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Travis Cook

**Stalin, Party of One?: A Look at Domestic Political
Resistance to Stalin's Collectivization Policies**

Joseph Stalin embodies the idea of a totalitarian dictator influenced by few and challenged by none. This view of Stalin's role in Soviet history has proven incorrect in many respects since the fall of the Soviet Union and the opening up of Soviet archives to scholars around the world. The event that most demonstrated the lack of homogeneity within the Soviet government and the persistence of resistance to Stalin's complete authority is the forced collectivization of agriculture. Soviet collectivization was an ambitious plan and for Stalin one of the most controversial policy initiatives he would pursue. Ultimately, the documentary record reveals that the agricultural policies that Stalin endorsed, which led to full scale collectivization, were not the product of a monolithic government ran by Stalin, but rather were contested at nearly every stage of development from 1928 through 1934.

The struggle over ensuring the proper amount of food for the Soviet Union had been a problem since before the 1917 revolution. The way Vladimir Il'ich Lenin chose to pursue agricultural policies displayed this contentious issue for Soviet leaders since the creation of the Soviet Union. The Civil War of 1918-1921 posed a unique challenge for Lenin as domestic warfare would often disrupt the agricultural progress of the nation. In a letter to N.A. Rozhkov in 1919 Lenin revealed his strategy for procuring food from peasant farmers during these years: "[i]f, instead of serenading free trade, the nonparty intelligentsia or the intelligentsia close to the party would form emergency groups, small groups, and unions for all-around assistance to the food supply, it would seriously help the cause and lessen hunger."¹ Lenin's comments to Rozhkov served as a euphemistic description of a practice that would extend beyond abolishing free trade to include forced seizure of grain from the peasantry and the instatement of a food rationing system. This economic system came to be known as War Communism. Although the system of War Communism was instated as a response to food shortages largely due to the

disruption of the Civil War, these practices remained unpopular among the peasantry and largely inefficient in fostering good relationships between the industrial centers, the central party and the rural peasantry.

Furthermore, War Communism proved unsustainable as poor harvests in 1920 and general discontent over grain seizures led to a variety of peasant uprisings. These developments caused Lenin to consider a pragmatic solution to the political and economic turmoil facing the Soviet Union in 1921 by developing what became known as the New Economic Policy (NEP). Lenin and Viacheslav Molotov discussed one of the basic tenets of this system in a telegram in July of 1921 which stated that, “[t]he chief condition for resolving the food crisis lies in the successful collection of taxes in [the form of] food.”² This tax in kind was not the only aspect of NEP and the reintroduction of a limited free market also became a major component for solving economic problems. These measures had positive effects on the peasantry as they observed grain prices reach pre-Great War levels and their standard of living recovered.

Within this new system there also began to develop certain segments of society that profited from the capitalist elements of the NEP economy. One main group of people who profited off of this system were referred to as NEPmen. NEPmen were essentially speculators who sold scarce goods to various groups of people in the city centers and countryside. In addition to NEPmen, peasants also began to assert some form of economic independence as many peasant farmers began to withhold grain from the market to fetch higher prices or simply used their harvests to fatten up livestock. The development of NEP did stabilize the Soviet economic system in a time of great crisis, but the advent of NEPmen and peasants who could manipulate the market would also become concerning for the Soviet government as the era of NEP moved on.

The central party would also be faced with a crisis that was the opposite of what had been experienced in the years prior to the stabilization of the agricultural sector. By 1923, as foodstuffs became relatively more available, food production began to outpace the production of industrial goods, which led to a rise in prices of industrial goods and a devaluation of agricultural goods. The growing difference between these indexes became what Lev Trotsky referred to as the 'scissors crisis.' This had a great impact on the peasantry forcing many to revert to subsistence farming or refrain from selling their grain altogether due to the poor exchange value it had with industrial goods by this time. The actions of much of the peasantry left industrial centers particularly vulnerable to the peasant's will in this respect. Although short term fixes for the split between the prices of industrial and agricultural goods would be created, these problems would not cease and furthermore would be issues that Stalin faced as he asserted his political dominance towards the end of the 1920s.

This crisis was compounded by a focal point of the Bolshevik party throughout the period of NEP which centered on creating industrial growth in the Soviet Union following the destruction caused by the Great War, the 1917 Revolution and subsequent Civil War. A debate that developed within the party over how to achieve progress in the industrial sector did not differ in kind but only degree because the Bolsheviks all agreed that the peasantry would provide the revenue necessary to build an industrial base. Nevertheless, by 1924 an industrialization debate developed that would not be resolved until Stalin consolidated his control over the economic apparatus of the Soviet Union in 1928. This debate was polarized by the left and right wings of the Bolshevik party. The rightists were made up of Politburo members Nikolai Bukharin, Alexey Rykov and Mikhail Tomskii and championed the policies of NEP, which relied on a taxation of the peasantry to ensure state revenue. The left wing included Politburo

members Lev Trotsky, Lev Kamenev, Grigory Zinoviev and the economist Evgenii Preobrazhenskii, all of whom felt that state intervention, which would set the prices the state would pay for agriculture lower than the world market and also set industrial prices artificially high, was the proper economic course to procure revenue for industrializing the Soviet Union. This form of accumulating capital was in contention with NEP as it attacked the free market and restricted the peasant's ability to market their own grain. Stalin allied with the right wing for political reasons as his thesis of 'socialism in one country' confronted the ideology, created by Lenin and embraced by Trotsky and to a lesser extent the left wing of the Bolshevik party, that the socialist revolution needed to spread internationally. However, Stalin never entirely agreed with the right as he felt a focus on heavy industry, which was a position of the left, was more important than the rightists' strategy of focusing on small scale manufacturing of consumer goods. Stalin and Bukharin emerged victorious over their political opposition, but the political infighting concerning the proper economic policies for the Soviet Union was far from over.

By 1927 the inadequacies of NEP had become apparent when considering the deficiencies between needed grain reserves and the actual amount being collected by the state. Roberta T. Manning estimates that by December "only one-third of annual domestic food requirements (220.2 million poods of grain) had been secured from the 1927 harvest, compared to 340.1 million poods the previous year."³ The problem with food distribution existed as only one dilemma that Stalin was faced with in 1927, but concerned the Soviet leader immensely. The solutions that Stalin would soon seek out drastically altered the landscape of Soviet agriculture and proved to have deleterious effects on much of the peasantry.

A report from the OGPU⁴ regarding concerns in the countryside in the summer of 1927 because of a war scare revealed another quandary for Stalin. The document regarded a war scare

in 1927 that evolved from diplomatic shortcomings between the Soviet Union and Britain, China and Poland, which left many people in the Soviet countryside fearful of the prospect of international conflict. The report revealed that, “[p]anic can be seen among Cossacks in the village of Pavlovskoe, Krymsk Raion, in connection with the rumors of war. Instances in which horses and cattle are sold off have been noted, and silver money is being hidden.”⁵ The information presented by the OGPU described some shortcomings of NEP that Stalin’s economic plan would have to confront. The first problem that became apparent surrounded the way that the free market allowed peasants to sell their goods in the event that they might lose them for a war effort or some other campaign by the state, which left the Soviet Union’s food supply vulnerable to the peasant farmers’ will. Furthermore, under NEP peasants could hoard away goods and money in the hopes of it gaining value in the future. For these reasons the war scare of 1927 underscored the specific areas that Stalin and his supporters would have to focus on in order to form a solid agricultural infrastructure that could lead to full-scale collectivization.

The argument against the free market system did not solely rest on the problems that the war scare created. Stalin’s advisors also revealed that there were fundamental problems with the free market in general. A telegram from the OGPU stated that, “[s]peculators extract large profits from the sale of goods in short supply at inflated prices at markets with abnormally high demand, allocate the funds received in this manner to procurements and disorganize the procurement markets through excessive increases in set prices, which in a number of cases brings about a sharp drop in state and cooperative procurements.”⁶ The problem that the telegram from the OGPU discussed could trace its roots back to the development, within the outlines of NEP, which allowed peasants and NEPmen to distort market prices by hoarding scarce goods for eventual sale at inflated prices. In the context proposed by the OGPU this practice proved

detrimental to state procurements as the state was forced to adhere to the prices set by these speculators. This was another concern that would lead Stalin to turn against NEP, positioning himself against Bukharin and focusing on strategies to target a class of peasants that were known as kulaks.

The kulak class was seen as the most economically affluent of peasant society. The idea of a kulak class came from Lenin viewing the peasant stratum as a Marxist class based society in microcosm. Therefore, kulaks filled the bourgeois class and the rest of peasant society was divided into middle and poor peasant classes. The term kulak took on a highly politicized role, which allowed the term to be applied in a fashion that never described a definitive group within peasant society. Nevertheless, kulaks became a major point of focus for Stalin because he believed that their access to more agricultural goods than the rest of the peasantry put them in a unique position to influence agricultural prices by withholding agricultural goods until prices were raised in much the same way described by the OGPU's report on speculators. Stalin also used this term as a way to demonize specific members of peasant communities found to be undesirable to the state. The political nature of this term and the wide variety of peasants who could be labeled kulaks displayed the elasticity of the kulak moniker. The kulak label eventually allowed the state to use this term to intimidate large segments of the peasant community during various collectivization drives by attaching harsh penalties to the crime of being a kulak. Due to the negative connotations of this term, punishments of kulaks were rarely seen as being negative by party members, but were questioned in relation to how this would affect the middle and poor peasant classes.

Kulaks would become a major point of focus for Soviet leaders, but only as part of a larger economic plan that Stalin had for the Soviet Union in 1928. Stalin's economic plan

depended heavily on grain reserves, and it demonstrated why focusing on the peasant communities became a focal point for the Soviet government under Stalin. A speech by Stalin in 1928 revealed the path he wished to pursue. Stalin first described the difference between the Soviet Union and capitalist nations by stating that, “[i]n capitalist countries industrialization was usually based not only on internal accumulation but also on the plundering of other countries, the plundering of colonies or vanquished countries, or on substantial loans from abroad...All of this is being done in our country on the basis of internal accumulation.”⁷ Although Stalin’s view of the way to industrialize depended on the proletariat and peasant classes, the strategies that led to forced collectivization would focus solely on the latter. Stalin described the role of peasant farmers in this system by stating that, “it pays the state not only ordinary taxes, direct and indirect, but it also pays relatively high prices for goods from industry—that is first of all—and it does not receive the full value of the prices of agricultural products—that is second of all.”⁸ This focus revealed various ways that Stalin’s first Five Year Plan, which focused on rapid industrialization, would be dependent on the grain reserves that could be obtained by the peasant class. Stalin’s plan resembled that of the previously defeated leftists, in that the Soviet government would attain revenue through setting the prices the state would pay the peasantry for foodstuffs at below market cost, and underscored the measures that he was willing to enforce on the peasantry to guaranty industrial progress. The taxation on the peasants would continue, but government control over the price of agricultural goods became central components of Stalin’s economic plan.

The industrialization focus was central to Stalin’s economic plan. However, Stalin also goes on to state that, “[w]e must have a certain minimum of reserves at our disposal if we want to defend the positions of Soviet power both domestically and abroad.”⁹ The war scare of 1927

would have been fresh in Stalin's mind and his use of the peasantry for domestic security also served as a plan to ensure the Soviet Union could withstand potential attacks from the capitalist nations abroad. This arrangement laid out by Stalin also relied heavily on peasant labor, which ideally provided a model where vast amounts of resources could be extracted from the peasant class.

The peasantry alone could not provide food security for the Soviet Union under NEP, and Stalin felt the way to reverse this trend and ensure a large amount of state grain reserves hinged on pursuing the collectivization of agriculture. The collective farms, or *kolkhozy*, would rely on tractors and large machinery in order to mechanize the farming process and ensure that large amounts of food would be produced. Although the idea of solving state grain reserve problems by focusing on collective farms had broad acceptance within the party, the methods used to implement this strategy were contentious, which required a tempered approach. Stalin subverted the restrictions created by a need to consult with central party officials and encouraged a collective farm movement by making a trip to Siberia in January of 1928, during which he chided local officials for their softness against kulaks and instructed them to encourage the collectivization of agriculture. Although not official policy or endorsed by the Politburo, these instructions were the beginning of Stalin's attempts to ensure the collectivization of all Soviet agriculture. The focus on collectivization would become a massive mobilization of peasant labor, but in 1928 forced collectivization of agriculture throughout the Soviet Union did not embody a homogeneous party policy and peasants joining collective farms was seen by the government as a largely voluntary endeavor.

Collectivization was not the only goal of Stalin during his trip to Siberia and the focus these agricultural plans would have on liquidating the kulak class was made clear. A Central

Committee (CC) directive in January of 1928 stated that, “[i]n order to restore our price policy and achieve a serious turnaround, we must strike at resellers and kulaks right now, we must arrest speculators, kulaks, and other disrupters of the market and price policy.”¹⁰ This policy of aggressively targeting the peasants who profited from the free market contains the early signs of the path that Stalin and his supporters would follow regarding agriculture and was foreshadowed in the Party’s industrialization debate of 1924-1928. In addition to taxation, the CC directive revealed that the state was seeking price controls and to eradicate kulaks through punishments that included confiscations of property. These confiscations were often justified by referring to article 107 of the criminal code, which allowed for confiscations of a criminal’s property. The elasticity of the term kulak and the implementation of these harsh penalties would not only achieve Stalin’s goal of liquidating the kulak class, but came to be used as a tool of state repression that would ultimately assist the state in future campaigns to forcefully collectivize agriculture and procure food supplies from the peasantry.

These controversial economic policies that Stalin encouraged created much political fallout. As early as January of 1928 the central party was already receiving reports from political figures that challenged Stalin’s campaign, which relied on peasants as a sort of human resource for capital extraction. The treatment of kulaks became especially controversial. The central party’s instructions for local officials were revealed in a CC directive in January of 1928. It stated that, “[w]hen arrears are collected on any kind of payments, harsh penalties be imposed immediately, above all against the kulaks.”¹¹ Two weeks later these practices were questioned in a letter to Stalin from the chairman of the board of the Siberian Krai¹² Agricultural Bank, S. I. Zagumenny, in which he warns of the dangers of this approach. Zagumenny wrote that, “I am firmly convinced that the bulk of middle and poor peasants will view putting the kulaks on trial

just for failing to sell grain as nothing other than a return, in one form or another, to the times of war communism and the period of forced grain requisitioning [*prodrazvyorstka*].”¹³ Zagumenny was only projecting his opinion of what might happen, but his letter pointed out the similarity between the agricultural plans Stalin endorsed and War Communism as towns were expected to fill state grain quotas through collective farms and appropriating it from the kulak class. What Zagumenny feared was that these new measures would alienate the lower strata of peasantry who still resented War Communism, which in turn would have negative effects on the peasantry’s willful involvement in their role with industrializing the country. Zagumenny’s letter displayed an early form of resistance to Stalin’s basic view of the economy and challenged the treatment of the peasants from within the party by officials responsible for the areas where these strategies were being carried out.

The ill reception that these plans received among the peasantry can be seen through an examination of letters written to members of Red Army units. An OGPU report on the attitudes of peasants writing to Red Army soldiers revealed that the peasantry began to experience hardships in regions that were being subjected to the agricultural policies Stalin promoted. One family’s correspondence read, “[y]ou write that service has become easy for you and life is good, but for us, our dear son-in-law, life has gotten very bad. They’ve started taking away grain from the rich for the treasury, and they’re forcing them to sell it at fixed prices...Flour now costs 3 rubles, so that they’re pushing every citizen into taking grain out of the area.”¹⁴ This mass exodus of food and the ill reception of the grain procurement plans Stalin championed in 1928 caused much unrest among the people closely tied to the rural communities as this account reflects. When coupled with the fears of Zagumenny it became clear that Stalin’s agricultural

strategy ran the risk of alienating the peasantry, which was a point that Stalin would soon be confronted on with political opposition from high ranking party members.

Bukharin detested the new direction that Stalin, his old comrade in defending NEP, was taking the peasant economy. This political split led the right wing of the Bolshevik party to be labeled the Right Opposition by Stalin and his supporters who felt Bukharin and the rightists' economic views posed opposition to the central party line. The Right Opposition would stand out as one of the greatest challenges to Stalin's hegemonic rule over Soviet policy making. Although the Right Opposition questioned the departure from NEP in all realms of economic and social spheres, the greatest grievance they had surrounded an aberration to Stalin's agriculture plans. In order to understand the way that Stalin's attempts at grain requisitioning evolved into wide spread discontent among some high ranking members within the Politburo it is important to revisit the specific fears and challenges experienced by the people affected by the grain requisitions and Zagummeny.

By the summer of 1928 the problems forecast earlier in the year by Zagumenny and witnessed by Red Army soldiers would come to fruition. The USSR's deputy people's commissar of finance M. I. Frumkin would be the first high ranking official to sound the alarm. In a letter from Frumkin to the Politburo and Stalin in June of 1928, Frumkin revealed that, "[t]he deterioration in our domestic situation is attributable above all to the countryside, to the agricultural situation...the countryside, with the exception of a small segment of poor peasants, is against us."¹⁵ Frumkin blamed the domestic shortcomings squarely on the problems with the agricultural plan that Stalin championed. He also revealed that much fallout manifested among the peasantry over the new grain procurement plans from every segment of peasant society, not just from the intentionally targeted kulak class.

Frumkin's call to the supporters of the new form of requisitioning grain was in his words an attempt to "call the Politburo's attention to the factors that are the focus of hundreds and thousands of party members."¹⁶ Perhaps this widespread concern was an overstatement by Frumkin, but even if the number of party members disenchanted by the agricultural policies championed by Stalin were embellished, the fact that Stalin and his supporters faced political opposition because of the central party line concerning agriculture was apparent. Frumkin did not hesitate to describe the negative effect these practices had on the peasantry and on the entire economy as well. He wrote that, "[a]ny incentive to improve a farm, to increase the inventory of working animals or equipment, or commercial livestock, is paralyzed by the fear of being listed as a kulak."¹⁷ The point that Frumkin made was that not only were the measures Stalin supported destructive in fostering a positive relationship between the peasantry and the rest of society, but this alienation actually posed a serious threat to the economy. There had already been concern over eliminating incentive to produce goods through the destruction of NEP, but Frumkin took this argument a step further and actually described Stalin's treatment of the kulaks as providing a disincentive for peasants to be productive in the agricultural sector. Frumkin's letter was a direct contestation of Stalin's agriculture policy and revealed the political unrest among party members concerned about the state of social and economic relations in the Soviet Union almost immediately after the agricultural policies Stalin endorsed were implemented in Siberia and spread to the Ural region.

Another way that Frumkin contested Stalin's political hegemony was by proposing solutions to the problems in the countryside that went against the policies adopted by Stalin and his supporters. Frumkin suggested that the central policies should "not expand state farms on an intensive [*udarny*] and superintensive [*sverkhudarny*] basis. This intensive way of operating will

be costly.”¹⁸ Frumkin suggested that the plan of procuring grain and moving the entire peasantry onto collective farms should take a temperate and methodical path, which would be a position that political opposition to Stalin would embrace throughout the collectivization campaigns. Frumkin’s letter in 1928 outlined some shortcomings with the central party line and revealed that even by midsummer Stalin was being faced with opposition from within the political apparatus due in large measure to the agricultural policies he supported. The issues raised by Frumkin directly confronted the plan championed by Stalin and would also become a major platform that the Right Opposition would endorse.

By July, Bukharin outlined the basic grievances the Right Opposition had with this reorganization of Soviet economic strategies. Although most of the points that Bukharin focused on surrounded the agricultural policies supported by Stalin, the Right Opposition also felt that the rapid rate of industrialization as a whole had been an unrealistic program. Bukharin stated that, “[w]e want to accomplish a whole host of important tasks overnight...It is not hard to understand that, first, in this formulation these tasks cannot be fulfilled simultaneously.”¹⁹ This endorsement of a temperate approach to moving the country forward would lead Bukharin and the Right Opposition into direct conflict with Stalin surrounding his plans to rapidly procure grain supplies. Furthermore, it would set Bukharin and the Right Opposition up as a major hurdle for Stalin’s plans concerning the entire economic policy he endorsed.

Bukharin noted in his speech in July that, “last year we exported 227 million rubles’ worth of grain and fed everybody, this year we not only did not export anything, but in addition we are experiencing the most brutal signs of under consumption in a whole host of areas.”²⁰ The problems with the agricultural agenda that Stalin championed led to two dependent areas of concern for Bukharin and the rightists. The first was the alienating factor that the new

agricultural policy had on every stratum of the peasantry. Bukharin stated that, “Lenin wrote that the main task of our CC and Central Control Commission, as well as our party as a whole, was to prevent these disagreements from growing to the degree of ‘serious class based disagreements.’”²¹ To Bukharin and the Right Opposition the problem was that the draconian measures that were championed by Stalin led to poor economic policy and a division between the peasantry and the rest of society. Bukharin’s understanding at this point was that these policies forced the state to enact measures that would not only harm the peasantry, but also by subverting Lenin’s strategy with NEP, the economy as a whole.

A second major point of focus for Bukharin was on the property confiscations that were being carried out against kulaks and speculators in order to ensure more grain reserves. Bukharin described the similarities these had to War Communism by stating that, “[d]uring the program debate we just defined war communism as a system that sets the goal of rational consumption with a curtailment of individualist incentive for the small scale producer, with requisitions, confiscations and so forth.”²² According to Bukharin these measures not only alienated the peasantry from the proletariat, but also removed any incentive the peasantry would have to produce the proper amount of agricultural goods needed for the state to maintain an international presence and also provide for its citizens domestically. Although these were not the only issues that the Right Opposition had concerning the rapid rate of industrialization that was being pursued by Stalin and his supporters in the Soviet government, they did reveal that the agricultural strategies supported by Stalin in 1928 had opened Stalin and his supporters up to wide spread political opposition.

Nevertheless, in the winter of 1928/29 the method that had been implemented in the Siberian and Ural regions and promoted by the CC earlier in the year, which relied on town

councils fulfilling grain requirements by expropriating grain from kulaks and encouraging the collectivization of agriculture, spread throughout the Soviet Union and became known as the Ural-Siberian method. With the expansion of the Ural-Siberian method peasant communities began to experience measures similar to War Communism throughout the Soviet Union, which would largely reshape the structure of the peasant's way of life. In 1929 when the plans put into practice in the countryside began to spread, the implementation of such practices also began to be questioned in the political sphere. It was merely an extension of the policies that Stalin and his supporters promoted in 1928 and although the rightists questioned these plans and the expansion of them, a much more influential and subtle political give and take would ensue surrounding the proliferation of the Ural-Siberian method. The resentment for the kulaks and reversal of the free market policies of NEP would remain, but exactly how to allow peasant communities to extract grain from those labeled kulaks would prove controversial.

Although the rightists felt that the procurement campaign and the harsh penalties levied against kulaks moved too fast and threatened to upset the cooperation between the peasantry and the proletariat, many local officials favored harsher reprisals and a rapid tempo. This debate unfolded by May of 1929. A telegram from the RSFSR Commissariat of Justice revealed the penalties that the central party felt should be extracted by law against kulaks. It stated that, "[i]n the event that [grain] delivery is not made, the repressive measure to be imposed is a levy equivalent to double the amount of grain [owed], with the subsequent sale of the individuals property."²³ These measures that would be exacted against the real or perceived kulaks that were accused of withholding grain were immediately challenged by local officials.

A telegram from A. A. Andreev, secretary of the Northern Caucasus Krai party committee to Stalin, following the telegram outlining legal repercussions, revealed the way local party

officials were pushing for heavier punishments. Andreev outlined his desire to allow “a fine to be imposed by the commissions, based on a resolution of citizens’ meetings, at five times the value [of the amount owed].”²⁴ This split between the legal requirements, the central party figures, and the desires of local party officials underscored another way that the plans for grain procurement and punishing kulaks were facing resistance. In a complete reversal of the rightist positions, by May of 1929 Stalin was presented with local officials who felt the central party agricultural agenda was too modest.

The insistence by local officials that the agricultural policies were not harsh enough would be accepted by Stalin and his supporters. A decree from the RSFSR Central Executive Committee and Sovnarkom in June of 1929 revealed that they would allow local soviets “[t]o impose a fine on an administrative basis in the amount of up to five times the obligations set by the resolution of a general assembly or commission of a village soviet, and in the event of refusal, to auction off property.”²⁵ This decree described how the grievances of local officials won out and the harsh reprisals against speculators and kulaks would be accepted. The triumph of the local officials in their contestation of central policy embodied the repressive measures that would continue to disenfranchise many peasants and cement the agricultural policies that Stalin championed throughout the grain producing regions of the Soviet Union.

Also by 1929 many people within the Soviet government were trying to discredit the Right Opposition, which caused Bukharin to confront Stalin in harsher terms. In a declaration Bukharin made to the Politburo in January of 1929 defending himself, Rykov and Tomskii against slander, the Right Opposition’s confrontation with Stalin’s control over the agricultural plans of the state became apparent. Bukharin denounced “the pithy catchword of ‘tribute’ ... Connected with it is the subsequent change in the taxation of the peasantry, the

growing difficulties with the supply of bread, the reduction in the sown area, and the dissatisfaction of the peasantry...no one can say a word against the 'tribute' because Comrade Stalin has pronounced this word."²⁶ There is a lot that one can discern regarding the controversial nature of the agricultural policies Stalin endorsed and the way these facilitated resistance through this statement. For example, Bukharin continued to criticize Stalin's understanding of the problems developing regarding grain supplies among the peasantry. However, this declaration also revealed the shortcomings of Bukharin and the Right Opposition. Although the rightists had legitimate claims surrounding the inadequacies of Stalin's plans, they were unable to garner enough support to actually challenge this system. As Bukharin notes, the rightists were the only ones willing to seriously challenge these policies due to the reverence many party members had for Stalin.

Bukharin's cries of injustice did not necessarily sum up the way that the Politburo supported Stalin alone. Lars Lih, Oleg Naumov, and Oleg Khlevniuk state that, "[i]n spite of the political defeat of the 'rightists' in April 1929 at both the plenum of the Central Committee and the XVI Party Conference, Bukharin, Rykov and Tomskii preserved some authority in the party—state apparatus. All of them remained members of the Politburo."²⁷ By this time the mere disagreement over Stalin's policies did not lead to automatic banishment from the party. However, Stalin had his own group of supporters that would insulate him from any serious challenge posed by the rightists. By November of 1929 Bukharin was expelled from the Politburo, and Rykov and Tomskii were removed from the Politburo the following year.²⁸ These expulsions and the fear that Stalin had surrounding these members of the Politburo did not necessarily rely solely on their opposition to his agricultural policies, but the opposition these

figures posed to the agricultural policies Stalin endorsed played a major role in their alienation within the party.

Upon examining some of Stalin's letters to Molotov, his most trusted follower, it becomes clear that the rightist's opposition to the agricultural policies Stalin endorsed were an ever present concern for Stalin during 1929. There is also evidence that Stalin truly felt that Bukharin had no grounds for confronting his approach to agriculture. In a letter written in August of 1929 Stalin wrote that, "[t]he main problem with grain procurement at present is 1) the presence of a large number of urban speculators at or near the grain market who take the peasants' grain away from the government...3) the desire of a whole number of collective farms to hide grain surpluses and sell grain on the side."²⁹ As this statement disclosed, Stalin thought that the problem with the new agricultural policy did not stem from poor central policy that alienated peasants or dissipated the incentive to produce, but rather hinged on a number of greedy local peasants and officials. This was in stark contrast to Bukharin and the rightist's analysis that the problems surrounding grain procurement rested on the tenets of the central party line and outlined the sharp difference in these group's positions.

Another letter that Stalin wrote to Molotov displayed his optimism surrounding the agricultural policies he championed. Stalin wrote that, "procurements are now going well...The main thing now is not to rest on our laurels and to move things forward."³⁰ This optimism was not completely revealing of Stalin's attitude and an earlier letter demonstrated that he still had some resolve to discredit Bukharin and the Right Opposition. Stalin wrote, "Bukharin has slid into the swamp of opportunism...why does he praise Lenin so much now after his death?"³¹ Stalin's criticism of Bukharin seems typical of disagreeing politicians, but the focus of his argument is enlightening. One main point that it emphasized was that Stalin either disagreed with

or feared the legitimacy of Bukharin's claim that his policies went against Lenin's wishes. Either way, the letter showed that Bukharin's criticism of Stalin and his insistence on the problems with Stalin's grain procurement strategies were concerning for Stalin well into 1929.

Nevertheless, the collective farm movement began to increase due to peasants joining collective farms in the last few months of 1929. This increase largely consisted of poor peasants and had much to do with local officials forcing them onto collective farms or peasants simply joining collective farms to ensure they would not be labeled kulaks. When viewed in this light the rise in collective farm populations could hardly be seen as due to voluntary actions of the peasantry, but party officials and Stalin described the increase in collective farm populations as such. R.W. Davies and S. G. Wheatcroft estimate that, "in the last three months of 1929,...about three million households joined the kolkhozy."³² This figure was touted by Stalin as an example of widespread support for collectivization among the peasantry and caused Stalin's attitude to change dramatically by the fall and winter of 1929. In a letter to Molotov in December of 1929 Stalin retained a denunciatory tone concerning the rightists and optimism over collectivization. Stalin wrote that, "grain procurements are progressing... The collective farm movement is growing by leaps and bounds... The rightists (the three) are working away, but so far they haven't made a move."³³ The light hearted nature of Stalin in these letters displayed his optimism surrounding grain procurements and collectivization, but also demonstrated the lack of fear he had of the rightists. Stalin kept an eye on the Right Opposition, but his optimism surrounding the success of the grain procurements of 1929 seemed to have alleviated his fear that Bukharin may pose a serious threat surrounding the issue of agriculture. This, coupled with the growing size of the collective farms, led Stalin and the Politburo to begin to consider a plan to implement full scale forced collectivization.

The optimism of many party officials and the forward looking plans towards wholesale collectivization were contained in a report by G. N. Kaminsky. Kaminsky wrote that:

[W]e must categorically declare that we have achieved major successes in the task of socialist reorganization of the countryside thanks to consistent implementation of the party's general line. The party did this work in spite of the rightists, against them, in conflict with them, and only steady, firm implementation of the party line will be able to guarantee us new successes in the future. The party in the future will do even more vigorous work in the collectivization of agricultural production, based on the rapid pace and large scale of the collective[-farm] movement, and will strive to achieve even greater success.³⁴

The defeat of the rightists left little in the way of opposition to rapid collectivization by the winter of 1929. Also the vigor of the party officials to pursue wholesale collectivization pushed the Soviet government towards finalizing plans on how to achieve this collectivization and how to ensure its success. Ultimately, this would set the stage for a debate within the Politburo that would once again question the viability of Stalin's optimistic tenacity.

Despite the vigor of Stalin's speeches and other party officials concerning the success of the agricultural policies of 1929 an examination of the discussions concerning how to pursue full scale collectivization within the CC reveals that controversy over the practicality of the plans Stalin championed also developed. The CC draft decree on the pace of collectivization on December 18th 1929 contained the focus that was supported by many members of the CC concerning the methods that would lead to full scale collectivization. The decree stated that, "the task of collectivizing the vast majority of peasant farms may be completely fulfilled within five years."³⁵ The decree of the CC was the plan that would be debated throughout the rest of December and into January from various positions that contradicted and supported Stalin's view of the rate collectivization should be pursued. Another element of the CC decree was the continuation of the campaign against the kulak. As the decree stated, "resistance by the kulak has become all the more rabid and fierce as he now directly confronts the prospect of his destruction

as a class in the Soviet system.”³⁶ This focus on the problems that kulaks posed to collectivization would later become a point of contention, but with the political defeat of the Right Opposition the debate within the CC would overlook this element of the CC decree and battle lines were drawn primarily over the rate at which collectivization would be forced on the peasantry.

Although a five year plan did allow for some time to help collective farms come into fruition, there were some within the CC that felt this rate was still too rapid. The main resistance to the plans that Stalin would come to support and the primary concerns over this rate of collectivization are contained in a report by the first secretary of the Middle Volga party organization, M. M. Khataevich. He noted that, “[w]e must not get preoccupied with speeding up the pace, but at the same time there must be no artificial slow down.”³⁷ Khataevich’s analysis was a long way from the rightist’s direct confrontation of the agricultural policies adopted by the Soviet government. However, his reluctance to endorse the strict and somewhat rapid timetables outlined in the CC decree resembled the warnings of Frumkin who felt rapid collectivization would cause economic problems and revealed the disagreement that party members still had surrounding setting a rapid pace for collectivization. Khataevich’s concern over the CC decree did not necessarily contradict rapid collectivization strategies, but he did propose that this focus on numbers and rapid progress may prove harmful for the Soviet Union.

By the time Stalin weighed in on this issue it became clear that he disagreed with the CC decree because its plans were too modest of an approach and certainly disagreed with Khataevich’s warnings against pursuing rapid collectivization. Stalin described his view in a telegram to Molotov where he stated that, “[w]e are planning to shorten the resolution by 75 to 80 percent...and to lay a shorter deadline for collectivizing the principle grain areas.”³⁸ Stalin’s

view of the rate wholesale collectivization should be pursued was clear. He supported a plan that would ensure the most rapid rate for full scale collectivization. Again Stalin took the hard line as he did against the Right Opposition and criticisms surrounding punishment for kulaks.

The final plan that was settled on by the Politburo would satisfy Stalin's wishes. The final decree on the pace of collectivization was finalized on January 5, 1930. It declared that, "the collectivization of such highly important grain areas as the Lower Volga, the Middle Volga, and the Northern Caucasus can be completed for the most part in the fall of 1930 or, at the latest, in the spring of 1931; the collectivization of other grain areas can be completed for the most part in the fall of 1931 or, at the latest, in the spring of 1932."³⁹ The final decree of the CC on the plans for compulsory collectivization demonstrated Stalin's triumph over a political struggle that had begun three years earlier. This transition to collective agriculture and away from the limited free market system allowed by NEP marked a shift within the Soviet Union which would not end with this decree that solidified the position that Stalin supported. Furthermore, rapid collectivization as official party policy and the Unified position of the CC at this point in history had little effect on the tribulations these policies would cause in the future.

The new system that Stalin and the CC supported required a vast reorganization of party positions, which soon caused wide spread resistance among lower level political figures. For example, "[i]n Vladivostok out of 249 assigned to be transferred only 169 were given moving vouchers; the others showered the okrug [party] committee with petitions with all sorts of certificates attached about ailments, etc., doing everything possible to avoid going to a raion."⁴⁰ The idea of moving to a distant *raion*⁴¹ was obviously unpopular among many political officials who refused to leave their former positions to help implement compulsory collectivization among the peasantry. The shift in political responsibilities and the resistance of lower level

officials to comply revealed the distance between the central party members and the mood among the lower ranking local members of the government at this transitory point in Soviet history.

The grievances of lower party officials displayed mild political resistance to the collectivization plans that were being implemented, but the peasantry would soon face much greater hardships than being forced to a government post in a distant *raion*. This would manifest as a plan to forcefully collectivize agriculture would exclude kulaks in a way that posed a serious threat to a large number of the peasantry. A Politburo decree on January 30, 1930 outlined how kulaks should be dealt with. The decree separated the kulaks into three classes with drastically different punishments attached to each category. They instructed that:

Category 1—immediately liquidate the counterrevolutionary kulak aktiv elements by incarcerating them in concentration camps, not stopping at the death penalty for organizers of terrorist acts, counterrevolutionary disturbances, and insurrectionist organizations; b. Category 2—should be comprised of remaining elements of the kulak aktiv, especially the richest kulaks and quasi-landowners, who are to be exiled to remote localities of the USSR and, within the borders of a given region, to remote areas of the region; c. Category 3—consists of kulaks who are left within the borders of a given raion; they are to be resettled on new land plots allotted to them outside collective farms.⁴²

What is clear from the Politburo decree is that kulaks would not be allowed to participate in the collective farms and would face harsh reprisals for the status imbued on them by the state. It is also around the time that these practices were being implemented that the actual existence of a kulak class began to be questioned. As officials from the city centers were sent out to villages to extract punishments against these kulaks the realization that the intended targets of the campaign were far from being rich began to take hold. This was remedied by the state when the “central party apparatus imaginatively introduced a special category of Sub-kulaks who were poor but yet opposed to the government.”⁴³ These measures ensured that a wide range of peasants could be targeted by the state and increased the elasticity of the term kulak. When coupled with the list of

punishments depending on what category of kulak an accused person would be placed in the focus on attacking kulaks, which became known as dekulakization, embodied a form of wide spread state terror against the peasantry to ensure peasants would join collective farms.

The forced collectivization campaign endorsed by the CC and the fear many peasants had of being labeled kulaks led to a massive increase in collective farm populations. Davies and Wheatcroft estimate that between January and February of 1930, “nearly ten million households were dragooned into kolkhozy.”⁴⁴ However, the all around implementation of collectivizing agriculture along with the attack on the kulaks caused many problems among the peasantry. The lack of popularity these policies had among the peasantry can be seen through an increase in mass disturbances among the peasantry in the first few months of 1930. A report by the OGPU on mass disturbances in the countryside revealed that in January there were 102 mass disturbances by February 1,048 and in March there were 6,532.⁴⁵ The unrest among the peasantry displayed the lack of support the central party line had among the peasantry almost immediately after the plan to instate rapid compulsory collectivization throughout the Soviet Union became accepted as central party policy.

The unrest among the peasantry that came with compulsory collectivization and the harsh treatment of the kulaks forced Stalin to address these issues not long after this agricultural campaign ensued. Stalin did so on March 2, 1930 in an article which appeared in the authoritative central party newspaper *Pravda* entitled, “Dizzy with Success.” Stalin described the shortcomings that rapid collectivization caused “as a result of the block-headed belief of a section of our party: ‘We can achieve anything!’ ‘There’s nothing we can’t do!’.”⁴⁶ Stalin’s ability to shirk the responsibility for the pitfalls of rapid collectivization became the most innovative solution to the problems of dissenting opinions over agriculture Stalin would develop.

As his article said, the problem did not rest on the overzealous central party line that he had championed, but rather on local party officials that were ‘dizzy with success’ and impassioned by the cry of the socialization of the agricultural sector. Stalin’s “Dizzy with Success” article was accompanied by the central party reducing the intensity of forced collectivization and dekulakization, which also helped to quell the unrest in the countryside and remove political pressure from Stalin.

In addition to Stalin dodging the responsibility for the unpopular campaigns during the first forced collectivization and dekulakization drives of 1930 the Right Opposition provided a series of forced recantations served to ensure that the party line, which Stalin had engineered, would be seen as a homogenous agricultural outline. Bukharin’s recantation in December of 1930 revealed the strong focus these denunciations would have on the agricultural policies Stalin endorsed. Bukharin began by disavowing the rightist coalition altogether by stating that he regrets, “the fundamental mistakes committed by a group of comrades, to whom I myself once belonged.”⁴⁷ His denunciation of the Right Opposition would contain the role that this opposition played in confronting the agricultural policies being implemented by Stalin and his proponents. A broad recantation would not suffice, however, as Bukharin goes on to say that, “[i]t was the crushing of a class enemy, of the kulak capitalist stratum, the process of a transition to total collectivization of the poor-middle peasant, petty peasant economy...and the party’s relentless and determined pursuit of the general line that gave us victory.”⁴⁸ The matter of whether Bukharin truly believed that the position of the rightists was erroneous or that his recantation was an outgrowth of the fact that by this time the Right Opposition had been crushed politically did little to deduce from the focus this recantation had on the success of the agriculture policies instated by the party earlier in the year. Bukharin’s recantation demonstrated that by 1930

political resistance had become very minimal and the only way that any member of the government, including Bukharin, could hope to continue service in that government would be to support the party line in regards to agriculture. Bukharin was willing to do so, but that did not signal an end to the political fallout over the forced collectivization and dekulakization campaigns that were being implemented.

There is also some evidence that Stalin himself felt that any of the punishments levied against peasants who would detract from the goal of collectivization was necessary. In September Stalin wrote to Molotov stating that, “[w]e must immediately publish all the testimonies of all the wreckers of the supplies of meat, fish, tinned goods and vegetables...and after a week have the OGPU announce that all these scoundrels will be executed by firing squad. They should all be shot.”⁴⁹ The focus on punishing people who got in the way of central policy concerning collectivization by death would be an issue that caused trouble within the government in the future. However, the question of how to legitimate the treatment of kulaks remained a concern of Stalin and his supporters throughout a second wave of forced collectivization and dekulakization that occurred in the early months of 1931.

The unrest among the peasants had been pacified by Stalin’s retreat from the rapid rate of collectivization and dekulakization in the beginning of 1930. Furthermore, the tumultuous and large scale agricultural policies of 1930 did little to hinder that year’s harvest and with the help of good weather the Soviet agricultural sector observed a record harvest. This successful harvest renewed the Soviet government’s confidence in the viability of full scale collectivization and a second wave of forced collectivization would prove less contentious as a demoralized peasantry were forced into collective farms. Davies and Wheatcroft estimate that, “[n]early four million households joined the kolkhozy in the first three months of 1931, and a further 2.5 million in

April and May.”⁵⁰ The agricultural success experienced after the first collectivization drive would not transfer to the second. Lazar Kaganovich, who was a member of the Politburo and Stalin’s deputy in the party revealed in a letter to Stalin in September of 1931 that, “[e]ven though the total amount of procurements is much greater than last year...the procurements now are apparently going to be more of a strain, and management of this issue will have to be strengthened.”⁵¹ No longer was it sufficient to blame shortcomings on local party officials or the kulak and by 1931 inconsistencies in the plan of rapid compulsory collectivization were beginning to develop.

The political atmosphere of 1931 can be seen in Stalin’s concern for legitimizing the harsh treatment of kulaks during the dekulakization campaigns to the rest of the party. Stalin’s focus on contextualizing the treatment of the kulaks to the rest of the party is discussed in a letter from Stalin to Molotov. Stalin questioned a speech Molotov was to give at the VI Congress of Soviets when he stated that, “I read only the part about ‘dumping’ and ‘forced’ labor... Regarding the kulaks’ labor, since they are not convicts, either they should not be mentioned at all, or we should explain in a special section and with thorough documentation that the only ones who work among the kulaks are those who want to work and [that they do so] with all the rights of voluntary labor.”⁵² Stalin’s defense of the cruel treatment of kulaks as deserved and also not resulting in forced labor was an attempt by Stalin to ensure that Molotov’s speech would justify these draconian practices to the rest of the party. The mere need to address this issue displayed Stalin’s political insecurity surrounding his policies against the kulaks in 1931. Furthermore, this political insecurity was compounded by the failures in agriculture, which were preludes to what would come and by 1932 Stalin would again face extensive opposition due to the agricultural policies he endorsed.

The year 1932 brought widespread famine to the Soviet Union due to the central party policies concerning agriculture. Ukraine was especially susceptible to this famine and Stalin misjudged the situation in Ukraine from the beginning. Stalin revealed his ignorance on the issue in a letter to Kaganovich. He wrote that, “Ukraine has been given more than it should get. There is no reason to give it more grain—and there is nowhere to take it from.”⁵³ Stalin was responding to pleas by local officials for the Soviet government to alleviate the starvation that was occurring in epic proportions in Ukraine throughout 1932. Stalin’s indifference to the cries of local officials led him to oppose their suggestions. In a rare case for the Soviet leader this misunderstanding of the crisis in Ukraine led him to reveal to Kaganovich in August that, “[u]nless we begin to straighten out the situation in the Ukraine, we may lose the Ukraine.”⁵⁴ The pleas from the local officials, although contradictory to what Stalin felt was necessary, did not pose any sort of political threat to central policy. However, as Stalin’s correspondence in 1932 demonstrated, the misunderstanding of the crisis in Ukraine and his inability to agree with local officials led to a catastrophe so large that Stalin had to question his ability to keep Ukraine in the Soviet Union.

The Ukrainian crisis was just one political problem that Stalin faced in 1932. Much controversy was also created within the party surrounding a law, “said to have been drafted by Stalin personally,”⁵⁵ instated on 7 August 1932 concerning theft of public property. The law sought to end unlawful consumption of state food reserves by starving peasants through allowing the state to punish theft of various public property in a way that required, “execution with confiscation of all property, with commutation of execution under extenuating circumstances to deprivation of freedom for a term not less than 10 years with confiscation of all property.”⁵⁶ When considering the poor state of food reserves in the country by 1932 due to the aggressive

collectivization policies being instated it was not surprising to party officials that theft of state food supplies occurred on a fairly large scale. However, the way that Stalin sought to remedy this problem was shocking. A threat of execution or ten year imprisonment was an extreme sentence for theft of property and again Stalin's harsh line would draw dissenting opinion from members of the government.

This dissent came from within the Politburo and was recorded in a letter from L. M. Kaganovich to Stalin. Kaganovich wrote that, "[t]here was one objection to the third section yesterday by...[sic] today he wasn't there he went out of town. There were also doubts about and even objections about the second and third...but ultimately we settled on this text in principle."⁵⁷ Although Kaganovich did not provide any names, it was clear that multiple members of the Politburo opposed the sections of Stalin's law that required strict penalties for theft of state property. The objections of many members of the Politburo did little to soften the repressive measures instituted by the decree, but the opposition to it displayed resistance to Stalin's agricultural policies from within the Politburo as late as 1932.

The year 1932 also brought criticism of Stalin's agricultural policies from M. N. Riutin, a former district secretary who affiliated with the Right Opposition and was expelled from the party in 1930. Stalin had an inclination that Riutin would pose a problem as a letter he wrote to Molotov in 1930 revealed. Stalin wrote that, "[w]ith regard to Riutin, it seems to me that it's impossible to limit ourselves to expelling him from the party...he will have to be exiled somewhere as far as possible from Moscow."⁵⁸ Stalin was correct about Riutin in 1930 and by 1932 Riutin would provide a scathing denunciation of Stalin and his policies in a document entitled "Stalin and the Crisis of the Proletarian Dictatorship," more commonly known as the Riutin Platform. With the help of his comrades within the party Riutin attempted to distribute it

to party members in secrecy. The Riutin Platform attacked Stalin with vitriolic language and sought to encourage party members to contest Stalin's growing hegemony within the Soviet government. Although the number of party members who actually received the document is unknown, to Stalin it was clear that this document directly contested his power and confronted him within the political sphere. The Riutin Platform bluntly stated that, "Stalin sees no contradiction whatsoever between, on the one hand, his theory and, on the other hand, his pronouncements concerning the liquidation of kulaks as a class, the improvement in the material conditions of the middle and poor peasants, and the middle peasants irreversibly coming around to socialism. And yet, in reality, they are mutually exclusive."⁵⁹ The focus of the Riutin Platform on the often contradictory nature of Stalin's agricultural outlook and the reality of the situation for the peasants and the economy as a whole resembled a continuation of the Right Opposition platform. By 1932 it had become clear to Riutin that punishing the kulaks and building an alliance between the middle and the poor peasants and the rest of society through collectivization was proving impossible. Although the Riutin Platform was one of the last real political contestations to Stalin's power, it did challenge Stalin's growing power in the Soviet government largely by pointing to the failures of the agricultural policies that Stalin had endorsed.

By the end of 1932 and into 1933 the Eismont affair,⁶⁰ which contained many high ranking members of the government, also posed a threat to Stalin in ways deemed by Stalin and his supporters to be similar to the Right Opposition. The claims against this group were contained in a speech by M. F. Shkiriakov, the chairman of the Middle Volga Territorial Control Commission (KK/RKI), at the CC plenum in January of 1933. Shkiriakov stated that Eismont's group, "had a negative attitude to the party's policy in agriculture, to those measures which we are utilizing against the class enemy, against the remnants of the kulaks, now liquidated... This

total harmony of views was shared by Smirnov, Eismont, and Tolmachev.”⁶¹ Although the Eismont affair was much more tempered and less confrontational than the Riutin plot or the Right Opposition, it did confront the party leadership with accusations by central party officials that Stalin’s agricultural plans were detrimental to the Soviet Union. By this time the party had become much more unified as M. F. Shkiriakov’s scathing denunciation of this group that deviated from the party line displayed. For this reason the example provided by the Eismont affair demonstrated that although political dissent was rather ineffectual by 1933, the agricultural plans that Stalin endorsed were still being confronted by many high ranking members within the government.

Eismont and Riutin were arrested for their contestation of the forced collectivization and dekulakization campaigns championed by Stalin, but there still existed wide spread and severe famine in the Soviet Union well into 1933. This led to more grass roots political upstarts that developed in opposition to the state merely because of the agricultural policies that were being implemented. This can be seen with a political party that called themselves “The People’s Communist Party.” M. F. Shkiriakov described this party’s platform in a memo to Kaganovich that stated, “[t]he objective of this counterrevolutionary organization was to overthrow Soviet power, the dissolution of the kolkhozy and the restoration of individual farming [edinolichnoye khoziaistvo] as the predominant form of agriculture.”⁶² The likelihood of this political organization of attaining its goal was minimal, but their goal was clear. Stalin’s agricultural policies had to be reversed at any cost. The goals of this party were more drastic than the other criticisms that merely sought to slow the rate of collectivization and their focus proved that although major forms of resistance had been reduced by the Soviet government, political resistance to these policies among the Soviet people in 1933 still remained.

The final triumph of Stalin's agricultural policies and the end to widespread resistance to collectivization could be seen as being achieved by 1934. Stalin's "Congress of the Victors" speech revealed that, "[t]he majority of the adherents to these antirevolutionary groups had to admit that the line of the party was correct and they have capitulated to the party... The policy of eliminating the kulaks and of complete collectivization has triumphed."⁶³ The triumph of the collectivization campaign and the defeat of all opposition was no easy task and the battle that raged over the collectivization of Soviet agriculture within the party and beyond had lasted six years at the time of this speech. Although Stalin's policies had triumphed, this long road was a testament to the struggle that collectivization was for the people involved, the politicians that opposed the party line and Stalin's attempts to unilaterally instate Soviet policy.

The full scale forced collectivization of agriculture and Stalin's implementation of the agricultural policies he championed were contentious plans that only succeeded after he overcame a wide variety of political resistance. The origins of the agricultural debate can be traced to the period of NEP through the development of peasants profiting off of the free market, the 'scissors crisis' and the industrialization debate. By 1927 Stalin was ready to confront the shortcomings of NEP and instate an economic strategy that was all his own. Stalin's agricultural plans would take over much of the economic platforms championed by the left wing of the Bolshevik party in the industrialization debate and focus on extracting resources from the peasantry through state control of agricultural practices. Almost immediately after Stalin's trip to Siberia political resistance to these agricultural plans developed among party officials Zagumenny and Frumkin. The Right Opposition sympathized with earlier resistance, but posed more of a threat to Stalin because this resistance would include members of the Politburo. Less confrontational forms of resistance included dissenting opinions within the CC and even local

officials discontent with measures that they felt were too reserved. Nevertheless, Stalin's forced collectivization strategy became accepted as the central party line in January of 1930. Although the implementation of widespread compulsory collectivization caused discontent among many peasants, Stalin's "Dizzy with Success" article was able to shift the blame from himself to local party officials and solidify the party's resolve by focusing on forced recantations from Bukharin regarding his criticism of the agricultural policies and the good harvests of 1930. However, this strategy did not eliminate political dissent altogether as famine gripped large regions of the Soviet Union in 1932 and 1933. Stalin's unwillingness to heed the cry of local officials almost cost him Ukraine and even members of the Politburo questioned the harsh reprisals Stalin mandated against the peasants that he perceived as enemies of the state. The Riutin and Eismont affairs highlighted the dissatisfaction among many current and ex party members in 1932 and 1933 and served as some of the last confrontations to Stalin's supreme authority from within the government over forced collectivization. That did not mean that political resistance ceased altogether as grass roots political parties that were opposed to collectivization persisted, but the "Congress of the Victors" speech in 1934 marked an end to a contentious plan that completely transformed the agricultural landscape of the Soviet Union. Although Stalin's policies won out over political opposition in nearly every case discussed above, the widespread discontent and political fallout over these agricultural plans demonstrate a political process ripe with debate and dissenting opinions that prove Stalin did not retain hegemonic influence over the party-state apparatus during the implementation of the agricultural policies he endorsed from 1928 to 1934.

Glossary of terms and abbreviations in endnotes:

Cheka	Vserossiiskaia Chrezvychainaia Komissiiia Po Bor'be s Kontrevoliutsiei, Spekuliatsiei i Sabotazhem (All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counterrevolution and Sabotage [1928-1922])
CPSU(b)	Kommunisticheskaya partiya Sovetskogo Soyuza (bolshevikov) (Communist Party of the Soviet Union [Bolsheviks])
OGPU	Ob'edinennoe Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie (Unified State Political Administration [Political Police])
Okrug	An Okrug was an administrative district that contained various townships, similar to a county.
RTsKhIDNI	Rossiiskii Tsentr dlya Khraneniya i Issledovaniya Dokumentov Noveishei Istorii (Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Recent History)
TsA FSB RF	Tsentral'nyi Arkhiv Federal'noi Sluzhby Bezopasnosti Rossiyskaya Federatsiya (Central Archive of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation)
TsK KPSS	Tsentral'nyi Komitet Kommunisticheskaya Partiya Sovetskogo Soyuza (Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union)
RGASPI	Rossiski Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii (Russian State Archive of Social and Political History)
RGAE	Rossiski Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Archive of the Economy)
RKP(b)	Rossiiskaia Partiiia Kommunistov (bolshevikov) (Russian Communist Party [Bolsheviks])
RGVA	Rossiiskii Gosudarstvenni Voennyi Arkhiv (Russian State Military Archive)
RSFSR	Rossiiskii Sovetskaia Federativnaia Sotsialistcheskaia Respublika (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic)
VKP(b)	Vsesoiuznaia Kommunisticheskaya Partiiia (bolshevikov) (All-Union Communist Party [Bolsheviks])

Notes:

¹“Letter to N.A. Rozhkov. 29 January 1919,” RTsKhIDNI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1, 315, l. 1-4, reprinted in *The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archive*, ed. Richard Pipes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 62.

² “Telegram from Lenin and Molotov to All Provincial and Regional Party Committees of the RKP(b) 30 July 1921,” reprinted in *The Unknown Lenin*, 130.

³ Roberta T. Manning, “The Rise and Fall of the Extraordinary Measures, January-June 1928: Toward a Reexamination of the Onset of the Stalin Revolution,” *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies* 1504 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001), pp. 2, 7., reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry, 1927-1930*, ed. Lynne Viola, V P. Danilov, N A. Ivnitskii and Denis Kozlov (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 17. A pood is a Russian measurement equal to 16 kilograms.

⁴ The OGPU was a secret state police agency. The OGPU was originally named the Cheka, but from 1923 it became known as the United Main Political Administration, which had the Russian acronym OGPU.

⁵ “From informational summary report [svodka] no. 22 of the OGPU information and Political Control Department for 20 July through August 1927, 4 August 1927,” TsA FSB RF, f.2, op. 5, d. 394, ll. 88-89ob., reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry, 1927-1930*, 24.

⁶ “Report from the OGPU to the USSR Sovnarkom on the need to take repressive measures against private traders, 29 October 1927,” TsA FSB RF, f. 2, op. 6, d. 567, ll. 1-5., reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 29.

⁷ “From speeches by I.V. Stalin and N.I. Bukharin at the July Plenum of the CC, 9-10 July 1928,” RGASPI, f. 17, op.2, d. 375(part 2), ll. 500b-66ob, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 98.

⁸ “From speeches by I.V. Stalin and N.I. Bukharin at the July Plenum of the CC, 9-10 July 1928,” RGASPI, f. 17, op.2, d. 375(part 2), ll. 500b-66ob, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 99.

⁹ “From speeches by I.V. Stalin and N.I. Bukharin at the July Plenum of the CC, 9-10 July 1928,” RGASPI, f. 17, op.2, d. 375(part 2), ll. 500b-66ob, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 101.

¹⁰ “CC directive to local organizations on intensification of measures with regard to grain procurements, 14 January 1928.” *Isvestiiia* TsK KPSS, 1991, no. 5, pp. 195-96. Adopted by the Politburo on 14 January 1928. Draft of telegram prepared by I.V. Stalin and S.V. Kosior, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 55.

¹¹ “CC directive to party organizations on grain procurements, 5 January 1928,” RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 667, ll. 10-12, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 47.

¹² Krai’s were large administrative districts located on the peripheries of the Soviet Union.

¹³ “Letter from S.I. Zagumenny to I. V. Stalin and S. I. Syrtsov on the application of article 107 of the criminal code, 19 January 1928,” *Isvestiiia* TsK KPSS 5 (1991): 199-201, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 72-73.

¹⁴ “From a political report by the Political Administration of the Caucasus Red Banner Army on the attitudes of Red Army soldiers toward the grain procurement campaign, 28 February 1928,” RGVA, f. 9, op. 28, d. 55, ll. 50-50ob., reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 90.

¹⁵ “Letter from M.I. Frumkin to the Politburo, 15 June 1928,” RGSAPI f. 17, op. 163, d.736, ll. 43-50, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 92.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ “Letter from M.I. Frumkin to the Politburo, 15 June 1928,” RGSAPI f. 17, op. 163, d.736, ll. 43-50, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 95-96.

¹⁸ “Letter from M.I. Frumkin to the Politburo, 15 June 1928,” RGSAPI f. 17, op. 163, d.736, ll. 43-50, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 96-97.

¹⁹ “From speeches by I.V. Stalin and N.I. Bukharin at the July Plenum of the CC, 9-10 July 1928,” RGASPI, f. 17, op.2, d. 375(part 2), ll. 50ob-66ob, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 104.

²⁰ “From speeches by I.V. Stalin and N.I. Bukharin at the July Plenum of the CC, 9-10 July 1928,” RGASPI, f. 17, op.2, d. 375(part 2), ll. 50ob-66ob, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 108.

²¹ *Ibid.* “From speeches by I.V. Stalin and N.I. Bukharin at the July Plenum of the CC, 9-10 July 1928,” RGASPI, f. 17, op.2, d. 375(part 2), ll. 50ob-66ob, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 105.

²² *Ibid.* “From speeches by I.V. Stalin and N.I. Bukharin at the July Plenum of the CC, 9-10 July 1928,” RGASPI, f. 17, op.2, d. 375(part 2), ll. 50ob-66ob, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 111.

²³ “Telegram from the RSFSR Commissariat of Justice on administrative penalties for violating grain delivery deadlines, 23 May 1929,” RGASPI, f. 84, op. 2, d. 10, l. 159, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 130.

²⁴ “Telegram from A. A. Andreev, secretary of the Northern Caucasus Krai party committee, to I. V. Stalin on the Justice Commissariat directive, 29 May 1929,” RGASPI, f. 84, op. 2, d. 10, l. 157, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 131.

²⁵ “Decree of the RSFR Central Executive Committee and Sovnarkom ‘On the expansion of the Rights of local Soviets in Assisting the Fulfillment of State Assignments and Plans,’ 27 June 1929,” RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 746, l. 10, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 132.

²⁶ “From N.I. Bukharin’s declaration to the Politburo, 30 January 1929,” RGASPI, f. 17, op. 2, d. 726, ll. 77-82, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 114.

²⁷ Lars T. Lih, Oleg V. Naumov, and Oleg V. Khlevniuk, ed., *Stalin’s Letters to Molotov, 1925-1936* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 148.

²⁸ Lih, Naumov and Khlevniuk, 150.

²⁹ “Letter 41. 10 August 1929,” reprinted in *Stalin’s Letters to Molotov*, 165.

³⁰ “Letter, 45. 1 September 1929,” reprinted in *Stalin’s Letters to Molotov*, 176.

³¹ “Letter 43. 23 August 1929,” reprinted in *Stalin’s Letters to Molotov*, 173.

³² R. W. Davies and Stephen G. Wheatcroft, *The Industrialization of Soviet Russia: The Years of Hunger, Soviet Agriculture, 1931-1933*, 5th ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 4.

³³ “Letter 53. 5 December 1929,” reprinted in *Stalin’s Letters to Molotov*, 183-184.

³⁴ “Report by G.N. Kaminsky ‘On the Results and Further Tasks of Collective-farm construction,’ 14 November 1929,” RGASPI, f. 17, op. 2, d. 431, ll. 2-88, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 156.

- ³⁵ “CC draft decree on the pace of collectivization, prepared by the commission, 18 December 1929,” RGAE, f. 7486, op. 37, d. 40, ll. 217-212, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 181.
- ³⁶ “CC draft decree on the pace of collectivization, prepared by the commission, 18 December 1929,” RGAE, f. 7486, op. 37, d. 40, ll. 217-212, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 187.
- ³⁷ “Report by M. M. Khataevich at the bureau of the Middle Volga Krai party committee on the work of the commission, 21 December 1929,” RGASPI, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2542, part 2, ll. 312-17, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 196.
- ³⁸ “Telegram from I. V. Stalin to V. M. Molotov on points of revision for the CC draft decree, prepared by the commission, 1 January 1930,” RGASPI, f. 558, op.11, d. 38, l.1, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 200-201.
- ³⁹ “Decree of the CC of the VKP(b) on the pace of collectivization and state assistance to collective-farm construction, 5 January 1930.” KPSS v rezoliutsiakh i resheniakh s’ ezdov, konferentsii I plenumov TsK, vol. 5, pp. 72-75, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 202.
- ⁴⁰ “Informational report on response to elimination of okrugs, 1930,” RGAE, f. 8043, op. 11, ll. 22-23, reprinted in *Stalinism as a Way of Life: A Narrative in Documents*, ed. Lewis Siegelbaum and Andrei Sokolov (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 93.
- ⁴¹ In the Soviet Union a Raion was an administrative district that served as a subsection within larger territorial categories such as kraia. These units could contain a number of towns or rural communities.
- ⁴² “Politburo decree, ‘On Measures for the Liquidation of Kulak Farms in Raions of Wholesale Collectivization’ 30 January 1930,” RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 8, ll. 64-69, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 228-229.
- ⁴³ Robert Service, *A History of Twentieth-Century Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 180.
- ⁴⁴ Davies and Wheatcroft, 4.
- ⁴⁵ “Report from the OGPU Secret Political Department on the forms and dynamics of the class struggle in the countryside in 1930, 15 March 1931,” TsA FSB RF, f. 2, op. 8, d. 679, ll. 36-72, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 342.
- ⁴⁶ “I.V. Stalin, ‘Dizzy with Success: Concerning Questions of the Collective-Farm Movement,’ 2 March 1930,” Pravda, 2 March 1930. From J. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 12 (Moscow, 1955), pp. 197-205, reprinted in *The War Against the Peasantry*, 279.
- ⁴⁷ “N.I. Bukharin’s speech to a joint plenum of the CC and CCC of the VKP(b), 19 December 1930,” RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 2, d. 453, ll. 53-61, 70-74, 77-78, 87-92, reprinted in *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*, ed. J. Arch Getty, and Oleg V. Naumov (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 45-46.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.* “N.I. Bukharin’s speech to a joint plenum of the CC and CCC of the VKP(b), 19 December 1930,” RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 2, d. 453, ll. 53-61, 70-74, 77-78, 87-92, reprinted in *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*, 46.
- ⁴⁹ “Letter 65. 13 September 1930,” reprinted in *Stalin’s Letters to Molotov*, 213.
- ⁵⁰ Davies and Wheatcroft, 4.

⁵¹ “Kaganovich to Stalin, 11 September 1931,” RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 739, ll. 96-105, reprinted in *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence, 1931-1936*, ed. R.W. Davies, Oleg V Khlevniuk, and E. A. Rees (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) 87.

⁵² “Letter 72. before March 1931,” reprinted in *Stalin’s Letters to Molotov*, 228.

⁵³ “Stalin to Kaganovich, 15 June 1932,” RGASPI, f. 81, op. 3, d. 99, ll. 62-63, reprinted in *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*, 136.

⁵⁴ “Stalin to Kaganovich, 11 August 1932,” RGASPI, f. 81, op. 3, d. 99, ll. 144-151, reprinted in *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*, 180.

⁵⁵ Getty and Naumov, 110.

⁵⁶ “Law of 7 August 1932 on theft of public property,” RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 13, ll. 99-100, reprinted in *The Road to Terror*, 111.

⁵⁷ “Kaganovich to Stalin, 2 August 1932,” From Kaganovich family archive, reprinted in *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*, 171.

⁵⁸ “Letter 66, 13 September 1930” reprinted in *Stalin’s Letters to Molotov*, 215.

⁵⁹ “The Riutin Platform, Spring-Summer 1932,” reprinted in *The Road to Terror*, 56.

⁶⁰ The Eismont affair consisted of meetings among party members that included N. B. Eismont, V. N. Tolmachev, E. P. Ashukina and an influential old Bolshevik party member named A. P. Smirnov. The incident consisted of various gatherings by these party members in Eismont's apartment to critique Stalin's collectivization and industrialization policies. Getty et al., 75-76.

⁶¹ “M. F. Shkiriatorov’s speech at the Central Committee plenum of 7-12 January 1933,” RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 2, d. 511, ll. 168-78, reprinted in *The Road to Terror*, 84.

⁶² “Memo from M. F. Shkiriatorov to L. M. Kaganovich, 3 September 1933,” RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 120, d. 106, ll. 56, 56ob, reprinted in *The Road to Terror*, 65.

⁶³ “Stalin’s speech to the Seventeenth Party Congress, 28 January 1934,” J. Stalin, “Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress on the Work of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b),” *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1952, 392-420, reprinted in *The Road to Terror*, 130.