹¹⁸ in Kharkiv for permission to provide religious instruction for children in school.

Here in Landau, there is also a group that is working against us.

[I] have spoken with the secretary of the Okruha Party Committee, who said I should speak with Com. Peisner of the GPU¹¹⁹ in Nikolaev, [I] have, however, received nothing from him to date and have to stumble around in the dark and see where I am able to get information. [I] will speak to the okruha party committee, for without any information it is impossible to take up the fight the clergy with success. They have their informants everywhere and are well informed about what we are up to. All of the organisations are still weak. In Johannisthal, the KNS [Committee of Impoverished Peasants] and the kulaks have voted against their own candidate.

In the entire raion, there are only 2 rural soviet chairmen on whom we can rely in some measure – in Rohrbach, [one] who has submitted a request to join the

118 All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, the nominal state leadership.

119 State Political Administration, i.e. the political police, 1922–1934.

party, Moser, and in Sulz, [one] who used to be a middle peasant, Com. Bauer. [I] will send in full report next week.

We are working closely with Com. Merz and rather agree on almost all matters. The women's organiser is a good comrade, but does not speak a word of German and you know how our Germans look at Russians and all the more at Hebrews [i.e. Jews]. The question has been asked of me several times already: "Don't you have any Germans?"

With communist regards,

Secretary of the Party Committee Landau // Steinberg //

Source: TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 20, spr. 2019, ark. 197.

3.11 Polish Bureau (Pol'biuro) of the Proskuriv Okruha Party Committee, Minutes of a Meeting, 25 July 1928

Translation from Ukrainian¹²⁰

Minutes of a meeting of the Polish Bureau of the OPK [Okruha Party Committee] on 25 July 1928

Present: Comrades Dreling, Liushnevskii, Hurnitskii, Shtain, Vrublevskii, Gol'd, Yanchevskaia.

Considered:

1. Findings on the state of Polish work in Felshtyn Raion (Comrade Vrublevskii).

Decided:

1. Decision attached.

Considered:

2. On the assignment of Polish Natsmen [i.e. Okruha Department for National Minority Affairs] workers to raions (Comrade Dreling).

Decided:

2. To Proskuriv Raion send Comrade Karchevs'kii, to Kuz'myn Raion send Comrade Martyns, to Horodok send Comrade Buchynskii, to Felshtyn assign Comrade Turzhans'kii as a Polish Natsmen worker. To the village of Yuryntsi send

¹²⁰ The author of these minutes mixed Ukrainian language with Russian grammar and terminology. Names and places are transcribed from Ukrainian cyrillic scripture according to the original.

Comrade Pshekop, to Volochysk send Comrade Nasal'skii from the Kiev Party College; as to the assignment to Viitovtsi of Comrade Vishnevskii, agreement is to be reached with the RPK [Raion Party Committee]. Students from the party school to be assigned as follows: Comrade Yanchevskaia as Polish female organiser at the OPK, Comrade Mikhalevs'kii, member of the KSM [Communist Youth League], as manager of the reading room in the village of Oleszkowce [Oleshkovtsi], Comrade Bednazha as secretary of the Polish rural soviet in the village of Maćkowce [Mats'kovtsi] in Proskuriv Raion.

Considered:

3. On sending on courses and to schools (consideration of applications).

Decided:

3. Comrade Chaikovs'kii, VKP (b) candidate, KSM member, smith's assistant at sugar factory in Derazhnia Raion, to be recommended to Robfak¹²¹ in Kiev.

Comrade Mazur, Polish Natsmen worker in Volochysk Raion, party member, to be recommended to the Polish Teacher Training College in Kiev.

Comrade Kuzin, Vladimir, born 1908, KSM member, poor peasant from the village of Hreczany [Hrechany], to be recommended to the Soviet Party School in Kiev.

Comrade Fedoruk, KSM member, 25 years, to be recommended to the Polish Teacher Training College in Kiev.

Comrade Sokhatskii, Liudvyk from Yuryntsi Raion, KSM member, to be recommended to the Soviet Party School in Kiev.

Considered:

4. Report by Comrade Dreling on a visit to Yarmolyntsi Raion and Vovkovyntsi Raion.

Decided:

4. At the first OVK [Okruha Executive Committee] Natsmen meeting, Comrade Dreling shall raise the issue of supplying Polish rural soviets in Volochysk Raion and Letychev Raion with stamps, seals and signs in Polish, and also of switching the official work of the Polish rural soviets to the Polish language. Raise the matter of the building of a school for three, not two, years in the village of Majdan Werbecki [Maidan Verbetskii], so that a further 80 children can attend it.

Inspect Yuryntsi Raion in terms of the implementation of directives of the Polish Okruha Meeting. After inspection, hear the report of the Polish Natsmen of Yuryntsi Raion.

¹²¹ Rabfak/Robfak: Workers' Faculty, serving to prepare candidate students by providing them with elementary knowledge from the primary and secondary school programmes. A Robfak course lasted for a year, after which candidates would be admitted to higher education institutions without taking an entrance examination.

In August, hear a report on preparations for the school year as regards the provision of Soviet party schools with funds and teaching personnel.

Comrade Yanchevskaia to visit Letychev Raion to verify the possibility of organising meetings of delegates in Polish villages there.

Considered:

5. On the calling of a general meeting of Poles in the town.

Decided:

5. Call a meeting at the start of August.

Deputy Head of the OPK Polish Bureau

Dreling

[typed and handwritten signature]

Source: DAKhmel'O, P-f. 301, op. 41, spr. 176, ark. 39.

4. Soviet Modernisation in Rural Areas

4.1 Czerwiński, The New Economic Policy and the Cooperative Movement, 25 February 1922

Translation from Polish

The New Economic Policy and the Cooperative Movement

The new direction in economic policy creates all of the conditions necessary for the revival of the cooperative movement.

In the preceding period, in the first years of the revolution, cooperatives played a secondary role, the role of a preparatory apparatus for food supply bodies, which in the future was to give way to a state apparatus.

Because of this, some forms of cooperative activity were eliminated completely. There were no conditions for the development of manufacturing cooperatives, as all means of production were in state hands. The agricultural cooperative movement, on the other hand, after combining with the food cooperative movement, itself stagnated. Only food cooperatives were well regarded; but following the abolition of free exchange, these lost the ground beneath their feet.

The new turnaround in economic policy completely changes matters. The state grain monopoly has been abolished. After paying the tax, a peasant controls his surplus agricultural produce, which he can take to the market. Moreover, a whole range of restrictions applied to cooperatives have been abolished.

All necessary conditions exist, then, for the development of food and agricultural cooperatives in the countryside. The significance of cooperative activity is particularly great the present time. For this reason, the state is giving special care and support to cooperatives of this type.

Food cooperatives organise proper exchange between the proletariat and the peasantry, and prepare products for supply to the working and urban populations. Agricultural cooperatives oversee particular production processes, expand agricultural production and improve agricultural techniques.

Free exchange also creates all the conditions needed for the development of urban food cooperatives. Free trade brings products onto the market at extremely high prices, unaffordable to the masses. The need to obtain these essential items pushes the people to organise food cooperatives, supplying products of higher quality at lower prices than those on the free market.

The exchange of the products of the rural economy for those of industry also prepares the ground for the development of manufacturing cooperatives.

The need for agricultural and industrial products is enormous. Thus every manufacturer is interested in expanding production, in obtaining raw materials and tools of production on favourable terms, and in being able to conveniently sell them. All of this creates a stimulus for small and medium-sized manufacturers to unite, to organise cooperatives. The creation of manufacturing cooperatives is also desirable from the state's point of view: only the uniting of manufacturing can bring about its expansion and improvement, and thus the rebuilding of the people's economy, which is in a state of ruin.

At the present time, both the manufacturing and agricultural cooperative movements are at an embryonic stage of development. However, the keen activity taking place in this area, with the voluntary formation of cooperative organisations, portends its further successful expansion.

Czerwiński

Source: Głos Komunisty, 25 February 1922, no. 32 (701), pp. 1-2.

4.2 Exemplary work. The village of Krzyżanówka, Ulaniv Raion, Berdychiv Okruha, 31 August 1927

Translation from Polish

Exemplary Work The village of Krzyżanówka, Ulaniv Raion, Berdychiv Okruha

Our village's present rural soviet was elected in February of this year. The soviet is headed by and composed of mainly poor peasants (7), moderately wealthy peasants (1) and 2 workers. Among a population of 410, and 160 electors, the soviet consists of 8 members and 2 candidates, including only two women. Those elected to the soviet include two male and one female Komsomol member. In total there are three Komsomol members on the soviet. The Komsomol members on the soviet perform the following duties: the female member is a representative of women and also of the food cooperative (the dairy section in particular), one of the male Komsomol members works on the agricultural committee, while the other is on the cultural and educational committee and chairs the KNW [Committee of Impoverished Peasants].

During its term of office there have been 20 meetings of the soviet. At the meetings economic matters were considered, such as repairs, as well as other

administrative matters: on the fire brigade, on tax, on combating home alcohol production and hooliganism. Half of all matters placed on the meeting agendas concerned reports. The soviet, through reports and through its members' personal participation in work, has truly succeeded in directing the work of all organisations in the village.

At sittings and general meetings, reports have been heard from all committees of the soviet, the cooperative, the KNW and other organisations. Ceremonial sittings also took place to mark the February Revolution, the Paris Commune and "Press Day."

It is unfortunate only that the soviet itself did not present reports to electors. As we shall see, important work on the rural soviet was done by the Komsomol unit. Although it has existed for only a year and a half, that unit has proved itself capable of properly getting down to work. Above all it nominated for the soviet the most suitable comrades, who are trusted by the local people. All Komsomol members, as we can see, perform appropriate work on the KNW, in the cooperative, on the soviet itself and in almost all village organisations. Komsomol members are not formal members and managers of those institutions. They perform their duties properly and conscientiously. And this is because the whole cell directs and supervises the work of each of its members.

At sittings of the bureau and general meetings of the unit, reports were sometimes heard several times from Komsomol members working on various committees and the soviet.

For example, reports by Komsomol members from the soviet concerning work on that body were discussed twice, reports from the administrative, economic and sanitary committee three times, and reports on the activity of the cooperative twice, in addition to single reports on the SWP [Mutual Assistance Society], on the KNW, on the cultural and educational committee and on the work of the committee for the building of a school.

The unit also directs the work of the Komsomol members from the village of Osiczna who are on the soviet. There are two Komsomol members from Osiczna and both are members of the soviet.

We will learn more details about the unit's work on the soviet after considering the activity of each committee and organisation separately.

Financial, administrative, economic and sanitary committee

This committee consisted of three members of the soviet. Komsomol members do not belong to this committee, but they sometimes attend its meetings. It should be added that at all three meetings of the committee there was quite a large number of peasants (up to 15 people). Items on the committee's agenda concerned the

committee's purpose, the cleaning of wells and farmyards, a report by a representative of the lending cooperative, the agricultural tax for 1927/28, extension of committee competences and of the powers of rural soviets in administration and finance, and the fire brigade.

As a result, farmyards and five wells were cleaned. Komsomol members played an active part in the cleaning of the wells. The fact that committee members are engaged in the work and perform it daily is demonstrated by a small but significant occurrence. One of the peasant women was scattering ash near a well. This was observed by committee member Jan Załubowicz, who pointed out to the woman that this must not be done, explained why, and went on his way. Here is the manager's watchful eye, not only at meetings, but in everyday life also. At the last meeting of the committee on 14 July, Comrade Piotr Sałacki (a Komsomol member) volunteered to work on the committee.

Cultural and educational committee

In the case of this committee also, matters stand well. The committee has three members, two of whom are from Komsomol. There were four meetings of the committee. The meetings considered the preparations for the 8th March campaign, the fifth anniversary of *Sierp* [The Sickle],¹²² and other matters. Also a teacher's report on the work of the school was heard and discussed, and there was discussion about the distribution of newspapers, the "Sierpowcy"¹²³ club, and the wall newspaper, of which only one issue has so far appeared.

The committee and the Komsomol unit organised MOPR and OSO-Aviochem [Rus. OSO-Aviakhim] clubs.¹²⁴ Twelve persons joined the MOPR club, and ten the OSO-Aviochem club.

A report on the work of Komsomol members on the committee was discussed at a general meeting of the unit.

Agricultural committee

This committee did not sleep either. Nor did the Komsomol members, who attended its meetings regularly. The committee considered matters relating to the spring sowing, pest control, and others. As a result, 30% of oats were sown using cleaned seed obtained from the sugar production complex.

As a result of its work, the committee recorded 70 desiatinas of land sown with sugar beet, which is one-quarter of the village's total arable land.

122 *Sierp*: A weekly in Polish language, edited between 1922 and 1937.

123 The name was derived from that of the Polish weekly *Sierp*.

124 Society for the Assistance of Defence, Aircraft and Chemical Construction, 1927-1948.

Insects fear Komsomol members and do not nest in their orchards, because every member having an orchard has smeared the trees with clay and removed caterpillars. And following their example, peasants have begun to do the same: Kaniecki, Skomorowski, A. Nowakowski and others.

Komsomol members also responded to the damage caused by hail. One of them belonged to the committee responsible for calculating the damage and seeking compensation for damaged grain.

The matter of the building committee should also be mentioned here. That committee was appointed by the rural soviet in connection with the building of a school. The state assigned 3,500 roubles for the building of the school, and the peasants themselves collected 210 roubles. In spring the entire Komsomol unit went to work breaking stones and digging.

The peasants transported materials and worked on building the school. Railway workers also assisted. The poorer classes participated in the building of the school, as the richer ones were concentrated on making money.

The Komsomol unit's resolution relating to the sowing campaign was as follows: "All Komsomol members who work on their own farm should clean seed properly, so as to set an example to the peasants in practical matters" (Minutes no. 5, dated 6 March 1927).

KNW and SWP

The KNW has 22 members. This is a small number, but all of them have paid their membership fees. There are 16 who have fallen into debt since last year. All Komsomol members belong to the KNW, and two have been elected to its presidium. The report of the Committee was discussed at a sitting of the rural soviet and at a meeting of the unit. The Committee's initiation of the organisation of a collective farming association ought to be carried through to completion.

Six Komsomol members are members of the SWP, and one of them is on its presidium. In all, the Society has 52 members. Its assets amount to 130 puds of grain and three desiatinas of land, of which one is sown with beet.

The work of the cooperative

The organisation of a cooperative is a matter for the Komsomol councils and village activists. Nonetheless, work was done here by a Komsomol member, Comrade Sigda. Of the five recently elected members of the board of the cooperative, two are from Komsomol.

Source: Głos Młodzieży, 31 August 1927, no. 32, p. 8.

4.3 Stanisław Dobrzyński, '*Głos Młodzieży*' (Voice of the Youth) and Its Correspondents, 15 January 1927

Translation from Polish

'*Głos Młodzieży*' [Voice of the Youth]¹²⁵ and Its Correspondents¹²⁶

The conference of correspondents of *Sierp* [The Sickle]¹²⁷ in January 1925 (and the committee at that conference made up of *Głos Młodzieży* correspondents) set *Głos Młodzieży* a fundamental task: to adapt to the needs of work in the countryside, and above all the needs of village youth. Now, after a year of work, it is time to verify how far that task has been fulfilled. This can be best ascertained on the basis of how many correspondents write for the paper, how they write, and on what subjects.

Last year (in January) up to 70 correspondents wrote for *Głos Młodzieży*. In the present year, the total figure is around 150. These numbers are quite clear and give a distinct indication of progress in this direction.

Last year (in the summing up) it turned out that the lion's share – as much as 80% – of correspondence described cultural and educational work. Matters of everyday life and Komsomol work occupied insignificant amounts of space. There were a mere three or four pieces about work among girls. There was no correspondence about the economy at all.

All of this taken together shows that although *Głos Młodzieży* made constant progress, this progress was not too significant. This resulted above all from insufficient adaptation to the needs of the countryside and rural youth, which naturally caused the paper to be seen in a less than ideal light (by both readers and correspondents).

The situation has now changed, and quite significantly. Young people treat the paper more seriously, and there is greater interest in it. This can be seen in the figures indicating who is writing for it, how, from where and on what subjects.

Who is writing, from where and how much

Every week the paper receives on average 25–30 letters and reports of various types (more on this below), including a number of enquiries on legal and organisational matters.

Most of the letters and reports received come from the Right-Bank region of Ukraine, particularly Proskuriv, Shepetivka and Volhynia Okruhy (including

125 *Głos Młodzieży*: A bi-weekly in Polish language, edited between 1922 and 1937.

126 Bold print according to the original.

127 *Sierp*: A weekly in Polish language, edited between 1925 and 1935.

from the Polish raion). Less correspondence is received from the Left-Bank region (Kherson, Odessa and Yekaterynoslav Okruhy) and regularly from the Belarusian SSR.

Of the total correspondence, 55–60% comes from the Right-Bank region, 10–13% from the Belarusian SSR, and 4–5% from the Russian SFSR.

Of those writing, 60% are peasants and the youth of the peasant classes (selkors [rural correspondents]), 29–30% are workers (factories, steelworks, sugar factories), and the remaining 10–13% are correspondents from schools, factories, the Red Army (4%); 17% of correspondents are party members and candidates, 45% are Komsomol members, and 38% have no party affiliation. Girls (and women) make up 13% of writers. In terms of age, most of those writing are young people aged 18–23 (around 55%), followed by those aged 16–18 (28%) and those over 23 (10%).

What they write about and how

What they write about. Of 464 items of correspondence published in 37 issues (excluding enquiries and correspondence not published or used in different ways), 178 concern cultural and educational work (reading rooms, clubs, campaigns, schools, etc.), which is more than 40% of the total. This is followed by the topic of Komsomol work (work of Komsomol members and units – internally and externally), with 83 items. Next is everyday life (behaviour, home alcohol production, hooliganism, superstitions, etc.) with 78 items. Work among girls (women) was described in 26 reports, pioneer work in 24, the life of workers in 14, rural soviets, committees of impoverished peasants and mutual assistance societies in 27, conferences in 8 and the agricultural economy in 5.

As can be seen from the above figures, the state of reporting on economic matters is poor, and reporting about the soviets, committees of impoverished peasants and cooperatives leaves something to be desired. There is far too little correspondence on these topics.

How they write. On cultural and educational work, correspondents write most of all in terms of needs: the management board there is not working, the work there is poor, in that place they have not done this, there is a lack of education there, a shortage of workers, etc. The positive sides of work are also described: we have organised clubs, a reading room, we are working, we are attracting people to work, etc. This subject area describes the process of Sovietisation of the Polish population and youth, seen above all in their involvement in cultural and educational work. A characteristic of this correspondence is enthusiasm for cultural and educational work and a desire to organise, as expressed through immediate (and strong) reaction to any deficiencies in that area.

Komsomol work. This subject area is constantly improving and now stands quite well. The dominant content of such correspondence is the noting of

deficiencies in Komsomol work – both internally, and in soviets, cooperatives and social organisations or among the non-party youth. Much space is given to the matter of lack of competence in carrying out internal educational work.

Everyday life. The quantity of correspondence on this subject is constantly increasing. At the start of the year there were 2 to 3 reports per week, now there are 6 to 7. This indicates, in any case, more in-depth work in the countryside, and the increasing seriousness of issues of everyday life. The chief [problem] – as referred to in the correspondence – is the evil that continues to reign in many instances: home alcohol production, followed by hooliganism, religious superstitions, lack of work on upbringing, and the unclearness of the forms and methods of work in that area.

In other subject areas, note should be taken of a revival in the topics of female work (among girls) and pioneer work. Basic issues of Komsomol work – soviets, cooperatives, committees of impoverished peasants, the economy – are still poorly covered. Rural organisations and correspondents have still not raised their work to an appropriate standard.

However, everything overall indicates that the reflection of rural life and the life of village youth on the pages of *Głos Młodzieży* is becoming every broader and more comprehensive, is covering new areas, and is increasing in depth. And that is a big plus.

Conclusions for the future

From everything that has been said above, we see that *Głos* is improving, is becoming a paper for rural youth, and that correspondents are increasing the depth and breadth of their work. But all this is still too little. So that *Głos Młodzieży* can give a full description of rural life, even broader and deeper work is needed. Above all, correspondents should describe more broadly, comprehensively and in greater depth the work of the rural soviets, their committees, cooperatives, committees of impoverished peasants, mutual assistance societies, and the state of the agricultural economy. Cultural and educational matters, everyday life – these are only some of the issues of village life and the work of the young. It is necessary to move to a higher level – to deal with economic and social work, the economy, and the work of the soviets, cooperatives, etc.

These are the goals that the new year of work at *Głos Młodzieży* sets for its correspondents.

S. Dobrzyński¹²⁸

Source: *Głos Młodzieży*, 15 January 1927, no. 2 (62), p. 3.

128 Stanisław Dobrzyński (1902–?) was a communist and Soviet activist, in the 1920s member of the editorial staff of *Głos Młodzieży*. He was arrested by the NKVD in 1933 and was sentenced to 10 years' hard labour. His later fate is unknown.

4.4 Overview of Subscribers to *Das Neue Dorf* [The New Village],¹²⁹ April and May 1927

Translation from German

Distribution of subscribers to the newspaper *Das Neue Dorf* for April [and] May [1927] by individual okruha

Okruha	April	May	Okruha	April	May
Artemivs'k	451	472	Romny	8	8
Berdychiv	6	6	Stalino	277	257
Bila Tserkva	17	10	Starobels'k	22	23
Vinnitsia	12	21	Sumy	6	4
Volhynia	523	469	Tul'chyns'k	7	6
Hlukhiv	1	1	Uman'	11	10
Dnipropetrovs'k	171	144	Kharkiv	23	32
Zaporizhzhia	374	359	Kharkiv City	54	52
Zinoviev's'k	19	20	Kherson	337	318
Izium	125	95	Cherkasy	7	6
Kamianets'	1	2	Chernihiv	1	1
Kiev	80	77	Shepetivka	38	48
Konotop	2	3	AMSSR ¹³⁰	208	209
Korosten'	168	152	RSFSR	328	332
Kreminchuk	2	3	Siberia	134	136
Kryvyi Rih	168	166	Northern Caucasus	420	375
Kupians'k	–	–	Crimea	555	536
Lubny	5	5	Georgia	814	801
Luhans'k	217	176	Overseas	84	85
Mariupol'	813	684	Complimentary	143	145
Mohilëü	6	6	Contractual agents	200	200
Melitopol'	1,168	1,056	Cens. ed. allot. ¹³¹	80	85
Nizhen'	4	5	Archive	50	50
Mykolaïv	367	364	Stock	94	150
Odessa	1,018	935			
Pervomais'k	21	22	Total	9,700	9,200
Poltava	54	45			
Proskuriv	3	3			
Pryluky	3	3			

Source: DAMO, R-f. 161, op. 1, spr. 701, ark. 256.

¹²⁹ *Das Neue Dorf*: Ukrainian Newspaper in German language, 1925–1936.

¹³⁰ Autonomous Moldavian Socialist Soviet Republic.

¹³¹ I.e. Censors.

4.5 Landau Women's Organisation, Minutes of a Meeting, 14 June 1925

Translation from German

[62]

Protocol n. 4

of the assembly of the Landau Women's Organisation under the chair of Com. Bülz, secretary Com. Gontscharowa, K., in the presence of 45 female and 20 male persons.

Took place, 14 June 1925

- 1) Informational report regarding the cooperative from Com. Hirsch
- 2) Liquidation of illiteracy, report from Com. Müller
- 3) Ongoing matters

Heard:

1. Informational report about the cooperative. Significance of the cooperative. Despite the fact that the cooperative had to record a large deficit this past year and despite the fact that there are still persons who support speculators, the cooperative still took a noticeable upswing. One no longer has to consider the crash that Landau's kulaks prophesied for the cooperative. With 116 members, the cooperative has already taken quite an upswing. But if the speculators were fully vanquished, and everybody joined as a member, then goods would be purchased from Dnieprovid and Ukr. Trust, where the cooperative has 1,500 roubles in credit. All of that will help our cooperative to an even higher level, and we will be able to strive for the enlargement of our cooperative in the near future.

Resolved:

To acknowledge the report and to join the cooperative united.

[62 zv]

Heard:

2. Liquidation of illiteracy. The Landau Raion counted 1,000 illiterate persons in the past year. Of these, 330 men were attending school. Only 130 passed the test. Landau itself had more than 100 illiterate persons, of whom only 30 were attending school, among them were no women. The women's motivation [stems from

a desire] to help realise Lenin's testament, namely that "illiteracy is liquidated by 1927," not only in individual colonies but rather throughout the Soviet Union.

Resolved:

To acknowledge the report and to enrol oneself as an attendee of the illiteracy school for the coming year.

Following com. had the floor: Ostrovskaia, Tomashevskaja and Deutschmann

Ongoing Issues:

3. The election of a village organiser for the women's department. Com. Gratz, E., unanimously elected as village organiser.

Chairwoman: /Bülz/

Secretary: /Goncharova/

Source: DAMO, P-f. 12, op. 1a, spr. 1, ark. 62.

4.6 Report on the Rural Soviet Chairwoman Eva Pfaff, 5 March 1927

Translation from German

The First Woman Chair of a German Rural Soviet

In the new elections to the Landau Rural Soviet in Karl-Liebnecht Raion (Mykolaïv Okruha), Comrade Eva Pfaff was elected chair.

Comrade Pfaff was born in Freudental, Odessa Okruha, and is at present 30 years old. Her father was a blacksmith. The family was large, which is why little Eva was also forced to enter into the service of strangers already at age seven. Over the course of a year, she attended the village school. As a maid, Comrade Pfaff usually worked on peasant farms. In 1926, she found



employment in the Landau hospital as a cook. During her free time here, she attended the assemblies of various social organisations and distinguished herself through her active participation.

Source: *Das Neue Dorf*, 5 March 1927, no. 91/41, p. 3.

4.7 The Hreczany affair and working women, 1928

Translation from Polish

The Hreczany Affair and Working Women¹³²

The kulak and the tertiary are growing more and more audacious in their opposition to Soviet Authority¹³³ and village activists. The battle against them should be taken up not only by farm labourers and the poor and moderately wealthy peasants, but also by all working women.

How plentiful is motherly care and anguish about children's future! Children run about the village with nothing to occupy them, make mischief, catch colds, and waste their time. As the years pass, the child will grow into an adult. Grown up, but backward: illiterate, spoilt, debauched and lazy.

Only the school can provide relief to mothers' cares. Children at school not only learn, but are brought up under the eye of a teacher; a literate person will both have an easier life, and be easier for another to live with. This is why the school is so close to the heart of every conscious working peasant woman.

But not everyone thinks that way.

In the village of Hreczany, near Proskuriv, the Polish school was set on fire, **and the organisers of the arson were kulaks and their allies, members of the religious organisation called the tertiaries.**

That kulak band not only set the school ablaze, but also obstructed the extinguishing of the fire, screaming that what was burning was the tears of the landowner whose house and property had been taken for the use of the school.

This is a shameful episode, but at the same time an instructive one. It is instructive because it teaches by visible example that **kulaks and tertiaries are enemies of the Soviet Polish school.** A village woman therefore has to choose

¹³² Bold print according to the original.

¹³³ Capitalisation as in the original.

whether to stand with the enemies of the school, with the kulaks and tertiaries, or to take the side of the school and, together with the poor and the aware seredniaks, put up resistance to the kulaks.

This matter is now of great importance given the approaching elections to the soviets.

The election to the soviets is a battle between the kulaks and the working peasantry over who will control the village. As a result of this battle, management of the village may come into the hands either of the kulaks, rosary members and tertiaries, or of the poor and the seredniaks who support Soviet Authority. The working woman in the Soviet Republics enjoys the same rights as a man, and therefore much depends **on her participation** in the election.

So let Polish working women not allow seats on the rural soviets to go to those who burn Polish schools, the kulak minions of ignorance, who want the countryside to become even more impoverished, so that they can exploit the poor still more. The kulak finds it hard to bear collectives, cooperation and other paths allowing the poor to escape from penury. The kulak does not want machinery or money credit for the poor or moderately wealthy peasants, but wants them for himself.

The kulak is the enemy of the building of socialism, the enemy of the cultural revolution – he is the friend of the former masters, speculators and bourgeoisie.

So let the Polish working woman give this her due consideration, and at election meetings for the poor, let her listen carefully to what they say about the misdeeds of the kulaks and tertiaries. Also meetings of female delegates should now turn the whole of their attention to the elections to the soviets.

Without diligent preparation for the elections at delegate meetings, at the KNW, at meetings of labourers and bedniaks, etc., we will not properly accomplish the task.

It is thus vital that women too be present at all of these meetings, that they too play a part in the battle between the working peasantry and the kulaks which is currently being fought in our republics.

Source: Stroniczka Kobiety (supplement to the newspaper Sierp), 1928, no. 10, p. 1.

4.8 Inspector Martsyniuk (Marcyniuk), On the Status of Polish Education in Vinnytsia Okruha, April 1928

Translation from Ukrainian

Report of the inspector of Polish institutions on work done by the Pol'biuro INO [People's Education Inspectorate] from 1 November 1927 to 1 April 1928

Social education

1. An additional parallel Polish group was started in the village of Obidne in Voronovytsia Raion. Because neither the RVK [Raion Executive Committee] nor the teacher entrusted with running the group had taken appropriate action to ensure the proper functioning of the Polish group, after five months of teaching (in March) the teaching was stopped.

The Polish group was constituted from pupils of all groups at the Ukrainian vocational school in Obidne, where children learned only the Polish language, and proper attention was not paid to that fact. Also the Okruha Pol'biuro INO was not notified of that, and available means to resolve the matter from the Okruha INO were not used at the appropriate time; only when teaching was stopped did the teacher notify the Pol'biuro INO directly.

2. Inspections of Polish schools were made in the localities of Pykiv, Ivaniv, Zhuravne, Uladivka in Pykiv Raion; Varshytsia in Kalynivka Raion; Zhabelivka, Trostianets in Voronovytsia Raion; Tarabanivka in Tyvriv Raion; and Brailiv in Zhmerynka Raion. During inspection it was found that the economic condition of the Polish schools is unsatisfactory. The schools do not have either suitable rooms or school and other furniture, and are not provided with funds for fuel, renovation and other expenditure. Renovation is carried out at the schools in winter, as occurred in Varshytsia, and generally money for expenditure is assigned by the RVKs with significant delays.

3. Teaching and tutoring work at the schools has not yet been regulated as it should be, particularly in those schools where a teacher deals with three groups simultaneously, and in hard conditions.

4. Only the first and second groups are provided with the required textbooks; the third and fourth groups have only 50%, because on the one hand the INO did not assign sufficient funds for Polish textbooks, and on the other hand, textbooks for the older groups were not published in time. The textbooks that were purchased for the schools were distributed very late, with almost two months' delay. The reason for this delay was that DVU [State Publishing House of Ukraine] did not make orders

in time and received Polish textbooks from Tsentrvydav [Central Publishing House of the Nations of the USSR] in the second half of October.

5. Schools were obliged to report on a trimester basis to the Pol'biuro INO. However, this order was carried out only by the Polish schools in Vakhnivka Raion and the Polish school in Braïliv.

6. Use was made of funds to provide schools with Polish newspapers and teaching literature. A relevant letter was sent to all RVKs, but some RVKs, such as those of Vakhnivka, Voronovytsia, Zhmerynka, Khmilnyk, and the former one in Krasne, did not subscribe to any Polish literature for the Polish schools. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution, following prior arrangements between the Inspectorate and RVKs, Tsentrvydav sent complete sets of Polish literature for newly opened reading rooms and schools in Khmil'nyk, Pykiv and Voronovytsia Raions, but their RVKs did not purchase [the literature] and sent it back to Tsentrvydav.

7. In the matter of the improvement of the qualifications of Polish teachers, at the initiative of the INO (Pol'biuro) an attempt was made to organise methodological groups. However, the Polish teaching staff did not respond effectively to this, and such groups were not established, even though most teachers are not sufficiently prepared to practise their profession and lack the necessary theoretical knowledge.

8. For the new one-year courses at the Polish Teacher Training College in Kiev, five candidates were delegated.

9. In the matter of the expansion of the network of cultural and educational institutions, a five-year plan was drawn up, providing for the opening of a Polish school in the okruha.

Political education

1. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution, the Central Library received Polish literature, which was sent to the villages of Vyta-va, Tarabanivka, Tereshpil and Dubova. Some was allocated for the library of the Polish Club and the Raion Library in Zamostia.

2. "Red corners" were organised in Varshytsia in Kalinyvka Raion and Braïliv in Zhmerynka Raion.

3. It should be noted that the buildings of political education institutions are in poor condition, and for that reason the work carried out there is poor.

4. Likpunkts¹³⁴ were opened in Braïliv (one for youth, one for adults), Vyta-va, Tarabanivka, Varshytsia, Semky, Ivaniv and Lityn. The likpunkt in Lityn operated only for a month. All likpunkts have been provided with literature.

134 Likpunkt: Point for Liquidation of Illiteracy.

Conclusions:

For the future, RVKs should be asked to pay more attention to cultural work among the Polish population, so that situations such as that in Obidne do not recur in the future. Draw the attention of RVKs to the need to provide materials to Polish schools, which will enable them to improve their work. In assigning funds for their maintenance, the RVKs should take account of the actual condition of Polish schools and provide them with means for renovation, equipment and other purposes as needed.

When supplying schools with textbooks for the next school year, Okruha People's Education Inspectorates should conclude agreements for their delivery directly with Tsentrvydav in Kiev, which will make it possible to supply schools with textbooks by the appropriate time.

When assigning funds for Polish textbooks, the National Education Inspectorate must take account not only of the number of pupils in schools, but also of the fact that Polish textbooks are twice as expensive as Ukrainian ones.

The question of the assignment of funds needed to maintain teachers on short-term training courses should be taken up with the Okruha People's Education Inspectorate; this will speed up the requalification of Polish teachers.

Action should be taken to combat the neglect of INO orders by teachers, and decisive measures should be applied in relation to those Polish teachers who do not appreciate their obligation to carry out the orders of the People's Education Inspectorate.

RVKs should be made aware of the need to provide Polish schools and political education institutions with the necessary Polish literature.

In the future, when establishing likpunkts in their raions, RVKs should be asked to pay more attention to the liquidation of illiteracy among the Polish population in those villages which do not yet have Polish cultural and educational institutions.

RVKs should be given the task of providing political education institutions with necessary funds for economic expenditure and literature even in cases where the political education institutions do not come under the local budget.

INSPECTOR OF POLISH INSTITUTIONS *Martsyniuk*
[typed and handwritten signature]

**4.9 All-Ukrainian Commissariat for People's Education to all Huberniia
People's Education Departments, 17 May 1925**

Translation from Polish

CIRCULAR
OF THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT FOR EDUCATION

Further to circular no. 12423 of 23 April of this year, the People's Commissariat for Education notifies you that places on central courses of additional training for Polish teachers in Kiev are allocated in the following manner:

- 1/ Podolia Gubernia – 20 places
- 2/ Volhynia Gubernia – 20 places
- 3/ Kiev Gubernia – 15 places
- 4/ Odessa Gubernia – 5 places
- 5/ Katerynoslav Gubernia – 1 place
- 6/ Kharkiv Gubernia – 2 places

The courses will open on 6 June of this year.

People's Education Departments should provide teachers with money for return travel to Kiev, funds for living costs and an advance to the amount of one month's salary.

Moreover, for teachers' maintenance, in accordance with circular no. 12423, 20 roubles is to be allocated per teacher, total [...] ¹³⁵ roubles. This money should be sent to Kiev, 10 Rylski Lane, "Polpedkursy," ¹³⁶ to manager Radziejowski.

Course attendees should bring with them a pillow, a quilt and linen. Attendees will be registered at the Polpedkursy office, 10 Rylski Lane. Notification of the allocation of places on Polish additional training courses in Moscow will be sent later.

The People's Commissariat for Education proposes that Polish teachers be informed of the planned courses, and that efforts be made to ensure that the teachers arrive in Kiev at the set date. Responsibility for compliance with this circular rests with the heads of the People's Education Departments.

Deputy People's Commissar for Education – Riappo
Deputy Chairman of Council of National Minorities – Lewitan
Manager for Additional Qualifications – Rawicz-Szczerba

Certified as a true copy:
Secretary of Council M.W. – Litwak

Source: Sierp, 17 May 1925, no 19, p. 12.

¹³⁵ Number is omitted in the publication.

¹³⁶ Polpedkursy: Polish Teacher Training Courses.

4.10 Krzemiński, A., A Voice from the Province, 14 September 1924

Translation from Polish

A Voice from the Province

My view on *Sierp* [The Sickie]¹³⁷ – Soviet rule has given the Polish people freedom – Our greatest evil: Catholic priests, Orthodox priests and rabbis.

I am often asked what I like in *Sierp* and what I dislike. I don't find anything in *Sierp* to dislike: everything is beneficial. I never skip anything; I read *Sierp* from beginning to end. I just want there to be as much as possible.

The newspaper *Sierp* is of great benefit to workers and peasants. It is hated only by various masters, priests and kulaks.

After reading *Sierp* I immediately tell my comrades about what is happening in the world. Fifty or sixty years ago the Polish population spoke Polish. But after 1860, after the uprising [of January 1863], when the Polish bourgeoisie made friends with the Russian bourgeoisie, it was no longer permitted to talk in Polish. Although it was only the villagers who couldn't – the bourgeois and intelligentsia spoke Polish among themselves.

Now, thanks to Soviet rule, every nationality has the right to speak and learn in its native language. Now we, together with the Ukrainian and Russian working people, as brothers and equals, are working to improve our lives.

There is still one great evil among us, however. The Catholic priests, Orthodox priests and rabbis misinform the working people. But only for so long. Let them remember that "a jug will only hold water as long as its handle is not smashed off." It will not be long before the young generation has no wish even to look at them. It is time to stop counting beads and reading books for church. Better to pick up a newspaper or some book of learning. From good papers and books you can enlighten yourself and learn wise things. By reading religious books you will just grow stupid.

Dunaivtsi
In Podolia

Worker A. Krzemiński

Source: *Sierp*, 14 September 1924, no. 26, p. 2.

¹³⁷ *Sierp*: A weekly in Polish language, edited between 1922 and 1937.

4.11 W. Wogau, On the Political Situation of the German Village, 19 June 1928

Translation from German

[45]

Top Secret

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ZB [Central Office] of the G[erman] SECTIONS at the TsK KP(b)U Com. Com. BERGER, BIRNBAUM, DUERMAYER

To the okruha sections in the okruha committees in Mykolaïv, Kherson, Melitopol', Mariupol', Luhans'k, Stalino, Zaporizhzhia, Korosten' and the German sections in the district committee in AMSSR

To the political department of the 45 Division in Kiev

INFORMATIONAL LETTER

Esteemed Comrades!

In this letter, we want to direct your attention to numerous important matters.

The first matter is the political situation of our German village

In connection with the difficult situation in the village (bread shortages, poor prospects for the harvest, etc.), severe dissatisfaction vis-à-vis [Soviet] power is noticeable in many okruha among the village poor and mid-sized peasants. Arriving news indicates that in individual raions and villages there have been peasant demonstrations and brawls under the banner "Give us bread, we are starving." From all of these news items, it is to be gathered:

1) The activity of the kulaks and clergy has grown significantly in the last months. This clique is trying to provoke the village poor and mid-sized peasants by declaring "The communists have taken everything away from you peasants, now you have nothing to eat. The Soviet government promised you bread and seed, but gives you nothing, etc." In some localities, the kulaks are organising a literal storming of local Soviet and cooperative authorities.

2) The activity of the village poor, especially the KNS [Committee of Impoverished Peasants] has declined. This can be explained by the fact that the work among the village poor has let up, that our work with the masses is not worth a kopeck. The village poor, and with them the mid-sized peasants and wage workers as well, are rather letting themselves be provoked by the kulaks and clergy and are not able of putting up energetic resistance. The anti-religious propaganda has also let up, and that has made it possible for the clergy and the church to boost its authority.

3) On the other hand, we see the inability of most rural soviets, which do not even see it as their duty to carry out any work along these lines. We even see quite a number of chairmen and members of the rural soviets themselves walking at the head of the demonstrations.

4) Here, it must also be pointed out that the work of our party cells, raipartkoms [raion party committees] and okruha sections leaves much to be desired. We are forced to observe (on the basis of facts) that our party cells and many party comrades are acting totally helpless, that they do not know what to do at the required moment. Under these circumstances, many are losing every sense of communist responsibility. In many cases, the okruha sections are behaving cold-bloodedly (we would say criminally) in response to these events. They did not even find it necessary to inform the ZB about the mood and it

[46]

seems as if they do not know themselves what their obligations are.

5) And finally, we are forced to note that the emigration movement in the German villages is increasing in scope again, and our party organisations are not even trying energetically enough to contain it.

Naturally, this cannot be allowed to continue. The ZB sees itself compelled to resort to organisational measures with respect to quite a number of comrades. At the same time, we are demanding that, for your part, a series of concrete measures immediately be taken through the party committee to reinforce your work. For our part, we recommend first and foremost the following measures:

1. Reinforcement of the party organisations and party cells in the most important villages and raions, to which end reliable party comrades are to be temporarily commandeered from okruha and city. Furthermore, it is completely

necessary that the leadership of [...] ¹³⁸ the raipartkoms and sections above the party cells and party organisations be reinforced.

2. Is it absolutely necessary to reinforce the anti-religious propaganda through the cells of the atheists? ¹³⁹ The authority of the church may not be allowed to increase. The class character of religion and the politics of the church must be made clear to the members of the cells of the atheists.
3. The work with the masses must be expanded, and by these means, the village poor are first and foremost to be organised. Enlightenment with regard to party policy, the necessity of grain procurement, etc. must be reinforced. Gaining the cooperation of the village poor, collectivisation of the economy, etc. must be carried out energetically.
4. It must be made clear to the population (first and foremost the village poor) that the salvation of the poor and the middle peasants lies not in emigration but in the collectivisation of agriculture and in the struggle against the kulaks. Emigration must be fought energetically.
5. The work of the German sections as such must be set so that it does not just point out dangers and difficulties. If they seek to fulfil the tasks of the party (and this they must), the sections must be able to work out a series of concrete measures and bring them to the party committee for discussion and implementation. We must introduce self-control and self-criticism into our work with Bolshevik determination. And it is precisely here that we see the sections are failing to fulfil their duties. Contact with ZB must also be more firmly established so that we can learn of such important matters from the sections and not only through the general apparatus.

It is necessary, comrades, that you do not approach this letter in a mechanical manner. Every okruha has its own peculiarities, and [the] measures that you take must be adapted to the peculiarities and conditions of the okruha. Panic may not be allowed to take hold either, rather we must analyse the situation of the German villages with Bolshevik perseverance and adjust our work accordingly. Of course, initiative must be shown here.

You must report to us about the measures taken, the progress of your work, and the results.

[47]

¹³⁸ One word illegible.

¹³⁹ Wogau refers to the League of Atheists.

2. THE SECOND MATTER IS PARTY EDUCATION IN THE WINTER

It is necessary that all steps are undertaken in order to bring the Odessa party school up to its full complement, namely by making a solid effort. It is important to ensure that party comrades are first and foremost commandeered there. The percentage of party members must be increased. [...] Here, too, party [comrades] and [Komsomol members] must be commandeered first and foremost, and children from among the village poor in particular. By means of our universities, we must obtain good young offspring in terms of social background.

Particular attention is to be devoted to the political schools in the village. Bringing these up to their full complement must be carried out now already, so that the propagandist does not have to deal with this work himself. It is unavoidably necessary that in the course of party enlightenment this year more attention is given to familiarising the party and young comrades with the history of Ukraine. Each and every comrade who works in Ukraine, even if he is engaged in national work, must be conversant in the history of the revolutionary struggle and the national question in Ukraine. [...]

3. THE ISSUE OF WORKING WITH THE MASSES

As already said, work with the masses in the German village is very weak. Quite a few successes are to be observed only in Odessa Okruha. It is necessary that more attention be devoted to the issue of work with the masses in the German village. This must be properly expanded. We recommend raising this issue and studying it in depth in the cells and *raipartkoms*. The elections of rural soviets and other organisations are also approaching, and the party must be prepared. Due to the current political situation in the village, this election campaign will encounter a number of difficulties, the kulaks' onslaught will be strong, and thus work with the masses, work among the village poor, wage workers, teachers must be reinforced.

Those are in general the most important matters we wanted to point out.

With com. regards,

HEAD OF THE ZB OF THE GERMAN SECTION AT THE TsK KP(b)U
/WOGAU/

Source: DAMO, f. P-1, op. 1, spr. 533, ark. 45-47.

5. Creation and Supervision of Rural Minority Institutions

5.1 Afanasii (Panas) Butsenko,¹⁴⁰ Circular of the VUTsVK on the Designation of Uniform Local Administrative and National Units in Localities with a Polish Population, 16 September 1924

Translation from Russian

[At the top left corner of the document are two handwritten notes]

To the TsKNM. To be agreed with the Chairman of the SNK, 7 September, A. Butsenko.

Generally I have no objections, but why are only Poles mentioned? There are also Bulgarians, Germans and others there. The circular should be marked Confidential, 14 September – V. Chubar'¹⁴¹

CONFIDENTIAL

Circular

To Gubispolkoms [Guberniia Executive Committees] (Kiev, Podolia, Volhynia and Odessa) and corresponding Guberniia Commissions for National Minority Affairs
Copies to Gubkoms [Guberniia Party Committees] (Kiev, Podolia, Volhynia and Odessa)
To all Pol'biuro at Gub- and Okrispolkoms

On the designation of uniform local administrative and national units in localities with a Polish population

One of the main goals of our policy with regard to national minorities is to make efforts to involve a significant part of the working class in the building of the Soviet system, and to eliminate ethnically based conflicts of various kinds. This is to be done by designating localities with a significant percentage of national minorities and dividing them into autonomous local administrative units – rural soviets and raions.

140 Panas [Rus. Afanasii] Butsenko (1889–1965) was from 1923 to 1928 secretary of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee.

141 Vlas Chubar' (1891–1939) was from 1923 to 1934 head of the Soviet Ukrainian government (RNK).

A similar division has already been made with respect to German settlements, which has brought positive results, and the same is currently being done in relation to Moldavians and Bulgarians. To facilitate the matter of the division, the Sovnarkom (at a meeting of 29 August of this year) reduced the population norms required for the creation of autonomous raions and rural soviets (from 25,000 persons to 10,000, and from 1,000 to 500); it also proposed to Gubispolkoms, those that have not yet taken similar steps, that they present appropriate plans for *raionirovanie*. Assigning high importance to these actions with respect to the Polish population, the executive committees' national minority bodies [...] should immediately begin preparations for the designation of Polish rural soviets and raions. This process should be completed in 1924 and 1925, because this is the final period for the completion of *raionirovanie*.

For the performance of this task it is proposed:

1) to identify localities with a significant percentage of Polish population, which may be designated for the creation of autonomous Polish rural soviets and raions.

2) to collect statistical and other material concerning those localities so as to prepare appropriate plans for division and *raionirovanie*.

3) to present these plans in appropriate order to the Okr- and Gubispolkoms.

4) as regards the election campaign for the soviets, which is currently in preparation, in localities with a Polish population attention should be paid to representatives of the Polish working class. For the rural soviets and Raion- and Okrispolkoms choose the Polish workers and peasants who are most dedicated to the Soviet system. These measures should facilitate implementation of the *raionirovanie* plan.

In creating Polish rural and raion soviets, it must be borne in mind that they can be created only in settlements where the Polish population constitutes an absolute majority. Those places which do not have such a majority should remain within the system of general local administrative units, with assurance of representation of the Polish working masses in the lower bodies of those soviets. If under the present administrative division there already exist rural soviets in villages with an exclusively Polish population, then our actions will consist of formally registering them as Polish rural soviets. In settlements populated by so-called Ukrainian Catholics, attempt as far as possible not to require them to join the Polish rural and raion soviets, in such cases explaining the essence of the entire undertaking to that group of people. In case of doubt as to the national affiliation of the residents of certain settlements, the criterion adopted should be the language used by residents on an everyday basis.

Before the completion of preparatory work for the implementation of the guidelines in this circular, it is recommended to avoid premature publicity about

the matter of the new administrative division among the Polish population, so as to avoid the misunderstandings which might arise for that reason. On the process of executing the instructions herein, notify the TsKNM by the 5th day of each month and after, request additional clarifications if needed, also giving notification of any obstacles.

Secretary of the VUTsVK:

A. Butsenko

[handwritten signature]

Chairman of the TsKNM at the VUTsVK

[illegible signature]

Member of the TsKNM

Saulevich [Saulewicz]¹⁴²

[handwritten signature]

16 September 1924

Source: TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 6, ark. 61–62.

This Document has been published earlier in: Stanisław Stępień (ed.), *Polacy na Ukrainie: Zbiór dokumentów*. Part 1: *Lata 1917–1939*, vol. 3. Przemyśl: PWIN, 2001, pp. 46–48.

¹⁴² Jan Saulewicz (1897–1937), a Polish communist from Ukraine, member of the Central Pol'biuro in Ukraine, Polish representative at the Central Commission for National Minority Affairs. He was shot by the NKVD in 1936.

5.2 German Section in the Odessa Huberniia Party Committee, Excerpt from an Activity Report, 8 October 1924

Translation from German

Report of the German Section in the Odessa Hubkom [Huberniia Party Committee] KP(b)U for the period from 1 January to the Huberniia Consultations on 5 October 1924

[excerpt]

3. FORMATION OF GERMAN RAIONS

Right at the start of the reporting period, [the section] set about tackling the separation of the cohesive areas of German colonies into administrative units. The section in the *Hubvykonkom* [Huberniia Executive Committee] worked out projects that foresee the formation of two raions, namely one that foresaw the colonies of the Berezan river with its centre in Landau and one with its centre in Freudental, which was to unite the colonies from Gross-Liebental to Strassburg. Objections on the part of the Okruha Executive Committee in Odessa were raised against the latter project, and it was also rejected. The Mykolaïv Okruha Executive Committee¹⁴³ brought forward many reasons – and, it must be said, unsound ones – in opposition to the Landau raion project. Here, it must be emphasised that the formation of German raions met with fierce resistance on the part of the huberniia and okruha organs in general and only as a consequence of pressure from the central authorities are we today so far along that two raions will soon be in operation in a short period of time – one with its centre in Landau and the second with its centre in Selz. But in Odessa Okruha, there is yet another colony area with its centre in Gross-Liebental, which encompasses 16,000 Germans and which could be united into a raion just as well. The national make up of this raion would be about 98 percent German. The economic basis for this raion would also be a very favourable one. Nonetheless, the formation of this raion is categorically rejected by the authorities here. It must be noted that the population of this area demands separation into a national raion, and that it intends to dispatch a delegation to our central organs in order to present the population's wish there.

In the areas of the Selz and Landau raions, their formation was met by agitation, which came from the clergy and the kulaks. In a broad-based campaign,

¹⁴³ Mykolaïv Okruha still formed at this time a part of Odessa Huberniia.

we countered this agitation through discussion of the national policy of the Communist Party and Soviet power. This succeeded in convincing the toiling masses of the actual reasons for the counter-agitation, which found its best expression in the resolution of the non-party farmers' conference in Mannheim and Landau, which unanimously approved the formation of the raions and called on the corresponding organs to accelerate their separation.

At present, the separation of national rural soviets is being worked on, and it is to be hoped that this work will be completed in the near future.

[...]

4. CULTURAL ASSOCIATION¹⁴⁴

As the successor to the two colonist associations that arose here during the period of hunger, a so-called cultural association was formed, whose leadership did not correspond to our requirements with regard to politics. When Comrade Bieligg joined the administration as a representative of the section, a systematic, arduous work began, in order to secure the influence of the party in this association. As a consequence of this work, an opposition group formed within the association, which insisted on a new election of the local group's administration. This new election was conducted on 4 May of this year, and those candidates supported by the section were elected. The party comrades who were nominated as candidates by the section remained in fact in the minority by 7 votes and were elected to the administration only as candidates. Although this factor can be interpreted as a failure, the result is to be regarded as a success of the section, since the newly elected administration works in the closest of contact with representatives from the section. In the summer, the association's work lay almost completely dormant. At the start of winter, a German section will be formed within the Club of Western Nationalities, which the remaining members in the cultural association will also join, so that the association as such has lost its right to exist completely.

[...]

Source: DAMO, P-f. 1, op. 1, spr. 120, ark. 84-87.

¹⁴⁴ This might be a reference to the association mentioned by Philipp Vassel in document 6.4.

5.3 The Creation of Landau Raion, 16 December 1924

Translation from Russian

[3]

ACT

16 December 1924. We, the undersigned Commission, represented by the authorised Chairman of the Okrispolkom [Okrug Executive Committee], Comrade I. GONCHAROV, as well as other members, Chairman of the Varvarovka Raiispolkom [Raion Executive Committee], B. G. Vasil'ev, and Chairman of Landau Raiispolkom, I. G. Merts [Merz], acting in accordance with the regulation of the Okrispolkom no. 16024 from 13 December 1924, carried out the creation of Landau Raion:

I. ADMINISTRATIVE PART

6 rural soviets were established: Landau, Johannistal [Ioganestal'], Speyer [Shpeer], Katherinental [Katerinental'], Karlsruhe [Karlsrue], with all adjacent settlements (listed in the attachment), a part of Sulz [Zul'ts] – namely, the village of Sulz, a part of the Novo-Grigorievskii [Rural Soviet], namely the villages of Schönfeld [Shenfel'd], Halbstadt [Gal'bshtadt], the *khutory* [hamlets] Martina (Zelenyi Yar), Solonikhskii and Trikhatskii.

II. ECONOMIC PART

The territory of the newly established district occupies 54,468 desiatinas, 523 sq. versts of land, with the total area of 11,356 desiatinas of State Fund No. 312 / 493, 187, 188, 189, 190 located on the territory of Landau Raion and adjacent to its territory.

The population in the allocated area is 15,929. Among them 7,554 men, 8,375 women. By nationality, the number is subdivided: Great Russians – 229, Ukrainians – 972, Germans – 14,387, Jews – 163, Bulgarians – 1, Moldovans – 5, Poles – 58, others – 114.

There are 2,894 farmsteads with 3,440 head of draft cattle, 4,335 head of cattle, 2,811 head of pigs, 2,306 head of sheep and goats, 2,335 head of young horses, 1,109 head of young cattle.

2 inventory stations located in the colonies of Landau and Johannistal with a total of 465 items of inventory.

In addition to the 2,894 farms located on the territory of the established district, there are also 4 artel's, with a total of 52 members, which occupy an area of land of 457.50 desiatinas.

There are 3 demonstration fields, with a total area of 72 desiatinas. 2 of them are leased, with a total area of 12 desiatinas (contracts are attached), 5 mills assigned to the RIK and located on the territory

[4]

of the newly formed Landau district, with total level of profitability per year – 7,628 roubles 70 kopecks. In addition to this, there are 16 houses assigned to the RIK and leased out according to the attached contracts no. I–A / .3.4.5.7.11.13.14. 17.18.19.21.22.23.25 and an unleased house, for a total income of 708 roubles 72 kopecks.

III. CULTURE AND EDUCATION

On the territory of the newly established raion, there are 9 labour schools which are to remain in the possession of the raion, located in the following settlements: Sulz, Karlsruhe, Katherinental, Speyer, Waterloo [Waterloo], Johannistal, Schönfeld, Halbstadt and Landau with a total of 19 teachers, one agricultural school located in the Landau colony with a staff of 2 teachers, 1 public hospital located in Landau with a staff of 8 people and 15 beds; 1 orphanage in Karlsruhe with a staff of 5 people and 80 children; 1 veterinary centre located in Landau with a staff of 2 people.

Sel'buds [community centres] – 1 in Karlsruhe, reading rooms – 2 in Sulz and Landau, libraries – 3, in Sulz, Waterloo and Karlsruhe with a total of 1,000 books. Likbez schools – 5, located in Landau, Waterloo, Sulz, Karlsruhe and Johannistal, with currently 170 students from the illiterate population.

IV. TAXATION

12 tax lists for unified agricultural tax showing a total amount of tax income of 135,596 roubles 17 kopecks, of which 5,528 roubles 43 kopecks is deducted. Thus, the current tax is 130,067 roubles 74 kopecks; of this amount, 108,083 roubles 43 kopecks was paid, penalty fees are 147 roubles 77 k., so the amount payable is 21,984 roubles 31 kopecks. Tax arrears amount to 11,812 roubles 01 kopeck.

There are 63 reports of income and property tax at fixed rates for the 2nd half of 1924/25 in the amount of 952 roubles 53 kopecks. 45 reports on the 2nd Gold Loan in the amount of 635 roubles. 2 unpaid cards to the Karlsruhe Rural

Soviet, as well as 7 lists of debtors: for the simultaneous collection of the equalisation fee for the 1st half of the year 1924/25, for the collection from industrial premises, the equalisation fee for the 2nd half of the year 1923/24 year, fines for non-submission of the declaration for income tax at fixed rates for the 2nd half of 1923/24 and bonds of the 2nd Gold Loan, as well as aggregate income tax for the same period in the total amount

[5]

of 3,977 roubles 74 kopecks.

V. KNS [COMMITTEES OF IMPOVERISHED PEASANTS]

On the established territory there are 6 KNS with a total number of 1,018 members, among them 804 men and 214 women; their economic condition is as follows: 5,5903.75 desiatinas of land, 501 head of draft cattle, 10 head of breeding cattle; inventory – 25 sowing drills, 217 ploughs, 155 harrows, other kinds of tools – 24. Average land sufficiency – 2¼ desiatinas. On the territory of Landau Raion there are four poor peasant artel's. One of them has a total number of 13 members and 76.75 desiatinas of land. There are two head of draft cattle and two items of inventory (ploughs). Arrears of the newly established territories of the Landau raion amount to 135 roubles 75 kopecks, for newspapers, magazines, etc.

There are 6 KVP [Mutual Assistance Committees], with a total number of 432 members, of whom 333 are poor peasants. The KVPs have 208 desiatinas of land. In addition, the KVP have the following material assets: rye – 25 puds, barley – 416 puds, money – 151 roubles 75 kopecks.

[...]

This act has been drawn up in 3 copies, approved by signatures.

Chair of the Commission: signature / Goncharov /

Members:

Signature / Vasil'ev /

Signature / Merts /

Stamp:

Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies
Varvarovka Raion of Nikolaev Okrug, Odessa Guberniia, UkrSSR
/coat of arms/

Source: DAMO, R-f. 161, op. 1, spr. 201, ark. 3–5.

5.4 Transfer of the Rohrbach Rural Soviet to Landau Raion, 7 January 1925

Translation from Russian

[98]

ACT

7 January 1925, the colony of Rohrbach [Rorbakh]

We, the undersigned Commission of representatives of Odessa Okrug on the one hand, in the person of Comrade M. TARAN from the Okrispolkom [Okrug Executive Committee] and Comrades SINIAKOV and TALDYKIN from the Berezovka Raiispolkom [Raion Executive Committee] and Raipartkom [Raion Party Committee], and representatives of Nikolaev Okrug on the other hand, in the person of G. GONCHAROV and A. TSIRUL'NIKOV from the Okrispolkom, as well as Comrade MERTS [MERZ] from the Landau Raiispolkom, on this day, in the presence of Comrade MOZER [MOSER], representative of the Rohrbach Rural Soviet, and Comrade AKKERMAN [ACKERMANN] from the Rohrbach KNS [Committee of Impoverished Peasants], in accordance with the order of the Odessa Okrispolkom No. 181 and the orders of the Nikolaev Okrispolkom No. 16024 and 16110, carried out the transfer and acceptance of the Rohrbach Rural Soviet of Berezovka Raion of Odessa Okrug to the newly organised Landau Raion of Nikolaev Okrug with all affairs and property, which are as follows:

1. One settlement: the colony of Rohrbach
2. Number of farmsteads: 651.
3. Population: 2,914 people, 1,457 men and 1,457 women; by social composition: 193 poor, (including 104 members of the KNS), 200 middle-class peasants, 250 kulaks (including those deprived of voting rights – 43) and others – 8; by nationality: Germans 2,701, Jews 151, Russians 62.
4. The area of suitable land is 9,986.58 desiatinas.
5. 993 draft horses, 895 cows, 298 young horses, 463 young cattle, 418 sheep and 1,100 pigs.
6. Inventory: 417 vans, 5 carts, 109 reapers, 78 broadcast sowers, 5 row sowers, 162 winnowing machines, 238 thinning bunches, 35 two-share ploughers, 65 one-share ploughers, 5 horse rakes.
7. Enterprises: 2 private-owned peasant-type steam mills, one of which is in a dilapidated state, 8 forges and 3 private trading establishments.
8. Public buildings: 1 – of the Rural Soviet, 1 – of the *Sel'bud* [community centre], 3 – schools, 1 – house rented by the pastor, six in total.

9. Cooperative Societies: 1 consumer society with the number of members "...,"¹⁴⁵ including 74 poor peasants, "...," middle peasants and "...," kulaks. Share capital "...," turnover for the last month / November / "...". The general condition is good.
10. 3 schools, 2 of them are active. There are 5 teachers, 4 of them are financed from the raion funds and 1 teacher is financed by the local community. The total number of students is "268."¹⁴⁶
11. 1 medical dispensary with a staff of 1 physician, 1 paramedic and 1 nurse, financed by the local community.
12. One *Sel'budynok* [sic; community centre] with 92 members.
13. The unified agricultural tax on the books of personal accounts amounts to 29,245 roubles 95 kopecks; 114 roubles 19 kopecks is deducted based on petitions and complaints. There is no information whether the tax had been executed before the act was drawn up in the Rural Soviet, since the RIK has sent no coupons since 18 November 1924.
14. The monetary book on stamp duties and local taxes is neither numbered nor stamped. From 12 December 1924, the Rural Soviet imposed a stamp duty in the amount of 34 roubles and a local tax of 2 roubles 15 kopecks, which were received.
15. On account of State Insurance 1,269 roubles 91 kopecks was charged, of which 114 roubles 22 kopecks was paid.

ORGANISATIONAL PART

16. Members of the Rural Soviet – 32, among them 30 men and 2 women. By nationality: 27 Germans, 2 Russians and 3 Jews.
By social composition: 18 poor people and members of KNS, 14 middle-class peasants.
17. Members of the Soviet are distributed in the following sections: Land and Economic Section, with a total number of 11 members, Cultural and Administrative Section with 10 members, and Budget and Taxation Section with 11 members.

[98 zv]

18. During 1924, there were 18 meetings of the Rural Soviet, 45 general meetings, 4 meetings of the Land Section and 3 meetings of the Cultural and

¹⁴⁵ The spaces for the numbers are left blank.

¹⁴⁶ The number is entered in another hand.

Administrative section. There were no meetings of the Budget and Taxation Section.

19. The work of the Rural Soviet was carried out without an established plan.
20. An institute of responsible executives was introduced on 17 December 1924 in the number of 3 senior executives and 28 junior executives. The work is done neatly.
21. Documentation is kept in accordance with the instructions of the Raiispolkom and is in a satisfactory condition.
22. The main list of payers of agricultural tax in the current campaign is in satisfactory condition. The book of personal accounts (form 4) is neither numbered nor bound or stamped, corrections made are not specified.
23. Face-to-face communication with the Raiispolkom is carried out by providing the population with carts as needed at the request of the Rural Soviet. The minutes of the general meeting on this issue are not available.
24. The Rural Soviet has a hired watchman, financed by the local population in the amount of 30 roubles a month. The minutes of the general meeting on the issue of hiring and paying a watchman were not approved by the Raiispolkom.
25. There is a volunteer fire brigade of 3 people; other functions are distributed among the responsible executives. There are 2 hose lances, of which one is in a satisfactory condition, and the other one lacks a hose.

ON THE KNS

26. The KNS has 104 members, 82 men and 22 women; by nationality: 79 Germans, 1 Ukrainian, 15 Russians, 9 Jews and other; by education: 82 of them are literate, 22 illiterate.
27. During the year, there were 5 meetings of the KNS and 38 general meetings of organisations.
28. 1 likbez school attended by 50% of the illiterate poor, that is, up to 30 people.
29. The total amount of land of the KNS members is 982.50 desiatinas; it is allocated as a special block of land.
30. Members of the KNS have 95 horses, 83 cows.
31. Agricultural inventory: 31 vans, 6 ploughs, 6 reapers.
32. Poor people who are not members of the KNS – 89.

ON THE KVP [MUTUAL ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE]

33. The KVP consists of 39 members, of whom 15 are KNS members and 24 are middle-class peasants.
34. Material assets: 108 roubles 59 kopecks in money, 99 puds 4 funts in wheat, 14 puds 4 funts in barley. In addition, 396 roubles 90 kopecks are listed in the documents as reciprocal unpaid sums.
35. The land fund has 80 desiatinas of land.
36. The work of the KNS and KVP is generally satisfactory. However, there are organisational defects, which are as follows: there are no accounts on the economic state of the KNS, the KNS is not sufficiently represented in the KVP in the sense of involvement in its activities; other elements valuable for the KNS are also lacking. The list of KVP members is not in good order, cash amounts of the KVP fund are kept by the cashier.

[...]

[99]

This act is issued in five copies.

Delivered:

1. signature / Taran /
2. signature / Taldykin /
3. signature / Siniakov /

Accepted:

1. signature / Goncharov /
2. signature / Tsirul'nikov /
3. signature / Merts /

Stamp:

/ Berezovka Raiispolkom of Odessa Okrug and Guberniia
Coat of arms/

Source: DAMO, R-f. 161, op. 1, spr. 201, ark. 98-99.

5.5 Transfer of the Worms Rural Soviet to Landau, 7 January 1925

Translation from Russian

[89]

ACT

7 January 1925, the colony of WORMS [VORMS]

We, the undersigned Commission of representatives of Odessa Okrug on the one hand, in the person of Comrade M. TARAN from the Okrispolkom [Okrug Executive Committee] and Comrade SINIAKOV from the Berezovka Raipartkom [Raion Party Committee], and Comrade TALDYKIN from Berezovka RIK [Raion Executive Committee], and representatives of Nikolaev Okrug on the other hand: G. GONCHAROV and A. TSIRUL'NIKOV from the Okrispolkom, as well as Comrade MERTS [MERZ] from the Landau Raiispolkom [Raion Executive Committee], on this date, in the presence of Comrade GORST [HORST], Chairman of the Worms Rural Soviet, as well as Comrade VAL'TER [WALTER], Head of the KNS [Committee of Impoverished Peasants], in accordance with the orders of the Odessa Okrispolkom № 181 and of the Nikolaev Okrispolkom № 16024 and 16110, carried out the transfer and acceptance of the Worms Rural Soviet of Berezovka Raion of Odessa Okrug to the newly organised Landau Raion of Nikolaev Okrug, with all affairs and property, which are as follows:

1. 3 settlements: the colony of Worms, khutor [hamlet] of Bondarevka and khutor of Mikhailovka.
2. Number of farmsteads: in the colony of Worms – 359, in Bondarevka – 44, in Mikhailovka – 43.
3. Population: the colony of Worms – 1,871 people, 872 men and 999 women; khutor of Bondarevka – 217 people, 103 men and 114 women; khutor of Mikhailovka – 235 people, 115 men and 120 women; in total in the Rural Soviet – 2,323 people, 1,090 men and 1,233 women. Poor peasants in the colony of Worms – 74, middle-class peasants – 182, wealthy peasants – 103. In Bondarevka: middle-class peasants – 44; in Mikhailovka – 43.

By nationality: in the Rural Soviet of Worms – 1,987 Germans, 262 Ukrainians, 48 Jews, 36 Gypsies.

By social composition: in total, there are 74 members of the KNS in the rural soviet, 269 middle-class peasants and 103 wealthy peasants.

4. The area of suitable land: in Worms – 4719 desiatinas, Mikhailovka – 578 desiatinas, Bondarevka – 554 desiatinas, in total – 5,581 desiatinas.

5. In Worms – 407 draft horses, 426 cows, 77 young horses, 275 sheep, 511 pigs. In Mikhailovka – 57 draft horses, 64 cows, 11 young horses, 53 sheep, 32 pigs. In total – 513 draft horses, 570 cows, 98 young horses, 363 sheep, 563 pigs.
6. Inventory. [In Worms:] 190 vans, 4 carriages, 35 reapers, 11 broadcast sowers, 5 row sowers, 39 winnowing machines, 86 drill ploughs [*bukker*], 82 ploughs, 230 harrows. In Mikhailovka: 21 vans, 1 cart, 6 reapers, 2 broadcast sowers, 2 winnowing machines, 9 drill ploughs, 10 ploughs, 18 harrows. In Bondarevka: 24 vans, 35 reapers, 4 sowers, 4 winnowing machines, 2 drill ploughs, 13 ploughs, 14 harrows; and in total in the Rural Soviet: 235 vans, 5 carts, 54 reapers, 17 broadcast sowers, 5 row sowers, 45 winnowing machines, 97 drill ploughs, 105 ploughs and 262 harrows.
7. Enterprises: one peasant-type steam mill, 3 forges and 2 private trading establishments.
8. Public buildings: 1 – the Rural Soviet, 1 – school, 1– *Sel'bud* [community centre], 1– agricultural cooperative, 1 – school apartment, 1 inn, in total – 6 buildings.
9. Cooperative Societies: 1 consumer society with 236 members including 197 wealthy and middle-class peasants, and 39 poor peasants; 119 roubles 50 kopecks of share capital; turnover for the year 1924 [...] is 1,168 roubles. General condition: 1 agricultural credit cooperative society with 227 members, including "..."¹⁴⁷ wealthy peasants, 199 middle-class peasants, 28 poor; share capital – 139 roubles 31 kopecks. Fund for the purchase of agricultural machinery – 501 roubles 56 kopecks, capital stock – 139 roubles, 31 kopecks, Cultural Fund – 45 roubles 60 kopecks, turnover for the year 1924 "..."¹⁴⁸ and for the last month 3,934 roubles. [...]
10. 1 active school. Classes are being conducted regularly. There are 2 full-time teachers and one contract teacher. The number of students – 254, among them 149 male and 106 female.
11. 1 *Sel'budynok* [sic; community centre] with 70 members.
12. The unified agricultural tax for the village of Worms sums to 10,481 roubles 24 kopecks, and for khutor Bondarevka 1,488 roubles 63 kopecks, executed for the first and second terms – 6,622 roubles 1 kopeck.
13. The inspection book on stamp duty and local tax is bound and stamped, the amount of non-returned payments is 19 roubles 35 kopecks.
14. On account of State Insurance 2,042 roubles 90 kopecks was charged, of which 2 roubles 57 kopecks was paid.

147 The space for the number is left blank.

148 The space for the number is left blank.

[89 zv]

ORGANISATIONAL PART

15. Members of the Rural Soviet – 27, among them 24 men and 3 women. By nationality: 21 Germans, 1 Jew, 5 Ukrainians.
By social composition: 16 poor, 8 middle-class peasants, 2 employees, 1 party member.
16. Members of the Soviet are distributed in the following sections: Cultural and Administrative Section with 6 members, Land and Economic Section with 7 members, Budget and Taxation Section with 8 members.
17. During 1924, there were 15 meetings of the Rural Soviet and 25 general meetings.
18. The work of the Rural Soviet was carried out without an established plan.
19. The institute of responsible executives was introduced on 28 December 1924 in the number of 2 senior executives and 22 junior executives. However, they have not yet begun to work.
20. Documentation is kept in accordance with the instructions of the Okrispolkom and is in a satisfactory condition.
21. The main list of payers is in satisfactory condition. The book of personal accounts is numbered and stamped, but the corrections made are not specified.
22. There is no special post at the Rural Soviet, and the Rural Soviet is served by duty carts at the request of the Rural Soviet.
23. The Rural Soviet has a hired watchman, financed by the local population to the amount of 175 roubles a year.
24. There is a fire brigade of 1 senior and 8 junior firemen. There are 2 hose lances, of which one is in a satisfactory condition, and the other one requires repair.

ON THE KNS

25. The KNS has 74 members, 60 men and 14 women; by nationality: 57 Germans, 16 Ukrainian, 1 Jew. There are no records kept.
26. There were no meetings of the Presidium. In total there were 14 general meetings.
27. The area of the land of KNS members is 557 desiatinas. Form of land use – communal. No special block of land is allocated to the members of the KNS.
28. Members of the KNS have 74 horses, 27 cows, 27 ploughs, 45 harrows and other tools.

ON THE KVP [MUTUAL ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE]

29. The KVP exists, but there are no members. There is a presidium of 3 members.
30. The fund of the KVP amounts to 40 puds in barley and 86 roubles 67 kopecks in money. There are 10 desiatinas of land and one house assigned to the KVP.
31. The book on income and expenditure is in unsatisfactory condition. Sums for both income and expenditure are incorrect. The book is neither bound, nor numbered or stamped with a wax seal.

Delivered:

1. signature / Taran /
2. signature / Taldykin /
3. signature / Siniakov /

Accepted:

1. signature / Goncharov /
2. signature / Tsirul'nikov /
3. signature / Merts /

Stamp

Source: DAMO, R-f. 161, op. 1, spr. 201, ark. 89.

5.6 Evaluation of the Rohrbach Rural Soviet, 28 September 1925

Translation from Russian

[9]

ACT

We, the undersigned, Chairman of the Landau RIK [Raion Executive Committee], Merts [Merz], Anson, the Secretary of the RIK, Shardt [Schardt], on this 28th day of September, 1925, in the presence of the Chairman of the Rural Soviet Kasrleber [?], the Secretary of the Rural Soviet and the Chairman of the Land Section Tsimbel'man, inspected the Rohrbach [Rorbakh] Rural Soviet and established the following:

1. The work of both the Rural Soviet and the sections is carried out without any plan, therefore, the work plan performance of the Rural Soviet for the fourth quarter is only 35%.
2. The Rural Soviet has no control over the sections and public organisations of the village, which are consequently left to themselves.
3. Sessions of the sections are irregular: throughout the year 1925, the Cultural Section had only 5 sessions, and the minutes of the sessions no. 4 and no. 5 are missing; the last meeting of the Section for Improvements was held on 22 June; the Land Sections had one meeting in August, and none in September.
4. Lists of state tax defaulters that the Raiispolkom [Raion Executive Committee] asked for on 21 September [...] have not yet been acted upon.
5. Mandatory resolution no. 8 of the Raiispolkom, sent to the Rural Soviet in two copies, has been stored the files, without displaying one copy on the premises of the Rural Soviet.
6. Most documents are filed under other subjects than intended. This is particularly true for files no. 1, 17, 18 and 20.
7. There is no accurate record of persons liable for military service, horses, harnesses and leashes, as well as the necessary folders for military records. Military circulars are not announced at general meetings, but only taken into consideration.
8. There are no census books, therefore it is not possible to identify the exact area of land in use.
9. Despite the repeated instructions of the Raion Land Administration, there is no more or less accurate information about the autumn sowing campaign.
10. Registration of labour contracts in accordance with § 95 of the guideline for unified record-keeping is not conducted by the Rural Soviet.
11. The Rural Soviet does not send representatives of its Land Section to the Raion Land Council; the material on penalties for the "Sel'vinsad"¹⁴⁹ is not sent to the address, but is filed with the affairs of the Rural Soviet.

¹⁴⁹ Sel'vinsad was an collective winegrowing association in Rohrbach.

On *Sel' KOV* [Rural Peasant Mutual Aid Societies]

12. The work plan is missing. There are no minutes of meetings no. 4 and 6, or an accurate list of KOV members.
13. Protocol decisions are enforced without the approval of the Raion KOV.
14. There are no protocol decrees for the money issued by the Rural KOV from the orphan funds, and the items are not fully entered in the book of personal accounts.
14. Supporting documents for receipts and expenditures, as well as the circular order of the Raion KOV, are not filed and are in a chaotic state.
15. The cashbook is kept incorrectly, which makes it impossible to obtain a definite picture of the financial condition of the Rural KOV.
16. The revision commission of the Rural KOV is inactive, which explains such a chaotic state of its affairs.

On the *Sel'bud* [Community Centre]

17. The last meeting of the *Sel'bud* was held in April.
18. The reports in the cashbook are not accurate. This explains the fact that the current balance is only 4 roubles 25 kopecks, instead of 12 roubles 28 kopecks.
19. Supporting documents for receipts and expenditures are not filed and are in great disarray.
20. Cultural and educational work is not being carried out at all. There are no lectures, only dance evenings are held.
21. There is no campaign to involve new members in the *Sel'bud*.

On the Cooperative Society

22. Arrears on share payments of Cooperative Society members amount to 1,377 roubles.

[10]

To eliminate all of the above-mentioned defects and revitalise the work of the Rural Soviet, its sections and all public organisations of the village, it is proposed that the Rural Soviet immediately implement the following measures:

1. To propose and develop a work plan for the Rural Soviet and all sections for the 1st quarter of 1925–26, which should be strictly adhered to until it is fully implemented.
2. To strengthen its leadership over the sections and all the available public organisations in the village, especially the *Sel'bud*, which should be obligated to keep records.
3. To regularly hold meetings within the Rural Soviet and its sections, that is, three times a month.
4. To oblige the chairman of the Rural Soviet to have constant supervision over the timely collection of all taxes owed by citizens and, upon receipt of the instructions of the Raiispolkom, to immediately start collecting arrears of non-payers.
5. To inform the Secretary of the Rural Soviet that the copies of mandatory resolutions sent by the RIK, with the exception of 1 copy, are not to be attached to the files, but are to be posted on the premises of the Rural Soviet and the *Sel'bud*.

The Rural Soviet, through the Village Executives, is to monitor the compliance of citizens with all mandatory regulations valid in the raion.

6. Due to the incorrect distribution of the majority of incoming papers, the secretary of the Rural Soviet should be obliged to reconsider all cases by distributing the papers according to their purpose by 15 October.
7. The Chairman of the Rural Soviet should be obliged to keep an accurate record of all persons liable for military service, horses, carts and harnesses. The secretary is to initiate military office work, in accordance with § 124 of the guideline for unified record-keeping.

8. It is proposed that the Rural Soviet keep household books, so that the entire area of land used by the [Cooperative] Society can be registered.
9. To make it the responsibility of the Rural Soviet to inform the Raion Land Administration on a weekly basis about the course of the sowing campaign, providing accurate, well-founded information about the area sown.
10. To introduce a system for registering labour leases in the Rural Soviet.
11. It is proposed that the Rural Soviet send members of its Land Section to the Raion Technical Council, as well as submitting papers addressed to the "Sel'vinsad."

On Sel' KOV [Rural Peasant Mutual Aid Societies]

12. It is proposed that the Rural KOV adhere to the work plan, start a book of minutes and keep accurate records of all members of the organisation.
13. It is proposed that the Rural KOV not enforce protocol decisions without their approval by the Raion KOV.
14. To oblige the Rural KOV to keep the strictest record of every public kopeck.
15. To oblige the Rural KOV to put its office in proper order, in particular the cash receipts and expenditures.
16. Due to the incorrect keeping of the cash book by the Rural KOV, which makes it impossible to get an idea of the true financial compliance of the organisation, it is proposed that the Rural KOV board immediately start a new cash-book in good order.
17. To oblige the Revision Commission of the Rural KOV to audit monthly the affairs of the above-mentioned organisation.

On the Sel'bud

18. It is proposed that the head of the Sel'bud convene meetings of the Sel'bud council more often, keep the cash book correctly and also put in proper order the monetary documents of receipts and expenditure.

19. It is proposed that the head of the *Sel'bud* take all measures to improve the cultural and educational work of the village, by increasing the number of lectures and reports, by reducing dancing evenings, using all the available cultural forces of the village for this purpose.
20. It is proposed that the head of the *Sel'bud* lead a campaign aimed at involving more members in the *Sel'bud*, as well as transfer the consulting bureau to the *Sel'bud*, and offer consultation free of charge.

On the Cooperative Farm

21. Due to arrears on share payments of cooperative members to an amount of 1,377 roubles, it is proposed to the board of the latter to take all measures to eliminate the debt.

[11]

22. To oblige the Chair of the Rural Soviet to persistently supervise the implementation of the above-mentioned measures until 1 November, both on the part of the Rural Soviet and on the part of the Rural KOV, the *Sel'bud* and the Cooperative Farm. The results should be presented to the Raiispolkom for each point of this act separately.
23. The present act is drawn up in 2 copies, one of which remains in the documentation of the Rural Soviet, the other in the documentation of the Raiispolkom. A copy is sent to the Okrispolkom and the Okrug Prosecutor's Office.

Chair of the RIK: Merts [Merz]

Chief of the Raion Land Administration: Anson

Secretary of the RIK: Shardt [Shardt]

Chairman of the Rohrbach Rural Soviet: Kasrleber

Secretary of the Rural Soviet: Kimoned

Chairman of the Land Section Tsimbel'man

Certified true copy: Secretary of the RIK / Shardt /

Source: DAMO, R-f. 161, op. 1, spr. 1158, ark. 9-11.

5.7 A Pol'biuro (Polish Bureau) Commission Inspecting the Hreczany Rural Soviet, 8 September 1927

Translation from Ukrainian

Report on an Inspection of the Rural Soviet in Hreczany in Proskuriv Okruha, Conducted on 8 September 1927

The inspection was conducted by a commission made up as follows:

RVK [Raion Executive Committee] – responsible secretary – Sapozhnikov
Representative of Okruha Pol'biuro – Hurnits'kyi
Representative of Raion Pol'biuro – Khmel'nyts'kyi [Chmielnicki]¹⁵⁰
Raion Political Inspector – Boichuk
Head of Raion Department of Agriculture – Raha
Member of Rural Soviet Audit Committee – Yavors'kyi
Head of Village KNS [Committee of Impoverished Peasants] – Buiar

Present:

chairman of the rural soviet – Hurnits'kyi
secretary of the rural soviet – Balash
candidate member of VUTsVK – Mazur

The jurisdiction of the rural soviet in Hreczany covers only the village of Hreczany.

Total number of residents: 3,656, of whom:

Poles 3,408

Ukrainians 187

Russians 53

Jews 1

others 7

According to information received, the residents are descendants of 17th-century settlers from Poland. The rural soviet was elected on 24 February 1927, and consists of 39 members and 13 deputies, among them 8 women.

The national and social composition of the Soviet is as follows:

Poles – 51

Ukrainians – 1

poor – 46 persons

¹⁵⁰ Jan Chmielnicki (1901–1943) was a member of the Communist Party. He was expelled in 1935. In the same year, he was sentenced to three years hard labour. He died in Krasnoiar'sk in 1943.

seredniaks – 6 persons

KNS members – 16 persons

The rural soviet has a three-person presidium and the following committees:

- 1) management, order and sanitary matters – 9 persons
- 2) village economy – 11 persons
- 3) financial management – 9 persons
- 4) culture, protection of motherhood and children – 10 persons
- 5) assistance to social organisations – 11 persons

Institutions and social organisations functioning in the village:

- a seven-year Polish school;
- a *Sil'bud* [Community Centre];
- a Food Society;
- an Agricultural Credit Society;
- a Village Mutual Assistance Society;
- a Village KNS;
- a collective farm;
- a MODR [International Red Aid] branch;
- a Komsomol organisation;
- a unit of the KP(b)U.

Activity of the presidium and the rural soviet

Since the time of the election there have been 7 sittings of the presidium of the rural soviet. [...] The following types of issues were considered:

organisational	12 occasions
agricultural	6
financial and economic	6
cultural and social	3
political	3
relating to supervision	3
administrative	3
other	5

Sittings were attended by 60% to 85% of members of the Soviet. However, there was little participation in the Soviet sittings by electors. [...]

Financial and economic matters

This issue, a responsibility of the economic and financial committee, is dealt with in practice by committee member Mazurek, who also performs similar activity in forestry as representative of the agricultural community. The rural soviet does not have its own budget, nor is it able to obtain funds on its own account, and therefore its needs are considered in the budget of the raion soviet.

An additional source of income is 10 desiatinas of land near the forest, planned to be used for tree planting and a pond near the river Bug. That land was sown with clover, and the pond was leased in 1927 for 114 krb.¹⁵¹

Income from the above sources is as follows:

At 1 January [1927] <i>remaining cash [from previous year]</i>	92.50 krb
<i>of which in the Food Society</i>	80 krb
<i>Revenue</i>	1,157.15 krb
Total revenues	1,249.65 krb
Expenditure	1,246.81 krb
<i>of which for the Food Society</i>	178 krb
<i>Remaining cash</i>	2.85 krb

[...] The fire brigade has only one pump, three barrels and minor equipment. A fire service does not in fact exist, and those assets are managed by the director.

Construction of a Hromads'kyi Budynok [Community Centre]

This matter is dealt with by a special five-person committee under the direction of rural soviet member Sova. Financial matters are the responsibility of the teacher Kurzhaniovs'kyi. Costs of the construction of the building, which will be used by the Soviet and by all social organisations in the village, are planned at 33,000 krb.

Received to date	4,150.62 krb
Expended to date	4,157.10 krb
Borrowed and not recorded in the books	6.48 krb

¹⁵¹ *Karbovanets'*: Ukrainian monetary denomination equivalent to the Soviet rouble.

Besides this there are no appropriate documents for revenue of 760 krb and expenditure of 759.31 krb. That sum was spent on various purposes (e.g. transportation of bricks and others). [...] Construction is expected to be completed in 1928.

Agricultural matters

There are 802 farms in the village, with a total of 2,071.71 desiatinas of land. There are 0.57 desiatinas per resident, and 2.58 desiatinas per farm.

Numbers of farms by quantity of land are as follows:

up to 1 desiatina	47 farms
up to 2	396 farms
up to 3	172 farms
up to 4	97 farms
up to 5	65 farms
up to 6	25 farms

In terms of number of livestock:

without horses	500
with 1 horse	218
with 2 horses	84
without cattle	141
1 cow	593
2 cows	68

Communal forestland – 32.93 desiatinas.

Individual forestland – 11 desiatinas.

A plan for the use of the communal forest land has been drawn up. The village is not fully collectivised. The Land Commission dealing with that matter has already received 57 applications for entry to the collective.

Artificial fertilisers were not used. According to the Land Commission there are no dishonest contracts. In the village there exist two forms of control of land (a land association and a collective farm). [...]

Organisational and order matters

Administrative activity is included in the working plan of the presidium of the rural soviet, and for this reason the management and order committee as such did not perform such work; the responsibility rested with the presidium. Roads were repaired only partially.

[...]

In general, administrative activity is inadequate.

Documentation office: forms are in Ukrainian, while records are made in Polish.

[...]

Cultural and educational matters

The village has a seven-year Polish school and a village community centre. Teaching at the school last year began on 23 September 1926. There were then 398 pupils, including 16 from other villages. Registered pupils accounted for 87% of children aged 8 to 10 and 61% of the total number of children of school age. Teaching took place on a single shift, and ended on 3 June 1927 with 20% of pupils present. Two groups have graduated from the school: in 1925 (10 persons) and in 1926 (8 persons).

At the school, L[ik]N[ep] courses were run, paid for by the raion budget. The course was attended by 42 pupils aged 10 to 14, but was completed by only 24, the remainder being of "low literacy." The school receives three copies of the newspaper *Sierp* [The Sickle],¹⁵² one of *Visti* [News]¹⁵³ and one of *Pravda* [The Truth].¹⁵⁴

Peasants receive on subscription approximately 120 copies of various papers (mostly *Sierp* in the case of peasants, and *Gudok* [The Signal]¹⁵⁵ in the case of peasant railway workers). In 1927 (from 10 June to 11 September) a nursery was organised in the village, supervised by one manager and two carers, for 35 children, including eight in infancy. It was planned for the nursery to be visited by a doctor twice a month and whenever called. There was also a children's playground supervised by one carer, opened on 10 June with 32 children (aged 6–7). It was closed on 1 September. The village medical point performed vaccinations against smallpox and scarlet fever.

However, the cultural and educational committee is not properly constituted. It does not include teachers and rural soviet members. It has not performed very much work.

152 *Sierp*: A weekly in Polish language, edited between 1922 and 1937.

153 *Visti VUTsVK*: The newspaper of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, 1919–1941.

154 *Pravda*: The newspaper of the VKP(b), published since 1912.

155 *Gudok*: A newspaper in Russian language for the Soviet railway workers, 1917–today.

Sil'bud: The Sil'bud was founded in 1925, with 30 members. At present there are 50 members. Numbers of Sil'bud members by class, age and party status are as follows:

Poor	44
Seredniaks	6
Adults	12 (25%)
Youth	38 (75%)
Komsomol members	10
Members of Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine	4
Non-party	36

[...] The *Sil'bud* has a library, containing 350 volumes and having 27 readers. Cooperation with the rural soviet is not satisfactory.

There exist branches of MODR (16 members) and OSOAVIOKhIM¹⁵⁶ (28 members). During "defence week," 19.19 karbovanets' was collected in voluntary donations. The collection is still being conducted.

Agricultural Credit Society

The Society was founded in 1924 by 25 members. It covers the Polish villages of Hreczany, Maćkowce [Mats'kivtsi] and Szaróweczka [Sharovechka] and the hamlets of Zarzeczce [Zarichcha] and Małoszowce [Malashivtsi]. At 1 July 1927 the Society has 738 members (including 430 from Hreczany).

Members by social class:

Bedniaks	443
Seredniaks	235
Wealthy	18
Others	11

By party status:

Members of the KP(b)U	9
Komsomol members	4
Non-party members	725

¹⁵⁶ Society for Assistance of Defence, Aviation and Chemical Construction of the Soviet Union, 1927-1948.

Members include:

KNS members	128
Women	28

Thus 53.6% of residents of the village belong to the Credit Society. In 1924 the Society organised a brickyard, which had 10 full-time workers; in 1927 it had 8 workers.

The Society's financial position [in karbovanets']:

Fixed assets	3,009
Equity	1,244
Loans	3,600
Reserves	210
Special	7,300
Assets	3,400
Revenue	2,200

[...] Cultural and educational activity of the Credit Society

The Society subscribes to 14 copies of *Sierp* and one of *Kooperatyvne Zhyttia* [Life of the Cooperative]. [...]

Food Society

The Society was founded in 1925 by 52 founding members. At 1 October 1926 it already had 57 members.

At 1 September it had 131 members, an increase of 130%. A total of 16.3% of farms participate in the food cooperative.

Numbers of members of the Society by social class are as follows:

Bedniaks	105
Workers and officials	26

By party membership:

Members of the KP(b)U	4
Komsomol members	4
KNS members	33

By sex and age:

Men	105
Women	26
Youth	9

The membership fee of 5 karbovanets' was paid by 108 persons, and 23 persons paid only a part of that sum.

Financial affairs of the Food Society

Share capital	474.50 krb
Equity and fixed assets	874.97 krb
Credit	278 krb
Net revenue	2,164.17 krb
Shares in offices	90 krb
Credit at raion cooperative	400 krb
Debtors (900 krb was spent on building of the community centre, and individual debts total 104 krb)	1,004 krb

Turnover for the last month: 4,003.54 krb [...]

The Rural TVD [Mutual Assistance Society]

At 1 October 1926 there were 70 members. Since that time 18 members have joined, to make a total of 88. They include 7 women. Two members attended a sitting of the rural soviet on 1 January 1927. There was no general meeting.

Funds of the TVD

Arable land (cemetery) – 2 desiatinas,

Edges [along road] – 2.64 desiatinas,

1 residential building.

Arable land leased out for 16 krb annually.

Edges sold at the end of 1927 for 76 krb.

House leased out for 16 krb. [...]

The Rural KNS

KNS members: 78 (including 6 women), which represents 21% of the number of bedniak farms in the village.

Bedniaks	72
Seredniaks	3
Officials	3

By party status:

Members of the KP(b)U	5
Komsomol members	10

[...]

Collective farm

The collective farm was organised in 1924 from seven farms, consisting of 31 persons, of whom 16 have capacity to work. The collective farm has 31 desiatinas of land, of which 19 are arable. In 1926 a four-field system was introduced.

Jointly held livestock consists of 2 horses, 1 pedigree boar (made available to all residents of the village). Equipment consists of a sower, a horse-powered thresher, two harrows, two ploughs, and two feed silos.

[...]

Chairman of commission [no signature]
Members of commission [no signatures]

Certified as a true copy
[illegible signature]

Source: TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 305, ark. 22-37.

This Document has been published earlier in: Stanisław Stępień (ed.), *Polacy na Ukrainie: Zbiór dokumentów*. Part 1: Lata 1917-1939, vol. 3. Przemysł: PWIN, 2001, pp. 64-76.

5.8 Central Control Commission of the VKP(b), Report on the Polish Rural Soviet in Szaróweczka, Proskuriv Raion, 1927

Translated from Ukrainian

Report

On an inspection of the Polish Rural Soviet in Szaróweczka [Sharovechka] in Proskuriv Raion, Proskuriv Okruha, after the rural soviet elections

Total residents of the village: 1,864 persons, of whom 1,863 Poles and 1 Russian woman.

Total farms: 411, average provision of land per person: 0.42 desiatinas, average per farm: 1.94 desiatinas.

Farmers having land:		Farmers having horses:	
up to 1 desiatina	16	1 horse	110
up to 2 desiatinas	172	2 horses	32
up to 3 "	162	3 "	5
up to 5 "	11	Farmers not having horses:	264
up to 6 "	1		
up to 7 "	1		
Totally exempted from tax:		107 farms	

[...]

The rural soviet

Exists as a Polish rural soviet since 1924. All members of the soviet are Poles. Total members: 18 persons, of whom 3 are women. By social position: KNS [Committee of Impoverished Peasants] members 8, bedniaks 7, seredniaks 1, teacher 1, and an official (instructor at the Pol'biuro of the OPK [Okruha Party Committee]). Peasant members of the soviet not having horses: 8 persons, having one horse: 8 persons. Members of the soviet totally exempted from tax: 9 persons, partially exempted: 3 persons. The soviet has 5 committees, consisting of soviet members: 1) Administrative: 2 soviet members and one candidate member; 2) Land Affairs Committee: 4 members; 4) Assistance Committee: 5 members; 5) Financial and Economic: 4 members. Because there is only one locality, there are no village

representatives, there is only the chairman of the rural soviet and his deputy. The chairman of the soviet performs administrative work for all soviet members and for persons performing duties. But generally neither the chairman nor members know the duties and tasks of the rural soviet.

[Handwritten note:] *There were no committee sittings.*

II. The work of the rural soviet¹⁵⁷

Number of sittings at time of elections: 10, by month: 1 in February, 2 in March, 2 in April, 2 in May, 2 in June, 1 in July.

Total matters taken up: 38, of which organisational: 8, all actioned; cultural and educational: 1, not actioned; political: 4, all actioned; concerning agricultural tax: 3, all actioned; concerning poverty: 3, not actioned; concerning the sowing campaign: 1, actioned; concerning the land system: 2, not actioned; concerning land: 3, one actioned; administrative: 2, actioned; on cooperatives: 1, not actioned; reporting: 5, two not actioned; concerning insurance: 1, actioned; on granting of right to vote in election: 1; review of the work of the rural soviet: 1, not actioned; on the KVD [Mutual Assistance Committee]: 2, not actioned.

At sittings of the rural soviet matters are raised concerning land associations; generally there is no difference between general meetings, sittings of the rural soviet and land association meetings.

In reports it is only formally written that work is satisfactory, and directives are still not issued. The rural soviet's plan and calendar are drawn up for a half-year. In the preparation of the calendar and plan only one member of the soviet participated (the instructor of the Pol'biuro of the RPK [Raion Party Committee]), as well as the secretary of the soviet. The plan and calendar were not approved at a sitting of the soviet. Attendance by soviet members at sittings amounts to 65%.

Besides, every day approximately 15 people visit the rural soviet, and answers are given to all of their questions. There were two complaints of hooliganism, both satisfied. Resolutions of the soviet did not pass smoothly, but they are implemented. Official relations between the soviet and the RVK [Raion Executive Committee] are conducted in the Ukrainian language, and official documents of the soviet are also kept in Ukrainian, apart from seals and stamps; moreover, Polish is not used in the keeping of documentation, there are no document forms in the Polish language.

157 The numeration in this document is not consistent.

III. Means of involving the masses in the Soviet economy and cultural and educational construction, contacts with the masses, cooperation in the village

1. The soviet's management of the committees takes place by way of reports; there were 2 committee reports; since the election there have been no committee sittings. Apart from a teacher, no other outside persons have participated in committee work.

2. Income and expenditure chart. Sources of income for the village budget consist of: costs for leasing of land, for which the soviet receives 28 karbovanets'¹⁵⁸ 50 kopecks per year, and from the Raion: for stationery materials 5 karbovanets' per quarter, for electricity 3 karbovanets' per year, for economic expenditure 5 karbovanets'.

All of this money is spent by the soviet. The soviet does not participate in drawing up the raion budget, and the income and expenditure chart is drawn up in the raion without the participation of a representative from the soviet; no committee was engaged in the collection of the agricultural tax or the recording of agricultural tax objects and insurance.

3. The matter of collective forms of farming was not taken up by the committees at all; recently there is observed to be some interest in the farm's culture, but artificial fertilisation or other methods of improving the soil are not used. There were no cases of covert leasing, there were cases of selling of land, particularly among resettlers. There is no cooperation between the land association and the land committee. The sole land association has no management, resettlement has been completed for 23 farms, 33 farms are subject to resettlement.

4. The administrative committee has not played its proper role in the soviet and does not act to combat home alcohol production and contraband. There were cases where the chairman of the soviet or the secretary took part in such abuses as drunkenness and others. The soviet does not exercise management among persons performing duties, it only formally replaces those persons. The soviet does not provide supervision of night watches. Repair of roads is carried out, bridges repaired, trees are not planted, relations between rural soviets and court authorities are satisfactory.

5. There is one Polish four-year school of social education, with 154 children, which is 49% of the total number of children of school age. There are three groups at the school; in the next school year four groups are expected. In the years

¹⁵⁸ *Karbovanets'*: Ukrainian monetary denomination equivalent to the Soviet rouble.

1926/1927 there was one liknep,¹⁵⁹ attended by 54 persons, including 32 women, all teenagers. 27 persons completed the liknep. There is a reading room (the reading room building is leased). The reading room is financed from the raion budget, it has 107 members, there were 3 general meetings of reading room members (there are no minutes from those meetings). In the reading room there are 164 books, all Polish, there are no newspapers, there is a subscription to *Sierp* [The Sickle]¹⁶⁰ – 2 copies, also 10 copies of *Sierp* from an individual subscription. Books are lent out to readers. Work at the reading room was carried out in winter, now there is no such work; a reading room council operates, it had two meetings (there are no minutes). Teachers take part in reading room work. There was no management of the reading room from the Raion Department for Political Education, or from the raion's former Polish representative. From the soviet's cultural and educational committee there was some individual management, but the results are poor. One teacher's report was given at a sitting of the soviet concerning the school, and one concerning the likpunkt,¹⁶¹ and also a report of the manager of the reading room. The soviet committee did not inspect all cultural institutions in the village, and there was no participation by the committee in the field of school education. The committee took no interest in the matter of the protection of motherhood and childhood. There was a veterinary inspection, medical examinations were carried out only at the school, other residents of the village were not examined. The provision of medical assistance to the village is satisfactory, but a careless attitude to village residents is observed, from both doctors and veterinarians. The village is provided with veterinary services.

6. Introduction of cooperative activity among the masses:

a) A food cooperative has existed since 1926, it has 93 members. Social status of members: Committee of Impoverished Peasants members 44, seredniaks 45, trade union members 4, full members 50, non-full members 43. Monthly gross working capital 1,637 karbovanets', revenue since formation 504 karbovanets', assets 106 karbovanets' 70 kopecks. Shares to the Raion Company [...] ¹⁶² karbovanets'. Share capital 321 karbovanets' 98 kopecks; prices were reduced by 10%. Cooperative activity involves 24% of all farms. The cooperative has prospects for increasing its membership and turnover;

b) The Village Headscarf Weaving Cooperative has 6 members, social composition: 2 bedniaks, 3 seredniaks, 1 moderately wealthy, shares – 125 karbovanets' each. The cooperative has existed since 1920, it has work the whole time, it also

159 Ukr. *Likvidatsiia nepys'mennosti naselennia*: Liquidation of popular illiteracy.

160 *Sierp*: A weekly in Polish language, edited between 1922 and 1937.

161 Rus. *Punkt po likvidatsii negramotnosti*: Point for Liquidation of Illiteracy.

162 The amount is illegible.

has demand for its goods; there are 3 members of the management board and 3 members of the audit committee; the cooperative has prospects; it uses credit from Kustprom [Artisan Industry].

c) The Brickmaking Artel' has existed since 1926, members: 11, all bedniaks, except one, only 7 of them work, 1 excluded as an exploiter and speculator, 3 members have shares but do not work, total workers 8, one does not hold a share. Assets: 750 karbovanets', one member's share: 100 karbovanets', gross capital for entire period of existence: 2,500. Assets were acquired partly from work, partly from profits. Credit obtained from the fund [...] ¹⁶³: 400 karbovanets', from the All-Ukrainian League of Agricultural Cooperatives: 740 karbovanets'. The average daily earnings of one worker amount to 1 karbovanets' 20 kopecks. There are prospects for the sale of goods. The presidium consists of 3 members and 3 members of the audit committee. There has not yet been an inspection;

7. Participation of social organisations in the work of the soviet.

A KNS has existed since 1919, after the last reorganisation it has 83 members, 3 of them women, 63 members of the KNS have no horses, 20 have one horse, 41 members of the KNS are exempted from tax. The KNS includes 20% of the village poor. There were three general meetings of the village KNS, total matters considered: 9, of which organisational: 7, economic: 2; matters actioned: 4; one inspection took place but it did not reveal much; the documentation of the village KNS is poorly maintained.

The KVD has only a presidium, it has no funds, and no work.

The committees of the rural soviet generally do not have contact with social organisations. A report from the village KNS was presented on one occasion at a sitting of the soviet.

The rural soviet's contact with the masses

Most village activists are poor residents with low levels of literacy and political development, management of this body of activists is inadequate, and they are not properly engaged. The rural soviet is not an organiser of social life in the village, for the reason that the soviet itself does not know its duties. All orders received from higher authorities are regularly explained to residents of the village, the peasantry receives answers to all political questions. The peasants' attitude to the orders of higher authorities is good.

163 One word illegible.

The nationality question

1. Relations between Poles and Ukrainians are satisfactory.
2. Work among other nationalities in the village of Szaróweczka is not carried out because of the absence of any such.
3. There is a Polish school in the village; there are no children of other nationalities.

Audit committee

1. Electors did not participate in the work of the audit committee because there was no work done by that committee.
2. The audit committee has no contact with village residents.
3. The audit committee did not inform electors of its meetings, because it did not hold any.
4. There is no contact between the audit committee and the Central [Party] Control Commission and the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate.
5. Higher authorities did not exercise management of the work of the audit committee.

Source: TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 305, ark. 41-42.

5.9 Central Commission for National Minority Affairs to the Central Administrative-Territorial Commission at VUTsVK, Proposals for Name Changes of the Polish Villages Bogudzięka (Bogudzen'ka) and Fridrowa (Fridrovo) in Berdychiv Okruha, 4 February 1926

Translation from Ukrainian

To the Central Administrative-Territorial
Commission

The TsKNM [Central Commission for National Minority Affairs] requests for the second time rapid consideration of the proposals for changes of name of the Polish villages Bogudzięka (Bogudzen'ka) and Fridrowa (Fridrovo) in Berdychiv Okruha. It also wishes to ask that the assignment of revolutionary names take place before the elections to the Polish rural soviets in those villages.

The TsKNM desires to notify the Central Administrative-Territorial Commission that already this year the village of Bogudzięka (translated as “thanks to God”) is now called by the majority of residents Listopadówka [Listopadovka] (in honour of the October Revolution). Also, the name Dąbalówka [Dombalivka]¹⁶⁴ is used as an alternative name for the village of Fridrowa.

In the matter of the latter change, residents of the village of Fridrowa consulted Comrade Dombal’ [Dąbal],¹⁶⁵ who is the Honorary Chairman of the rural soviet there.

A change of name of the Polish village Fridrowa is necessary, because immediately adjacent (on the other side of the river) there is a Ukrainian village with the same name *Fridrovo*.

Deputy Chairman
Kantor
[typewritten signature]

Secretary
Piotrovych [Piotrowicz]
[typewritten signature]

Source: TsDAVO, f. 413, op. 1, spr. 95, ark. 29.

This Document has been published earlier in: Stanisław Stępień (ed.), *Polacy na Ukrainie: Zbiór dokumentów*. Part 1: Lata 1917–1939, vol. 3. Przemyśl: PWIN, 2001, pp. 57–58.

164 See also Stanisław Stępień (ed.), *Polacy na Ukrainie: Zbiór dokumentów*. Part 1: Lata 1917–1939, vol. 1. Przemyśl: PWIN, 1998, doc. 38.

165 Named after Tomasz Dąbal (1890–1937), a peasant communist activist. Dąbal worked as secretary of the Agricultural Commission at the Executive Committee of the Communist International. In 1936 he was arrested. On 21 August 1937 he was sentenced to death, and was executed the same day.

6. Outside Views on National Minority Institutions

6.1 Franciszek Charwat,¹⁶⁶ Polish Legation in Kharkiv, On the Situation of Polish Cooperatives in Ukraine, 21 February 1922

Translation from Polish

POLISH LEGATION
in Kharkiv
21 February 1922
no. 636/22/P/Ch.

To
Eastern Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
in Warsaw

Not desiring to indicate new paths for the policy of the Polish government in Ukraine, I would like to draw attention to an unexploited area of activity which may, given appropriate influence, bring us significant benefits, both political and economic.

The matter concerns the development of cooperative enterprise among Poles here.

At the present time, cooperative enterprise is viewed favourably and is very strongly supported by the Soviet government. Shedding the burden of the exclusive running of commerce and industry, but not wishing the resulting benefits to be redirected to private capital, the Soviets would like to rescue their ideology, at least partially, by making cooperative enterprise a leading factor regulating the whole of economic life. Hence the government, which has condemned and continues to condemn all non-communist cultural, religious and humanitarian associations, wishing to retain its own monopoly in that sphere, takes an entirely different approach to cooperative associations.

This is a fact which, in my opinion, we should eagerly exploit. It is true that the present time – when Polish factories and landed property are entirely destroyed, and the Poles here, driven by nervous exhaustion and the horrors they have experienced, are thinking only of returning to their own country and not of rebuilding our assets – is not a moment that immediately portends significant results. It is nonetheless possible that, given the mounting difficulties in

166 Franciszek Charwat (1881–1943) was a Polish diplomat. From 3 September 1921 to 26 August 1923 he was chargé d'affaires in Kharkiv. Following the Polish defeat of September 1939 he went to France, then to Portugal, and from there to Brazil, where he died in 1943.

repatriating the Poles living here and in offering options, and given also the difficult economic and housing situation in Poland, large numbers of Poles would more readily agree to remain here, having the possibility of earning a living, rather than embark on an uncertain migration.

Indeed, in spite of the current wave of homecomings, Ukraine is and still must be a space for our expansion, a territory for colonisation, and so foundations should already be being built today.

There is no doubt as to the political value of a network of Polish cooperatives here – they would not only provide protection against loss of national identity and a substitute for the non-existent cultural associations, but they might, suitably directed from Poland, play a significant role in supporting the government's eastern policy.

No less significant would be the network's economic value. The gaining and penetration of a market here, the creation of new factories and cooperation between Poland and this economic colony would be hugely facilitated and would give us a weapon against foreign competition.

The importance of cooperative enterprise in uniting national minorities here has been perfectly understood by the Germans. Not even mentioning the autonomous communes of Germans, which represent some kind of power, the "Sojurge" association of German settlers in Ukraine (see reports 159/21/P/CH. of 27 October and 792/21/P/Ch. of 23 December) is slowly beginning to pave for Germany a way to economic expansion in Ukraine. Although the German settlement is situated in the part of the country most affected by hunger, there is no sign of that mass panic among them; on the contrary, visibly directed from Berlin, they have been proceeding for almost a half a year now with action to create a cooperative network among their settlers, distributed all over Ukraine, they have obtained legalisation of their statutes from the Soviet government, and, having their own factories, are working busily and today already represent a quite substantial economic force.

In summary of the foregoing, I note that:

1. The mass re-emigration of Polish settlers is depriving us here of the most important factor on which our political and economic expansion to the East might primarily be based.
2. Neither the Polish government nor society has the ability to provide room and possibilities of making a living to the whole homeless crowds of returnees, making an undesirable proliferation of malcontents in the country inevitable.
3. Neither the Polish government nor society is financially powerful enough to create immediately its own establishments for economic expansion by directing large amounts of capital to the market here in order to take over major industry (forestry, railways, mines, concessions). Even expecting that a leading

role could be obtained in rebuilding the sugar industry here, nevertheless, given the present social and political conditions, the range of influence of such establishments will for a long time be territorially restricted.

Making the above assumptions, I believe that one of the starting points for our policy in Ukraine should be an effort to create small factories, though as numerous as possible, united into cooperatives.

Provided that this initiative is in agreement with the views of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I consider it necessary and possible to do the following:

1) Obtain from the Soviet government a guarantee for Polish cooperatives of the same rights and prerogatives that are enjoyed by all existing cooperatives here;

2) Proceed with appropriate action both here and in Poland.

The details of such action, in case of approval of the basic concept, might be more broadly developed and established.

Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

Charwat

[handwritten signature]

Source: AAN, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ref. 6703g, pp. 13–15.

6.2 German Section at the Odessa Gubispolkom, Report on a Field Visit by an Instructor Named Wehner, 10 April 1923

Translation from Russian

[16]

REPORT

from my duty visit as an instructor of the German Section of the Odessa Gubispolkom to the districts of Yelizavetgrad, Nikolaev and Kherson from 12 February to 5 April 1923.

[...]

GENERAL POLITICAL SITUATION

During my instructor's visit within the above-stated time period, I held 13 general meetings, which were attended by a vast amount of people, some of them lasted 4–5 hours continuously. The topic of discussion was the general political

situation, the situation in Europe and the consequences of the occupation of the Ruhr by the French, the Paris Commune. Six resolutions of protest against a new war in Europe were drawn up, which contained the following text: "Having listened to the report of Comrade Vener [Wehner], the instructor of the German Section at the Odessa Gubispolkom, the general meeting decided: we recognise that the capitalist system must finally yield to the force of circumstances and fall, for only then can we provide human conditions for the working people. Proletarians of all countries are called upon to fight capitalism until the final victory of the working class; we promise with all our means and forces to participate in the economic restoration of Soviet Russia and thus with the international and still struggling working class to find a haven for protection. Long live the united proletariat of all countries. Long live the world revolution."

Kochubeev colony of Mennonites in Aleksandrov Volost', 23 March 1923.

There were three discussion sessions that sparked lively debates on the following topics: "What is communism?", "What is God?". The issues I raised were followed by my own exhaustive explanations, based on the scientific works of various philosophers and writers.

I have established that a German colonist strives for political enlightenment, but, unfortunately, there is no German communist in the Nikolaev, Yelizavetgrad and Dnieper districts who could educate the German peasantry politically about the importance of the Soviet regime, etc. In the Jewish colonies, where Germans also settled, Jewish and Russian comrades are making more effort to educate the German peasantry. Most of the time one hears the expression: "these are counter-revolutionaries, nothing can be done about them" [...]. In reality, they are not enlightened enough and are intimidated by the tsarist government and the Civil War; even the peasants themselves repeatedly raised the question whether someone from the German comrades could visit the colonies more often.

Komnezamozhi [Committees of Impoverished Peasants]. For the Committee I held 4 meetings; the topics of my lectures were the new economic policy, duties of the committee members. I established a committee with 28 members in the colony of Dobroe, Nikolaev Uezd. In Nei-Dantsig [Neu-Danzig], Nikolaev Uezd, the former committee was dissolved and a new and more substantial one of 40 members was established in its place. In general, the committees still function inefficiently, either because they have not yet fully understood the work assigned to them, or because they are intimidated by the former kulaks.

[17]

For example, when I organised the committees in the collective farm of Dobroe, one of the peasants took the liberty of using the following expressions: "We

will take off your skins, pull you out like dogs, as we did with the communists.” I brought this peasant to the People’s Court in Dobroe.

The economic and political situation of the former landless is deplorable. In the economic respect, because in some cases there is not a single horse for 15–20 members [of the Committee of Impoverished Peasants]. In the colony Al’t Dantsig [Alt-Danzig], Yelizavetgrad Uezd, some members of the committee received horses from the government three times, but these members, being too lazy to work, sold the horses every time, or they lacked the energy to become independent. It should also be noted that the kulaks are trying by all means to hinder the desire of the former landless peasant to become independent, fearing to lose their labour force; in the political respect, because political education, including explanations of the real meaning of the committee, was completely lacking. I dealt with colonies whose members were meeting a communist (me) for the first time in their lives, and I must state that people show interest in our cause, which is proved by the following example: as I finished my speech, people aged 60 up to 70 years were so touched by my lecture that they wanted to kiss my hands out of gratitude, they surrounded me on all sides. I distributed political and economic literature to the Committees, and it was decided to gather their members at least 2–3 times a week to discuss the brochures. The following brochures were distributed: “The Manifesto of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels,” “The ABC of Communism,” “Work,” “Agricultural Cooperatives” and others. It is important that educational work does not subside again, it must be continued by all available means in order to promote class struggle in the villages as well.

EDUCATION. Most of the libraries are freed (cleared) of nationalist and religious literature. In the German library in the city of Nikolaev I managed to find political literature, which the former German section had provided to the library for use. The literature was lying on the floor in a corner of the room’s, and it had not even been registered. I pointed out this circumstance to the head of the library and suggested that she immediately add these books to the lists and display them in a prominent place, otherwise the library will be closed after the next inspection.

There are very few clubs, which is explained by the fact that there is no one to organise them, as well as no funds and efforts. In the collective farm of Dobroe, Nikolaev Uezd, a club was organised that worked very well and effectively. The head of the club is a Jewish comrade who shows great interest in this matter. Political readings of the German colonist Leonardo Bodinger are also frequent. Worth mentioning is the struggle between the modern youth, members of the club, and their parents; for example, the son of a former kulak sang “The Internationale” at home, his father could not stand it and shouted at his son: “If you go

to the damned club again and sing this song at home, I will deprive you of your inheritance." Overwhelmed with emotions, he approached his son, who, however, is not a coward and pressed his father to the wall, mocking him and objecting: "Your time is over, we live under the free Soviet government." There were reports that parents complained to the Catholic priest in the city of Nikolaev, Father Merklinger, about their children and about the club, and he allegedly answered: "Catholics who attend the club do not dare to go to church and take communion any more." I passed this information in written form to the local partkom [party committee]. I handed over 35 political brochures to the above-named club. For the further equipping of the library and for the improvement of clubs, as well as their establishment, it is necessary to obtain various literature.

SCHOOLS. The teaching staff is very weak in terms of education, they are mostly young. Several German schools had to be closed, as the sacristan held the position of a teacher as well, and until now the school could not function due to the lack of suitable persons. At the meeting in the collective farm of Dobroe, where some residents protested against the appointment of a teacher who would not teach the Law of God, I assigned this teacher to the position and the school immediately began to function. In the first place, there is a lack of relevant teaching material to replace the old material from the tsarist era (in German), so it is high time to publish new textbooks for German schools, adapted to the Soviet system.

[17zv]

Economic situation. I reorganised the German trade unions for the colonists in Yelizavetgrad and Nikolaev on the basis of agricultural credit partnerships, with their accession to the District Agricultural Union. The Mennonite union of the Kochubeev Volost' of the Kherson Uezd is still on a nationalist basis. I was presented with a paper from the central headquarters of the Mennonite Union in the city of Khar'kov, according to which the union is not subject to mandatory reorganisation. This paper was sent from Khar'kov on 7 February 1923. I took the charter of this union to Odessa to take a closer look. As soon as the spring sowing season is over, the reorganised unions will organise gatherings and elect a new administration. I particularly emphasised that persons holding religious positions cannot be elected to the administration; representatives of the village, members of the Committees of Impoverished Peasants, if possible, communists should be prioritised. On each local union committee, a member of the Committees of Impoverished Peasants must be elected.

The general activity of the unions covered the former hunger campaign, the distribution of donations arriving from abroad. The Nikolaev Union owns two tractors ordered from the “*Shtok*” [“Stock”] company in Germany and placed in Simferopol, but it does not have the funds to put them into operation. The union also possesses goods from the *Kauchukrest* [Natural Rubber Company] in Odesa, where it orders rubber goods for the colonists and others. The union also has a small shoemaker’s store with 3 employees. In the near future, the Nikolaev union plans to join the union cooperative in Hamburg. The central headquarters of the Mennonite Union in Khar’kov also expects to receive 500 American tractors in the near future. It should be mentioned that there are no commercial forces that could take over the organisation and would be suitable for trading. The representative of the union is usually a rural schoolteacher, who, of course, has no experience in this field. Above all, one should pay attention to the literature that is delivered by unions, without censorship, from abroad to Russia.

COLLECTIVE FARMS. In general, such farms and artel’s in the German colonies are still very poorly supplied with agricultural implements and horses. In addition, the proper organisation of the artel’s was clearly misunderstood; the general opinion usually boils down to the fact that if artel’s are established, then they immediately receive benefits from the government, and if this does not work, then the interest in collective work disappears. In Nikolaev Uezd, there are three, and in Kherson Uezd there is one artel’, which managed to somewhat improve their economic situation. The main reason for the problematic development of artel’s is the fact that there are no suitable persons who would take this matter seriously and approach it to the best of their ability.

The general economic situation in the German colonies has improved significantly in comparison with 1922. Hunger is generally eliminated, there are no beggars lying on the ground. One of the main evils is the lack of agricultural tools that were taken away during the Civil War and are in some volost’s still stored without any use. Livestock is insufficient, particularly among the former landless, who currently possess land but do not have sufficient means to cultivate it. Unfortunately, there is still a national hatred of the Germans living in the village. For example, the Neifel’d [Neufeld] colony, which used to be one of the most culturally developed (the village had an elementary school [...]),¹⁶⁷ during the civil war it was substantially devastated and damaged; the inhabitants fled and in 1920–1921 partially returned, but now they cannot obtain land anymore. Russian refugees from Siberia settled in some houses – they continue to gradually devastate the village. 1) The streets were ploughed for seeding, which resulted in the draining of ponds and wells, and the peasants have to travel 8 versts to bring water. Now

167 One word is illegible.

they are thinking of dismantling houses and building them at another site. 2) During my stay in November 1922, more than 1,500 trees (1,000 puds) – old and young – were cut down, and this is the work of Russian refugees who organised three artel's. I suggested that the Guberniia Land Department in Nikolaev investigate this case. The commission has seized firewood. When I was there again, it turned out that the firewood had been sold to the mills in Nei Boldavka for 200 puds of grain. Whole houses, stone and iron fences, floors, etc. were taken away.

[18]

To this day, there is a paper in Antonov Volost' with the order of the Nikolaev *Uispolkom* [Uezd Executive Committee] dated 18 October 1922, protocol 72 § 3, according to which the German colonists must immediately leave the colony. Until now, they have not yet been given land and are threatened with expulsion every day. A similar case is also observed in Effenger, Nikolaev Uezd, where a peasant, who also fled, could not return to his house under the pretext that the house had been nationalised, but they still refuse to lease it. Every day he is in danger of expulsion. Unfortunately, even among the communists, national enmity breaks out, for example, in Kochubeev Volost', Kherson Uezd, the chairman of the Revkom [Revolutionary Committee] posted a notice stating that the use of the German language was prohibited. Unfortunately, many party comrades are poorly educated in terms of politics and are not sufficiently aware of the circumstances the peasants live in, which often leads to major misunderstandings. Our task, of course, is to create communists from among the colonists. To accomplish this, we need more financial sources, funds and efficient, strong-minded party comrades.

INSTRUCTOR OF THE GERMAN SECTION AT THE GUBISPOLKOM

Odessa

10 April 1923

Certified true copy / XXX /¹⁶⁸

Source: TsDAVO, R-f. 5, op. 1, spr. 2239, ark. 16–18.

¹⁶⁸ Signature is not legible.

6.3 Stefan Litauer, Polish Legation in Kharkiv, Report on the Situation of the Polish Community Living in Odessa, 25 September 1923

Translation from Polish

POLISH LEGATION
in Kharkiv
25 September 1923
No. 3029/23/P. CH.
By Dr Stefan Litauer¹⁶⁹

According to distribution list

To
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Section D. V. Consular Department
WARSAW
and to the Polish Legation
in Moscow

Polish life in Odessa

In Odessa there are currently still 5,000–6,000 Poles remaining. Most of them are from the classes of the very poor, small craftsmen or minor officials. There are still several members of the intelligentsia, who hold quite important posts: professors, doctors, engineers, etc. Communication between this intelligentsia and the grey mass of Poles in Odessa is very weak, and it should be noted that the small number of Polish intellectuals have adapted more to Soviet relations than have the Polish masses. In Odessa, like everywhere else, most Poles are grouped around a Catholic *parafja* [parish]. There are two parishes, one centred on the old church in the town centre, richer and more intellectual, the other on the new church on the town outskirts, where mainly craftsmen and workers are grouped.

The priest of the first parish is named Pflug,¹⁷⁰ and that of the second is named Szenfeld [Schönfeld].¹⁷¹ They are both German, but speak Polish, under-

169 Stefan Litauer (1892–1959) was a Polish diplomat and journalist. In 1922–1932 he worked for the foreign ministry.

170 Ferdinand Pflug (1894–?) was a Roman Catholic priest, from 1923 the priest of the parish of the Assumption of Mary in Odessa. After 1928 he was arrested and sent to the Bukht-Nagayevo labour camp.

171 Alois Schönfeld (1873–1938) was the priest of one of the Roman Catholic parishes in Odessa. In 1924 he was charged with counter-revolutionary activity, but was released. In 1935 he was again arrested and was sentenced to five years' hard labour. He died while carrying out his sentence.

stand the parishioners' Polish needs and are absolutely loyal to the Polish element as the dominant culture in the Catholic parishes in Ukraine. The old church also has a young curate, named Aszenberg,¹⁷² who comes from Żmudź (Samogitia), but considers himself a Pole, and through his actions shows himself as such. The situation of the Catholic churches in Odessa is much more favourable than anywhere else in Ukraine. The Catholic priests are not harassed or thrown out of their homes, they retain full control of clergy houses and church houses, and their contacts with parishioners and with the Polish Office are not constrained by any spying, searches or arrests.

Because the church is in such a situation, and the priests are respected by the local Soviet authorities, it has also been possible in Odessa to develop educational work among the Polish youth. At the new church there is a four-year school, which has its own most respectable building (one of the church houses). This school is entirely legal, is managed, maintained and subsidised by a group of parents, and indeed is tolerated by the *huberniia's* *Narobraz* [People's Commissariat of Education]. Moreover, the new church has a shelter for the elderly, which also serves as a concealed orphanage. In this house there are eight elderly women and six elderly men, as well as 35 children aged from 4 to 15. This boarding house is under the direction of Fr. Aszenberg, who contributes much effort and energy to maintaining the children's home. It is said that the Soviet authorities are not aware of its existence, and for that reason the children there can be educated in a strictly Polish and Catholic spirit. This lack of awareness on the part of the Soviet authorities is particularly surprising in that immediately next door is the aforementioned Polish school, which is inspected, although perfunctorily and only occasionally, by the *Narobraz*. Facts of this kind indicate that the local relations in Odessa are much more favourable to the development of Polish educational and cultural activity than in other towns. The Polish population in Odessa tries to take advantage of this situation, and these efforts should be supported by us. At present the efforts of the Polish population are directed towards enabling the establishment of another Polish school at the old church in the town centre, this time a high school, with a programme matching that of Polish high schools. The founding of this school is subject to difficulties of a purely financial nature, as the *Narobraz* has in principle given its consent for the opening of the school, provided that the group of parents listed as the founding group declares a sufficient sum of money for the school's maintenance. I consider it absolutely right to support these efforts: a fixed monthly subsidy from us amounting to 30 dollars, and a one-off subsidy to the same amount for the school's opening, will enable the Polish population in Odessa to establish a Polish high school in the town centre.

172 Paweł Aszenberg (1895–1933) was a Roman Catholic priest, from 1922 in the parish of the Assumption of Mary in Odessa. In 1925 he was arrested for illegal religious teaching and sentenced to three years' imprisonment. After serving his sentence he was again arrested, and in 1929 he was sentenced to three years' hard labour, during which time he died of typhoid fever.

There also exists a third school in Odessa, also in the form of a boarding house, for 130 children aged 3–16, in Mrs Drzewicka's former house for girls. This school is subsidised by the Narobraz, but remains under the excellent direction of Mrs Elknerowa, a good Polish patriot, who – having adapted the school on the outside to Soviet requirements – runs it internally in a Polish spirit. Apart from the schools and churches, the Polish population in Odessa has no community centres. In spite of that, in national terms, the population in Odessa appears to be more cohesive and persistent than the numerous Polish populations in other centres in Ukraine, such as Kiev. This is perhaps explained by the fact that in Odessa there is no Polish communist section, and the Polish population is not subject on a national basis to the destructive influence of Polish communists. This fact is also of key importance in educational work, which is able to develop much more freely under the supervision of the Russian communist Gubnarobraz than under a special Polish communist education office, as in Kiev.

Chargé d'Affaires a.i.
[illegible handwritten signature]

Source: AAN, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ref. 6773, pp. 19–21.

6.4 Philipp Vassel,¹⁷³ German Consulate in Odessa, On the German Party Section in Odessa, 3 June 1924

Translation from German

[1]

German Consulate

Odessa, 3 June 1924

[To] the Foreign Office,
Berlin W 8.

Carbon copy to the General Consulate in Kharkiv and the Embassy in Moscow

German Section of the Communist State Party

There exists in Odessa itself a special German Section to monitor the national minority interests of the 150,000 Soviet citizens of German stock who are settled in

¹⁷³ Philipp Vassel (1873–1951), career diplomat, consul, then general consul in Odessa, 1923–1926.

Odessa Huberniia – overwhelmingly in the German colonies of the smaller Odesa Okruha, where they make up 15 percent of the okruha's peasant population.

The previous leaders [of the section] – even if they did not have a particularly good reputation in Russian-Soviet circles – had worked in a careful and not unskilful way to bridge the deep antagonisms left over from the Bolsheviks' struggle for power since 1920, particularly in the Soviet administration's relations with the German colonies. Since the terrible bloodbath exacted on the part of the Cheka¹⁷⁴ as revenge for the colonists' struggle against Bolshevism, the thought of actual resistance to Soviet power is nowhere to be found in the German colonies. But economically and in the realm of the spiritual, i.e. especially ecclesiastical and educational matters, autochthonous Germandom and communal communism stand irreconcilably opposed to one another. In cooperation with the principal of the German school in Odessa, Director Thauberger, and the German Section's school expert, Fischer, it was possible to establish certain personal points of contact that were gradually able to somewhat detoxify mutual relations. In so doing, Fischer held onto the idea that all communist attempts at conversion would be lost on the adult generations of Germans. [...]

[2]

[...] The German Section is therefore trying through patient work to draw close to young persons from good peasant circles, among whom it could hope for success in conversion at least in the future. It therefore worked primarily on re-establishing the German school system in the countryside. For financial reasons, but also for general social ones, it had to start its reform with the enlistment of a new teaching staff and with the support of the better-off peasants, who are not inclined to communism. In this field, both sides' mutual interests met, whereby communists and peasants alike are placing their hopes for the future in opposite directions. The bearers of these ideas sought to find common ground for discussion and interaction in a German cultural association, which, under the exclusion of politics, enabled a certain rapprochement everywhere when attempted throughout the entire huberniia. From these ideas, the German Section achieved recognition of the cultural association's existence from the Soviet authorities, and Director Thauberger, with his enormous personal standing, recruited membership from among the peasants. The matter initially sounded quite gratifying.

However, incendiary complaints from communist German refugees, who live here on the good graces of the Soviets, led to an attempt at the very first general assembly of the cultural association in Odessa to turn the new organisation

174 Extraordinary Commission, the secret police of the revolutionary era.

[3]

into a rattling communist armoured car. This was certainly upsetting, but it did not do much harm, and the quiet, compensatory work of reconciliation continued. In particular, an emergency aid programme for the local German school's poor children, which the cultural association's local women's group under the leadership of my wife continued through the winter, accomplished everything expected of it.

In the meantime, the staff of the German Section has changed. Fischer was initially pressured [to go to] Germany for purposes of agitation and then employed in Moscow in the organisation of the German school system. The head of the section, a man with severe lung disease, was taken on by the hubernia administration and then given leave. Those persons departing were replaced by new inexperienced people who wanted to show that they understand things better than their predecessors do and were at odds with everything that the others had advanced. The new head of the section, a certain Müller, had just been forced out of a similar position in Crimea after a serious failure and was burning with desire to score public victories on communism's behalf. It soon became known that what mattered to him was gaining personal influence over all German organisations. Since, understandably, no one put up any resistance to him, he managed very quickly to be successful on paper. He noticed, however, that nothing had been gained and now tried to raise his profile by means of terror. In this respect, Russian conditions have changed quite considerably, at least here in Odessa. It is no longer so easy to shoot people in the blink of an eye, and even the police require evidence in order to take action against people no matter how unpopular. More recently,

[4]

incriminating material has not been brought against anybody]. Outside economics and culture, nobody actually has to suffer especially under the Soviet regime today, and it is not difficult to observe the new laws. Therefore, it is only possible to fall back on old matters, and there a very simple means has emerged here in Odessa – police files about a German central committee that was founded as a safeguard for general German interests here during the rule of the Russian volunteers and that switched over to Bolshevism only with the military advance of the Reds. The secret police here has total understanding for the fact that this central committee could act anti-Bolshevik under Denikin as well as revolutionary under the Bolsheviks later, and it has therefore generally refrained from using that old material against the members of the central committee. It keeps

them on hand for the eventuality that those who are compromised should again make themselves otherwise unpopular or straight out violate the law. In many cases, it has made use of them in order to keep people in investigatory detention – in one case for 17 months – until they were then brought before court and acquitted. Through some kind of false slander, the German Section has now managed to have poor Director Thauberger arrested for harmful activity in the culture association that their own predecessors founded and in the German school, although he has not deviated one bit from the provisions agreed to with Comrade Fischer.... But objectivity does not matter to [the German Section], where one hopes instead, by means of terror, to achieve a situation in which

[5]

indigenous German circles, and perhaps the rest of us as well, pay special deference to the German Section. Yet since the times when there was no shame but a martyr's honour to have been in prison remain in general a fresh memory and since people today are no longer shot for trifles, the terror is having exactly the opposite effect than what the German Section expects.¹⁷⁵

The German Section in Odessa, by the way, has brought terror into play not only against Thauberger, but also against a Reich German, the merchant Wilhelm Holzwarth, junior. The case is strange, for Holzwarth, the German-Russian son of a colonist, had left Odessa as a precautionary measure during the period of unrest when Bolshevism was established, had emigrated to Württemberg and was naturalised there, and only last autumn returned here – with a German passport and a proper visa from the Russian trade representative in Berlin – [to Odessa] where he represents American trade interests. It is unknown how he aroused the personal enmity of the German Section. It is suspected that he has been confused with his father, who two weeks ago was elected by a provost synod as a lay representative of the local Protestant communities at the general synod, which convenes soon in Moscow. The father is not a citizen of the Reich, and his son's Reich citizenship was apparently at first overlooked by the police. At any rate, Holzwarth junior was arrested at the same time as Thauberger by the local police at the behest of the German Section on the 21st of the previous month. The matter led to a consular intervention, which is still pending and whose outcome remains subject to report. So far, it has been officially disclosed that Holzwarth is accused of resisting

[6]

¹⁷⁵ These incidents are also mentioned in the report of German Section in the Odessa Huberniia Party Committee from 8 October 1924 (document 5.2).

Soviet authority by participating in the activities of the central committee in 1919. Other members of the central committee who reside here and are well known to the police remain undisturbed.

So far, the German Section's course has only caused destruction. Whether it will yield any kind of success, at least in the interests of communism, remains to be seen. At any rate, the equilibrium of the communities, which is unmistakably in the Russian authorities' interests, has once again been set back a good deal unfortunately.

After the pressure it instigated, the German Section is now seeking success in the countryside, especially in the field of "political enlightenment." In the German villages, 120 village schools, 3 communist village cells, and 17 cells of the Communist Youth League have been subordinated to it. At the same time, it controls the German section in the Odessa Huberniia school. Further, it publishes a German newspaper *Hammer und Pflug* [Hammer and Plow],¹⁷⁶ for which it estimates 3,000 subscribers, of which, however, only 1,000 subscribers have been found so far, not including the village administrations, which have subscribed to a large number of copies. The founding of this newspaper also goes back to Fischer and Thauberger. They correctly said at the time that in today's era such a newspaper would have to make do without subsidies, if it wanted to exist at all, and for this reason must not offend the peasant population with tactlessness. Today, nothing remains of these reasonable principles....

[7]

Furthermore, the German Section is seeking to promote the cooperatives and the committees for mutual assistance in the German villages in the interests of communism. With its current means and its current staffing level, it will not succeed. But it has been my experience that unfit people, especially in Soviet organisations, are quickly used up, and it does not hurt at any rate that the Russian huberniia administration is being taught through the present section which means do not work in German villages. If one has beheld with his own eyes that unshakable construct of German Protestant church congregations, delivered from hardship and death over the course their timeless existence – as was recently my privilege in Bergdorf, where I attended the cantata marking the 400th anniversary of the German hymnal on Sunday – there and in the Catholic villages as well – as I experienced on the drive to Bergdorf in Mannheim, Kandel and Selz for visits with the German Catholic parish priests – if one knows of their imposing

¹⁷⁶ *Hammer und Pflug*, a German newspaper edited by the German Section at the TsKNM in Ukraine between 1924 and 1925.

loyal martyrdom in its overwhelming patience and appreciates the superior way in which, even if with sacrifice, communist village mayors (former Russian sailors or German stewards from the Hamburg-America Line)¹⁷⁷ are being forced into a completely peripheral position of decorative façade with assured geniality, then one will also only be able to smile at the most menacing capers of an alien Communist Party's German Section. The German Section is a blossom of limited duration, the German communities are a piece of German eternity.

/Vassel/

Source: PA AA, 84282, 3 June 1924.

6.5 German Consulate in Kharkiv, On the Mennonite Resistance against Raionirovanie, 25 September 1924

Translation from German

German General Consulate

Kharkiv, 25 September 1924

[To] the Foreign Office,
Berlin

Formation of autonomous administrative districts in Ukraine (national minorities)

The intrinsically weak hopes that the Mennonites attached to the consolidation of their villages around Halbstadt into an autonomous administrative district for their economic, cultural, and religious life have experienced a severe disappointment – this according to what I have heard from a reliable, extremely well-informed source. The Mennonites will therefore resist by all means any further *raionirovanie*, as intended by the government of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic with regard to the settlements around Aleksandrovsk [Zaporizhzhia], and will exploit the resistance of the local authorities and civil servants, mostly Russian, who are being replaced by German speakers due to *raionirovanie* and with that are being left unemployed.

¹⁷⁷ This might be a hint on Friedrich Helbig (document 1.8).

The true aim that the government has pursued with *raionirovanie* was in the judgment of my informant to subvert the united front of the German-speaking Mennonite colonists by interspersing them with communist administrative civil servants and workers, and to carry out a thus far failed Bolshevisation in the guise of an outwardly liberal nationality policy. This made itself felt immediately after *raionirovanie*, and the guilelessness with which the Mennonites fell into the trap of *raionirovanie* has been ridiculed even by government civil servants – but not those belonging to the party – as naive and pitiful beyond all measure.

[2]

In my informant's judgment, if under the previous Russian-Soviet administration turning the tax screw had made itself unpleasantly felt on the whole as a means of making colonists more compliant, under *raionirovanie*, the Russian-speaking civil servants – who, given their ignorance of the German language, could be tricked into taking an X for a U and with whom, given their indolence, a *modus vivendi* could at least be found – have disappeared, and German-speaking communists have gained entry into the villages. These now stick their nose literally into everything and in their lack of knowledge regarding the colonists' living conditions and the countryside in general are making life hell for [the Mennonites], all the more so as they aim to Bolshevise the youth, who were until now inaccessible to the Russian-speaking party workers. In order to compensate as much as possible for the aforementioned consequences of the Greek gifts of *raionirovanie*, the Mennonites in the run-up to the new elections to the soviets in the autumn did not try to push through the German-speaking communists transplanted [to their communities], rather the trusted Russian-speaking communists from earlier [...].

/XXX/

Source: PA AA, R 84284, 25 September 1924.

6.6 Polish Consulate General in Kharkiv, General Description of the Situation of the Polish Population in Ukraine, 2 March 1925

Translation from Polish

Kharkiv, 2 March 1925

REPUBLIC OF POLAND
CONSULATE GENERAL
in Kharkiv
No. 302/prez

Distribution list:

To

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1/ Political Department

2/ Consular Department

3/ LEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND

in Moscow

THE STATE OF THE POLISH NATION IN UKRAINE.

General description

1. Presumed number of Poles living in the region covered by the mission, increase or decrease in that number, rate of development of the Polish community.

The current Polish population in Soviet Ukraine is approximately 450,000, mainly concentrated in the Right-Bank region, in localities, which formerly belonged to the Republic of Poland [...].

2. Distribution in particular localities and environments, nature of Polish settlements, etc.

[...] The course of the Dnieper marks a clear boundary, beyond which there are only occasional Polish settlements of a permanent nature. In the Right-Bank region, however, most Polish settlements are long-established, and the Polish population regards itself as native. Only a small part of that population consists of the descendants of Polish peasants who were resettled to Rus' (for example, the so-called Masurian colonies near Proskuriv); the majority consists of indigenous locals or the descendants of Polish families that have lived here for centuries and consider themselves a local indigenous population. In percentage terms the Polish population accounts for as much as 8% of the total in Volhynia and in Proskuriv Okruha, while towards the southeast, in the povits of Balta, Chyhyryn

and Cherkasy, the figure falls to 1% or lower. Higher percentages can be encountered in urban areas; in Kiev, for example, formerly 12% of the population was Polish, although at present that figure has fallen significantly [...].

Last autumn, in Kiev, Vinnytsia and Zhytomyr, the GPU¹⁷⁸ drew up lists of so-called “defectors,” containing hundreds of names. Such persons are generally suspected of disloyalty to Soviet authority or even of spying for Poland. The situation of these people is also extremely onerous, and many have no way out.

3. Development of organisational and social life, description and brief information on the most important societies and institutions and leading staff members, trade unions, financial basis and assets (with regard to associations).

As to the development of organisational and social life, given the ruthless terror that has been applied for several years, there is no question of the existence of any organisations, even underground ones, that do not function on the initiative of and with the support of the government and the Communist Party. [...] The “gubkoms” [Huberniia Party Committee] in Kiev, Vinnytsia and Zhytomyr have Polish sub-departments, and the huberniia educational boards have so-called “Polsections.” Besides, Kharkiv and the major cities of the Right-Bank region have so-called Polish communist clubs, which very slowly, and only in recent months, have displayed – if not vitality as yet – a certain effort to make their existence permanent and to serve as a focal point for the Polish population.

The number of rural soviets (“sielrads”) in the Right-Bank region where official business (internal only) has begun to be conducted in the Polish language is 36 according to the official statistics, although *Sierp* [The Sickle]¹⁷⁹ gives it as 63.

To give a general characterisation of the Poles currently living in Ukraine, 9/10 of the Polish population in the Right-Bank region consists of farmers, among whom Poland should begin cultural and educational work at the first opportunity. Other classes, such as former agricultural and factory officials, workers in various branches of industry, shopkeepers, craftsmen, state officials who have not yet ultimately joined the Bolsheviks, are very few in number and so scattered that they cannot serve as an ad hoc point of support for national activity.

4. Development of Polish economic life, banks, cooperatives, major enterprises.

None of the listed institutions exist in Ukraine, for the reasons set out in point 3.

5. Polish press, dailies and periodicals, their influence and its direction, number of subscribers or copies printed, any party leanings, participation of Poles in local political life.

178 State political administration, i.e. the political police, 1922–1934.

179 *Sierp*: A weekly in Polish language, edited between 1922 and 1937.

[...] In Soviet Ukraine, only the party, communist press has civic rights. The Polish press from beyond the border does not reach the population at all. The following Polish communist magazines are published in Ukraine: *Sierp*, *Głos Młodzieży* [Voice of the Youth],¹⁸⁰ and the communist scouting magazine *Sztandar Pioniera* [Pioneer's Banner]¹⁸¹ – all three published in Kiev. [...]

6. Polish schooling, number of children of school age and percentage attending school, nurseries, schools, their number and character (state or private, and how funded), level of learning, influence on youth. Teaching staff, its level of training and affinity to the Polish nation, teachers' professional associations and seminars; out-of-school youth organisations, scouting.

Most of the lectures on these courses are given in Russian. [...] In Ukraine there are 250 Polish schools, attended by 12 to 15 thousand children; other young Poles of school age, numbering several tens of thousands, are not taught at all or attend non-Polish schools.

There is a Polish secondary school in Kiev, at no. 10 Ryl's'kyi Lane, with around 400 male and female pupils. The headmistress is Miss Szumowiczówna, a former member of staff. Mr Józefat Andrzejowski, on leaving Kiev, asked the former staff to remain in their posts. Of their number there now remain only four teachers, of whom Mmes Remińska, Rudnicka and Kuryłowiczowa are now leaving, and Miss Szumowiczówna has given a ceremonial communist pledge.

Leszczyński is distinguished by his level of education and engagement; similarly, in Kiev, Mr Skarbek-Szacki. [...]

7. Pastoral care, priests and their participation in national social life. Polish churches and *parafie* [parishes], seminaries.

The Kiev region and Soviet Volhynia are divided into 136 parishes, and currently have 68 priests. Podolia is divided into 103 parishes and has 38 priests. In the Left-Bank region only a few parishes remain, in Kharkiv, Poltava, in the care of Polish priests. In Odessa there remains only the prelate Fr. Kruszyński, who has written a letter modelled on the letter of Fr. Fedukowicz and Tolstoy. [...]

Recently there has been an intensification of the persecution of priests, provocation and forced public expression of solidarity with the principles set out in the letter written by Fr. Fedukowicz, Tolstoy, and now Kruszyński of Odessa. The defection of Fr. Chrzczonowicz and resolutions of the parish councils and parishioners' meetings in Kharkiv, Poltava, Zhytomyr, Odessa, Vinnytsia and others, generally condemning the Polish element in the Catholic Church and protesting against the dependence of the Catholic clergy in Ukraine on the clerical

180 *Głos Młodzieży*: A bi-weekly in Polish language, edited between 1925 and 1935.

181 *Sztandar Pioniera*: A journal for Polish schoolchildren edited in Kiev, 1924–1925.

authorities in Poland – all of this has a disheartening effect on the remaining priests, particularly as they do not feel sufficient support from outside.

8. The Polish minority; attitude of the local authorities and community to the Polish nation, and in particular to Polish schools. Position of the local legislature, extent and possibility of utilisation of rights of minorities under local legislation and any international treaties.

[...] As to the attitude of the authorities, it is clear that the authorities take care of the Polish element insofar as they are striving to create Polish communist personnel for use after communists come to power in the Republic of Poland.

The possibility of taking advantage of rights of the Polish minority under local legislation can be entirely excluded at the present time.

9. Communication between the local population and Poland, including contacts existing between particular organisations for youth and for the older community.

All communication between local Poles and the home country is painstakingly eliminated by the Soviet authorities and is subject to harsh persecution.

10. Participation and role of the mission in the life of the Polish population, mutual relations. Subsidies from the mission's funds.

In case of the discovery of any contact between the mission and groups of Poles, or even individual persons, severe repressions and persecution immediately follow. [...]

Head of the Consulate General
Minister Counsellor

[illegible handwritten signature]

Source: AAN, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ref. 6703g, pp. 458–466.

6.7 Polish Consulate General in Kharkiv, On the Creation of Polish Administrative Units in Ukraine, 5 May 1925

Translation from Polish

Kharkiv, 5 May 1925

Republic of Poland
CONSULATE GENERAL
in KHARKIV.
No. 623/prez

Distribution list:

To

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
1/ Political Department
2/ Consular Department
3/ POLISH LEGATION in Moscow

On the Creation of Polish Administrative Units in Ukraine

The following announcement appeared in the press here in the last days of April of this year:

“On the designation of Polish rural soviets in Volhynia.

The Central Administrative-Territorial Commission at the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, at its meeting on 22 April of this year, approved a plan of the Volhynia Huberniia Executive Committee to designate Polish rural soviets in the following eight places in Shepetivka, Zhytomyr and Korosten' Okruhas: 1/ Stare Hutysko; 2/ Zabaro-Dawydówka, Nowy Zawód, 4/ Bobrycka Bolarka, 5/ Hoten II, 6/ Siedlice, 7/ Koszelówka, 8/ Dowbysz.¹⁸² The resolution is to be put before the next meeting of the All-Ukrainian Executive Committee for approval. The listed Polish rural soviets represent only a part of the work on the *raionirovanie* [Pol. *rejonowanie*] of localities with a predominantly Polish population. Deputy Chairman of the Central Commission for National Minority Affairs: Sudarski. Secretary: Piotrowicz.”

On 25 April of this year, the Soviet press in Kiev reported on the creation of a Polish raion in Volhynia (Zhytomyr Okruha). This raion is being organised in accordance with a plan of the well-known communist activist in Polish matters, the

¹⁸² In Polish the spelling *Dotbysz* appears more common.

Pole CZERLUNCZAKIEWICZ [Ukr. Cherliunchakevych], Deputy People's Commissar for Internal Affairs in the Ukrainian SSR. The press notes that the local Polish population is very favourable to the implementation of this new plan, while Catholic priests are agitating against the project, having regard to their loss of influence among the Polish population. Czerlunczakiewicz said the following in an interview with Kiev journalists:

"The purpose of my stay in Zhytomyr is to give a speech on the activity of the Government at the Okruha Congress of Soviets related among other things to the fact that in Zhytomyr Okruha there are many national minorities, particularly Poles. In mutually adjacent parts of Novohrad-Volyns'kyi, Baranivka and Pulyny Raions, the Polish population constitutes a compact mass, making it possible to create one Polish raion.

Considering Pulyny Raion, in which the Polish population amounts to 9,000, it should be noted that there are 12 rural soviets there for which a greater or smaller part of the population is Polish, but so far there are no soviets conducting official work in Polish. I can point to Koszelówka, for example, where the Polish population accounts for 711 out of the total of 890 persons; in Sosnowa Bolaraka there are 711 Poles out of the total 719 inhabitants of the village; only in the Koszelowa settlement is there almost no Polish population. In spite of this, in the rural soviet covering those three villages, the chairman is a person who does not speak Polish. We can thus see here one of the abnormalities that our government is fighting against. As regards the class division of the Polish population of Pulyny Raion, it consists of 75% poor peasants and 25% moderately wealthy peasants. The chairman of the Committee of Impoverished Peasants is a Pole, who reports that 50% of Polish farms are represented on that Committee, which is the largest percentage in Ukraine. This proves the high degree of Sovietisation of the Polish population. In my opinion, the most suitable centre for the future Polish raion is the settlement of Dowbysz, where there is a porcelain factory. The task that the authorities and administration have set themselves in relation to national minorities in general, and thus also to Poles living in Ukraine, is to introduce, as far as possible, the use of their language in the courts and administrative apparatus. This task will be successfully accomplished in full in relation to residents of the future Polish raion. The population is very favourable to the creation of a Polish raion. Local staff report that the peasants who come to Zhytomyr are asking almost daily when there will finally be a Polish raion. The priests fear it, however, saying that it will increase the influence of the communists and reduce their own role. As regards the Okruha Congress of Soviets in Zhytomyr, it can be said to have gone very well. The delegates – Czechs, Poles, Germans and Ukrainians as well – welcomed wholeheartedly the creation of a Polish raion. The resolution following my speech was adopted unanimously. The Ukrainian government has the needs of national minorities so much at heart that it has established norms

for raions inhabited by a Ukrainian population. For example, while an average raion should have between 25,000 and 40,000 people, the raions inhabited by a national minority might have a population of no more than 10,000. The population of the future Polish raion centred on Dowbysz significantly exceeds that minimum, and is almost equal to the normal population (it is approximately 20,000). Following my return to Kharkiv the plan for the creation of the raion will be finally drawn up by the appropriate authorities, and it will shortly be put into effect.”

In case of the creation of new Polish administrative units in Soviet Ukraine, the Consulate General will immediately notify the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of that fact.

Head of the Consulate General
Minister Counsellor
[illegible handwritten signature]

Source: AAN, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ref. 6703g, pp. 491–493.

6.8 German Consulate in Odessa, On the Economic Situation of the German Colonies, 11 September 1926

Translated from German

[1]

German Consulate Odessa

Odessa, 11 September 1926

To the Foreign Office,
Berlin

Copy to the German Embassy Moscow and the German General Consulate,
Kharkiv

German Colonies of Southern Ukraine

On the occasion of an official trip to the territory of the Moldavian Republic (AMSSR), I visited a series of German colonies within my district on the way there and back. I would like to summarise my impressions in the following manner.

The economic situation of the German colonies in southern Ukraine varies greatly. In general, severe impoverishment is to be observed compared to earlier. Inventories of agricultural machinery have been dragged off or sold, the line of good horses of large breeding – which were predominant in the colonies – has shrunk or has been considerably decimated – small livestock, especially sheep and pigs, [have] almost fully disappeared. Outwardly, as well, some colonies give the impression of being run-down and neglected. Frequently, no value is placed on keeping home and farm in good order, as is [otherwise] common on German estates. For 10 years, repairs on homes and barns have been carried out only to a moderate extent. Moreover, Soviet punitive expeditions wrought systematic devastation in a number of colonies after the German uprising of 1920.

[2]

Thus, for example, in the colony of Worms, every third or fourth farm was burned down and has yet to be rebuilt to this day.

There is no mistaking that over the course of recent years a certain economic growth has taken place. Based on my observations, this is chiefly the case in the colonies that prefer to cultivate wine and among those whose land reserve, or state fund – i.e. that part of the earth and soil still at the state's disposal after the distribution of land among the villagers – has yet to be given away to new settlers. This state fund, which has a size of 20,000 desiatinas or more in individual colonies, is – as long as it has not yet been given away – leased to the colony's peasants. The price of leasing costs [...] ¹⁸³ roubles per desiatina, depending on the quality of the land.

All of the colonies that still live off a state fund have therefore yet to prove their viability under the conditions of the agrarian reform. With the help of the additionally leased land, farms frequently have a size that comes close to their previous holdings. Farms that have more than 25–30 desiatinas of cropland at their disposal and therefore cultivate 45–50 desiatinas (200 morgen) ¹⁸⁴ together with the core land allocated to them are not uncommon.

By special directive, the German colonist, as a recognised model farmer of the Union, receives more land than the Ukrainian peasants, namely 2¼–2½ desiatinas per soul. For farms with a smaller number of souls, this constitutes such a small complex of land that

[3]

¹⁸³ The amount is illegible.

¹⁸⁴ An old German unit measure that varied widely within German speaking lands. Here, it is taken to mean roughly a quarter desiatina (0.225–0.25 desiatina/morgen or a desiatina/ca. 4 morgen).

it does not suffice to maintain the family, given the markedly extensive cultivation of the earth and soil. In such cases, leasing land from the state fund is a matter for life or death for colonists. At each new leasing of the year, the distribution office of the RIK (Raion Executive Committee) is literally stormed. It has happened that colonists have demanded their international passports in threatening terms upon learning on this occasion that the state fund had been exhausted due to the settlement of new farmers.

The colonies without a state fund are economically weakest. Even here, a number of resourceful and energetic farmers have understood how to adjust: they give preference to vegetable cultivation so long as proximity to a town promises good sales, etc. Even the handicrafts are asserting themselves. There are colonies (Selz, Baden) that for a radius of 50 versts or more have become carpenters, saddlers, coopers, carriage makers, etc., for the entire okruha. In general, there is great need, and the mood is miserable. Given the old wanderlust of the colonists, the urge to emigrate has arisen. On my trip, I was frequently asked whether emigrating back to Germany would not promise the prospect of success. Other than that, an enormous movement for emigration to America, especially Canada, is in progress. The government – as I am told – should not be placing obstacles in the way of this movement.

The surplus population from the colonies emigrated to America already during the tsarist era. They have never lost contact

[4]

with those colonists' sons who became Americans; thanks to their help, they got through the difficult years of hunger. A teacher in the colony of Cassel told me that, through his mediation alone, \$25,000 transferred by former Cassel colonists in America was paid out to the colony's population last year.

[...]

[5]

[...] There is a lack of tools and matériel, there is a lack of money, and there is above all a lack of upbringing. For the colonist is a man who despite German thoroughness and industriousness – which have remained his German inheritance – has become fully accustomed to Russian methods of work and land cultivation. Things are getting very primitive on his farm; with the catastrophic shortage in machines and tools, manual labour predominates now more than previously; even where, e.g. they previously had threshers, they have now switched to the old Russian style of threshing with rollers, which horses pull over the grain.

There is still little at all to note of the implementation of the government's programme to provide the countryside with a more abundant supply of machines. The Russian tool is chided and only bought if the old German prewar tool definitely has to be replaced. Tractors are quite rare, I encountered only three on my 8-day trip, 2 on a model state farm. The colonist has great interest in the tractor, he considers the small Fordson well suited for his enterprise especially due to its diverse range of uses. Not even the cost of 1,500 roubles would frighten him, although he calculates that the government itself paid no more than 600 roubles at most per unit. Many people have told me that they would gladly get together with a relative in order to acquire a tractor

[6]

for 2 or 3. That, however, is not possible. The government has resolved that only collectives with at least 7 people are allowed to buy a tractor. They also want to exploit this strong stimulus, possession of a tractor, to promote "socialist construction," the formation of collectives. But the German peasant says: even if I reach an agreement with my brother or brother-in-law regarding the tractor's use, I'll never reach an agreement with 6 neighbours – and thus refrains from making the purchase.

In individual colonies, a not insignificant amount of construction activity has started. This is the case everywhere where the government has started the distribution of the state fund and settled new families. In the village, completely new roads are being developed. The newly settled [persons] are Ukrainians and Jews, the majority Jews. If the preconditions for new settlement in the German village exist, i.e. if the German village has more farmers than farmsteads, then these families do not remain at home as a rule. They have themselves assigned land from their own village's state fund, but move out [to their allotment], as the state fund is usually on the periphery of a village's land, and found a new village. I have seen several such settlements. They accommodate the poorest parts of the German population and hardly differ from any Russian village. A small clay hut serves as a place of abode for humans, livestock and tools stand in the open or in an open, straw-covered shed at best. The only perquisites on the part of the government are that the new settlers are granted tax exemptions or tax rebates for a number of years. Owing

[7]

to the government's more peasant-friendly policy, relations with the authorities have become better without a doubt. This is seen in particular in the extent to which alien elements are being displaced in the rural soviet [and] more and more peasants

from the locality are moving in. Until recently, both the chairman and the secretary of the rural soviet were regularly strangers to the village, namely Jews in most cases by far. Today, only the secretary is still a Jew, the chairman is a young peasant who for some reason enjoys the trust of the authorities, a former Austrian prisoner of war, a former teacher or some such. The party is represented only in the person of the secretary, who is at the same time a GPU¹⁸⁵ agent and rural correspondent. What the chairman lacks in official finesse, the secretary has in energy and sense of purpose. He is the actual organ of government, while the chairman increasingly performs the role of mediator between government and peasants. For that, the secretary is also the most-hated person in the village, he is called only "the Jew" plain and simple. Even the chairman of the rural soviet sometimes fears his secretary. I personally experienced how a chairman asked me in private to please identify myself and comply with certain reporting formalities – he asked forgiveness for the harassment and harboured no doubt about my person – but his secretary was mistrustful, and he had to do what the secretary wanted.

There is a lot of complaining about the unified agricultural tax, which is due at present. It is generally made out to be much too high. Assessment is carried out according to the estimated harvest yield per desiatina

[8]

and the farm's herd of livestock. A harvest yield of 100 pud per desiatina was taken as the basis for this year's harvest, while the desiatina brought in an average of only 60 pud, sporadically only 40 pud. The consequences of this is over-taxation, which, however, the government does not recognise despite numerous complaints. In the commune of Rohrbach, e.g., budget planning is as follows:

The commune is made up of 3,800 souls, who have at their disposal more than 8,000 desiatinas of their own land and 2,000 desiatinas of leased land (state fund). The amount to be collected for the unified tax is 33,000 roubles. Accordingly, the community has to pay:

in taxes	33,000 rbl
" state insurance	7,000 "
" lease for 2,000 des.	<u>13,000</u> "
	53,000 rbl.

By contrast, gross income for this year is estimated at an average of 40 roubles per desiatina = 400,000 roubles per 10,000 desiatinas. Thus, there are levies of 53,000 roubles to pay from this gross income of 400,000 roubles, i.e. about 12½%.

¹⁸⁵ State political administration, i.e. the political police, 1922–1934.

In connection with this, I may mention that with regard to the results of the harvest I received confirmation everywhere for what the consulate has already reported in several dispatches. The harvest is only a modest mid-size harvest, better in some districts, but worse than last year in just as many districts.

The colonies enjoy all of the rights of the Union's national minorities, the right to [use] the German language, to German schools, to German self-

[9]

administration (within the framework of the Soviet system), and so forth. Nonetheless, there can be no doubt that through its measures the government is moving towards the subversion of Germanism and the fragmentation of cohesive German settlements. Through the agrarian reform, the aforementioned state funds were established right next to German colonies, whose property the government is giving away. And the government is gradually introducing non-Germans, primarily Jews, into those farmlands, which are the best and most cultivated in the entire country. There is no village that does not host at least 3-5 Jewish families, in individual colonies, 15 farms or more are already in Jewish hands.

The Jewish element's encroachment catches one's eye especially near the towns, namely Odessa. The country roads are teeming with Jewish traders – for the Jew who has been settled [to the countryside] does not work his land himself, but rather leases it (and not under 15 rbl per desiatina, while state land costs only 8 rbl on average) and otherwise engages in retail trade with rural and urban products. Only rarely does the Jew create his own farm, he usually buys himself into a stranger's dwelling, and the impoverished peasant is happy to be able to give up a part of his house for rent. Then, most of the rooms in the house are occupied by strangers, while the peasant, with his family, retires to the kitchen or a stall.

The German peasant does not want to hear anything about Bolshevism. He mocks the terms kulak – mid-sized peasants and the village poor – differences that in his opinion do not at all exist in the German colonies –

[10]

and laughs at efforts to win over the village youth for the aspirations of the "Pioneers" and the "Komsomol." Given the firmness of family discipline, the youth is not at all or only barely receptive to new ideas and points out anyone who has participated in a parade of the "Pioneers" even just once. In the villages, only the Jewish youth organise processions (for the Pioneers and Komsomol). But the peasant's attitude to communism never leads him to political opposition. To the contrary, he gratefully acknowledges that his treatment is better than 2 or 3 years

ago, that he can quietly go about his work and need not expect a search of his house or a summons to the GPU each and every day. Moreover, he has become careful, the bad experiences he had with the peasant uprising of 1920 [and] with the self-defence organisations of 1918 and 1919 are still a fresh memory. He only wants to work in order to get his farm and family back on their feet and frankly admits that the political preconditions for this have become more favourable.

[11]

The spiritual isolation in which the colonist finds himself expresses itself in a certain dullness and indifference, mistrust and suspicion. This mood is increased by the fact that spiritual leaders are entirely lacking and thus the personal influence of outstanding personalities has ceased to exist. There are certainly still some upstanding men with a spine, who will not mince words and will openly express their opinion in front of Soviet people: those who know that their knowledge and experience are indispensable to the village, or even the entire okruha. But these men are increasingly rare, they are dying out. A majority of the population exercises caution as the highest virtue; it works, remains silent, and tolerates the isolation even at the peril of complete spiritual degeneration. – Those men who were the colonies' spiritual leaders before the war, the clergy, no longer play this role today. Not that the anti-religious propaganda had had any success in the village, to the contrary! The clergy tell me that the religious needs of the population are greater than ever. If they complain, then only in the sense that sectarian movements, especially the Baptists, are proselytising on a grand scale and with success. The clergy are the men who have had to suffer the most from the persecution of the village population,

[12]

who went to prison without exception and who even today are threatened with prosecution and banishment for the slightest violation of Soviet ordinances. They are therefore understandably frightened, especially the Protestants – [they] remain at home and in the church and lack in any event the freedom and security that are prerequisites for the population's spiritual leadership. But there are also clergymen who are so impoverished – and have grown so shabby in their way of life and spiritual needs that they have lost the qualities of spiritual leadership in the first place. Their house hardly differs from that of a peasant's, all of their aspirations are directed at the maintenance of their family, for 100 pud grain (about 100 Rbl) are their only earnings in a year.

I may summarise my observations in the following manner: In economic relations, progress in the colonies is to be noted without a doubt. However, this is valid only with one very essential qualification that the colonies that still live off

the so-called state funds have so far yet to provide proof that they are viable after the agrarian reform. In cultural relations, by contrast, considerable regression is to be noted, isolation and stagnation. And for the government, in my opinion, this situation provides the basis for making a move on the cohesion of the German colonies. For only by breaking up the German entities is it possible for communism to gain entry into the village.

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Source: PA AA, R 84284, 11 September 1926.

6.9 German Foreign Office, Berlin, On Harassment of German Colonies in Ukraine, 11 June 1928

Translation from German

[1]

Note.

Today, a mill owner, Eduard Adam from Ahrenstein in East Prussia,¹⁸⁶ called on me and handed me the enclosed document. Adam explains the following:

Together with two Reich Germans, Peter Fuhrmann and Friedrich Heine-mann, he owns a mill in Bugolovka [?] near Kharkiv. The two Reich Germans named are known to the Consulate General in Kharkiv, inter alia, also because they look after German graves in the district concerned. According to Adam's statements, it emerged that a kind of panic has apparently taken hold of the Reich Germans living in Ukraine arising from, inter alia, the rigorous actions of the tax authorities conducted against every kind of private ownership. Adam illustrated in the following case, which he himself witnessed, just how intense the Soviet-Russian finance authorities' pressure on the peasantry is.

15 peasants who had joined together in an artel' bought a tractor from the government and paid in full. A short time after payment of the final instalment, the government suddenly requested admission to the artel' for 8 impoverished peasants (*nezamozhniki*),¹⁸⁷ who were nothing more

¹⁸⁶ Arnstein, today Jarzeń in North East Poland.

¹⁸⁷ Note in Russian Cyrillic.

[2]

than lazy slackers. When the peasants rejected this request, the commissar concerned declared: "The bourgeois spirit still has a hold on you." As punishment for their refusal to admit the 8 impoverished peasants, the tractor, already fully paid, was hereupon confiscated. Since this case involved a Fordson tractor – that is to say, an American make – for which the agricultural commissariat had yet to pay the American distributor, when the Americans pressed for payment of the purchase amount, all of the peasants' available grain stocks were collected by brute force. The quantity of grain "accumulated" in this manner was thereupon made available to the Americans as equivalent value for the tractors p[er] p[ro]curement].

Mr. Adam went on to report further that the situation of self-employed Reich Germans in agricultural and similar enterprises has thereby become a very precarious one, that the taxes, which are constantly being raised – he and his partner, for example, once again paid 30% of their income from

[3]

his mill as income tax – are collected with the greatest brutality, and in the event of insolvency, imprisonment immediately ensues, usually accompanied by the confiscation of assets. The almost compulsory amortisation of the peasant loan... which is ruthlessly imposed on all private entrepreneurs, is also perceived as an onerous burden. If one refuses to take the loan, one is immediately declared an "opponent of the ruling power." Therefore, there is a general tendency among the Reich Germans living in the Ukraine to sell off their property as quickly as possible. But here, too, there are conceivably tremendous difficulties, for no private person dares to buy such property, and also because, even in the event of a sale, a corresponding transfer of the purchase amount, calculated in roubles, out of the country is impossible under prevailing Russian law.

Herewith submitted to

Mr. V. L. R.¹⁸⁸ Lütgens

most obediently

Berlin, 11 June 1928

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Source: PA AA, R 265419, 11 June 1928.

¹⁸⁸ *Vortragender Legationsrat* – reporting legation councillor.

Glossary

AAN	Pol. Archiwum Akt Nowych (Archives of Modern Records, Warsaw)
AK	Ger. Armutskomitee (Committee of Impoverished Peasants), see also KNS
AMSSR	Ukr. Avtonomna Moldavs'ka Radians'ka Sotsialistychna Respublika / Rus. Avtonomnaia Moldavskaia Sotsialisticheskaia Sovetskaia Respublika (Autonomous Moldavian Socialist Soviet Republic)
ark.	Ukr. <i>arkush</i> , page within an archival dossier
arshin	Russian imperial unit of length; one arshin equals 0.71 metres
artel'	form of cooperative association in the late Russian Empire and the Soviet Union for artisans and small industrial enterprises
ASSR	Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic
bedniak	poor peasant
BNM	Rus. Biuro Natsional'nykh Men'shinstv / Ukr. Biuro Natsional'nykh Menshyn (Bureau for National Minority Affairs at huberniia/okruha level)
DAKhersO	Ukr. Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Khersons'koï Oblasti (State Archive of the Kherson Oblast', Ukraine)
DAKhmel'O	Ukr. Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Khmel'nyts'koï Oblasti (State Archive of the Khmel'nyts'kyi Oblast', Ukraine)
DAMO	Ukr. Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Mykolaïvs'koï Oblasti (State Archive of the Mykolaïv Oblast', Ukraine)
Das Neue Dorf	"The New Village," a Ukrainian Newspaper in German language, 1925–1936
DAVinO	Ukr. Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Vinnyts'koï Oblasti (State Archive of the Vinnytsia Oblast', Ukraine)
desiatina	Russian imperial unit to measure area; one desiatina equals 1.09 hectares
DVU	Ukr. Derzhavne Vydavyststvo Ukraïny (State Publishing House of Ukraine)
f.	Ukr. <i>fond</i> , archival collection
funt	Russian imperial unit of weight; one funt equals 410 grams

Głos Młodzieży	“Voice of the Youth,” a bi-weekly in Polish language, edited between 1925 and 1935
GPU	Rus. Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie pri TsIK SSSR (State Political Administration at the TsIK SSSR, 1922–1923), see also OGPU
guberniia	Rus. territorial-administrative unit; the same as Ukr. <i>huberniia</i> ; comparable to a province
Gubispolkom	Rus. Gubernskii Iсполnitel’nyi Komitet (Guberniia Executive Committee)
Gubkom	Rus. Gubernskii Partiinyi Komitet (Guberniia Party Committee)
Hammer und Pflug	“Hammer and Plough,” a German newspaper edited by the German Section at the TsKNM in Ukraine between 1924 and 1925
HDA SBU	Ukr. Haluzevyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Sluzhby Bezpeky Ukraïny (Main State Archive of the Security Service in Ukraine)
huberniia	Ukr. territorial-administrative unit; the same as Rus. <i>guberniia</i> ; comparable to a province
Hubvynkonkom	Ukr. Huberniial’nyi Vykonavchyi Komitet (Huberniia Executive Committee)
INO	Ukr. Inspektorat Narodnoi Osviti (People’s Education Inspectorate)
karbovanets’, krb	Ukr. Monetary denomination equivalent to the Soviet rouble
KGH	Ger. Komitee für gegenseitige Hilfe (Committee for Mutual Assistance), see also KOV, TVD
KK	Rus. Kontrol’naia Komissiiia / Ukr. Kontrol’na Komisiia (Control Commission)
KNS, Komnezam	Ukr. Komitet nezamozhnykh selian (Committee of Impoverished Peasants)
KNW	Pol. Komitet Niezamożnych Włościan (Committee of Impoverished Peasants), see also KNS
Kombed	Rus. Komitet bednoty (Committee of Poor Peasants)
korenizatsiia	Rus. for <i>rooting</i> , figuratively <i>nativisation</i> or <i>indigenisation</i> . <i>Korenizatsiia</i> was Bolshevik party policy to recruit cadres among national minorities to popularise Soviet power.
KOV	Rus. Krest’ianskoe Obshchestvo Vzaimopomoshchi (Peasant Mutual Aid Society), see also TVD, KVP
KP(b)U	Ukr. Komunistychna Partiiia (bil’shovykiv) Ukraïny (Communist Party [Bolsheviks] of Ukraine)

KSM, Komsomol	Rus. Kommunisticheskii Soiuz Molodëzhi / Ukr. Komunistychna Spilka Molodi (Communist Youth League).
kulak	derogatory wording for a rich peasant
Kustprom	Rus. Kustarnaia promyshlennost' (Artisan Industry)
KVD	Ukr. Komitet Vzaiemnoi Dopomohy (Mutual Assistance Committee)
KVP	Rus. Komitet Vzaimnoi Pomoshchi (Mutual Assistance Committee), see also Sel' KOV, TVD
KWP	Pol. Komitet Wzajemnej Pomocy (Mutual Assistance Committee), see also KOV, TVD
likbez	Russ. Likvidatsiia bezgramotnosti (Liquidation of illiteracy)
liknep	Ukr. Likvidatsiia nepys'mennosti naselennia (Liquidation of Popular Illiteracy)
likpunkt	Rus. Punkt po likvidatsii negramotnosti (Point for Liquidation of Illiteracy)
LKSM	Rus. Leninskii Kommunisticheskii Soiuz Molodëzhi / Ukr. Lenins'ka Komunistychna Spilka Molodi, Komsomol (Leninist Communist Youth League)
MODR	Ukr. Mizhnarodna orhanizatsiia dopomohy bortsiam revoliutsii (International Red Aid), see also MOPR
MOPR	Rus. Mezhdunarodnaia organizatsiia pomoshchi bortsam revoliutsii; Pol. Międzynarodowa Organizacja Pomocy Rewolucjonistom (International Red Aid), see also MODR
Narkompros	Ukr. Narodnyi Komisariat Prosvity / Rus. Narodnyi Komissariat Prosveshcheniia (People's Commissariat for Education)
Natsmen	Rus. Natsional'nye men'shinstva (National minority)
NEP	Rus. Novaia ekonomicheskaiia politika (New Economic Policy)
NKVD	Rus. Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs)
NKVS	Ukr. Narodnyi Komisariat Vnutrishnikh Sprav (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs)
OGPU	Rus. Ob'edinennoe Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie pri TsIK SSSR (Unified State Political Administration at the TsIK SSSR, 1923–1934)

OIK, Okrispolkom	Rus. Okruzhnoi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet (Okrug Executive Committee)
okrug (Rus.) / okruha (Ukr.)	territorial-administrative unit; comparable to a county (post-reform)
op.	Ukr. <i>opys</i> , archival inventory
OPK, Okruzhkom	Rus. Okruzhnoi Partiinyi Komitet (Okrug Party Committee)
Osoaviakhim	Rus. Obshchestvo sodeistviia oborone, aviatsionnomu i khimicheskomu stroitel'stvu (Society for the Assistance of Defence, Aircraft and Chemical Construction, 1927–1948)
OVK, Okrvykonkom	Ukr. Okruzhnyi Vykonavchyi Komitet (Okruha Executive Committee)
PA AA	Ger. Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (Political Archive of the Foreign Office, Berlin)
Poarm	Rus. Politodel armii (Political Section of the Red Army)
Pol'biuro	Rus. Pol'skoe Biuro (Polish Bureau)
povit	Ukr. territorial-administrative unit; the same as Rus. <i>uezd</i> ; comparable to a county (pre-reform)
POW	Prisoner of War
pud	Russian imperial unit of weight, one pud equals 16.4 kilograms
rabfak/robfak	Rus. rabochii fakul'tet / Ukr. robitnychyi fakul'tet (workers' faculty)
raion	Rus./Ukr. territorial-administrative unit; comparable to a district
raionirovanie	Rus. for <i>regionalisation</i> . <i>Raionirovanie</i> was all encompassing plan to reform the territorial-administrative structure of the Soviet state between 1920 and 1930
Raipolitosvita	Ukr. Raionna politychna osvita (Raion Department of Political Education)
Revkom	Rus. Revoliutsionnyi Komitet (Revolutionary Committee)
RIK, Raiispolkom	Rus. Raionnyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet (Raion Executive Committee)
RKP(b)	Rus. Rossiiskaia Kommunisticheskaia Partia (bol'shevikov) (Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik), 1918–1925)
RNK, Radnarkom	Ukr. Rada Narodnykh Komisariv (Soviet of People's Commissars)
RPK, Rai(part)kom	Rus. Raionnyi Partiinyi Komitet (Raion Party Committee)

RSDRP	Rus. Rossiiskaia Sotsial-Demokraticheskaia Rabochaia Partiiia (Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party, 1898-1918)
RSI	Ukr. Robycho-selians'ka inspektsiia (Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate)
RVK, Raivykonkom	Ukr. Raionnyi Vykonavchyi Komitet (Raion Executive Committee)
RWK, Rejwykonkom	Pol. Rejonowy Komitet Wykonawczy (Raion Executive Committee)
RZU	Rus. Raionnoe Zemel'noe Upravlenie (Raion Land Administration)
sazhen'	Russian imperial unit of length; one sazhen' equals 2.13 metres or three arshins
sel'bud	Rus. sel'skii budinok / Ukr. sil's'kyi budynok (rural community centre)
sel'kor	Rus. sel'skii korrespondent (rural correspondent), see also <i>sil'kor</i>
Sel' KOV	Rus. Sel'skoe Krest'ianskoe Obshchestvo Vzaimopomoshchi (Rural Peasant Mutual Aid Societies), see also TVD, KOV
sel'sovet; s/s	Rus. sel'skii sovet (rural soviet)
sil'kor	Ukr. sil's'kyi korespondent (rural correspondent), see also <i>sel'kor</i>
Sierp	"The Sickle," a Polish weekly, edited between 1922 and 1937
Sil'rada, s-r	Ukr. Sil's'ka rada (rural Soviet)
SKNS, Sil' KNS	Ukr. Sil's'kyi komitet nezamozhnykh selian (Rural Committee of Impoverished Peasants), see also KNS
SNK, Sovnarkom	Rus. Sovet Narodnykh Komissarov (Soviet of People's Commissars)
spr.	Ukr. <i>sprava</i> , archival file
SRSR	Ukr. Soiuz Radians'kykh Sotsialisychnykh Respublik (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Soviet Union), see also Rus. SSSR
SSSR	Rus. Soiuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Soviet Union), see also Ukr. SRSR
SWP	Pol. Społeczeństwo Wzajemnej Pomocy (Association for Mutual Assistance), see also TVD, KOV

Sztandar Komunizmu	“Banner of Communism,” a Polish daily edited by the Soviet Ukrainian government in 1919
Sztandar Pioniera	“Pioneer’s Banner,” a journal for Polish schoolchildren edited in Kiev, 1924–1925
TsBNM	Rus. Tsentral’noe Biuro Natsional’nykh Men’shinstv (Central Bureau for National Minorities)
TsDAHO	Ukr. Tsentral’nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Hromads’kykh Obyedan’ Ukraïny (Central State Archive of Public Organisations of Ukraine)
TsDAVO	Ukr. Tsentral’nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Vyshchykh Orhaniv Vlady ta Upravlinnia Ukraïny (Central State Archive of the Highest Ukrainian State and Government Organs)
Tsentrvydav	Ukr. Tsentral’ne vydavystvo narodiv SRSR (Central Publishing House of the Nations of the USSR)
TsIK	Rus. Tsentral’nyi Iсполnitel’nyi Komitet SSSR (Central Executive Committee of the USSR)
TsK	Rus./Ukr. Tsentral’nyi Komitet (Central Committee)
TsKK	Rus. Tsentral’naia Kontrol’naia Komissiiia / Ukr. Tsentral’na Kontrol’na Komisiia (Central Control Commission)
TsKNM, TsK Natsmen	Rus. Tsentral’naia Komissiiia Natsional’nykh Men’shinstv / Ukr. Tsentral’na Komisiia Natsional’nykh Menshyn (Central Commission for National Minority Affairs at VUTsVK)
TVD	Ukr. Tovarystvo Vzaiemnoi Dopomohy (Mutual Assistance Society), see also KOV
TWP	Pol. Towarzystwo Wzajemnej Pomocy (Mutual Assistance Society), see also TVD, KOV
uezd	Rus. territorial-administrative unit; the same as Ukr. <i>povit</i> ; comparable to a county (pre-reform)
Uispolkom	Rus. Uezdnyi Iсполnitel’nyi Komitet (Uezd Executive Committee)
UkrSSR	Rus. Ukrainskaia Sotsialisticheskaia Sovietskaia Respublika (Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic), see also USSR
USSR	Ukr. Ukraïns’ka Sotsialistychna Radians’ka Respublika (Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic), see also UkrSSR
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
verst	Russian imperial unit of length; one verst equals 1.06 kilometres or 500 sazhen

VIK	Rus. Volostnoi Iсполnitel'nyi Komitet (Volost' Executive Committee)
VKP (b)	Rus. Vsesojuznaia Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia (bol'shevikov) / Ukr. Vsesoiuzna Komunistychna Partiiia (bil'shovykiv) (All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), 1925–1952)
volost'	Territorial-administrative unit; comparable to a shire
VUChK	Rus. Vseukrainskaia chrezvychainaia komissiiia po bor'be s konterrevoliutsiei, spekuliiatsiei, sabotazhem i s prestupleniami po dolzhnosti (All-Ukrainian Extraordinary Commission, Secret Police 1919–1922)
VUTsIK	Rus. Vseukrainskii Tsentral'nyi Iсполnitel'nyi Komitet (Ukrainian Central Executive Committee), see also VUTsVK
VUTsVK	Ukr. Vseukraïns'kyi Tsentral'nyi Vykonavchyi Komitet (Ukrainian Central Executive Committee), see also VUTsIK
zv.	Ukr. <i>zvorot</i> , reverse side of an archival document
ZB	Ger. Zentralbüro für Nationale Minderheiten (Central Bureau for National Minority Affairs)

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Summary

Based on selected archival and printed documents, this volume offers insights into Polish and German minority institutions and the implementation of the Soviet Ukrainian nationality policies during the era of the New Economic Policy (NEP). Some of the documents come from archives in Ukraine, Poland and Germany; others reflect the manifold German and Polish publications in Ukraine between 1923 and 1929. The documents are grouped into six general sections: 1. biographies of local and regional actors; 2. everyday business in rural soviets; 3. state and party minority policies; 4. Soviet modernisation in rural areas; 5. creation and supervision of national minority institutions; and 6. outside views on the national rural institutions. These sections are ordered partly thematically and partly chronologically. Together they provide indications of how people in rural areas received the affirmative policies of the Soviet government and used them for their own purposes. Even though these policies failed to achieve their goal – to mobilise the entire population for the socialist project – they increased the agency of the people in local settings to an extent unmatched in previous and later times. The Polish village of Hreczany near Proskuriv (today Khmel'nyts'kyi) in western Ukraine, and the German Karl-Liebkecht Raion in southern Ukraine are a particular focus of this volume, as the ratios of minority populations were particularly high there, and many documents of the minority administration have survived in local archives despite the destruction of the Second World War.

Aside from Ukrainian, Russian and Jewish communities, the territory of Soviet Ukraine had significant Polish and German populations. According to the 1926 census, 480,000 inhabitants saw themselves as Poles, representing 1.6 percent of the total population; while 400,000 considered themselves to be Germans, this being 1.4 percent of the total 29 million inhabitants of Ukraine. The First World War and the 1917 Russian Revolution that led to the decay of traditional social structures and political institutions defined the history of the Ukrainian state under Soviet rule. Having won the Civil War, the Bolsheviks ruled the state with utmost brutality. However, they had difficulty providing the cities and towns with basic means for subsistence. Soon it became obvious that the so-called War Communism could not bring any economic gain, but had led to the collapse of the economy. Facing famine and imminent rebellions, Lenin and the other Bolshevik leaders chose a radical economic turnaround in early 1921. The NEP again enabled private initiatives in production, service and commerce. At the same time, the party leadership allowed self-government on a local scale in the form of rural soviets. If national minorities inhabited a compact territory, Moscow supported the creation of minority institutions that would promote the

local culture and language with the aim of winning the population over for the Bolshevik project. Initially, the rural soviets had the task of helping landless and poor peasants and then initiating a class struggle in the villages. Therefore, they had to support the propaganda against the “kulaks.” People categorised as such were excluded from any participation in the local self-government. Moreover, the rural soviets had to take part in anti-religious campaigns and promote socialist institutions, for instance agricultural cooperatives, in all spheres of rural life.

The Twelfth Congress of the Communist Party in 1923 adopted a large set of policies to promote national institutions and national cadres. Later these policies were subsumed under the term *korenizatsiia* (literally *rooting*, figuratively *nativisation* or *indigenisation*). Soviet Ukraine soon became a testing ground for Bolshevik affirmative national policies. They helped to stabilise Soviet rule in the border regions. The All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee (VUTsVK) explicitly stated that all rural soviets had to be administered in the native language of their inhabitants. The Ukrainian authorities closely supervised initiatives concerning national minorities. The Central Commission for National Minority Affairs at VUTsVK and the national sections at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (Bolshevik) played a major role in implementing the national affirmative action.

The German colonies – particularly in southern Ukraine – had an outstanding position economically and culturally. Their ancestors had founded these colonies in the 18th and 19th centuries following official invitations of the tsars and tsarinas. Under the affirmative policies, various German minority institutions took shape after 1923 to give the party access to this crucial minority population. In February 1930 there were 254 German rural soviets and seven German raions in Soviet Ukraine. Even though all citizens entitled to vote could decide who would represent them on the rural soviet, autonomy was limited. If a rural soviet failed to carry out its duties as the party required, it could be dissolved and elected anew with little fuss.

Karl-Liebknicht Raion in Mykolaïv Okruha was the most populous German district in Soviet Ukraine. Analysing its administration, it becomes clear that it was not local, but “alien” Germans who obtained the crucial executive functions within the minority administration. The party had more confidence in German-speaking people with an urban working-class background who had already proven their loyalty to the cause before 1917. The NEP, the *korenizatsiia* and *raionirovanie* (“regionalisation”) policies provided various opportunities for the German colonists. They now again had a say in local matters and could decide on issues of land distribution and economic development. Thus they were able to find a *modus vivendi* with the Soviet state. Meanwhile, they had the possibility of simply ignoring ideologically motivated campaigns and the newly established cultural centres (*sel’bud/sil’bud*) where party and state institutions organised

courses against illiteracy and distributed Soviet newspapers and journals in the German language such as *Das Neue Dorf* (The New Village) and *Die Saat* (The Seed). The German colonies were nothing exceptional in ignoring party and state initiatives. At the end of the 1920s, party and state officials had to accept that the *korenizatsiia* and *raionirovanie* projects could not meet the high expectations and mobilise the population for the socialist project to the desired extent. The implementation of forced collectivisation of agriculture and industrialisation thus led to another radical change in minority policies. All means of production and all forms of trade were socialised. The NEP came to an end. The party perceived the rural soviets as engines of the local economies and brought them completely under central control. The maintenance of minority administrations now appeared as a waste of capital and an obstacle to socialist construction. Thus, the Soviet Ukrainian government gradually abolished the national minority institutions. Karl-Liebknicht Raion ceased to exist in April 1939.

In contrast to the German colonists, whose ancestors had come to the lands that would later become Ukraine in the 18th and 19th centuries, the Polish minority was perceived as an autochthonous part of the population. Many people of Polish descent lived in the villages of western Ukraine. Among these was Hreczany, near the town of Proskuriv. During the NEP era, this village experienced a short but intense economic and cultural boom. The years between 1922 and 1929 were a golden age in its local history. The existence of a market – even in its restricted form – revitalised the local economy. Farmsteads could earn additional income by selling their surplus in the nearby town. Despite ideological restrictions, a Polish minority administration took shape in Hreczany in the mid-1920s. This self-government supervised the maintenance and development of the local infrastructure (streets and bridges) and promoted the modernisation of agriculture. The inhabitants of Hreczany perceived themselves as masters of their village and of their district on a larger scale. The local school taught in Polish, the everyday language of most of the inhabitants. The basic education provided enabled the young generations to attend secondary schools in Proskuriv. They saw new employment opportunities not only in the nearby railway station, but also in the sugar industry and the service sector in Proskuriv.

The peasants also experienced fundamental change in their everyday life. The rural soviet initiated the construction of a Polish cultural centre (*sel'bud/sil'bud*) where Polish customs and traditions were upheld. In 1927, the rural soviet opened a library where the people of Hreczany could read not only Soviet newspapers and journals in the Polish language – such as *Sierp* (The Sickle) and *Głos Młodzieży* (Voice of Youth) – but also Ukrainian and Russian ones.

In the NEP era, state and party institutions did not closely monitor all social activities in Hreczany. The inhabitants managed to build a Roman Catholic chapel

and organised religious festivities. Those entitled to vote could keep checks on their representatives on the rural soviet and vote against them at the next election if they did not seem sufficiently qualified. As in Karl-Liebkecht Raion, the political situation in Hreczany changed after 1928. The local population ceased to be an independent actor in public life. Most people were too frightened to become involved in local affairs. The forced collectivisation that deprived many inhabitants of their ancestral fields also put an end to many communal activities. With collectivisation the national rural soviets lost most of their political significance. Beginning in the mid-1930s, Hreczany – like the Karl-Liebkecht Raion – experienced increased russification and centralisation of public life. People of the Polish minority became a particular target of the Great Terror between 1936 and 1938. Many inhabitants of Hreczany were deported to Central Asia. In 1946 Hreczany became administratively a part of Proskuriv. Nevertheless, some of its inhabitants still share the memory of their Polish descent and their Roman Catholic faith.

Zusammenfassung

Der vorliegende Band ermöglicht anhand von Quellenzeugnissen zu polnischen und deutschen Minderheiteninstitutionen einen Einblick in die Praxis der sowjetukrainischen Nationalitätenpolitik während der Neuen Ökonomischen Politik (NÉP). Die Dokumente stammen einerseits aus Archiven in der Ukraine, Polen und Deutschland, andererseits aus den mannigfaltigen Presseerzeugnissen, die zur Zeit der NÉP in der Ukraine in polnischer und deutscher Sprache erschienen sind. Die hier editierten Dokumente sind nach sechs Themenbereichen gegliedert. 1. Biographien von lokalen und regionalen Akteuren, 2. Alltagsgeschäfte in den Dorfräten, 3. Minderheitenpolitik von Staat und Partei, 4. Modernisierungsbemühungen auf dem Lande, 5. Schaffung und Kontrolle von Minderheiteninstitutionen auf dem Lande, 6. Sicht auf die ländlichen Minderheiteninstitutionen von außen. Die Dokumente in diesen Sektionen sind teils thematisch, teils chronologisch geordnet. Gemeinsam liefern sie Hinweise darauf, wie die Menschen auf dem Lande die politischen Angebote zur lokalen nationalen Selbstverwaltung, wie sie die Sowjetführung ab 1923 schuf, angenommen und genutzt haben. Obwohl die entstandenen Institutionen letztlich die von der Partei intendierten Ziele – die Mobilisierung der Bevölkerung für das sozialistische Projekt – kaum erfüllten, stellten sie für die Menschen vor Ort einen Gewinn an politischen Handlungsspielräumen dar, die zuvor, aber auch späterhin unerreicht blieben. In diesem Band sind insbesondere das polnische Dorf Hreczany bei Proskuriv (heute Chmel'nic'kyj) in der damaligen Westukraine sowie der deutsche Karl-Liebknecht-Rajon in der Südukraine im Fokus, da dort der relative Anteil der Minderheitenbevölkerung jeweils besonders hoch war und zudem in den Lokalarchiven viele Dokumente zu den Minderheiteninstitutionen dieser Orte überdauert haben.

Die Ukraine war in den 1920er Jahren multiethnisch geprägt. Während die Polen gemäß Zensus von 1926 mit 480.000 Personen etwa 1,6 Prozent der rund 29 Millionen Einwohner der Sowjetukraine stellten, machten Deutsche mit 400.000 Personen im Jahre 1926 rund 1,4 Prozent der Gesamtbevölkerung aus. Die Ereignisse des Ersten Weltkriegs sowie der Russischen Revolutionen 1917, als traditionelle soziale Strukturen und staatliche Institutionen zerfielen, wurden zu einer wichtigen Etappe in der Geschichte der Ukraine. Nach ihrem Sieg im Bürgerkrieg führte die Kommunistische Partei, die insbesondere im Bereich der Lebensmittelversorgung und der alltäglichen Güter nicht in der Lage war, den neuen Herausforderungen gerecht zu werden, das Land mit äußerster Brutalität. Es stellte sich schnell heraus, dass der sogenannte Kriegskommunismus nicht nur nicht den erwarteten Nutzen brachte, sondern die wirtschaftlichen Beziehungen

fast vollständig zusammenbrechen ließ. 1920/21 drohte dem Sowjetstaat und damit auch der Ukraine eine Hungersnot, die das Potential hatte, einen bewaffneten Massenaufstand gegen die Bolschewiki hervorzurufen. Daher entschlossen sich die Bolschewiki unter der Führung von Vladimir Ul'janov (Lenin) zu einem grundsätzlichen Kurswechsel in der Wirtschaftspolitik. Die NĖP ermöglichte die Existenz eines privaten Sektors für Produktion, Dienstleistungen und Handel. Die Einführung der NĖP auf dem Lande war auch mit der Zulassung bestimmter Formen der Selbstverwaltung in Gestalt von Dorfräten und der Entwicklung der Kultur und Sprachen aller in der UdSSR lebenden Nationen und Nationalitäten verbunden. Anfänglich wurde die Idee, Dorfräte einzurichten, mit der Notwendigkeit materieller Unterstützung für landlose und arme Bauern erklärt, später erhielt sie auch eine ideologische Dimension, war sie doch darauf ausgerichtet, auf dem Lande einen Klassenkampf zu führen. Die Sowjetregierung widmete dem Kampf gegen die „Kulaken“ besonders viel Aufmerksamkeit. Auch wurden Kampagnen gegen religiöse Praktiken organisiert. Daneben konzentrierten sich die Bemühungen der Bolschewiki auf die Propaganda zum sozialistischen Aufbau in allen Bereichen des gesellschaftlichen Lebens.

Die Förderung nationaler Minderheiteninstitutionen und nationaler Kader, von den Bolschewiki insbesondere auf ihrem XII. Parteitag 1923 diskutiert, wurde später unter dem Begriff *korenizacija* (Verwurzelung) zusammengefasst. Die Sowjetukraine wurde zu einem frühen Experimentierfeld dieser affirmativen Nationalitätenpolitik, die letztlich die Stabilisierung der Parteierrschaft in den Grenzregionen ermöglichte. Das Allukrainische Zentrale Exekutivkomitee (VUCVK) beschloss, dass die Dorfräte in der Muttersprache der dort lebenden Menschen verwaltet werden sollten. Die Zentralbehörden versuchten, die Prozesse im Zusammenhang mit dem Leben nationaler Minderheiten so weit wie möglich zu kontrollieren. 1924 richtete das VUCVK die Zentralkommission für Nationale Minderheiten ein, die später eine außerordentlich wichtige Rolle bei der Organisation des öffentlichen Lebens der Minderheiten spielte. Das Zentralkomitee der Kommunistischen Partei der Ukraine (Bolschewiki) unterhielt jeweils nationale Sektionen, die für die Förderung der jeweiligen Minderheiten zuständig waren.

Den deutschen Kolonisten – insbesondere in der Südukraine – kam aufgrund ihrer wirtschaftlichen Stellung sowie ihres überdurchschnittlichen Bildungsniveaus eine herausgehobene Bedeutung zu. Die meisten Deutschen lebten in landwirtschaftlich geprägten Kolonien in der Südukraine, die ihre Vorfahren im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert auf Einladung der Zarinnen und Zaren gegründet hatten. Im Zuge der affirmativen Nationalitätenpolitik ab 1923 entstanden zahlreiche deutsche Minderheiteninstitutionen, um damit der Partei und dem Staat Zugang zu dieser wichtigen Bevölkerungsgruppe zu ermöglichen. Im Februar

1930 existierten in der Ukraine 254 deutsche Dorfräte, die meisten von ihnen in den sieben deutschen Rajons. Obwohl die Dorfräte von den stimmberechtigten Bürgern gewählt wurden, war während der NĚP die lokale Autonomie begrenzt. Erfüllten die ländlichen Sowjets ihre Pflicht zur Erhebung von Steuern und zur Verbreitung der politischen Botschaften nicht im erforderlichen Umfang, konnten sie von oben aufgelöst und mit wenig Aufwand neu gewählt werden.

Karl-Liebknecht in der Okruha von Mykolaïv war der bevölkerungsreichste deutsche nationale Rajon in der Sowjetukraine. An seinem Beispiel kann gezeigt werden, dass nicht einheimische, sondern „fremde“ Deutsche die verantwortlichen Positionen innerhalb der Minderheiteninstitutionen innehatten. Die Partei hatte größeres Vertrauen in deutschsprachige Personen, die aus Arbeitermilieus stammten und ihre Loyalität zur Sache bereits vor 1917 bewiesen hatten. Die NĚP und die damit verbundenen politischen Maßnahmen eröffneten den deutschen Kolonisten jedoch die Möglichkeit, die lokale Politik als Mitglieder der Dorfräte mitzugestalten und damit einen bestimmten Modus Vivendi mit dem Sowjetstaat zu finden. Gleichzeitig hatten sie die Möglichkeit, ideologisch motivierte Kampagnen oder die neugegründeten Kulturzentren (*sel'bud/sil'bud*) auch zu ignorieren, wo Kurse zur Beseitigung des Analphabetismus organisiert wurden und deutschsprachige Zeitungen und Zeitschriften wie *Das Neue Dorf* oder *Die Saat* auslagen. Die Deutschen waren damit nicht allein. Ende der 1920er Jahre mussten die verantwortlichen Partei- und Staatsfunktionäre erkennen, dass mit den getroffenen Maßnahmen die gewünschten Ziele nicht im erwarteten Umfang erreicht werden konnten. Diese Enttäuschung trug 1928 und 1929 zu einem erneuten abrupten Kurswechsel der Partei bei. Dies führte zur Verstaatlichung aller Formen von Produktion und Handel und damit de facto zum Ende der NĚP. Der Staats- und Parteiapparat zwang die Dorfräte, die Kollektivierung der Landwirtschaft, die bis dahin auf freiwilliger Beteiligung beruht hatte, mit aller Gewalt durchzusetzen. Nach 1929 begannen die Behörden in der Sowjetukraine, die Dorfräte vollständig unter die Kontrolle der Zentralregierung zu stellen. Die Aufrechterhaltung eines kostenintensiven Staatsapparates in Sprachen verschiedener Minderheiten wurde immer mehr als Hindernis beim sozialistischen Aufbau empfunden und schließlich ganz aufgegeben. Die meisten Minderheiteninstitutionen hörten spätestens 1939 auf zu existieren, darunter waren auch jene im Karl-Liebknecht-Rajon.

Im Gegensatz zu den deutschen Kolonisten, die im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert in das Gebiet der späteren Ukraine eingewandert waren, betrachteten sich die Polen als autochthonen Teil der Bevölkerung. Viele Polen lebten in Dörfern der damaligen Westukraine. Darunter befand sich auch das Dorf Hreczany bei Proskuriv. Unter den Bedingungen des Sowjetregimes erlebte das Dorf in den 1920er Jahren eine Phase wirtschaftlicher und kultureller Blüte. Die glänzendste Zeit in

seiner Geschichte waren die Jahre zwischen 1922 und 1929. Das Vorhandensein eines Marktes, wenn auch in begrenzter und kontrollierter Form, mobilisierte das wirtschaftliche Leben der Landbevölkerung nachhaltig. Die ländlichen Bauernhöfe erlebten einen wirtschaftlichen Aufschwung, und das kulturelle Leben entwickelte sich. Trotz der ideologischen Einschränkungen in Hreczany wie auch in anderen Dörfern in der sowjetischen Ukraine entwickelte sich in den frühen 1920er Jahren eine polnischsprachige Selbstverwaltung. Die ländliche Infrastruktur (Straßen, Brücken) wurde erweitert und die Landwirtschaft modernisiert. Die Dorfbewohner fühlten, dass sie Akteure der Veränderungen waren und dass vieles direkt von ihnen abhing, sowohl in ihrem eigenen Dorf als auch im weiteren Sinne im ganzen Land. Der Unterricht in der Dorfschule wurde in Polnisch, der Alltagssprache der lokalen Bevölkerung, geführt. Dies wiederum garantierte einen schnelleren und effektiveren Erwerb von Wissen. Dank ihrer Ausbildung konnten die Bewohner weiterführende und höhere Schulen besuchen. Sie sahen auch die beruflichen Möglichkeiten nicht nur bei der Eisenbahnstation im Dorf, sondern auch in der Zuckerindustrie und im Dienstleistungssektor der nahegelegenen Stadt Proskuriv.

Diejenigen, die im Dorf blieben und weiter Landwirtschaft betrieben, erlebten ebenfalls eine grundlegende Veränderung ihres Alltagslebens. So entstand im Dorf ein polnisches Kulturzentrum (*sel'bud/sil'bud*), wo es einen polnischen Chor gab sowie polnische Bräuche und Traditionen gepflegt wurden. 1927 wurde außerdem eine Bibliothek gegründet. Abonniert wurden polnischsprachige Magazine wie *Sierp* (Die Sichel) und *Głos Młodzieży* (Stimme der Jugend), aber auch ukrainische und russische Presstitel.

Während der NÉP wurde die soziale Aktivität der Einwohner von Hreczany nicht durchweg von den Staats- und Parteiinstitutionen kontrolliert. So bauten die Menschen in Hreczany trotz aller Widrigkeiten eine römisch-katholische Kapelle und organisierten öffentlich verschiedene religiöse Feiern. Die Wahlberechtigten waren in der Lage, die Professionalität und Ehrlichkeit von Personen, die von den Behörden in die Dorfräte geschickt wurden, einzuschätzen und unqualifizierte Personen gegebenenfalls auch wieder abzuwählen. Die Situation auf dem Lande änderte sich grundlegend 1928/29, als die Partei beschloss, ihre Kontrolle über das gesamte soziale Leben auszudehnen. Die Dorfbevölkerung hörte auf, eigenständiger Akteur des öffentlichen Lebens zu sein und wurde zunehmend passiv. Die meisten Menschen waren oft zu eingeschüchtert und zu besorgt um ihr eigenes Schicksal, um in der lokalen Gemeinde initiativ zu werden. Die Zwangskollektivierung, die die Bewohner um das von ihnen seit Generationen genutzte Land brachte, setzte auch vielen anderen kommunalen Aktivitäten ein Ende. Nach der Kollektivierung verloren die nationalen Dorfräte ihre Bedeutung.

Ab den 1930er Jahren kam es zu einer verstärkten Russifizierung und Zentralisierung des öffentlichen Lebens. Darüber hinaus hatten Angehörige der polnischen Minderheit besonders unter dem Großen Terror zu leiden. Viele wurden nach Zentralasien deportiert. 1946 wurde das Dorf Hreczany administrativ in die Stadt Proskuriv eingegliedert. Nichtsdestotrotz hat unter manchen Einwohnern die Erinnerung an ihre polnischen Wurzeln und ihre Zugehörigkeit zur römisch-katholischen Kirche überdauert.

Streszczenie

Niniejszy tom umożliwia przyjrzenie się praktyce polityki narodowościowej na Ukrainie Radzieckiej w okresie Nowej Polityki Ekonomicznej (NEP) na podstawie świadectw źródłowych dotyczących instytucji mniejszości polskiej i niemieckiej. Dokumenty pochodzą z jednej strony z archiwów na Ukrainie, w Polsce i Niemczech, z drugiej zaś z rozmaitych gazet i czasopism, które ukazywały się w czasie NEP na Ukrainie w języku polskim i niemieckim. Edytowane tu dokumenty są podzielone na sześć obszarów tematycznych. 1. Biografie lokalnych i regionalnych protagonistów, 2. Codzienne funkcjonowanie rad wiejskich, 3. Polityka państwa i partii wobec mniejszości, 4. Wysiłki modernizacyjne na wsi, 5. Tworzenie i kontrola instytucji mniejszości na wsi, 6. Spojrzenie z zewnątrz na wiejskie instytucje mniejszości. Dokumenty w tych sekcjach są uporządkowane częściowo tematycznie, częściowo chronologicznie. Łącznie dostarczają informacji o tym, jak mieszkańcy wsi przyjmowali i wykorzystywali oferty polityczne w zakresie lokalnej samorządności narodowej, tworzone przez kierownictwo radzieckie od roku 1923. Chociaż powstałe instytucje ostatecznie w znikomym stopniu spełniały wyznaczony przez partię cel, czyli mobilizowanie ludności do socjalistycznego projektu, to dla lokalnych mieszkańców oznaczały nieosiągalny wcześniej – ale również później – przyrost możliwości działania politycznego. W centrum uwagi znalazły się w niniejszym tomie polska wieś Hreczany pod Płoskirowem (obecnie Chmielnicki) na ówczesnej zachodniej Ukrainie oraz niemiecki rejon Karl-Liebcknecht na południu Ukrainy, ponieważ względny udział ludności należącej do mniejszości był tam w obu wypadkach szczególnie wysoki, a ponadto w lokalnych archiwach przetrwało wiele dokumentów na temat instytucji mniejszości w tych miejscowościach.

Ukraina miała w latach dwudziestych XX wieku charakter wieloetniczny. Według spisu powszechnego z 1926 roku na Ukrainie Radzieckiej było 480 tysięcy Polaków, co stanowiło mniej więcej 1,6 procent spośród około 29 milionów mieszkańców tej republiki, oraz 400 tysięcy Niemców, czyli w przybliżeniu 1,4 procent ogółu ludności. Wydarzenia pierwszej wojny światowej oraz rewolucji rosyjskich z 1917 roku, kiedy rozpadały się tradycyjne struktury społeczne i instytucje państwowe, stały się ważnym etapem w dziejach Ukrainy. Po zwycięstwie w wojnie domowej Partia Komunistyczna, która nie potrafiła sprostać nowym wyzwaniom zwłaszcza w dziedzinie zaopatrzenia w żywność i towary codziennego użytku, kierowała krajem ze skrajną brutalnością. Szybko okazało się, że tak zwany komunizm wojenny nie tylko nie przyniósł oczekiwanych korzyści, lecz doprowadził do prawie całkowitego załamania się życia gospodarczego. W 1920 i 1921 roku państwu radzieckiemu, a tym samym również Ukrainie groziła klęska

głodu, która mogła potencjalnie wywołać masowe powstanie przeciwko bolszewikom. Dlatego ich przywódca Włodzimierz Lenin podjął decyzję o zasadniczej zmianie kursu w polityce gospodarczej. NEP umożliwiła istnienie sektora prywatnego w sferze produkcji, usług i handlu. Wprowadzenie NEP na wsi wiązało się również z dopuszczeniem określonych form samorządności w postaci rad wiejskich, a także z rozwijaniem kultury i języków wszystkich żyjących w ZSRR narodów i narodowości. Pomysł powołania rad wiejskich tłumaczono początkowo koniecznością pomocy materialnej dla bezrolnych i ubogich chłopów. Później zyskał on również wymiar ideologiczny, miał bowiem na celu prowadzenie walki klasowej na wsi. Rząd radziecki poświęcał szczególnie wiele uwagi walce z „kulakami”. Organizowano również kampanie przeciwko praktykom religijnym. Oprócz tego wysiłki bolszewików skupiały się na propagowaniu budowy socjalizmu we wszystkich dziedzinach życia społecznego.

Wspieranie instytucji mniejszości narodowych i narodowych kadr, omawiane przez bolszewików zwłaszcza na ich XII zjeździe partyjnym w 1923 roku, ujęto później skrótowo pod pojęciem *korenizacija* (zakorzenienie). Ukraina Radziecka stała się wczesnym poletkiem doświadczalnym tej afirmatywnej polityki narodowościowej, która umożliwiała także ustabilizowanie władzy partii w regionach przygranicznych. Wszuchukraiński Centralny Komitet Wykonawczy (WUCWK) postanowił, że w radach wiejskich ma być używany język ojczysty mieszkających tam ludzi. Władze centralne próbowały w miarę możliwości jak najściślej kontrolować procesy związane z życiem mniejszości narodowych. W 1924 roku WUCWK powołał Komisję Centralną do spraw Mniejszości Narodowych, która odgrywała później nader ważną rolę w organizacji życia publicznego mniejszości. Komitet Centralny Komunistycznej Partii Ukrainy (bolszewików) posiadał zaś sekcje narodowe, odpowiedzialne za wspieranie poszczególnych mniejszości.

Koloniści niemieccy – zwłaszcza na południowej Ukrainie – mieli szczególnie duże znaczenie ze względu na swoją pozycję gospodarczą oraz ponadprzeciętny poziom wykształcenia. Większość Niemców żyła w typowo rolniczych koloniach na południowej Ukrainie, które założyli ich przodkowie w XVIII i XIX wieku na zaproszenie caryc i carów. W związku z afirmatywną polityką narodowościową od 1923 r. powstawały liczne instytucje mniejszości niemieckiej, co miało umożliwić partii i państwu dostęp do tej ważnej grupy ludności. W lutym 1930 roku istniały na Ukrainie 254 niemieckie rady wiejskie, większość w siedmiu niemieckich rejonach. Chociaż rady wiejskie wybierali uprawnieni do głosowania obywatele, w okresie NEP lokalna autonomia była ograniczona. Jeśli wiejskie sowiety nie spełniały w wymaganym zakresie swojego obowiązku pobierania podatków i rozpowszechniania przekazów politycznych, mogły zostać odgórnie rozwiązane i niewielkim wysiłkiem wybrane na nowo.

Karl-Liebknecht w okręgu mikołajowskim był najludniejszym niemieckim rejonem narodowym na Ukrainie Radzieckiej. Na jego przykładzie można pokazać, że nie miejscowi, lecz „obcy” Niemcy zajmowali kluczowe stanowiska w instytucjach mniejszości. Partia miała większe zaufanie do osób niemieckojęzycznych, które pochodziły ze środowisk robotniczych i dowiodły swojej lojalności wobec sprawy komunizmu już przed rokiem 1917. NEP i związane z nią działania polityczne otworzyły jednak niemieckim kolonistom możliwość wpływania na lokalną politykę w charakterze członków rad wiejskich i znalezienia w ten sposób pewnego *modus vivendi* z państwem radzieckim. Jednocześnie mieli możliwość ignorowania kampanii o podłożu ideologicznym lub nowo założonych ośrodków kultury (*siel'bud/sil'bud*), gdzie organizowano kursy zwalczające analfabetyzm oraz udostępniano niemieckojęzyczne gazety i czasopisma takie jak „Das Neue Dorf” czy „Die Saat”. W tej sytuacji byli nie tylko Niemcy. Pod koniec lat dwudziestych czołowi funkcjonariusze partyjni i państwowi musieli sobie uświadomić, że za sprawą podjętych działań nie zdołali osiągnąć pożądaných celów w oczekiwanym zakresie. Owo rozczarowanie przyczyniło się w 1928 i 1929 roku do kolejnej nagłej zmiany kursu partii. Doprowadziło to do upaństwowienia wszelkich form produkcji i handlu, a przez to de facto do końca NEP. Aparat państwowy i partyjny zmuszał rady wiejskie do bezwzględnego forsowania kolektywizacji rolnictwa, która wcześniej opierała się na dobrowolnym udziale. Po 1929 roku na Ukrainie Radzieckiej władze rozpoczęły poddawanie rad wiejskich całkowitej kontroli rządu centralnego. Dalsze utrzymywanie kosztownego aparatu państwowego posługującego się językami różnych mniejszości uważano coraz częściej za przeszkodę w budowie socjalizmu, a wreszcie całkowicie z niego zrezygnowano. Większość instytucji mniejszości przestała istnieć najpóźniej w 1939 roku, w tym właśnie te w rejonie Karl-Liebknecht.

W przeciwieństwie do kolonistów niemieckich, którzy w XVIII i XIX wieku przywędrowali na teren późniejszej Ukrainy, Polacy uważali się za autochtoniczną część ludności. Wielu Polaków zamieszkiwało wsie na ówczesnej zachodniej Ukrainie. Wśród nich była także wieś Hreczany pod Płoskirowem. W warunkach sowieckiego reżimu przeżywała ona w latach dwudziestych fazę gospodarczego i kulturalnego rozkwitu. Najpomyślniejszym okresem w jej historii były lata 1922–1929. Istnienie rynku – choć w ograniczonej i kontrolowanej formie – trwale stymulowało życie gospodarcze wiejskiej ludności. Wiejskie gospodarstwa przeżywały wzrost gospodarczy, rozwijało się też życie kulturalne. Mimo ideologicznych ograniczeń w Hreczanach, a także w innych wsiach na radzieckiej Ukrainie rozwijał się na początku lat dwudziestych samorząd ludności polskojęzycznej. Rozbudowywano wiejską infrastrukturę (drogi, mosty) i modernizowano rolnictwo. Mieszkańcy wsi czuli, że są podmiotami przemian i że wiele zależy od nich

bezpośrednio, zarówno w ich własnej miejscowości, jak i w szerszym rozumieniu w całym kraju. Nauczanie w wiejskiej szkole prowadzono po polsku, czyli w języku używanym na co dzień przez miejscową ludność. To z kolei gwarantowało szybsze i bardziej efektywne nabywanie wiedzy. Dzięki odbytej edukacji mieszkańcy mogli uczęszczać do szkół ponadpodstawowych i wyższych. Widzieli też możliwości kariery zawodowej nie tylko na stacji kolejowej we wsi, lecz również w przemyśle cukrowniczym i w sektorze usług pobliskiego miasta Płoskirowa.

Ci, którzy pozostali we wsi i nadal zajmowali się rolnictwem, również przeżyli zasadnicze przeobrażenie swojego codziennego życia. We wsi powstał zatem polski ośrodek kultury (*siel'bud/sil'bud*), gdzie istniał polski chór oraz pielęgnowano polskie zwyczaje i tradycje. W 1927 roku założono ponadto bibliotekę. Prenumerowano polskojęzyczne magazyny takie jak „Sierp” i „Głos Młodzieży”, ale również ukraińskie i rosyjskie tytuły prasowe.

W czasie NEP aktywność społeczna mieszkańców Hreczan nie była pod całkowitą kontrolą instytucji państwowych i partyjnych. Mimo wszelkich przeciwności zbudowali oni kaplicę rzymsko-katolicką i organizowali publicznie różne uroczystości religijne. Wyborcy potrafili docenić profesjonalizm i uczciwość osób delegowanych do rad wiejskich przez władze i ewentualnie odwoływać osoby bez odpowiednich kwalifikacji. Sytuacja na wsi zmieniła się zasadniczo w latach 1928–1929, kiedy partia postanowiła rozciągnąć swoją kontrolę na całe życie społeczne. Ludność wiejska przestała być samodzielnym podmiotem życia publicznego i popadała w coraz większą bierność. Większość ludzi była często zbyt zastraszona i zatroskana o własny los, by podejmować inicjatywy w lokalnej gminie. Przymusowa kolektywizacja, która pozbawiła mieszkańców ziemi użytkowanej przez nich od pokoleń, położyła kres również wielu innym rodzajom działalności samorządowej. Po kolektywizacji narodowe rady wiejskie utraciły swoje znaczenie. Od lat trzydziestych następowała nasilona rusyfikacja i centralizacja życia publicznego. Ponadto członkowie polskiej mniejszości szczególnie ucierpieli w okresie wielkiego terroru. Wielu zesłano do Azji Środkowej. W 1946 roku wieś Hreczany wcielono administracyjnie do miasta Płoskirowa. Niemniej wśród niektórych mieszkańców przetrwała pamięć o polskich korzeniach i przynależności do Kościoła rzymsko-katolickiego.

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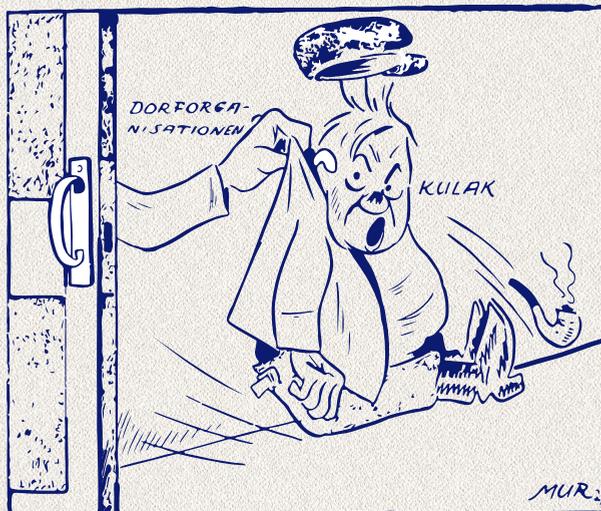
Frank Grelka jest historykiem Europy Wschodniej i pracownikiem naukowym Centrum Interdyscyplinarnych Studiów o Polsce na Uniwersytecie Europejskim Viadrina we Frankfurcie nad Odrą. W pracy doktorskiej badał ukraiński ruch narodowy pod okupacją niemiecką. Obecnie pisze monografię o Holokauście w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1941.

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The era of the New Economic Policy (NEP) was the golden age of Soviet affirmative national policies. This volume of documents offers insights into Polish and German minority institutions and political practices in early Soviet Ukraine. It provides a picture of how people in rural areas received the affirmative initiatives from above and adapted them for their own purposes. Even though these policies failed to achieve the goals the Bolsheviks expected, they granted a large degree of autonomy on a local scale that was unmatched in previous and later times. The Polish village of Hreczany near Proskuriv (today Khmel'nyts'kyi) in western Ukraine, and the German Karl-Liebknecht Raion in southern Ukraine serve as prime examples in this document collection.



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