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SOVIET RULE IN EASTERN POLAND,
1939 - 1941

I. THE FOURTH PARTITION
OF POLAND

1. The Invasion of
Poland

On September 18, 1939 the Moscow press published a communiqué of the Soviet General Staff announcing that during the early morning of September 17 the Red Army had crossed the frontier into Poland on a vast front running from the Soviet-Polish-Latvian border as far as the Soviet-Polish-Rumanian border. Although the invasion had been preceded by extensive military mobilization, the Soviet population was struck with amazement and dismay by the offensive action thus undertaken. In his radio address delivered on the first day of the invasion Molotov failed to clarify the relation of the operations of the Red Army to those of the German Army. 1/ Limiting himself to a brief outline of Soviet policy toward Poland, he explained that a situation had arisen in that country which demanded of the Soviet authorities especial concern for the security of the Soviet state, particularly since "Poland had become a convenient field for any contingency and surprises which might create a menace to the Soviet Union"; and consequently the Red Army had been instructed to cross the Polish frontier and "to take under its protection the lives and property of the population of Western Ukraine and Western White Russia". He continued to the effect that the Soviet Government could not "remain indifferent to the fate of the kindred Ukrainians and White Russians living in Poland, who even previously were nations without any rights and who now have been entirely abandoned to their fate".

2. Justification of
the Invasion from the
Soviet Point of View

As for his note addressed to the Polish Ambassador in Moscow, which had ventured the view "that the Polish State and its government have virtually ceased to exist",

Molotov

1/ Pravda, September 18, 1939.

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Molotov quoted it as declaring that the Soviet Government "intends to take every measure to deliver the Polish people from the ill-fated war into which it has been plunged by its unwise leaders and to give them the opportunity to live a peaceful life". The liberation of the Ukrainian, White Russian and Polish peoples in Poland was to be effected by the Red Army which, he boasted, "this time, too, will display its combative might, class consciousness, and discipline" and "will perform its great emancipatory task with new feats of heroism and glory". 2/

3. German-Soviet Relations

As the German Army swept swiftly toward the Soviet frontier while the Red Army advanced slowly but steadily toward the west, panic spread to such an extent among the Soviet masses that Molotov was obliged in his radio address of September 17 to warn "that from these excessive purchases of food and goods only those will suffer who go in for this and hoard unnecessary supplies". The general confusion was not lessened by a run on the savings banks in the large cities, and at last the Kremlin was obliged to recognize that the Soviet masses had not yet fully oriented themselves to the idea of Soviet-German cooperation. Consequently, on the day following the invasion the following joint Soviet-German communique was issued: 3/

In order to avoid any type of unfounded rumors with regard to the tasks of the Soviet and German troops which are operating in Poland, the Government of the U.S.S.R. and the Government of Germany declare that the operations of the troops are not in pursuance of any aims contrary to the interests of Germany or of the Soviet Union, nor contrary to the letter and spirit of the non-aggression pact concluded between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. On the contrary, the task of the troops is to restore in Poland the order and calm which was disrupted by the disintegration of the Polish state, and to assist the population of Poland in reorganizing the conditions of its existence.

4. The

2/ Bolshevik, No. 17, September 1939.

3/ Pravda, September 19, 1939.

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4. The First Demarcation Line

By the time of the Red Army's invasion, the Wehrmacht had plunged deep into eastern Poland; it had encircled Lwów, captured Lublin, and reached a line running in general from Bialystok to Brest-Litovsk, Wlodzimierz and Lwów, thus practically completing the destruction and capture even of isolated remnants of the Polish Army. On September 18 units of the Red Army and the German Army met for the first time, but aside from a minor incident at Lwów no untoward events took place. Such incidents, however, were feared, and since both armies were accompanied by vast arrays of members of the G. P. U. and Gestapo, by party-workers and propagandists, it was thought best to reach an agreement on the extent of the joint operations. On September 20 a group of German Army officers left Berlin for Moscow, where, after a conference with their Soviet counterparts, a joint statement was issued, on September 22, to the effect that a demarcation line between the two armies had been drawn up. 4/ This preliminary line ran from the East Prussian frontier at Kolno south along the Pisa River to its mouth on the Narew River; it then followed the Narew to its juncture with the Bug River, thence along the Bug to the Vistula, south along the Vistula through Warsaw to Sandomierz, and then southeast along the San River past Przemyśl to the Uzon Pass in the Carpathian mountains on the Hungarian frontier. This line cut through the city of Warsaw, giving the suburb of Praga to the Soviets. The German Army, which had penetrated more than 150 miles beyond the line of demarcation, now began to retire.

5. The Second Demarcation Line

While the drawing of such a line well in advance of the Red Army was undoubtedly designed to prevent too close contact between the two forces, 5/ it is not unreasonable to speculate that Berlin was encouraging Moscow to move the Red Army farther westwards than the Kremlin had intended, with the aim of drawing the Soviet Union deeper into the German orbit. In this sense a large part of Poland proper was to serve Berlin as hostage for future Soviet cooperation. In the end, however, Stalin held the Red Army east of a front not differing greatly from the Curzon line.

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4/ Pravda, September 23, 1939.

5/ Despatch from Moscow No. 130, October 30, 1939.

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Upon von Ribbentrop's second visit to Moscow, on September 27 and 28, a definitive line was drawn, which gave to the Soviet Union considerably less Polish territory than Hitler apparently was prepared to cede. The new line ran due west from the tip of Lithuania to the frontier of East Prussia, giving Germany the city and district of Suwalki, a wedge between Soviet and Lithuanian territory which was later to serve so usefully as a springboard for the German advance. The line continued along the East Prussian frontier to Ostrolenko; hence southeast to the Bug River, along the Bug via Brest-Litovsk to the town of Kristinopol, situated somewhat north of Lwów, and thence almost due west to the San River and along the latter to its source on the border of Hungary (Ruthenia).

The new line, according to the map published in Party Structure for September 1939, established "the frontier between the respective state interests of the U.S.S.R. and Germany on the territory of the former Polish state". Furthermore, according to the Treaty of Friendship concluded between the Soviet and German governments on September 28, "the frontier between the respective state interests" of the two powers was recognized as "final" and designed "to eliminate any interference with this decision by third powers". 6/

II. SOVIET EXPANSION IN THE BALTIC

Although the Kremlin stressed ethnic affinities as one of the principal motives for the annexation of Eastern Poland and showed reluctance to extend its control to regions of Poland in which White Russians and Ukrainians did not predominate, nevertheless it now hastened to gain control over the Baltic States, where no ethnic justification could be advanced. It is understood that when von Ribbentrop and Stalin met in Moscow on August 23, 1939, their conversation did not touch upon Lithuania; at least, it was tacitly assumed, from the nature of the specific territorial commitments agreed upon in respect to Estonia, Latvia and Bessarabia, that Lithuania did not fall clearly within the sphere of Soviet interests. 7/ Rather than advance deeper into Polish territory, Stalin apparently looked upon Lithuania as a more valuable prize and hastened to conclude a treaty of mutual assistance with that country twelve days

6/ Bolshevik, No. 18, September 1939. after

7/ Based on secret information obtained in 1939 from the German Embassy in Moscow.

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after the signature of the Soviet-German Treaty of Friendship. 8/ This step apparently produced the first violation of the spirit, if not the letter, of the Soviet-German understanding.

In return for the cession to Lithuania of the city and district of Vilna, Stalin obtained the right to maintain a considerable Red Army force on Lithuanian territory and thus prepared the ground for the Soviet occupation in June 1940. At this time Molotov declared that Vilna, "forcibly separated by Poland from Lithuania", would be returned to the latter, "not because Lithuanians predominated there", but because "it was connected on the one hand with the historic past of the Lithuanian State and, on the other hand, with the national aspirations of the Lithuanian people". 9/ At the same time, in return for "mutual assistance", Stalin obtained similar rights in respect to Estonia and Latvia. 9/

III. THE SOVIET CONCEPTION OF THE GERMAN-SOVIET AGREEMENT

While Moscow expressed its jubilation over the expansion of Soviet territory, it by no means lost sight of the wider benefits which might ensue from the Soviet-German pact of non-aggression, as well as from the treaty of friendship. The joint Soviet-German declaration of friendship, issued at the time of the signing of the treaty, affirmed that "a solid foundation for enduring peace in Eastern Europe" had been created. Bolshevik 10/ expressed great satisfaction over the view that, "while in the west commerce was more and more dying out, in the east of Europe economic cooperation was expanding and being strengthened", the best example of "a broad program of economic cooperation between the U.S.S.R. and Germany being the considerable expansion of trade between the U.S.S.R. and Estonia", from

which

8/ Bolshevik, No. 19, 1939.

9/ Molotov's speech at the Session of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union on October 31, 1939; Bolshevik, No. 20, October 1939.

10/ Bolshevik, No. 18, September 1939.

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which the Kremlin had just secured military privileges.

At the session of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, on October 31, 1939, Molotov also revealed that the Kremlin held a broad conception of the Soviet-German agreement. ^{11/} He ventured the view that "we always were of the opinion that a strong Germany is the necessary condition for durable peace in Europe", and proceeded violently to attack the British and French imperialists as well as the Versailles settlement. Touching upon the question of Poland, he explained that "it is not necessary to prove that at the moment of the complete downfall of the Polish state our Government was obligated to extend a helping hand to our brother Ukrainians and our brother White Russians" since "it did so", an explanation which drew "tumultuous, prolonged applause" and brought the deputies to their feet for an ovation. He added that "the Red Army entered these regions with the complete sympathy of the Ukrainian and White Russian population, which met our troops as its liberators from the yoke of the 'panie', the yoke of the Polish landlords and capitalists".

About a month later, at "the triumphant session of the Moscow Soviet", held on November 6, Molotov delivered another speech relating inter alia to the fourth partition of Poland. ^{12/} Blaming the war on the capitalist world which, "according to Lenin", was rotten and dying and which recently had been forced to "retreat" before the Red Army and censuring severely the British and French "imperialists" for not calling a halt to their selfish war with the Nazis, Molotov boasted that:

Soviet White Russia has almost doubled its territory and population and has created a state with a population of ten millions, which many European States do not possess. An end had been put henceforth to the splitting up of the White Russian people. The White Russian people on all its territory is united into a single whole, and one can now say that White Russia is completely reintegrated. The same may be said of the Ukrainian people which was broken into bits during the course of many centuries and which suffered the heaviest kind of yoke for many years. Now on all its territory the

Ukrainian

^{11/} ibid., No. 20, October 1939.

^{12/} Bolshevik, No. 21, November 1939.

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Ukrainian people is united into a single whole. The ardent dreams of the best sons of the Ukrainian people, who have offered innumerable sacrifices to the cause of their national liberation, have come true. At last, one may say: henceforth, the Ukraine is reunited (applause). One must believe that the Ukraine, with its thirty million inhabitants and quick growing population, will be able within a short time to catch up with certain large countries, even with France, if you wish, with its population of forty-two million persons. Our fraternal republics - the Ukraine and White Russia - have grown and our brothers of the Western Ukraine and Western White Russia have entered the ranks of Soviet citizens with great joy and faith in the future (prolonged applause). Thus, the entire Soviet Union has grown since it pushed forward its frontiers considerably in the west. That is something for which the Soviet Union should be congratulated on its XXII October anniversary! (tumultuous and prolonged applause).

We, of course, should not forget that nine-tenths of humanity still live within the framework of capitalist society, under the domination of capitalism. The Soviet Union is composed of less than one-tenth of the population of the globe. But, as you see, the capitalist world recently has had to shrink and to retreat somewhat (happy bustle in the hall), but the Soviet Union with the inclusion of Western Ukraine and Western White Russia has grown in territory, as well as in population approximately by 13 million persons. On these grounds, we have the right to congratulate the peoples of the Soviet Union because our Soviet family of 170 millions has turned into 183 millions (tumultuous and prolonged applause).

So, a comparison between the paths of development of the capitalist countries and the Soviet Union does not speak to the advantage of the capitalist world, but exactly the reverse.

According to the same speech, that portion of the Western Ukraine taken over by the Soviet Union included 8 million persons on a territory amounting to 88,000 square kilometers; that portion of White Russia annexed contained 4,800,000 persons on a territory of 108,000 square kilometers. "In all", said Molotov, "seven million Ukrainians, more than

3 million

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3 million White Russians, more than one million Poles and one million Jews" had been taken into the Soviet Union. 13/

IV. THE NATURE OF THE INVASION

1. The First Days

Observers in southeastern Poland at the time of the flight of the Polish Government reported that the situation was similar to conditions existing in Russia during the 1917 revolution. Officials of all ranks and large numbers of the middle and professional classes were exiled to concentration camps in the depths of the Soviet Union. Many landlords were shot and Ukrainian nationalists were "liquidated", among them even some who had fought against Polish troops. It is also reported that some Ukrainian nationalist villages were burned, and as the Red Army reached the Ruthenian border Soviet officers boasted that they would go on to seize Ruthenia. Eighty thousand Polish refugees entered Hungary, of whom about three-quarters were military. From Bucharest it was reported that by October approximately 25 thousand Polish soldiers had been interned in Rumania, and between 40 and 60 thousand civilians had been given refuge. From Kaunas came reports to the effect that 100,000 Polish refugees had crossed into Lithuanian territory. It was estimated in Moscow that by October 500,000 Poles had been shipped in freightcars to Siberia, Kazakhstan, Archangel, and other distant regions. This number soon reached the total of somewhat more than one million persons, including prisoners of war. 14/

2. The

13/ According to the Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland, 1939-1941, this area contained (in 1931) 12,012,000 persons, of whom 4,794,000 were Poles; 4,139,000 Ukrainians, 993,000 White Russians, 1,045,000 Jews, and "others" 728,000. The same source contains the following estimate of the population of this area as of 1939: 13,199,000 persons of whom 5,274,000 were Poles, 4,529,000 were Ukrainians, 1,123,000 were White Russians, 1,109,000 were Jews, and "others" 822,000.

14/ Data contained in this paragraph are based on State Department's Information Series, No. 63a, November 10, 1939; despatch from Moscow, No. 1175, February 26, 1941; despatch from Kaunas, No. 783, April 5, 1940. Memorandum of the Embassy at Moscow dated August 12, 1942.

2. The Role of the Communist Party

Red Army forces did not advance alone into Poland. According to G. Eidinov, Director of the Organizational-Instruction Section of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of White Russia, ^{15/} "Party work in the liberated regions began from the very first days of the attack of the Red Army", when "hundreds of the best Communists were dispatched to White Russia, together with the advance units of the Army, for the purpose of assisting the people in the organization of the new revolutionary power". Eidinov went on to report that "during the historic September days the most energetic and selected cadres of Party-workers were chosen among the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of White Russia" and, "as the cities and districts were liberated, provisional administrations were established from among the local population, the Red Army and the Party-workers assigned for work in Western White Russia". These provisional administrations, according to the same source, helped to crush resistance offered by the "remnants of the ruling classes and their agents", and directed the activities of "the peasant committees set up for the redistribution of the land" as well as carrying out political work in preparation for the elections to the National Assemblies to be held in Bialystok and Lwów. In the factories and plants commissars were designated by the Communist Party from among trusted workers. "These were the days", exclaimed Eidinov, "when the workers' committees established control over production, made inventories of the property subject to nationalization, and when the owners of the enterprises politely inquired whether they would be retained in the capacity of 'director' or 'assistant'". He added that "by January 1, 1940, the toilers of the western oblasts of White Russia, under the direction of the Bolsheviks, had settled their tasks in a basic manner".

Similar developments took place in Western Ukraine where the Party tasks were described by Eidinov as follows: "During this period the tasks of the Party organizations consisted in transmitting the experience of our revolution for the purpose of assisting the people to crush the resistance of the landlords and capitalists, to nationalize industry, fully to liquidate the landlord system, to smash the old state apparatus, and to attract tens of thousands of workers and peasants to the direction of the state". The Party had no easy time of it. It was admitted that "in the western oblasts powerful prejudices exist: religious, national,

^{15/} Party Structure, No. 17, September 1940.

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race and professional prejudices", and that, since "some Party-workers had failed to understand how complicated the situation really was", a Stalinist "cleansing" had been found necessary. First of all, "Trotskyists" had to be liquidated. Propaganda was to be "concrete and directed mainly toward preaching class warfare". Bundists, Zionists, Socialists, National Democrats, kulaks and other "bourgeois elements" had to be crushed. According to Burmistenko, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of the Ukraine, "a sharp political struggle" ensued during the elections to the National Assembly of Western Ukraine. ^{16/} He complained that "the Endeks (National Democrats), P. P. S. (Socialist Party of Poland), U. N. D. O. (Ukrainian Nationalist Democratic League), and Zionists had attempted by every possible means to present their candidates and had endeavored by spreading provocative rumors to break up the pre-election gatherings of the electors and to organize libelous attacks against the worthy candidates presented by the National Assemblies in the cities and villages". He added that "the Socialists, Zionists, and Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists, these lackeys of Pilsudski, trafficking with the freedom of the Ukrainian people, had endeavored to place their partisans in the electoral commission", and members of the nationalist organization, Tsaö, had had "the impudence to demand the registration of their candidates". Needless to say, their efforts were defeated, and single lists of Party-members and trusted "non-Party men" were presented to the people as the sole candidates. For example, continued Burmistenko, "in all electoral districts of Western Ukraine for elections to the Ukrainian National Assembly the candidates were presented by peasant committees, provisional administrations, gatherings of workers at enterprises, meetings of worker's guards and assemblies of the intelligentsia". He also disclosed that "these advanced workers, peasants and intelligentsia who actively aided the Red Army and who carried on a determined struggle with hostile elements such as the National Democrats, Ukrainian Nationalists, Socialists and other enemies of the people", would be taken into the ranks of the Party, subject, of course, to "individual selection", including the cases of former members of the Communist Party of Western Ukraine who were to be accepted merely as "candidates for membership in the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks".

A vivid description of the first days in Poland following the entry of the Red Army is contained in an article

in

16/ Party Structure, No. 22, November 1939.

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in Bolshevik.^{17/} In those early days Lwów was "a microcosm of the two worlds, the capitalist and the socialist and of the gulf between the two". Bourgeois life "still continued, bourgeois films were shown, and bourgeois prejudices flourished. All this was accentuated by the arrival of 100,000 refugees, who were mostly Poles and "who regarded Lwów, not as the center of Western Ukraine, but rather as a city of Eastern Poland". Actually, Lwów had been influenced greatly by Austria and, according to the author, was not essentially Polish. Among the refugees some were naive and others cunning. Spies were everywhere. The "enemy" spread all sorts of rumors; when a large number of workers were sent to the Donets Basin, the rumor was spread that they had been exiled to Siberia. The workers seized the factories, guided by "those who arrived from Moscow and Kiev". The first breakdown of the "nationalist discord" took place in the gatherings of writers and the intelligentsia, who met together "regardless of nationality".

3. Preparation of the First Elections

Moscow took considerable pains in preparing the elections to the national assemblies. In White Russia alone, according to Bolshevik,^{18/} "from September 20 to November 4, 1939, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of White Russia and the Oblast Committees of the Party sent 250 lecturers, propagandists and newspaper workers and 4,000 agitators to the western oblasts of the White Russian Soviet Socialist Republic". The Kremlin also dispatched an array of party-workers and G. P. U. officials from Moscow and Kiev. In a short time three thousand copies of the Short Course of the History of the Bolshevik Party, 1,700,000 copies of Molotov's speech of September 17, 1939, and 4 million copies of "political mass literature" had been distributed in White Russia alone. In respect to "agitation" the "most essential questions touched upon were: ^{18/}

1. What does "non-Party Bolshevik" mean?
2. What are the basic works of Lenin?

3. What

^{17/} P. Pavlenko, "Significant Days", Bolshevik, No. 22, November 1939.

^{18/} Article by M. Burmistenko, Party Structure, No. 22, November 1939.

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3. What are the tactics of the communist parties of the belligerent countries?
4. Does the Anti-Comintern Pact still exist?
5. Can the present war be terminated by a proletarian revolution in the belligerent countries?

The "trusted" candidates for the national assemblies who were presented on a single list of "the Communists and non-party men", ran on the following platform:

1. Establishment of Soviet power.
2. Inclusion of Western Ukraine and Western White Russia respectively in the Ukrainian SSR and the White Russian SSR.
3. Approval of the confiscation and distribution to the peasants of the lands of proprietors, monasteries and officials.
4. Nationalization of the banks and large enterprises.

4. The Acts of the National Assemblies

The National Assembly of Western Ukraine met in Lwów; that of Western White Russia, in Bialystok. In reality, they merely approved policies already achieved or in process of execution. ^{19/}

The first declaration of the National Assembly of Western Ukraine, that on "state power", was issued on October 27; two days later the National Assembly of Western White Russia issued a similar declaration. Both emphasized the following points:

1. The Poland of the gentry, which had maintained itself by the oppression of millions of Ukrainians, White Russians and of the Polish laboring class has collapsed. Carrying out the will of the "Soviet people", the Red Army had extended a helping hand to "the toilers".

2. The history of all revolutions, as well as the experience of the fraternal peoples of the Soviet Union,

has proved

^{19/} Pravda, November 4, 1939; Moscow News, October 30 and November 6, 1939.

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has proved that the Soviet power alone expresses and protects the interests of the working classes. The entire history of mankind shows that any power other than Soviet power constitutes an undisguised domination and uncurbed arbitrary rule by a handful of exploiters. The so-called bourgeois-democratic states have proclaimed the equality of all citizens, but actually they have deprived the working people of active political life.

3. Soviet power brought liberation because it abolished capitalist slavery by getting rid of landed proprietors, factory owners, shop owners and bankers. Soviet power is the establishment of Soviets of Working People's Deputies, and only through the Soviets can the working class and "its vanguard, the Communist Party of Bolsheviks", direct the construction of Socialism.

4. Only Soviet power is capable of abolishing all national oppression and enmity and of insuring cooperation and friendship among the working people of all nationalities. Soviet power, guided by the Communist Party of Bolsheviks, will lead to the flourishing of the productive forces of the people. Soviet power is the most democratic power in the world and the Soviet Union is "the hope and the fatherland of the working people of the entire world".

On October 27, when the National Assembly of Western Ukraine acclaimed the establishment of "Soviet power", it requested the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. "to accept the Western Ukraine as part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" and to include it in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic "in order to reunite the Ukrainian people in one state and put an end to the age-old separation of the Ukrainian people". This request was granted five days later.

On the same day, October 29, when the National Assembly of Western White Russia declared for "Soviet power", it similarly requested reunion with the White Russian Soviet Socialist Republic and two days later the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. acceded to that request.

The requests of both Assemblies stressed the view that "only in the Soviet Union can the national culture of any nation, the people's culture in the fullest sense of the word, flourish to the full" and that "only in the Soviet Union has mutual distrust among peoples disappeared and strong friendship been developed and strengthened in place of national discord".

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The most important acts, however, of the Assemblies related to the land. In the case of Western Ukraine, formal nationalization of the land was proclaimed by the National Assembly on October 28; two days later the National Assembly of Western White Russia issued a similar proclamation. Both declarations decreed that "henceforth all the land and its minerals, as well as the forests and waters, are the property of the entire people, that is, state property", but in the case of the Western Ukraine a more appealing declaration was made to the effect that "the working people - the workers, peasants and the working intelligentsia - are the sole, legitimate owners of the land of the Western Ukraine, liberated from the proprietors and capitalists".

It was recognized that the "only possible way to solve the land problem was to do as our brothers, the people of the Soviet Union, have done": accordingly, "confiscation without compensation was decreed in respect of the land of the former proprietors, monasteries and high government officials, together with all their chattels, implements and all estate buildings". The peasants' "age-old dream of emancipation from the yoke of the landed proprietors, the dream of the land", was to be realized and the subject of collectivization was carefully avoided. Iron revolutionary discipline, however, for the purpose of safeguarding the "sacred and inviolable property of the people" was to be strictly enforced.

The final act of each assembly was to nationalize the banks, large factories and mills, mines and railways. Henceforth there was to be no place for "parasites such as bankers and factory owners" since capitalist "exploitation of man by man" was to cease.

Actually, confiscation and distribution of the land had begun long before. According to the leading editorial of Pravda of March 24, 1940, "the peasants received the land upon the arrival of the Red Army".

V. THE KREMLIN'S AGRARIAN POLICY

1. General Views

The Kremlin was prepared not to repeat the mistakes committed in the past by Comintern workers, for example, in Hungary and Poland. The great mass of hired hands (batraki) and small peasants had to be won over politically

before

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before collectivization on a large scale could be introduced. The agrarian policy followed by the Kremlin at this time has been well outlined in a study by Professor P. Tolstoi. 20/

1. Until 1939 the landholding system was different in the new "republics" from that existing in pre-1917 Russia. Western Ukraine and Western White Russia were in the position of "colonies" with practically no industry. Polonization had been carried on by Poland, this "poor offspring of the Treaty of Versailles". The people of the "kresy", that is, the "minorities who consisted of Ukrainians and White Russians", had felt the hostility of the ruling Polish landlord class. Land reform had not been carried out effectively, but laws for the settlement of "Polish nationalists, legionaries, soldiers, gendarmes and civil servants had been carried out with vigor".

2. The pattern of land relationships which had existed prior to the establishment of the Soviet structure had, to a large extent, placed its stamp upon the methods of carrying out the new agrarian order in each of the new western Soviet Republics and regions.

At the same time, the single direction of the agrarian policy of the Communist Party, the undivided principles of the nationalization of the land and the liquidation of the basic forms of ownership of land not worked by the owners, the unity of the forms of collectivization and the unique method of Soviet democracy - all these factors condition the considerable similarity in the order of carrying out the radical reconstruction of the land system in the new western frontiers of the U. S. S. R.

3. First of all, consideration had to be given to those mistakes which were committed in 1918-1920 by the Soviet power, during the period of construction of the new agrarian regimes in these territories and in certain other republics (for instance, in Hungary and partly in the Ukraine) and which led to the estrangement from the Soviet power of the peasant masses who were unprepared for an immediate socialist reconstruction of agriculture. It was particularly important

20/ courageously
 "The Nationalization of the Land in the New Western Republics and Oblasts", The Soviet State and Law, No. 3, 1941.

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courageously to satisfy the age-old longings of the laboring masses of the peasantry by a mass distribution of the landlords' holdings for the use of the small peasant households, without succumbing to the temptation of preserving the large estates as bases either for the new state socialist enterprises - the sovkhoses - or for the new public socialist enterprises - the kolkhoses. In 1939-1940, beginning with the first steps in the agrarian reconstruction of the new western frontiers, Lenin's following warning (in 1919) was not forgotten: The peasant thinks "a big estate, that means I am a farm hand". Of course, this is a mistake. But the peasant connects his notion of the big estate with his hatred, his recollection that the landlords oppressed the people. This feeling remains, it is not yet dead.

4. The agrarian reconstruction took place on the basis of a broad spontaneous movement of the laboring masses of the country in the Ukraine, White Russia, Moldavia, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Everywhere, following the establishment of the people's power, "actives" were created from among toilers who had recommended themselves in the past under the conditions of the bourgeois structure by their devotion to the people's cause. Appropriate local land and land-reconstruction committees were likewise created, which declared themselves republican or oblast committees. In the Western Ukraine and Western White Russia such local committees began to be created even prior to the acceptance by the National Assemblies of the declarations on the confiscation of the land of the landlords. They played a big role during the first days after the liberation from the Polish plague in upholding iron revolutionary discipline, in protecting from plunder abandoned estates, buildings and implements which had become national property, and in treating such property as sacred and inviolable.

5. It was necessary to distribute as quickly as possible the land which was not worked by the owners to the landless and small peasants. As in the carrying out of the first land laws on the territory of the R.S.F.S.R. and other Soviet Republics,

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the confiscation and distribution of lands which were not worked by the owners and the entire reconstruction of agrarian relations in the new Soviet territories was and is being carried out under the circumstances of a sharp class struggle for land.

The joy of the weak landless and small peasant was real. "Our eternal dream, the dream of the hired hand and the poverty-stricken peasant, the dream of one's own little plot of land sufficient for feeding the family, has come true" - such was the unanimous voice of the laboring village according to the testimony of numerous correspondence from Western Ukraine and Western White Russia in the autumn of 1939, and from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia in the fall of 1940.

"Capitalist elements" endeavored to hinder this process. There were many cases of resistance and the "class enemy launched false rumours about seizure of the land from the middle-peasant households, about mass confiscation of peasant implements and requisition of the harvest as well as about forced collectivization". . . "Among the less class-conscious peasants, supporters of the kulaks were recruited", and fictitious distribution as well as fictitious collective farms were resorted to, particularly among the "grey barons" (well-to-do peasants) of the Baltic States.

Regardless of the general policy of "not succumbing to the temptation to preserve large estates for quick collectivization", the author of the article in question points out that "the best of the big private estates are utilized as bases for state farms (sovkhoz) which serve not only as models of socialist economy for the whole district, but also for the purpose of assisting the adjacent villages, in a practical way, by distributing seed, cattle, et cetera". There were also created on former estates a network of MTS (Machine-tractor-stations) for servicing the peasant holdings on the basis of contracts. In White Russia particularly, the "supryag", a system of joint work, was developed.

2. Distribution of the Land

By the early part of 1940 the face of Western White Russia and Western Ukraine had been considerably transformed.

In

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In speaking of the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, which took place in March of that year, the leading editorial of Pravda 21/ compared them to the previous elections to the National Assemblies, in October 1939, when "traces of landlord bondage had not yet been wiped out", when "capitalists wandered about their factories", when the enemies of Soviet power "whispered that everything was new - temporary", and spread uncertainty. "Of course", continued the article, "the unhappy past is still recalled by kulak agitation, by the jesuitical whispers of priests, and the hostile sallies of the hirelings of the 'panie'". "But all this", Pravda added, was only the remnant of the past, since "the toilers of the western oblasts, resting on the powerful arm of the entire Soviet State, are endeavoring as quickly as possible to cover the path which for more than twenty years has been traversed by all the people of the Soviet Union". Kostyuk, Secretary of the Bialystok oblast committee of the Communist Party of White Russia, stressed the fact that "former batraki (hired hands), bednyaki (poor peasants) and the weak serednyaki (middle peasants) of our oblast have received from the State 180,000 hectares of land of the proprietors", and "thousands of advanced peasants are petitioning to enter collective farms", of which "40 have already been organized", in addition to the "24 MTS which are being created". 21/

P. K. Ponomarenko, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of White Russia, reported that thousands of hectares had been taken from the estates of the Radziwill, Sapieha, Tiszkievicz and others", and added that "the most advanced peasants" have come out for collectivization. 21/ He revealed that in the Pruzhnan (Pruzana) district of Brest-Litovsk, out of 9,000 households 2,248 had petitioned to enter collective farms, of which "at the present time in the western oblasts 149, embracing 9,856 households, have been organized".

More detailed information on this subject is furnished by the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, Burmistenko. 22/ According to this

source,

21/ Pravda, March 24, 1940.

22/ M. Burmistenko, Party Structure, No. 22, November 1939; see also note 18. The sole available statistics on this subject are drawn from Soviet sources and have not been checked by outside observation or analysis.

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source, in the Lwów oblast more than 178,000 hectares had been confiscated from the landlords, monasteries and big officials. Of this amount more than 140,000 had been turned over by the peasant committees to the laboring peasants. From 78,000 hectares belonging formerly to landlords, a few hectares each were allotted to 39,000 households which had possessed no land at all or not more than 0.14 of a hectare. In the Stanislawgw oblast, 135,000 hectares, amounting to about 30 percent of the land already in possession of the peasants, were distributed. In the Lutek (Luck) oblast 158,703 hectares were allotted among 62,914 households, of which 48,000 had previously possessed not even one-tenth of a hectare. In the Tarnopol oblast 375,000 hectares, belonging formerly to landlords and monasteries, were divided among poor peasants, whose exact number is not given. The peasant committees also distributed livestock. The poorest peasantry in the oblast of Tarnopol received 8,627 cows, 3,670 pigs and about 10,000 horses.

3. Consolidation of Political Power Through Land Distribution

Ponomarenko also disclosed that "the liberated people have put forward candidates for deputies to the socialist parliament from among the most worthy of the worthy, the best of its sons and daughters, who have proved trustworthy in the cruel struggle with the landlords and capitalists and who have been tested in the marvelous days of spade-work in the establishment and strengthening of Soviet power". The Communist Party, he concluded, "has attained unlimited authority among the new citizens of the Soviet Union - among the toilers of the western oblasts of White Russia" - a trust which is the "unconquerable force of the Stalinist bloc of communists and non-Party people".

4. Trend Towards Collectivization

Within a few months approximately one million hectares of arable land were distributed to 400,000 households of landless and poor peasants in the six new oblasts of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. In the five new oblasts of the White Russian SSR approximately 439,000 hectares of arable land were distributed to similar households, the exact number of which is not revealed. Six hundred and five collective farms, embracing 30,000 households, had been organized in the new oblasts of White Russia by March

1940.

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1940. In the Western Ukraine 404 collective farms had been created by September 1940 and by the beginning of 1941 the 571 collective farms embraced 34,000 households. By the latter date 14,000 additional households had petitioned to enter the collectives. ^{22/} Sixty-one state farms also had been set up, together with 233 cattle farms. ^{22/} One hundred and eighty-five sheep farms and 112 pig farms were organized as collectives; by January 1, 1941 their number had risen to 742. ^{22/} According to Soviet law these new dairy farms were not to be subject to obligatory state deliveries of milk until January 1942, an indication which suggests either that the collective system was not yet in working order, or that the peasants were being encouraged to enter livestock collective farms through certain favors. ^{23/}

5. The Methods of Collectivization

While the trend of development was toward collectivization, it is not apparent, on the basis of Soviet sources alone, that either haste or force was widely applied by the Soviet authorities; at least no mass collectivizations of entire villages took place as in the Soviet Union from 1929 to 1932. ^{22/} It is revealed in November 1939 that "activists in certain places talk about collective farms, but as a whole the peasantry at its present level is not yet ready for the collective farm structure and the 'activism' of the advanced peasants is far ahead of the peasant masses and does not always reflect the latter's feelings". Gradually, however, after the poorest peasants had been won over by the mass distribution of land, certain inducements were offered to them to join the model collective farms which slowly began to appear. Higher prices for their products were given to members of collective farms; peasant delegations were invited to Moscow, where they were entertained and shown the Agricultural Exposition, and where the advantages of the new system were carefully pointed out.

Unlike the collectivized dairy farms, the kolkhozes which cultivated grain were forced to effect obligatory deliveries to the state. ^{24/} It is probable that peasants

engaged

^{23/} See note 20; also, Bolshevik, No. 1, 1941; Pravda, March 24, 1940; Pravda, February 6, 1941. No data on this subject other than those based on Soviet sources are available.

^{24/} P. Ponomarenko, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of White Russians, Pravda, September 17, 1940.

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engaged in individual farming in the new Soviet regions were obliged to turn over to the government even a larger share of their crops than in the case of the collective farms, as was the practice in the Soviet Union during the collectivization campaign.

Another inducement to join the collective farms was soon discovered. In spite of the fact that a considerable number of horses of the landlords were soon distributed among the poor peasants, sufficient traction power was lacking to cultivate satisfactorily their enlarged holdings; when the MTS (machine-tractor-stations) began to furnish their services under contract almost entirely to the collective farms, many individual peasants turned to the collectives. On the basis of Soviet information, the sole available source for data on the subject, more than 100 MTS were organized during 1940 in Western White Russia and over 170 in Western Ukraine.

In certain areas collectivization apparently progressed fairly rapidly. For instance, the Secretary of the Oblast Party Committee of Rowne (Rovno) stated that in his district, where there were only 14 kolkhozes at the beginning of 1940, there were 37 by the spring sowing and 76 at the end of the agricultural year.

Speaking of the 605 collective farms set up in Western White Russia during 1940, Ponomarenko declared that they were of great significance since "it means the beginning of the transfer of the peasants from individual, small, private economy to the path of socialist economy".

VI. GENERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

1. Trade

When the Red Army crossed the frontiers of Poland, together with a vast array of Party-workers and G. P. U. officials, the highly overvalued exchange rate of the ruble for the zloty was officially maintained; accordingly, Soviet citizens, who had been deprived for years of various kinds of consumption goods, soon bought out all available goods. The large number of refugees also added to the general confusion and it was not long before trade came practically to a standstill. 25/

2. Canal

25/ Based on observations of eye-witnesses who reported to the Embassy at Moscow and the Legation at Kaunas in 1939.

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2. Canal and Road Construction

Military operations, and in some cases the revolutionary zeal of local communists, had also done their share in breaking down the national economy, but Moscow soon introduced severe discipline into the factories and shops and began to integrate the new regions into the state economy of the Soviet Union. Unemployment was solved partly through the construction of new roads and work on the Noginski and Royal Canals (the Bug-Dnieper), and in part by the deportation of large numbers of civilians and soldiers to Asiatic Russia. In addition, "several thousand" laborers were sent to work in the Donets Basin. A sixty-kilometer road was built during 1940 between Minsk and Vileika. By March 1940 about 20,000 peasants were working on the Bug-Dnieper Canal; by September 200,000 persons were so engaged. ^{26/}

3. The Textile Industry

The Soviet authorities planned to transform Bialystok into one of the largest textile centers of the Soviet Union. According to Pravda of September 17, 1940, "fifty-six million rubles would be expended upon the reconstruction of the textile industry of Bialystok", and its production in 1941 would attain between sixteen and eighteen million meters of cloth.

4. The Trade Unions

The reorganization of the existing trade unions confronted the Communist Party with a difficult task. According to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, Burmistenko, ^{27/} it was "a big job" which was begun soon after the Party had established some order. He discloses that "by a decision of the All-Union Central Council Trade Unions, organization bureaus were created in the new oblasts in November 1939, and a registration of members of the trade unions was effected in all enterprises in the districts of Lwów, Stanislawów, Volhynia, Drohobycz (Drogobych), Rowne and Tarnopol, after which elections to the factory plant,

^{26/} P. Ponomarenko, Pravda, March 24 and September 17, 1940. local.

^{27/} See note 22.

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local, shop committees and group-trade union organizations, as well as elections to the district, city, oblast and road committees of the labor unions, would take place". This work, of course, was executed under the direction of the Party, which by the beginning of 1940 had set up a wide network. For instance, in the new oblasts of White Russia alone 1,106 local party organizations, including 186 in industrial enterprises, electric power-stations and in transport, had been set up by February. At that time there were 15,666 Party-members and candidates, with 1,837 members in Bialystok, 1,098 in Baranowicze, 957 in Brest-Litovsk and 816 in Pinsk.

5. The Polish Petroleum Industry

In Western Ukraine great attention was devoted to restoring the petroleum industry and transport. The Chairman of the Soviet of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR, L. Korniets, ^{28/} reported that, under the direction of the Communist Party of the Ukraine led by Comrade Krushchev, considerable progress had been achieved; 978 enterprises had been restored, 400 kilometers of roadbed and track had been repaired, together with 27 stations, 7 locomotive depots and a large locomotive repair shop, 19 bridges had been restored, all in the Drohobycz area. In the region of Borislav 790 petroleum wells had been placed in operation, 9 new wells had been drilled, and 15 others were being drilled. Altogether, by September 1940 in the Borislav district 852 wells were in working order.

Further details on the petroleum industry in the Drohobycz area are given by the Secretary of the Drohobycz Oblast Party Committee. The petroleum production of this region amounted in 1909 to 2,076,000 metric tons; in 1938 to 370,000 metric tons. ^{29/} "We obtained more than 3,000 wells which had been destroyed or neglected. Out of 20 refineries 8 had not been in operation for several years, and the remainder were badly damaged by bombing during the Polish-German War." The Polmin plant had been particularly

^{28/} Izvestiya, September 17, 1940. badly

^{29/} According to the Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland, 1939-1941, London, the crude petroleum production of this area in 1938 was 325,000 metric tons; in 1913 it was 1,400,000 metric tons. It is generally recognized that production has greatly declined during the past 30 years owing mainly to natural exhaustion of reserves.

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badly damaged. Capital repairs had been made on 315 wells and 57 new wells drilled. 30/

In connection with the petroleum industry, it should be noted that Soviet articles of this period constantly point to the large amount of foreign capital invested in this, as well as in other industries, as one of the greatest evils in Poland from which Soviet power had delivered the people. Confidence was expressed by the Soviet authorities that production would substantially increase under Soviet operation.

VII. RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. The Church

The close inter-relationship between the nationality, religious and agrarian problems in the new western regions was recognized by the Soviet authorities from the beginning. In an article in Bolshevik, 31/ it was pointed out that rivalry between the Ukrainian "pope" (priest) and the Polish priest in these regions had been intense for several centuries and that "in the former Polish State the faith of the oppressed nationalities - Orthodoxy - was persecuted". Pavlenko went on to point out that "it had often happened that the ordeals of the Orthodox Ukrainian Church assumed clearly nationalist forms, the defense of the faith becoming the defense of the nation", hence, "the great devotion to religion, which dictates for us a cautious and flexible policy toward the Church". The anti-religious policy adopted by the Soviet authorities in the new regions was to avoid so far as possible strong-arm methods in favor of others, more subtle and efficient. According to Pavlenko, "the church people not only had to withdraw from their chairs in the university and gymnasia, but also lost their influence on the spiritual life of the working class" since the Church was transformed into "a private society of the faithful which, for Church people is a catastrophe, particularly from a financial point of view". Anti-religious propaganda was to be carried out principally in the schools and at conferences. Apparently, no branches of the League of Militant Atheists were established in the new regions of White Russia or the Ukraine; one gains the impression that the main emphasis of political propaganda at this time

30/ Pravda, September 17, 1940.

31/ See note 17.

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was on inculcating "Bolshevik" labor discipline. For instance, Pravda (March 20, 1940) complained that the political propagandists in the western oblasts of White Russia were carrying on "one-sided agitation that was not helping to teach the people love and respect for work". It appears that too much attention had been devoted to the advantages of Soviet citizenship and not enough to its responsibilities. Even Cardinal Hlond of Poland has admitted 32/ that "there were no organized massacres of priests" and that "the few cases so far recorded were due to the zeal of local Communists". Judging by Soviet information there are grounds for believing that the Kremlin's policy toward the churches was designed to impoverish and degrade the priests but not to exterminate them physically.

2. The Soviet Nationalist Policy in the Schools

Judging by articles on the subject, cultural developments in the new regions related mainly to spreading Stalinist ideology in schools, in which the various nationalities could study in their own language. An indication of the nature of nationalist culture as promoted by Moscow is furnished by the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of White Russia, Ponomarenko. 33/

Soviet power has given to each people the right to education in its own language. In the western oblasts there are now 4,278 White Russian schools, 173 Russian, 932 Polish, 150 Jewish, 61 Lithuanian and 49 Ukrainian schools. The construction of new national schools shatters the chauvinistic agitation of remnants of the exploiting and clerical elements.

Having had their heads broken in their insufferable relations with other nationalities and in their policy of forced Polonization, these paid hirelings of the landlords and capitalists are powerless before the fact of the complete victory of the Leninist-Stalinist nationality policy which not only gives the right to all nationalities to develop their culture, language and art, but also lends all the power of the State to further such development.

3. Class

32/ N. S. Timasheff, "The Church in the Soviet Union, 1917-1941", The Russian Review, Vol. 2, No. 1 (New York, 1942).

33/ Pravda, September 17, 1940.

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3. Class Warfare in Education

The nature of the doctrine of class struggle which was injected by the Communist Party into the schools is revealed by Eidinov in his article previously referred to, entitled "A Year of Party Work in the Western Oblasts of White Russia". ^{33/} Writing of the work of the Komsomols, who had helped to free the youth "from the burden of prejudices acquired under the conditions of former Poland", he related that

the remnants of the exploiting classes, the broken counter-revolutionary parties, and the clerical elements carried on chauvinistic agitation and attempted to scare the youth away from the Soviet schools and to spread all kinds of counter-revolutionary inventions.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Through the medium principally of the All-Union Communist Party the Soviet Government had, between 1939 and 1941, thoroughly Sovietized that portion of Poland occupied by the Red Army. After confiscating and nationalizing the land and distributing it to the poorer peasants, and nationalizing practically all other means of production and distribution, the Party authorities gradually inaugurated the collectivization of the peasant economy, a process which, by the time of the German invasion, had made substantial progress. With the dispossessing, execution or deportation of the landlords, factory owners and managers, of a large portion of the middle and professional classes, and of some of the wealthier peasants, a levelling process set in, under the direction of the Communist Party obviously designed to eliminate every trace of Polish rule and of the "bourgeois" social structure in this area. By the time of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Eastern Poland could hardly be distinguished, in most essential aspects, from other predominantly agrarian regions of the Soviet Union.

^{33/} Party Structure, No. 17, September 1940.