Introduction

> There's no point in rebuilding that collective farm. There's no village there, the farm worked poorly in the past and the soil is bad. What's worse, the people there aren't even real *kolkhozniki* – they're just rotten.
>
> Soviet official, Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine, 1948[1]

This is a history of 'rotten' people. Thousands of them returned victorious from fighting against the Germans in World War II to their 'bad soil' in Soviet Ukraine from 1945, but had to keep fighting until the end of that decade. Now they were fighting against their own Soviet government, which obstructed them from rebuilding their villages, farms and what remained of their pre-war lives. These people were not wartime collaborators, forced labourers or other 'traitorous' Soviet citizens whom officials normally discriminated against and slandered after the war. Numerous works have been published on their experiences.[2] The people whom authorities called 'rotten' were decorated war veterans and committed *kolkhozniki*, whom authorities were supposed to assist in, not obstruct from, rebuilding post-war Soviet society. This book examines the struggle between these 'rotten' people and the authorities, which reveals a new fault line in the restoration of Soviet control in parts of the Ukrainian countryside after World War II. The Soviet society that re-emerged in these areas shook chaotically along this fault line in ways we are only beginning to understand.

[1] Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial′no-politicheskoi istorii – RGASPI) f. (*fond*) 17, op. (*opis′*) 122, d. (*delo*) 316, l. (*list*) 155. *Kolkhozniki* are collective farmers and members of a collective farm (*kolkhoz*).

[2] On the difficulties encountered by displaced persons returning to Ukraine after the war, see Tetyana Pastushenko, *'V′izd repatriantiv do Kyïva zaboronenyi . . . ' Povoienne zhyttya kolyshnikh ostarbaiteriv ta viiskovopolonenykh v Ukraïni* (Kyiv: Instytut istoriï Ukraïny NAN Ukraïny, 2011). For a Soviet-wide history, see Pavel Polian, *Zhertvy dvukh diktatur. Ostarbaitery i voennoplennye v Tret′em reikhe i ikh repatriatsiia* (Moscow: Vash Vybor Tsirz, 1996).

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108879293.001 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The specific people that authorities called 'rotten' in the above epitaph were soldiers who returned to the land on which their village of Raska once stood. Raska, 90 kilometres west of Kyiv, had been burnt to the ground, the soldiers' murdered loved ones buried beneath it. Like so many of their comrades, in victory the soldiers lost the very things they had fought to protect. On 11 April 1943, German occupation forces and local Ukrainian collaborators launched a pre-dawn raid on this ethnically Polish village in response to the murder of three German soldiers in the area.[3] They herded almost all of Raska's remaining 421 women, children and elderly inhabitants – or 'partisans' as the Germans called them – into a ditch and shot them. Before torching the village, the murderers also killed the visitors who had come to Raska to celebrate a holiday.[4] That is why 'there was no village there'.[5] The soldiers' first task upon their return home after the war was to give their loved ones a proper burial. The soldiers swore an oath to their dead to rebuild the village and collective farm on this 'grave of honour' that can still be visited today (see Figure 1).[6]

Similar oaths rang out across post-war Ukraine. More *kolkhozniki* labelled 'rotten' by authorities swore oaths about 140 km south-west of Raska, outside what remained of the large city of Bila Tserkva. This city, too, was a site of massacres – of Ukrainian Jews in 1941 – and remaining civilian populations especially in 1943 as part of the German forces' 'anti-partisan' war and retreat westwards from the advancing Red Army.[7] Almost the whole of the city's remaining infrastructure was destroyed in

[3] State Archive of Kyiv Oblast (Derzhavnyi arkhiv Kyïvskoï oblasti – DAKO) f. 4810, op. 1, d. 3, l. 22.

[4] This is the conservative estimate of total casualties offered by World War II Museum in Kyiv, which is the same as in RGASPI f. 17, op. 122, d. 316, l. 151. This figure, however, does not take into account visitors to the village attending a holiday celebration on that weekend. Locals remaining in Raska have given higher figures inclusive of visitors. On the memorial at the gravesite in the village, 613 victims are listed, 120 of them children. See Chapter 5.

[5] DAKO f. r-880, op. 11, d. 95, l. 7.

[6] A handful of men originally from Raska who had not been drafted into the Red Army worked in the area or fought in partisan units, though most would join the Red Army as it advanced through Kyiv Oblast in late 1943. Some of these men were the first to arrive at the village after its destruction. Small snippets of information, comprising a few pages, about Raska's destruction are found in recollections gathered from some remaining residents in 1973 and later published in a book of poetry (the only such published book found by the author) in Ukraine: L. N. Horlach and I. M. Pal′chik et al., *Dzvony pam′iati. Knyha pro trahediiu sil Kyïvshchyny, znyshchenykh fashystamy u roky viiny* (Kyiv: Radyanskyi pys′mennyk, 1985), 188. For the difference between this 'official information' and the recollections of other survivors of the massacre and the post-war struggle against the authorities, see Chapter 5.

[7] For details of casualties in the German 'anti-partisan' war and the broader 'scorched earth' policy during the retreat from the Soviet Union, see Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, ed., *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht. Dimensionen des Vernichtungskrieges 1941–1944: Ausstellungskatalog* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2002), 387–9.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108879293.001 Published online by Cambridge University Press

1 Grave of honour in Raska (2016)

the heavy fighting. The city's pre-war population had been massively reduced. *Kolkhozniki* who had survived brutal German occupation since 1941 joined with those returning from military service to try to rebuild their collective farms and villages where there was little trace of them. Local authorities first obstructed the rebuilding and then tried to liquidate the farms as soon as the *kolkhozniki* were successful in rebuilding them.[8]

Most local authorities tried to fulfil their legal obligations to assist the masses of citizens seeking to rebuild their post-war lives, but it was not unusual to deny it to some people, 'rotten' or otherwise.[9] There was

[8] 'Local authorities' refers to village-, city-, *raion*- and oblast-level authorities, unless specifically designated. In Raska, the lowest authority was the local village council (*sel′sovet*), followed by two *raion* authorities representing the state (*raiispolkom*) and party (*raikom*), with the latter usually making decisions carried out by the former. In Bila Tserkva, city authorities comprised the state representative (*gorsovet*) and party arms (*gorkom*) as well as two *raion* authorities, the *raiispolkom* and *raikom*. All reported to their superiors at the oblast level, the state arm (*obliispolkom*) and party arm (*obkom*), who reported to their superiors at the nationwide republican level, who, along with all-Union authorities, are referred to as 'central authorities' unless otherwise designated.

[9] Immediately after the war, most of the Soviet population still lived in the countryside, and the majority of war veterans initially returned to their villages, or what remained of them, after demobilisation. The mass emigration from the countryside to the cities happened after the initial resettlement of the villages following demobilisation. See Mark Edele, 'Veterans and the Village: The Impact of Red Army Demobilization on Soviet Urbanization, 1945–1955', *Russian History* 36, no. 2 (2009), 159–82; Mark Edele, *Soviet Veterans of World War II: A Popular Movement in an Authoritarian Society, 1941–1991* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); and Robert Dale, *Demobilized Veterans in Late Stalinist Leningrad: Soldiers to Civilians* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108879293.001 Published online by Cambridge University Press

considerable competition for the scant resources on offer, from food rations and building material, to pension payments, loans and housing allocations. In addition to the farms and villages in Raska and Bila Tserkva, 30,000 farms were destroyed during the war and needed to be rebuilt.[10] As many as 8 million Ukrainians may have died from war and occupation among the 28 million Soviet dead.[11] Many returning soldiers, like those in Raska and Bila Tserkva, failed to receive these resources as part of the more generous state assistance to which they were legally entitled, promised to them in the din of war by the state, which had been too impoverished by the war to provide it now.[12] To make matters worse, the consequences of war and occupation continued to unravel years after their cessation. By the time most soldiers returned home in late 1946,[13] the country was hurtling from mass drought to famine, which killed at least a million more people and reversed many of the gains made in rebuilding the countryside upon Ukraine's liberation from late 1943.[14] In this context of enduring material deprivation and massive social disorganisation, the assistance to which people were legally entitled became conditional.[15] 'Rebuilding' or 'reconstructing' the country was by no means a linear process that could be simply facilitated successfully by 'assistance'.

[10] This number includes state farms (*sovkhozy*) and machine tractor stations (MTSs) destroyed or pillaged: V. M. Danylenko, ed., *Povoienna Ukraïna. Narysy sotsial'noï istoriï (druha polovyna 1940-kh–seredyna 1950-kh rr.)* (Kyiv: Instytut istoriï Ukraïny NAN Ukraïny, 2010), 7.

[11] S. V. Kul'chyts'kyi, *Chervonyi vyklyk. Istoriia komunizmu v Ukraïni vid yoho narodzhennia do zahybeli*, vol. III (Kyiv: Tempora, 2013), 106. See here too for the broader debate over casualty figures.

[12] There is an emerging literature on authorities failing to assist desperate people as part of their broader inability to negotiate the competing claims for resources among soldiers and other members of society in a period of severe material shortage. This was an enduring problem in the immediate post-war period, even for soldiers, whose status as veterans at this time did not guarantee them the advantages they had been promised by the state. See Edele, *Soviet Veterans of World War II* and Dale, *Demobilized Veterans*.

[13] For demobilisation figures, see Mark Edele, 'A "Generation of Victors"? Soviet Second World War Veterans from Demobilization to Organization 1941–1956', PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2004, 102.

[14] Union-wide casualties. On the collapse of the agricultural sector and the famine across the western parts of the Soviet Union in 1946–7, see two major works with varying viewpoints on the state's role in causing and/or exacerbating the famine: V. F. Zima, *Golod v SSSR 1946–1947 godov. Proiskhozhdenie i posledstviia* (Moscow: Institut Rossiskoi Istorii RAN, 1996); and Nicholas Ganson, *The Soviet Famine of 1946–1947 in Global and Historical Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

[15] It was only in the mid-1950s that *kolkhozniki* in the countryside ate as well as they had done before the war and broader Soviet economic indicators approximated pre-war norms. For comparative pre- and post-war consumption data in each oblast of Ukraine, see the Russian State Archive of the Economy (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv ekonomiki – RGAE) f. 582, op. 24, d. 430. It is important to remember, however, that these figures are averages.

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It was unusual for local authorities, however, to disobey the law and central policy to conspire to obstruct *kolkhozniki* from rebuilding their own villages and collective farms or to try to liquidate operating ones. In Raska, they tore down homes and the school that the soldiers, now *kolkhozniki*, had rebuilt upon their return from the war, and stole their last morsels of food and livestock, before ordering the physical liquidation of the partially reconstructed farm and village. Authorities ejected *kolkhozniki* from their homes and land, and stole farm equipment on the outskirts of Bila Tserkva in their attempt to liquidate the farms as well as in other locations across Kyiv Oblast, where Raska and Bila Tserkva are located. Authorities along the vertical of political power were involved, from the *raion* (district) level – committing the violence on the ground – to the oblast (provincial) level – directing and protecting the former from prosecution. Along this vertical, levels of government were formally separated into party and state bodies, which had different responsibilities for managing agriculture. On the *raion* level, the management lay mainly with the district state committee (*raiispolkom*). The district party committee (*raikom*) was more a decision-making body less involved in day-to-day agricultural affairs. This structure was mirrored at the next and highest level in the oblast with the *obliispolkom* and *obkom*. In practice, there was overlap of personnel and responsibilities between these bodies. This overlap intensified especially around harvest time, in times of food crisis or, in the cases of Raska and Bila Tserkva, when authorities conspired to act against the law and the broader thrust of post-war building to obstruct the *kolkhozniki*.

This obstruction was not simply unusual behaviour: it was potential political suicide for authorities to obstruct the development of the collective farm system – the state's rapacious extraction of food from the countryside to feed the cities and armies and for export. Although this system was economically inefficient, as with most forms of forced labour, it remained the backbone of the entire Soviet economy and economic foundation of Stalinism.[16] The job of local authorities was to make this system work by enforcing the law that bound *kolkhozniki* to their farms and engaged them in work for the state, not kick them off the farms and stop them from operating. *Kolkhozniki* were generally reluctant to work on the farms when they received only a share of the grain or income from produce that remained after the state requisitioned it. This share was often insufficient to keep them alive, so most *kolkhozniki* survived only by

[16] Paul Gregory, *The Political Economy of Stalinism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

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farming the small plot of private land permitted to them, where they could grow their own food.

Soviet officials investigating the crimes committed by these local authorities thus struggled to understand their motivations in obstructing the rebuilding or trying to liquidate farms, especially in regard to Raska. Its inhabitants had been massacred and its collective farm, called 'First of May' (Pershe Travnia), destroyed by German occupiers, making its reconstruction part of the broader narrative of patriotic rebuilding espoused by the state. The *kolkhozniki* too struggled to understand the local authorities' motivations for obstructing them from rebuilding the farms when, unlike many other *kolkhozniki*, they were happy to work on them. By the poor standards of the Ukrainian collective farm sector, the farms in Raska and Bila Tserkva had operated reasonably well by the eve of the war, and *kolkhozniki* earned a decent living, which they all now sought to resume afterwards.[17] Importantly, their commitment to working on their rebuilt farms bound them to the land and to the communities from which the authorities were trying to remove them. Land and lifestyle were entwined for the *kolkhozniki*, and their attachment to both ran deep in these places. Local authorities clearly understood this, but it made no difference to their behaviour.

Leon Koval′skyi (Kowalski), a war veteran and *kolkhoznik* in Raska, best expressed this sense of confusion among *kolkhozniki* over the local authorities' unusual behaviour when he spoke to the investigating officials who visited the farms in the winter of 1948. The officials quickly passed Koval′skyi's plea, made through tears, on to their superiors to address in the highest echelons of Soviet government in Moscow:

> I'm a Red Army soldier. I fought against the enemy for four years while the fascists executed my wife and three children at home. Now I'm back, it's not enough that I cannot be with my family, but I . . . have to put up with the most inhumane treatment [from the local authorities]. What are we asking for? We're asking to rebuild our collective farm . . . on the graves of our murdered loved ones. But the authorities deny us! I can't explain why they're treating us so callously [*bezdushno*].[18]

This book answers Koval′skyi's final question by examining the struggle of *kolkhozniki* to rebuild their villages and farms in Raska, Bila Tserkva and other areas of Kyiv Oblast. These are atypical cases. Nowhere else in Ukraine did local authorities stop *kolkhozniki* rebuilding their farms and villages so violently. Authorities claimed to have rebuilt almost all of the sector's other

[17] For data on the pre-war performance of these farms, see Chapter 3.
[18] RGASPI f. 17, op. 122, d. 316, l. 154.

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pre-war collective farms by the beginning of 1946, totalling 2,368 farms in Kyiv Oblast and 26,368 Ukraine-wide.[19] Nowhere else did *kolkhozniki* fight for years for the right to rebuild their farms. By the end of the 1940s, life on the collective farms was no longer tolerable, indeed viable, for millions of *kolkhozniki* from Ukraine and across the Soviet Union. Through both legal and illegal means, they fled their farms for new lives in the cities.[20]

Though atypical, these cases teach us a great deal new about the problems of broader post-war agriculture, national rebuilding and post-war Stalinism. They occurred at the extremity of a wider, yet poorly understood process – local authorities' theft of collective farmland. The answer to Koval′skyi's question, then, concerns not only Raska and Kyiv Oblast, but all of Ukraine. Local authorities in Raska and Bila Tserkva refused to allow the *kolkhozniki* to rebuild their farms so callously because they had taken away the land where their farms were located and given it to others (appropriation). Local authorities appropriating collective farmland that was used to grow food for the state and distributing it for other uses, mostly to factories, institutions and workers to grow food for local consumption, was a widespread practice in wartime across the unoccupied Soviet Union and then in the liberated territories such as Ukraine. There were both legal and illegal appropriations, though the divisions between them in wartime were blurry and not enforced widely. Central authorities succeeded in stamping out illegal appropriations conducted by authorities and by factories, institutions and workers themselves, much of the literature argues, by prosecuting them in a massive political campaign launched in September 1946 called 'On measures to eliminate abuses of collective farm rules'.[21]

[19] For Kyiv Oblast, see DAKO f. r-880, op. 11, d. 95. For Ukraine-wide figures not including west Ukrainian oblasts, which were only forcibly collectivised from 1948, see Yu. V. Arutiunian, *Sovetskoe krest′ianstvo v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny* (Moscow: Akademia Nauk SSSR, Institut Istorii, 1963), 386.

[20] *Kolkhozniki* engaged in fluid migrations from farm to urban work both legally and illegally. Many were recruited for seasonal urban labour projects by state agencies for short periods after the war and were expected to return to their farms for sowing/harvest periods. Many ended up staying in urban areas permanently and eventually brought their families to settle, especially after 1949. Others left their farms on their own accord. Through both avenues, *kolkhozniki* left the collective farm sector in a massive migratory process across the Soviet Union. Some *kolkhozniki* were prosecuted for engaging in other work without authorisation and especially for failing to return from their urban employment to farm work in the sowing/harvest seasons. They were generally not prosecuted for leaving the farms permanently after 1949, but often lost their membership in them, and thus their claims to private plots. On more detail of the migratory process, see the discussion in Chapter 3 and Zima, *Golod*, ch. 8.

[21] The full title is Postanovlenie Soveta Ministrov SSSR (Sovmin) 'O merakh po likvidatsii narushenii Ustava sel′skokhoziaistvennoi arteli v kolkhozakh' (19 September 1946). From this point onwards, I refer to it as the 'Campaign on Collective Farm Rules'.

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This campaign returned millions of hectares of the land that had been appropriated during the war both legally and illegally to the collective farm sector to grow food to supply central rather than local demands.

The atypical – indeed, extreme – cases of Raska and Bila Tserkva, evident from recently declassified Soviet archival sources and survivor testimony, now reveal that local authorities refused to return large tracts of collective farmland in response to the 1946 campaign. Some continued appropriating it, secretly and illegally after 1946, not only here and across Kyiv Oblast, but also in other areas of Ukraine. Without knowledge of these extreme cases, we would have little idea that this problem endured widely after this time. Local authorities left no transparent paper trail of the numerous, less extreme illegal appropriations that remain in the archival record. The extreme cases did leave a transparent and rich trail, because the struggle between *kolkhozniki* and authorities was investigated and recorded.

An examination of this paper trail reveals a conspiracy emanating from the oblast-level state government (*obliispolkom*) in Kyiv to continue illegal appropriations. The heads of various government departments and other leading officials used their positions to spearhead a broader network of subordinates who operated on their orders or at least under their protection. Officials within this network possessed numerous strategies to conduct illegal appropriations, including coercing *kolkhozniki* into accepting the theft of land and concealing and falsifying records of their behaviour. Officials applied these strategies *in extremis* in Raska and Bila Tserkva where they met resistance from *kolkhozniki*. They and officials elsewhere in Ukraine applied them less extremely in other cases of appropriation where they met little or no resistance. Officials recorded these cases falsely in the archival record as legal appropriations reached by agreement between *kolkhozniki* and authorities or simply as mundane land transfers. With knowledge of how this network operated and its strategies of concealment and falsification laid bare, we can now reveal where these 'legal appropriations' conceal illegal ones and thus make transparent the opaque record in the archives. We can begin to understand land theft in Ukraine from its extreme iterations in the cases of Raska and Bila Tserkva to its moderate ones across Kyiv Oblast and elsewhere, committed by other local authorities. In this way, these cases are not limited in what they tell us about post-war reconstruction because they are not typical of general experiences. They shed the greatest

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insight into general experiences otherwise unknown exactly because these cases are atypical.[22]

Uncovering this hidden aspect of this period of history raises new questions: where *kolkhozniki* could not resist local authorities taking their land, how much of it remained unreturned to the collective farm sector? What impact did this illegal and largely unaccounted-for division in land have on local and central food supply, especially in time of famine and, indeed, on the fate of the post-war rebuilding of the agricultural sector and broader economies in Ukraine? What spurred such illegal conspiratorial behaviour among officials, and how was this resistance to central authorities possible at the local level in Kyiv Oblast and elsewhere? What spurred the resistance of the *kolkhozniki*? What does all of this tell us about the broader problems of post-war Stalinism? By addressing these questions in this book, we can arrive at a much better understanding of the intersections of land, food and power in post-war Stalinism.

*

A clash between local and central authorities over land usage was bound to emerge at some stage in the post-war period. By the end of the war across the entire Soviet Union, hundreds of thousands of factories and institutions, and millions of workers, were in possession of millions of hectares of collective farmland in areas that had avoided German occupation and then in those that had been liberated from it. This was not the case in areas annexed by the Soviet Union in its invasion of eastern Poland from September 1939, including parts of western Ukraine.[23] Former collective farmland was divided into small plots among individual workers and their families, who used it to grow their own food, primarily vegetables and mostly for personal consumption. Land used in this way was called *podsobnoe khoziaistvo*.[24] Local authorities usually made it available to factories/institutions and trade unions; the latter distributed it to their

[22] For a discussion of the capacity of local studies to shed insight into more general realities and, broadly, how local conditions can shape central ones, see Allan Pred, *Making Histories and Constructing Human Geographies: The Local Transformation of Practice, Power Relations, and Consciousness* (Boulder: Westview, 1990).

[23] David Marples, *Stalinism in Ukraine in the 1940s* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), ch. 7.

[24] In some cases factories/institutions set up their own farms to feed workforces; see Donald Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and Late Stalinism: Labour and the Restoration of the Stalinist System after World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 70–5, and, more broadly, T. D. Nadkin, *Stalinskaia agrarnaia politika i krest'ianstvo Mordovii* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2010), 235–51; E. V. Maksimenko, 'Istoriografiia problemy razvitiia individual'nogo i kollektivnogo ogorodnichestva i podsobnykh khoziaistv na iuzhnom Urale v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny i poslevoennyi period', *Vestnik Orenburgskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta* 5, no. 1 (2013), 83–6.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108879293.001 Published online by Cambridge University Press

workers or factories/institutions. Alternatively, individual workers appropriated the land themselves with or without the consent of the authorities.[25] This land provided a major food source for workers and thus, for local authorities, a basis for the economic reconstruction of their localities in Ukraine from the time of liberation in late 1943. This dependence did not wane in late 1946 when central authorities sought to recover this land. There was thus great impetus for local authorities in the most destitute areas to prevent the return of the land to the collective farm sector, which would have put the land back into state use with the food grown on it to supply mainly the central food supply system, not local demands. The impetus increased in late 1946 as mass famine loomed over the Ukrainian countryside.

Central authorities' decision to recover collective farmland and to begin prosecuting illegal appropriations in late 1946 was part of a broader reversal of a wartime policy of 'self-supply' that had encouraged local authorities to appropriate this land in the first place. Self-supply involved central authorities devolving power to local ones to organise their local economies and food sources, as the central economy was directed towards military consumption.[26] This policy continued in the territories where Soviet power was re-established from late 1943 onwards, such as Ukraine. Once the war was over, central authorities sought to recover the power they had ceded to local levels, along with land and control over food production in the countryside.[27]

This was a difficult process of recovery. Self-supply had worked well in providing food and economic needs on the local level across the Soviet

[25] Trade unions usually distributed *podsobnoe khoziaistvo* among their members who worked at the enterprises to which the land was distributed. See Stephen Lovell, *Summerfolk: A History of the Dacha, 1710–2000* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 164–8.

[26] On the devolution of authority to the local level in wartime, see William Moskoff, *The Bread of Affliction: The Food Supply in the USSR during World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); John Barber and Mark Harrison, *The Soviet Home Front, 1941–1945: A Social and Economic History of the USSR in World War II* (London and New York: Longman, 1991); Peter Hachten, 'Property Relations and the Economic Organization of Soviet Russia, 1941–1948', PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2005). On the re-establishment of post-war control over liberated territories, see Sanford R. Lieberman, 'The Re-Sovietization of Formerly Occupied Territories of the USSR during World War II', in Sanford R. Lieberman et al., eds., *The Soviet Empire Reconsidered* (Boulder: Westview, 1994), 49–67. On the restoration of central control over the localities, see Oleg Khlevniuk, ed., *Politbiuro TsK VKP(b) i Sovet Ministrov SSSR 1945–1953* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2002); V. Denisov, A. V. Kvashonkin, L. Malashenko, A. Iu. Miniuk, M. Iu. Prozumenshchikov and O. V. Khlevniuk, eds., *TsK VKP(b) i regional'nye partiinye komitety 1945–1953* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2004); and Yoram Gorlizki, 'Ordinary Stalinism: The Council of Ministers and the Soviet Neopatrimonial State, 1946–1953', *Journal of Modern History* 74, no. 4 (2002), 699–736.

[27] Urban residents received smaller plots to use as small vegetable gardens (*ogorodnichestvo*), though this land was generally not affected by the campaign.

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Union and continued to work reasonably well after the war. In appropriating the land, local authorities cultivated millions of hectares of state-owned collective farmland not in use by collective farms due to massive shortages of labour, livestock and machinery during both the war and its immediate aftermath.[28] Local authorities were legally permitted to appropriate such 'not in use' farmland in consultation with farm leaders, though they often appropriated whatever land they wanted with or without consultation.[29] Authorities illegally appropriated valuable land close to urban and industrial centres that was required to feed workers and meet local food demands. They also appropriated land either to feed themselves or to generate profit from selling food and agricultural products. In some cases, the utilitarian and corrupt uses of land were difficult to disentangle. Local authorities were supposed to return land to the farms at the end of the war, as self-supply from the agricultural sector gave way to the pre-war norm. Yet some authorities kept it, either because they feared returning the land would reveal their illegal acquisition of it or because they still needed the land they had acquired. In some cases, local authorities continued appropriating more land after the war and even after the 1946 campaign. Either way, it was now mostly illegal for local authorities to keep or continue to appropriate any collective farmland, unless specific authorisation was received from their superiors. As we will see below, this was given less often after the 1946 campaign. We can thus rebrand the continuation of this wartime policy of 'self-supply' in terms of land usage after 1946 as an illegal one.[30]

If the broader clash between local and central authorities over land usage was bound to happen after the war, then it was also bound to happen in the most devastated parts of the Soviet Union, such as the Ukrainian

[28] Large tracts of collective farmland were uncultivated due to the destruction of farms and massive losses of agricultural labour. Ukraine's pre-war population was heavily reduced upon liberation due to wartime casualties, conscription, exile and forced labour in Germany, and mass deportations and then population exchanges, which continued into the post-war period. In the capital Kyiv, for instance, the pre-war population of 1 million was reduced to 220,000 by December 1943. See Martin J. Blackwell, *Kyiv as Regime City: The Return of Soviet Power after Nazi Occupation* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2016), 22. On the legal appropriation of collective farmland in Ukraine during the war, see T. V. Vrons′ka, *V umovakh viiny. Zhyttia ta pobut naselennia mist Ukraïny (1943–1945 rr.)* (Kyiv: Instytut istoriï Ukraïny NAN Ukraïny, 1994), 56–7.

[29] On illegal sales and other appropriations of collective farmland, not discussed by Vrons′ka, *V umovakh viiny*, as a major problem in non-occupied areas of the Soviet Union during the war, see Arutiunian, *Sovetskoe krest′ianstvo,* 329–30, and H. Kessler and G. E. Kornilov, eds., *Kolkhoznaia zhizn′ na Urale, 1935–1953* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2006), 18. Chapters 1 and 2 discuss the scale of illegal appropriations of collective farmland in Kyiv Oblast.

[30] Specifically, self-supply in the post-war period here refers to the continual use of *podsobnoe khoziaistvo* taken from collective farmland by officials, factories and institutions after 1946.

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countryside. Here food and other resource demands were least well met by rationing and other resource distribution systems from the time of liberation in late 1943. This problem was faced primarily by those dependent on *podsobnoe khoziaistvo* and/or food rations to survive, such as workers, clerical employees, schoolteachers and lower-level state officials living in rural areas and especially rural peripheries of cities and urban towns. Local authorities maintained the policy of self-supply on their behalf, and especially on behalf of their factories and institutions that were engaged in the reconstruction of local economies alongside agriculture. These people generally received fewer of the meagre benefits of post-war reconstruction in Ukraine to which they were entitled and of which their compatriots in the major urban areas such as Kyiv received more. With less entitlement to food rations and less ability to access them, rural workers/officials depended also on their *podsobnoe khoziaistvo* to survive.[31]

The opportunity for local authorities in Ukraine to continue pursuing self-supply after the war was also greatest in Kyiv Oblast, which experienced the highest level of disorganisation in the structure of land usage and tenure in all of Ukraine. Confusion reigned over exactly which land had belonged to individual collective farms, and thus which had been stolen from them and was supposed to be returned.[32] Local authorities exploited – indeed, fomented – this confusion to conceal the extent of land they had taken illegally and to continue appropriating more.[33] They undertook the most extensive project across Ukraine to keep it, sometimes violently, after the 1946 campaign sought to identify stolen land and return it to the collective farm sector.

The timing of this clash over land between central and local authorities was precipitated by the failed 1946 summer grain harvest caused by a mass drought across the western parts of the Soviet Union. By September 1946,

[31] Post-war reconstruction, though onerous and difficult for everyone, was much more successful from the viewpoint of those sitting atop the hierarchy for food and resource distribution in the cities. They ate relatively well from 1944 onwards and, though accessing the food and resources to which they were entitled was a laborious and competitive task, of which much has been written, there was at least something to fight over. Outside the cities, there was much less. For an account of the successes of post-war reconstruction in the immediate post-liberation period in Ukraine, especially in agriculture, see Vrons′ka, *V umovakh viiny*.

[32] Land tenure established a farm's enduring right to use specific tracts of land and was conferred on farms by the authorities.

[33] This was a difficult and laborious process given that so many of the relevant land records were destroyed during the war in Ukraine, but most of the oblasts – except Kyiv – managed to make great strides towards this reorganisation by 1947. It is not coincidental that this lag accompanied the greatest delays in the return of illegally approved farmland and continuing post-war appropriations after 1946 (see Chapter 1).

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the state authorities had collected much less grain from the countryside than they had anticipated and were fearful of famine. They lost all patience with growing evidence of the continuation of self-supply across the Soviet Union. They understood this as symptomatic of the continuation of the 'liberal' wartime practices of local officials, rural workers and *kolkhozniki* with regard to land usage and considered such practices partly to blame for the food crisis. The massive campaign launched in September 1946 forcibly recovered the land appropriated from farms, further criminalised this practice and prosecuted officials for having made egregious appropriations and/or delaying returning the land.

The primary signal of the campaign was directed to *kolkhozniki*: that the repressive pre-war order in the countryside would replace the 'liberal' wartime one. This campaign affected *kolkhozniki* who had lived within the pre-1939 borders of the Soviet Union and less so the non-collectivised rural areas of western Ukraine/eastern Poland that came under Soviet control briefly from September 1939 until the German invasion in June 1941, and then again from 1944.[34] *Kolkhozniki* in the pre-1939 Soviet territories suffered under this campaign because many had illegally expanded the size of their private plot land after liberation in late 1943, that is that land on which they were permitted to grow their own food, by appropriating it from land that belonged to their collective farms and was used to grow food for the state. Many kept their expanded private plot in the post-war period, as it remained their only real food source, often with the connivance of farm leaderships and even local officials until the campaign, when they lost large chunks of it. This did not happen in Raska and Bila Tserkva and some other areas of Kyiv Oblast. Authorities had taken most of the fertile collective farm and private plot land that had belonged to *kolkhozniki* before the war and returned neither in the 1946 campaign.

Although the campaign was directed against *kolkhozniki*, its impact was felt just as keenly by workers/officials in rural areas. Illegal land expansions by *kolkhozniki* across Ukraine accounted for less land illegally appropriated from the collective farm sector than did workers' *podsobnoe khoziaistvo*. Of the almost 1 million hectares of this land slated for return to the collective farm sector by the end of 1946 in Ukraine, more than 70 per cent came

[34] The campaign was launched in the very small number of collective farms in these areas, such as in Lviv, which had forty-five farms by the end of 1946. The west Ukrainian countryside was inhabited mostly by individual farmers. See Central State Archive of Public Organisations of Ukraine (Tsentral′nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv hromadskykh ob′iednan′ Ukraïny – TsDAHOU) f. 1, op. 23, d. 4805, ll. 13–14.

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from institutions and factories, 20 per cent from workers and their families as *podsobnoe khoziaistvo*, and the remainder from *kolkhozniki*'s private plots expanded beyond their legal size.[35] Although there were significant exceptions, *kolkhozniki* often suffered a reduction – though a serious one – in the size of their private plots in the campaign, whereas the entirety of many workers'/officials' *podsobnoe khoziaistvo* was confiscated. Not all, but hundreds of thousands of rural workers/officials in Ukraine thus lost all of the *podsobnoe khoziaistvo* they accessed through their factories/institutions, while 208,000 lost whatever land they had appropriated and cultivated as *podsobnoe khoziaistvo* without authorisation in the countryside.[36]

The timing of the campaign and loss of *podsobnoe khoziaistvo* also could not have been worse for rural workers/officials in Ukraine. Partly as a response to the failed grain harvest, Moscow removed bread ration entitlements for all rural dwellers in the Soviet Union (not *kolkhozniki*, who had never received them) and their dependants in September 1946.[37] This affected more than 2.5 million people in Ukraine, 647,000 of whom Ukraine's leaders feared might die without bread rations.[38] By the end of 1946, workers who had lost *podsobnoe khoziaistvo* could not access bread rations, and those who had lost their ration entitlement could not acquire land to grow food.[39] In short, the state was not feeding its rural workers/officials and was denying them the ability to feed themselves as famine approached.

The clash between local and central authorities over land peaked at this critical point when hundreds of thousands of workers faced starvation in rural areas and urban peripheries. Local officials across Ukraine launched

[35] Central State Archive of Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of Ukraine (Tsentral′nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv vyshchykh orhaniv vlady ta upravlinnia Ukraïny – TsDAVOU) f. r-2, op. 7, d. 5032, ll. 219–220.

[36] TsDAVOU f. r-2, op. 7, d. 5032, ll. 219–220 (discussed in Chapter 1).

[37] Across the Soviet Union, pre-famine vulnerabilities among workers were widespread due to limited food supply. As Nicholas Ganson argues, 'problems with [food] distribution, stemming largely from the limitations of the production and trade network, *preceded* the failed harvest of 1946': Ganson, *Soviet Famine*, 56.

[38] TsDAHOU f. 1, op. 23, d. 4023, ll. 209–210.

[39] This affected low-level officials, workers, clerical employees and their families; 27.5 million lost their ration entitlement Union-wide. See Postanovlenie Sovmina no. 380 'Ob ekonomii i raskhodovanii khleba' (27 September 1946) in Filtzer, *Soviet Workers*, 52. Workers dealt with the cut in rations in a number of ways, including increasing their consumption of other available foods (potatoes, cabbage, etc.) from their reserves and purchasing food at their work places. Donald Filtzer argues that workers could stave off starvation in this manner – even if their general health deteriorated significantly – until late 1947 when the food situation improved. More detailed analysis of mortality in the famine may be required to clarify this point. For city workers in Bila Tserkva who kept their ration cards, prices on basic commodities such as bread increased by three times in September 1946, which made the situation difficult also for 'the lucky ones'. See Ganson, *Soviet Famine*, 57.

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massive protests with their respective superiors on the workers' behalf, or rather on behalf of the factories and institutions to which rural officials/ workers belonged. They were mainly concerned that the factories and institutions would have to close if their employees lost their food source in land or rations and that broader chaos might result from mass unemployment and starvation.[40] These protests spread up the vertical hierarchy of Ukrainian government from *raion* to oblast level until Ukraine's central authorities, its republican leaders, had little choice but to convey them to Moscow.

While republican leaders, especially the head of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine (CP(b)U), Nikita Khrushchev, were aligned with Moscow on returning land to the sector and establishing control over it, they sided with their subordinates on the matter of the removal of both rations and land from workers in rural areas at the same time. Although it is not widely known, so did 'Iron' Lazar Kaganovich, one of Joseph Stalin's closest allies. Kaganovich was one of the leading officials who had spearheaded the forced collectivisation of the Ukrainian peasantry at the beginning of the 1930s. This included the rapacious requisitioning of food from newly established collective farms, which helped to cause, along with a range of other factors, the 1932–3 famine that killed millions of people.[41] Who better than Kaganovich for Stalin to send to Ukraine to pull Khrushchev into line over his 'lax' attitude towards requisitioning food from collective farms during the famine and over his general complaints about the food crisis in Ukraine?[42] Kaganovich replaced Khrushchev as

[40] See TsDAVOU f. r-2, op. 7, d. 5050. For appeals in late 1946 and their continuation into 1947, see d. 5038. See also specific complaints made by local authorities to Kaganovich in O. M. Veselova, 'Pisliavoienna trahediia. Holod 1946–1947 rr. v Ukraïni', *Ukraïnskyi istorychnyi zhurnal* no. 6 (2006), 111. Factories, workers and institutions deemed not to have illegally appropriated land or kept it beyond their wartime agreements were allowed to keep it. Factory farms and other forms of subsistence land generally stayed with factories, though these farms suffered the damaging consequences of drought like the others. See Filtzer, *Soviet Workers*, 70–5, on factory farms and 61–2 on railway authorities complaining to state and party bodies.

[41] See a seminal work in the vast literature on this famine, R. W. Davies and S. G. Wheatcroft, *The Industrialisation of Soviet Russia 5. The Years of Hunger: Soviet Agriculture, 1931–1933* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

[42] *Kolkhozniki* faced starvation too, but not because of the end of bread rationing, as they never were entitled to such rations in the first place. The failed harvest slashed the already meagre wages they received for their collective farm work, often paid in food rather than money, while the reduction of their private plot land lessened their ability to grow their own food. Khrushchev had made appeals to Stalin on behalf of *kolkhozniki* suffering from famine, but most officials were not much concerned with their plight. Kaganovich especially was mostly unsupportive, given his role in the 1932–3 Ukrainian famine and his enduring anti-*kolkhoznik* attitudes evident at the February 1947 All-Union Central Committee Plenum on Agriculture. With regard to aid, Kaganovich was clearly supporting food aid only to enable *kolkhozniki* to at least commence the spring 1947 sowing season,

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First Secretary of the CP(b)U from March to December 1947 and did as Stalin expected in continuing to extract food from the collective farm sector with exemplary ruthlessness.[43] But it is clear now from the archives that, at least with regard to rural workers/officials, Kaganovich had softened to Khrushchev's mould by mid-1947. He pleaded with Stalin to restore rations to 647,000 Ukrainian workers, officials and family members in rural areas who were starving. He especially appealed for more food relief on behalf of children in state homes who had been orphaned or abandoned by their starving parents there in the hope that they would be fed. Neither appeal met with much success.[44] Kaganovich, Khrushchev and others at the republican level of government continued to ask for concessions in other areas but understood Stalin's message: to continue to implement the shift away from self-supply, to reduce rural food consumption and to re-establish central control over the collective farm sector. Most officials in the party and state structure at the local level fell into line.[45]

Leading officials in Kyiv Oblast did not. At both the oblast and *raion* level, officials mounted the challenge to their own republican authorities and central ones in Moscow by continuing the policy of self-supply secretly. These officials included *raion*- and oblast-level state and party officials, party secretaries in different *raiony* and, at the top of the hierarchy, the deputy chairman of the state government authority (*obliispolkom*) of agricultural affairs in Kyiv Oblast, S. K. Dvornikov. He was one of the senior officials responsible for the implementation of the 1946 Campaign on Collective Farm Rules that was supposed to return illegally appropriated land to the collective farm sector. Dvornikov and his allies did help

as he made clear in his appeals to Stalin. See Ganson, *Soviet Famine*, 110 and 89. For the earlier period, see V. V. Sazonov, 'Povoiennyi holod v URSR (1946–1947 rr.) i derzhavna polityka', in Instytut istoriï Ukraïny NAN Ukraïny, ed., *Holod v Ukraïni u pershii polovyni XX stolittia. Prychyny ta naslidky (1921–1923, 1932–1933, 1946–1947)* (Kyiv: Instytut istoriï Ukraïny NAN Ukraïny, 2013), 133.

[43] Veselova, 'Pisliavoienna trahediia', 105–6.

[44] As was often the case with leading officials pleading for 'humanitarian' assistance from Stalin, Kaganovich found it difficult to do so without implicitly critiquing Stalin's handling of the famine and ration policy. This is one of the reasons why Kaganovich re-drafted his letter to Stalin numerous times with different co-authors before sending it to him. Each draft contained less of an appeal on behalf of 'humanity' of the starving people than the previous one. For the first draft, see TsDAHOU f. 1, op. 23, d. 4023, ll. 209–210. For the second draft with Kaganovich's annotations, see f. 1, op. 23, d. 4026, l. 22, and for the final version sent to Stalin, ll. 63–64. Veselova writes that a letter by Kaganovich and Khrushchev on this matter was sent to Stalin in May 1947 ('Pisliavoienna trahediia', 111). This letter was one of the earlier drafts located in d. 4023. Kaganovich sent a final version of this same letter to Stalin at the end of May with significant changes, but now not with Khrushchev, but Korniets as his co-author: d. 4026, ll. 63–64.

[45] Stalin did accede to seed loans for collective farms per Kaganovich's request – but not on restoring rations for workers in rural areas: Ganson, *Soviet Famine*, 60.

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return thousands of hectares to farms in Kyiv Oblast. But it was exactly his role in returning land that enabled him to do the opposite – to allow illegally appropriated land to remain in the hands of those he chose and to continue to make illegal appropriations years after the end of the campaign.[46] It was this 'appropriator in chief' who libelled Raska's *kolkhozniki* as 'rotten' in the epigraph at the beginning of this book, after throwing them out of his office in Kyiv when they came to plead with him to help them fight off the local authorities and rebuild their farm in 1947.[47]

Dvornikov and a network of local officials, working together and independently, kept land that had been illegally appropriated and took more in spite of both the 1946 campaign and the punishments eventually handed down to them for doing so. Their chief motivation was that the appropriated land was far more valuable to them as *podsobnoe khoziaistvo* than as collective farmland. In the pre-war period these farms, located on urban fringes of Bila Tserkva and adjoining factories near Raska, had generated food surpluses after meeting their quota requirements for central supply. *Kolkhozniki* sold this food at nearby collective farm markets for workers and others to purchase as they were located close to urban and light industrial areas. But in 1945 local authorities clearly did not think that these farms could immediately generate food surpluses for workers if they were rebuilt in Raska, and it was clear that those in operation in Bila Tserkva could not do so at this time. If converted to *podsobnoe khoziaistvo*, this land could provide immediate food to workers who had few other sources of food but whose work was essential to regenerating the various economies required to aid in local urban and industrial reconstruction. In Raska the land was projected to supply food to expand light industry in this rural area, while in Bila Tserkva it provided land for the growing urban workforce in the rural peripheries of the city that were slated for urbanisation.

In a period when resources for rebuilding their devastated areas were scarce, local authorities in Kyiv Oblast were thus transforming, hectare by hectare, land here and elsewhere used by central authorities to operate the collective farm system into self-sustaining land to fund local urban/industrial reconstruction, which they valued more than collective farm rebuilding. This strategy was, on the one hand, a logical fulfilment of the basic premise of collective farming – exploiting land and labour from the countryside to provide for urban and industrial needs. On the other hand, this strategy presented a challenge to central authorities' first right to exploit this land and labour.

[46] TsDAVOU f. r-2, op. 7, d. 5035, ll. 12–16. [47] This meeting is discussed in Chapter 2.

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This challenge formed an essential tension between the post-war rebuilding strategies of local and central authorities in Kyiv Oblast. It was within this tension that Koval′skyi and thousands of other *kolkhozniki* were caught as they returned from war seeking to rebuild their farms and villages on land that now belonged to and provided essential food to others. Other *kolkhozniki* were also caught within this tension, but not as tightly as those in Raska and Bila Tserkva. Local authorities' more nefarious motivations for continuing sell-supply help explain why this was the case. Officials appropriated the land belonging to the farms in Raska and Bila Tserkva in 1945 and early 1946 illegally, even by the standards of the more relaxed wartime laws on appropriations. They distributed it to officials in industries and institutions among their client networks, which formed the sinews around the muscles of state, party, government and industry in the skeleton of Soviet governance. Due to the risk of revealing the initial crimes and the numerous parties responsible, local authorities could not follow proper channels to petition superiors at the republican level to keep this land from its recovery by the state in the 1946 campaign. For the same reason, these officials could not allow the *kolkhozniki* in Raska and Bila Tserkva to tell their stories to their superior authorities in Ukraine and certainly not in Moscow. It remained imperative for local officials to coerce the resistant *kolkhozniki* into silence and submission through the most callous means available to them, including beating, starving and arresting them. When superior authorities investigated the abuses *kolkhozniki* claimed they had suffered in numerous letters first to Kyiv and then to Moscow, local officials, like Dvornikov and others, dismissed the *kolkhozniki* as 'rotten'. These 'rotten' *kolkhozniki* not only threatened to get local officials into hot water, but also jeopardised their control of the broader client networks upon which their power was based across the oblast.

The local officials' coercion failed. A core group of *kolkhozniki* on each of the farms refused to leave. By 1948, their numerous letters (supplications) requesting help from superior authorities in Kyiv and Moscow drew the attention of representatives of the Council on Collective Farm Affairs (Sovet po delam kolkhozov), the powerful all-Union government body established to drive the 1946 campaign under Minister of Agriculture Andrei Andreev (see Appendix).[48] Council representatives travelled to the farms and championed the case of the courageous *kolkhozniki* in Raska and Bila Tserkva to their superiors in Moscow. Their case was passed on for consideration to the office of the powerful Central

[48] The Council's full name was Sovet po delam kolkhozov pri Sovmin SSSR.

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Committee secretary Aleksei Kuznetsov, who was the most prominent leading party figure driving the anti-corruption campaign in the state/party structure.[49] By the middle of 1948, the Council and Kuznetsov's office had joined with republican authorities in Ukraine, including Khrushchev, to force Kyiv Oblast's party organisation (*obkom*) to issue a decree requiring the return of all stolen land and goods from all the farms, their full reconstruction, and punishment of guilty officials, even Dvornikov. All other 'legal appropriations' made by these leading local officials now came under suspicion. It seemed as if, at this point, their entire network of resistance to central rule would unravel.

But this network did not unravel. Nor was this the end point in the struggle between *kolkhozniki* and local authorities. According to a classical understanding of how post-war Stalinism operated, it should have been. There was an order emanating first from powerful agencies and individuals in Moscow and then issued locally for authorities to fall into line, and orders like this were implemented, even if they were implemented badly. Instead, oblast- and *raion*-level officials generally refused to assist in the rebuilding of the farms, protected those named for punishment and, on some farms, abused the *kolkhozniki* even more as punishment for having been successful in securing the decree. When these officials were questioned by their superiors the following year on the status of the farms, by no less a figure than Khrushchev, at a CP(b)U Plenum in front of sixty other delegates, they lied, suggesting the farms were doing well. The questions stopped. But the farms were not doing well at all. There are reports in the archival record of this type of behaviour by officials becoming more and more common by end of the decade in some parts of the Soviet Union. But we have little detail and less clarity about how officials were able to conduct it successfully.[50] The cases of Raska and Bila Tserkva provide both, especially in the example of Dvornikov and his department – a leading local official in agriculture charged with recovering land who used his position to steal it. He thus represented both the means of and the greatest obstacles to the 'successful' restoration of central control in the countryside. This, as discussed below, was an old issue in tsarist and Soviet governance, but it was uniquely problematic in many ways by the late 1940s. If an examination of these cases in Raska and Bila Tserkva opens a window into the broader practice of illegal appropriations and the problems of agricultural reconstruction in rural society, then it also opens a

[49] RGASPI f. 17, op. 122, d. 316, l. 160. [50] See the discussion of corruption in Chapter 3.

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window into the broader dysfunction in post-war Stalinism at this time and its consequences for people's lives.

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The view from these windows offers a picture very different from the various ones of post-war reconstruction and Stalinism offered in the wide literatures. None of these literatures offers an adequate explanation for the atypical cases in Raska and Bila Tserkva or answers sufficiently the broader questions on post-war reconstruction and post-war Stalinism that arise from them. I will explore these limitations and work towards their resolution below. Works on ethnic discrimination in the Soviet Union, for instance, explain that the sort of violence directed by authorities towards ethnic Poles in Raska was common and particularly intense in Ukraine from the mid-1930s, and it continued during the war.[51] Ethnic Poles, like those in Raska who lived within the pre-1939 boundaries of the Soviet Union suffered most in 1937–8, when the Soviet state launched a massive operation to imprison and kill people of 'foreign ethnicity'. These were Soviet citizens belonging to ethnicities with a host nation outside the Soviet Union (Poles, Germans, Koreans and Japanese, among others). After years of supporting the rights of people of these ethnicities to develop their own language and cultures within a Soviet framework, the Soviets reversed this support dramatically from the early 1930s. In the paranoia of potential invasion by foreign powers that gripped the Soviet leadership at the time, instead of expecting Soviet allegiance among people of these ethnicities in return for supporting their ethnic development, the leadership now feared these people might betray Soviet interests to 'their' foreign nations when the latter waged war on the Soviet Union, especially Poland and Germany.[52] Ethnic Poles

[51] As these *kolkhozniki* were pre-1939 Soviet citizens, they were not subject to the population exchange between Ukraine and Poland after the war. On the post-war discrimination against Poles living in Ukraine as part of the broader 're-Sovietisation' of the western borderlands, see Alexander V. Prusin, *The Lands Between: Conflict in the East European Borderlands, 1870–1992* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 213.

[52] On the nationalities policies and their reversal, especially in Ukraine, see Terry Martin, 'The Origin of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing', *Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 4 (1998), 813–61. The Polish case was unique, given the Soviets' further intent to export the revolution into Poland. After their defeat in the Soviet–Polish war of 1919–20, the Soviets established Polish National Districts (*polraiony*) as 'autonomous' regions in Ukrainian and Belarusian areas from the late 1920s; these acted as prototypes for a planned future Soviet Poland. On the antecedents of state-driven anti-Polish discrimination in Ukraine in the 1930s and the *polraiony*, see Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003). On the 'Polish' and other operations of 1937–8, see Bodan Musial, 'The "Polish Operation" of the NKVD: The Climax of the Terror against the Polish Minority in the Soviet Union', *Journal of Contemporary History* 48, no. 1 (2013), 98–124. On the impact of the international political situation

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occupying state/party positions and those living in Ukrainian areas bordering Poland were especially targeted during the 'Polish operation' in 1937–8. In total, 111,000 were sentenced to execution and 28,744 to terms in labour camps; their family members, mostly women and children, were deported to remote areas of the Soviet Union.[53] Fourteen of those arrested in this operation were ethnic Poles from Raska, with only one of them returning to the village.[54]

Ethnic Poles who lived outside these pre-1939 boundaries and were subject to Soviet control during the war also came under suspicion by authorities. This time it was for their supposed association with Polish military forces engaged in a broader conflict with Ukrainian nationalist forces and, at different times, with the Soviets. Civilians bore the brunt of this internecine conflict that raged during and in the immediate aftermath of the war.[55] Many Poles openly supported Soviet power as an attempted defence against Ukrainian nationalist forces; tens of thousands of them were killed by these same nationalists.[56] However, the Soviets still deported almost all Poles from their homes in western Ukraine to eastern Poland as part of a border population exchange with ethnic Ukrainians moving the opposite way. Suspicion towards those who remained or settled in Ukraine remained widespread among Soviet officials.[57]

on Soviet paranoia, see O. Khlevniuk, *Khoziain. Stalin i utverzhdenie stalinskoi diktatury* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2010), chs. 5–6.

[53] N. V. Petrov and A. B. Roginskiy, '"Pol′skaia operatsiia" NKVD 1937–1938 gg.', http://old.memo.ru/history/polacy/00485art.htm.

[54] Figures are according to the Ukrainian government's official history of the district in which Raska is located: http://piskivska-gromada.gov.ua/s-raska-23–25-00–23-06–2016/.

[55] The following works focus on the mass violence that continued in the enduring insurgencies of the western borderlands after the war along with massive upheavals of demobilisation, population movement, famine and general chaos across large tracts of the Soviet Union: Alexander Statiev, *The Soviet Counterinsurgency in the Western Borderlands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron, 'Violent Peacetime: Reconceptualising Displacement and Resettlement in the Soviet–East European Borderlands after the Second World War', in Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron, eds., *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet–East European Borderlands, 1945–1950* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 255–68. The division between war and peace for millions caught within these upheavals was blurry for the years following 1945, encouraging the re-periodisation of wartime and post-war Stalinism among Soviet historians. See Stephen Lovell, *The Shadow of War: Russia and the USSR, 1941 to the Present* (Oxford and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); Chris Ward, 'What Is History? The Case of Late Stalinism', *Rethinking History* 8, no. 3 (2004), 439–58.

[56] On wartime allegiance between Polish and Soviet forces as well as positive attitudes among Polish populations towards Soviet power in comparison to Ukrainian insurgents, see Statiev, *The Soviet Counterinsurgency*, 88.

[57] See Chapter 5 for more discussion of this conflict. On the population exchanges, see Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 313–39, and broadly, Prusin, *The Lands Between*, and John J. Kulczycki, *Belonging to the Nation: Inclusion and*

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This suspicion over the allegiance of 'Poles' to Soviet power was clearly evident in the actions of local authorities in Raska. In response to superior authorities' questions regarding the *kolkhozniki*, local ones claimed, falsely, that the latter were 'traitorous'. They drew on the legacy of the 1937 operation and wartime developments noted above to claim, absurdly, that the Poles in Raska were likely to be assisting Ukrainian nationalist forces still operating in Kyiv Oblast in 1945 – the same forces that had been responsible for killing Poles. But xenophobia is only one factor among many explaining the conduct of local authorities in Raska and, importantly, central authorities paid little attention to these arguments and assisted the *kolkhozniki* in any case.[58] Elsewhere, local authorities abused ethnically Ukrainian *kolkhozniki* around Bila Tserkva as well, because, as in Raska, the purpose of the abuse was to realise their more important strategic interests. And these abuses turned violent in both places not because of the ethnicities of the *kolkhozniki*, but due to their resistance and their continual letters to central authorities in Kyiv and Moscow complaining about their treatment and seeking help. These supplications threatened to, and eventually did, drop the local authorities into hot water.[59]

The vast literature on citizens' supplications to central Soviet authorities promises to help us understand the dynamics of this struggle between *kolkhozniki* and local and central authorities in Raska and Bila Tserkva.[60] Supplications to authorities were a central feature of Stalinism, especially after the war, when post-war expectations for improved living conditions among the wartime generation went increasingly unmet. For *kolkhozniki*, they were perhaps the only avenue to plead for assistance from superior authorities when they were hemmed in by a web of local officials

Exclusion in the Polish–German Borderlands, 1939–1951 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

[58] See Chapter 3 for an in-depth discussion of the difference between central and local authorities' attitudes towards ethnic Poles.

[59] Titles most relevant to this study across the literature include: on corruption, James Heinzen, *The Art of the Bribe: Corruption under Stalin, 1943–1953* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016); on the antecedents of state-driven anti-Polish discrimination in Ukraine in the 1930s, Brown, *A Biography of No Place*; on abuses of collective farmers in the 1930s, Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[60] See Chapter 3 for further discussion of supplications. On the political importance of supplications in Stalinism, see Elena Zubkova, *Poslevoennoe sovetskoe obshchestvo. Politika i povsednevnost′, 1945–1953* (Moscow: Rosspen, 1999). For veteran supplicants, see Edele, *Soviet Veterans*, chs. 2, 3 and 8; and Dale, *Demobilized Veterans*. For *kolkhozniki*'s letters to authorities, see Kessler and Kornilov, eds., *Kolkhoznaia zhizn′*, 655–67, and the dedicated *fond* for *kolkhozniki*'s letters to authorities in RGAE f. 9476. For ordinary citizens' supplications, see Elena Yurievna Zubkova et al., *Sovetskaia zhizn′, 1945–1953* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2003).

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representing the different arms of state, party and police control, who conspired to abuse them with impunity. *Kolkhozniki* generally understood how to present themselves as allies of central authorities against local corruption effectively in their supplications. Koval′skyi's charge of *bezdushnost′* against local officials was one of the most prominent made across the Soviet Union at this time. Most supplications went unmet, but those that employed such language had a better chance of superior authorities intervening on their behalf. Central authorities used the same term, *bezdushnost′*, to blame the problems faced by *kolkhozniki* on local officials rather than, of course, on the policies they had directed these officials to pursue. The dynamics in the supplications from Raska and Bila Tserkva and central authorities' responses thus share significant similarities with other cases across the Soviet Union.

But there are significant differences, too, which limit the capacity of the supplication literature to assist our understanding of the dynamics of the struggle in Raska, Bila Tserkva and elsewhere. This literature does not address supplications of *kolkhozniki* asking to rebuild or operate their collective farms against the wishes of local officials and certainly not as a collective of war veterans, at least in Raska, on the site of German atrocities. Most of it addresses abuses of local officials keeping *kolkhozniki* bonded to their land without providing their end of the bargain in wages, good working conditions and lawful behaviour. That is, the literature addresses the problem of authorities keeping *kolkhozniki* working the land, not trying to kick working *kolkhozniki* off it. This failure thus not only limits our understanding of the anomalies in Raska and Bila Tserkva, but also the broader issue from which these anomalies arise – appropriations of collective farmland. This issue remains fundamentally unaddressed or misunderstood in this and the literature on Soviet agriculture, especially that concerning the immediate post-war period.

Historians of Soviet agriculture have written very little on appropriations, especially after the 1946 campaign, and certainly nothing on officials refusing to allow the rebuilding/operation of farms. All reduce appropriations, at least those made by authorities/institutions and factories, to a wartime problem that was more or less resolved by the 1946 campaign with the return of millions of hectares of land to the sector.[61] Their major focus in this literature on the wartime and post-war periods is

[61] Arutiunian, *Sovetskoe krest′ianstvo*, 329–30. For this problem in the Urals, see Kessler and Kornilov, eds., *Kolkhoznaia zhizn′*, 18; A. N. Trifonov, 'Sel′skokhoziaistvennye podsobnye khoziaistva Urala v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny', *Istoriko-pedagogicheskie chteniia* 10 (2006), 293; V. P. Motrevich, 'Vosstanovlenie sel′skogo khoziaistva na Urale v pervye poslevoennye gody (1946–1950

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on another major part of the strategy of self-supply – *kolkhozniki* expanding their private plots to supply themselves with food – and the massive post-war recovery of these 'excess lands' by authorities in the 1946 campaign.[62] Along with the pilfering of farm produce and collective farm property by *kolkhozniki* and authorities alike, plot enlargement flourished in response to wartime food shortages and relaxation of state control over the sector. Now central authorities were reasserting this control and hoped to force *kolkhozniki* to spend more time working on the collective farm and less on their private plots, partly by reducing the size of the latter. Unlike the campaign's greater 'success' of returning collective farmland appropriated by factories, institutions and workers, this 1946 campaign was only temporarily successful in returning millions of hectares from these private plots, as *kolkhozniki* resumed expanding them thereafter as well as spending more time working on them than in the collective.[63]

Central authorities were squeezing the countryside in late 1946 to reduce rural food consumption after the failed grain harvest. At the same time as they denied rural workers/officials land and reduced *kolkhozniki*'s land with which they could feed themselves, central authorities encouraged urban residents to do so by allowing them to keep or acquire small plots of garden space to produce food for subsistence (*ogorodnichestvo*). This policy was widespread during the war, and these plots, unlike those for *kolkhozniki* and workers/officials in rural areas, were not recovered for collective farm use in 1946. *Ogorodnichestvo* continued after the end of the first post-war decade as a concession to the reality of continuing urban food shortages. It was a way for urban residents to supplement their food rations at the expense of those who received none or were stripped of the capacity to produce food for themselves from land they had lost. It is indicative of central authorities' commitment to urban welfare at the expense of rural.[64]

gg.)', *Agrarnyi vestnik Urala* 96, no. 4 (2012), 24; and, broadly, M. N. Denisevich, *Individual'nye khoziaistva na Urale, 1930–1985* (Ekaterinburg: Institute of History and Archeology, 1991).

[62] See the seminal post-Soviet works on agriculture including: O. M. Verbitskaia, *Rossiiskoe krest'ianstvo. Ot Stalina k Khrushchevu, seredina 40-kh–nachalo 60-kh godov* (Moscow: Nauka, 1992); and V. P. Popov, *Rossiiskaia derevnia posle voiny (iiun' 1945–mart 1953)* (Moscow: Prometei, 1993).

[63] TsDAVOU f. r-2, op. 7, d. 7024, ll. 83, 86. See Chapter 4 for this discussion.

[64] *Ogorodnichestvo* is widely addressed by historians, though they too usually focus on the war years. Both *ogorodnichestvo* and *podsobnoe khoziaistvo* were intended to combat the massive shortages in the wartime rationing system in urban areas. As these shortages continued well into the post-war period, so did *ogorodnichestvo*, although *podsobnoe khoziaistvo*, which had grown during the war at the expense of collective farmland, was reduced as the land was returned to the farms in the 1946 campaign: Postanovlenie Soveta Ministrov SSSR, 'O kollektivnom i individual'nom ogorodnichestve i sadovodstve rabochikh i sluzhachshikh' (24 February 1949). Those who focus on the post-war years tend to agree on the concession argument (Lovell, *Summerfolk*, 156), and the state's relaxation of its assault on the private trade in foodstuffs (Julie Hessler, 'A Postwar Perestroika?

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Those few historians who address appropriations of collective farmland by officials, factories and institutions see it mostly as a method of self-supply in the countryside similar to that of *kolkhozniki*. It was motivated by the breakdown of central supply of food and resources in the war and, indeed, this enduring anti-rural bias over food allocation. These historians focus on how these agents appropriated – or colluded with farm leaderships during the war to 'rent' – collective farmland, paying the farm for the land and using it to feed their workers. This arrangement provided further benefits to the farms in addition to cash, as the reduced sown area of the farm also reduced their obligatory deliveries of foodstuffs to the state. The Soviet sociologist Yu. V. Arutiunian's ground-breaking work in the 1960s on Soviet agriculture put forward this interpretation, which has remained dominant since and has been developed by a few post-Soviet historians who argue that much of this land was returned to farms in the 1946 campaign. These historians locate the major economic consequences of appropriations made by institutions only upon its return to the collective farm sector, as it was accompanied by a proportionate increase in food delivery obligations to the state. The larger amount of land each farm possessed and which was currently under cultivation, the larger amount of foodstuffs it was required to deliver to the state. Unable to farm the land efficiently due to their continuing lack of resources and labour, even after the mass demobilisation in 1946 that flooded the countryside with labour (albeit temporarily), farms were unable to meet these heightened delivery requirements and plunged further into debt and destitution, with some farm leaderships prosecuted heavily. This was a major problem for these farms – but only one side of it.[65]

The analysis of post-war land appropriations in Kyiv Oblast in this book introduces the other side of the problem into the literature and changes the way we need to think about land abuses in the collective farm sector at this time. First, the campaign was not as effective in returning land to the sector

Toward a History of Private Enterprise in the USSR', *Slavic Review* 57, no. 3 (1998), 524). On the role of private horticulture in defining public and private space in post-war Stalinism, see Charles P. Hachten, 'Separate yet Governed: The Representation of Soviet Property Relations in Civil Law and Public Discourse', in Lewis Siegelbaum, ed., *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 65–82, and generally, V. V. Kondrashin, 'Krest′ianstvo i sel′skoe khoziastvo SSSR v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny', *Izvestiia Samarskogo nauchnogo tsentra RAN* no. 2 (2005), 295; A. N. Trifonov, 'Ogorodnichestvo i reshenie prodovol′stvennoi problemy na Urale v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny', *Istoriko-pedagogocheskie chteniia* no. 9 (2005), 214–27.

[65] Arutiunian, *Sovetskoe krest′ianstvo*, 329–30; Trifonov, 'Ogorodnichestvo'. For this problem in the Urals, see Kessler and Kornilov, eds., *Kolkhoznaia zhizn′*, 18, and Motrevich, 'Vosstanovlenie sel′skogo khoziaistva na Urale', 24.

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as historians had previously imagined. A much larger amount of land appropriated by local officials, institutions and factories remained in their hands after 1946. Newly declassified sources from the Council on Collective Farm Affairs indicate tens of thousands of hectares of such land in Kyiv Oblast and more across Ukraine.[66] Moreover, they indicate that in Kyiv Oblast local authorities conducted new illegal appropriations after the 1946 campaign until the end of the decade. Second, some *kolkhozniki* did not despair but fought hard for the return of their land across Kyiv Oblast. This land, often the most fertile, was used for both collective and private purposes and had been taken from them forcibly along with their livestock, resources, buildings and machinery. The farms could conduct neither collective nor private farm work properly. In these cases, unlike in most others across the Soviet Union, collective and private work was not mutually exclusive but interdependent. For these *kolkhozniki*, recovering land and resources to become official and functioning farms was essential to their capacity to feed themselves and maintain their rights to their land.

These *kolkhozniki* need to be treated differently from many thousands more who fought to recover their plots of private land, which had been reduced to almost nothing or completely confiscated by overzealous local officials incorrectly implementing the 1946 Campaign on Collective Farm Rules. Only some regions were affected by this problem, as the campaign was never intended to confiscate all private plot land, but only to reduce its size to the legal limit. These *kolkhozniki* too were left with little means to survive as famine approached. But they generally did survive, because this error was readily apparent to other officials, mostly from the Council on Collective Farm Affairs also implementing the campaign. These officials worked hard to get land back to the *kolkhozniki* quickly as the spring sowing period neared in 1947. But those in Raska and Bila Tserkva would have to wait until after the famine to get their land back – and then only part of it – in 1948. In 1946 their farms were not visible to the Council, located as they were outside or on the edges of the collective farm system, along with the most impoverished farms that attracted little attention, let alone assistance from authorities.[67] Here they had least protection or recourse against these debilitating abuses because it was here that local authorities could act with greatest impunity.

[66] See Chapter 1 for figures.

[67] See Chapter 3 for a discussion of the self-perpetuating relationship of impoverishment and ignorance in the collective farm sector.

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We know least about what life was like for people living on these edges. We know little of how the expansion of city or industrial limits into farm areas affected the many more *kolkhozniki* who remained on the land in the post-war period.[68] This is not only because historians have not addressed the complexities of land abuses in the sector explored here. Their focus in the post-war period has primarily been on how abuses in the collective farm system precipitated its evisceration – on how millions of other *kolkhozniki* across the Soviet Union left the post-war collective farm system, sometimes illegally, to escape its servitude and, indeed, potential starvation during and after the 1946–7 famine. Millions fled to other rural areas or cities to become urbanites and start a new life with greater privileges compared to *kolkhozniki*, hoping to become 'people of the first sort', as one Russian historian puts it, in a better post-war Soviet society.[69] This book examines the thousands of *kolkhozniki* across Kyiv Oblast and in other areas of Ukraine who remained on the land and sought a way back into a collective farm system as a way to survive and recover their pre-war lives.

How could this have happened to these *kolkhozniki* in Stalin's Soviet Union? How could Stalin's local authorities usurp the centre's right to exploit *kolkhozniki* by stopping them from rebuilding or operating the centre's mechanism of this exploitation – the collective farm – and eventually get away with it? More broadly, how could local authorities continue illegal appropriations for years after the 1946 campaign? Some insights into these questions are provided by works published mostly after the opening of the Soviet archives from the late 1980s on local authorities pursuing interests in opposition to or, at least, different from demands from central authorities (localism) as well as works on corruption and post-war transitions in Stalinist society. Their common contention is that dysfunction between levels of government was not an aberration, but a central feature of Stalinism.[70] The problem is that the 'dysfunction' represented by illegal

[68] Histories of Soviet 'urbanisation' generally do not address this issue. For a summary of recent works, see Thomas M. Bohn, 'Soviet History as a History of Urbanization', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 16, no. 2 (2015), 451–8.

[69] Verbitskaia, *Rossiiskoe krest'ianstvo*, 18; Elena Zubkova, *Russia after the War: Hopes, Illusions and Disappointments, 1945–1957*, trans. and ed. by Hugh Ragsdale (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998); Popov, *Rossiiskaia derevnia*.

[70] Donald J. Raleigh, ed. *Provincial Landscapes: Local Dimensions of Soviet Power, 1917–1953* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001). For local authorities' liberal interpretation of central policies in post-war Kyiv, see Blackwell, *Kyiv as Regime City*, 102–30. On the dangerous though necessary practice of local officials adapting central directives to local conditions, see Kees Boterbloem, *Life and Death under Stalin: Kalinin Province, 1945–1953* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 259; and Karl D. Qualls, *From Ruins to Reconstruction: Urban Identity in Soviet Sevastopol after World War II* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009). Other notable local

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appropriations looks very different from the dysfunction addressed in these works and, again, limits their capacity to explain it.

These newer works on localism develop an older tradition of examining the 'independent' and often illegal actions of local officials evading central policies whose fulfilment would be injurious to their localities, focusing mainly on the 1930s.[71] Local officials struggled to balance the impossible demands made of them by their superiors with their local responsibilities.[72] These 'revisionist' historians worked against the 'totalitarian model' predominant among Western historians in the aftermath of World War II.[73] This model understood Stalinism as an all-powerful regime imposed on a powerless and passive society, which ruled through violence and propaganda and governed via a network of local authorities that fulfilled central authorities' orders unquestioningly. Post-war or 'late' Stalinism was not very different from pre-war Stalinism, but only a late chronological stage of a political system that re-emerged after the interregnum of war to pursue its totalitarian aims with more vigour.

At least the view of centre–local relations within this model has been eroded by the barrage of newer local studies based on available Soviet archival material that focus on dysfunction in Stalinism.[74] This dysfunction peaked in the post-war period, which was not only a 'stage' of

studies include Jeffrey W. Jones, *Everyday Life and the 'Reconstruction' of Soviet Russia during and after the Great Patriotic War, 1943–1948* (Bloomington: Slavica Publishers, 2008). Recent Russian studies examine the post-war *nomenklatura*'s rise to power and how they shaped post-war society in the Urals: Oleg Leibovich, *V gorode M. Ocherki sotsial′noi povsednevnosti sovetskoi provintsii* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2008).

[71] For early revisionism, see Merle Fainsod, *Smolensk under Soviet Rule* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment: Soviet Organization of Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky, 1917–1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

[72] Graham Gill argues that Stalinism placed Soviet cadres in an impossible position, demanding they pursue the transcendent final goal of communism but also follow party and state laws often inimical to its realisation. If cadres broke these laws in pursuit of this transcendent goal, 'they could be accused of breaching party discipline, but if they adhered to those instructions and failed to achieve the goals that had been set down, they could be accused of political failure': Graham Gill, 'The Communist Party and the Weakness of Bureaucratic Norms', in Don K. Rowney and Eugene Huskey, eds., *Russian Bureaucracy and the State: Officialdom from Alexander III to Vladimir Putin* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 123. Donald Filtzer also argues that Stalinism imposed impossible demands on cadres and its citizenry, requiring them to act illegally for it to function and then punishing them for it, making criminals of the bulk of its citizenry. See his thesis on the 'psychology of circumvention' in Filtzer, *Soviet Workers*, 250.

[73] For classic 'totalitarian' texts, see Carl J. Friedrich, ed., *Totalitarianism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953); Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956).

[74] On the broader state of these schools and 'post-revisionism', see Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Revisionism in Soviet History', *History and Theory* 46, no. 1 (2007), 77–91, and M. Rendle, 'Post-Revisionism: The Continuing Debate on Stalinism', *Intelligence and National Security* 25, no. 3 (2010), 370–88.

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Stalinism, but a 'phenomenon in its own right'.[75] Although formal control was re-established by central authorities, their capacity to administer the country in the way they desired was diminished in comparison to the 1930s. Wartime exigencies of mass violence, insurgency, hunger and massive population dislocations endured into this chaotic post-war period when Soviet society was shifting from wartime to post-war economic and social settings.[76] In this literature, local authorities traverse, often successfully, the tangled webs of state and party structures in their dealings with the centre to pursue independent policies and practices. When questioned by their superiors about their failure to follow concrete laws and policies, local authorities typically justified their independent conduct with reference to broader political loyalties. Central and local authorities shaped one another through their interactions, within a clearly dynamic relationship.[77]

Corruption is perhaps a key platform on which centre–local relations shaped one another in this period. We now know that Moscow allowed corrupt leadership networks embedded in party institutions to operate after the war, in exchange for their loyalty to the centre. Such 'deals' between centre and periphery, and tolerance of corrupt activity among officials everywhere in exchange for political loyalty, developed after Moscow had launched massive and ultimately futile anti-corruption campaigns in the post-war period.[78] The premise of much of this literature is that central policies had engendered the very criminal practices in governance on the local level about which central authorities complained or which they came to accept.[79] Criminality was begat by the criminal political system, whose largest footprint was made in the last years of Stalin's rule.

There is much evidence to support this argument in the case studies covered here. This book thus joins the barrage of 'revisionist' archival-based 'local histories' flung against the totalitarian models of Stalinism, but from a new trajectory fundamentally different from the others. Officials in

[75] Juliane Fürst, 'Introduction', in Juliane Fürst, ed., *Late Stalinist Russia: Society between Reconstruction and Reinvention* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2006), 1.

[76] Ibid., 7. Moshe Lewin, *The Soviet Century* (New York: Verso, 2005), ch. 4; Denisov et al., eds., *TsK VKP(b) i regional'nye partiinye komitety*.

[77] See Donald J. Raleigh, 'Introduction', in Raleigh, ed., *Provincial Landscapes*, 1–13.

[78] Denisov et al., eds., *TsK VKP(b) i regional'nye partiinye komitety*, 6, 123; Heinzen, *The Art of the Bribe*; Cynthia Hooper, 'A Darker Big Deal: Concealing Party Crimes in the Post-Second World War Era', in Fürst, ed., *Late Stalinist Russia*, 142–64; and Juliette Cadiot and John Angell, 'Equal before the Law? Soviet Justice, Criminal Proceedings against Communist Party Members, and the Legal Landscape in the USSR from 1945 to 1953', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 61, no. 2 (2013), 249–69.

[79] Heinzen, *The Art of the Bribe*, 1. For further works and discussion on corruption, see Chapter 3.

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Kyiv Oblast did not arbitrate between local needs and central demands with the type of deal making and negotiation among political networks that was common in Stalinism. Fundamentally, they mobilised these networks not to pursue self-enrichment via corruption, but to attack the system's economic base of collective farming to continue a wartime strategy of economic survival in the post-war period once it had been declared illegal. Central authorities understood this not only as a crime, but also as a challenge to their authority, and handed down punishments to officials. These officials nonetheless mobilised their networks to avoid serving their punishments and continued to commit such crimes until the end of the 1940s in Kyiv Oblast and, importantly, in other areas as well. This behaviour is fundamentally different from the activities covered in these works on post-war localism and sits outside the conceptual framework of dynamic, contested centre–local relations that shaped one another through their exchange. This behaviour was an abrogation of exchange, not an expression of it.

To make sense of this behaviour, we cannot simply locate it within a context of massive transitions in Soviet society in the immediate aftermath of the war, as others do. We need to locate this behaviour at the disjuncture between different understandings of the meaning of this transition from wartime to post-war economic and social settings held by central and local authorities. This disjuncture was most severe in late 1946, as mass drought threatened to turn into famine. As this point in October 1946, Andrei Zhdanov, a key figure in the central Soviet leadership, told an audience of party/state leaders and bureaucrats in Moscow that famine could be avoided only if local authorities were forced into making the transition into the post-war period by ending self-supply and reducing 'wasteful' food consumption. Essentially, famine could be avoided only by the restoration of the pre-war economy and central control over the countryside.[80] For *raion*- and oblast-level authorities in Kyiv Oblast, these famine-prevention

[80] On the broader pre-war restoration project, see Lewin, *The Soviet Century*, 127 and Lewin, 'Rebuilding the Soviet *Nomenklatura* 1945–1948', *Cahiers du monde Russe* 44, nos. 2–3 (2003), 219–52. For the reconstruction of the Ukrainian political class, see Blackwell, *Kyiv as Regime City*, 73–101, and Danylenko, *Povoienna Ukraïna,* 139–62. For the legacy of collaboration in rebuilding Soviet power in western Ukraine, see Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). On the re-establishment of Soviet police structures after the war, but also changes in repressive policies – from broad campaign justice targeting entire groups before the war to judicial-bound repression of individuals after it – see David R. Shearer, *Policing Stalin's Socialism: Repression and Social Order in the Soviet Union, 1924–1953* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). Some historians argue that divergent options were available to the Soviet leaderships upon victory in the war: that of returning to a more repressive regime or that of pursuing a more liberal political course. See Sheila Fitzpatrick,

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measures threatened to bring it straight to their doorstep. They had long been dealing with the challenge of supplying food to workers in rural areas and urban peripheries with the same strategies, such as self-supply, that had proved effective in wartime. Central authorities' attempt to end self-supply at this time made it more essential for local authorities to continue it. At the October meeting, Zhdanov expressed central authorities' frustration with this disjuncture between central and authorities, asking his audience of 'centralists' rhetorically:

> Everyone is still fighting the war ... Leningrad is still under blockade (audience laughter). That is why we are wasting bread and produce ... So even though the war is over, wartime practices continue to affect the entire period of peaceful reconstruction. Why?[81]

By answering Zhdanov's rhetorical question literally in this book, I situate our understanding of the behaviour of local authorities in Kyiv Oblast at this disjuncture of where war ends and 'peace' begins. This enables us to explain why their continuation of self-supply was different from the deal making and negotiating behaviour addressed in the literature and, more importantly, to understand how this disjuncture, the key pressure point in the broader context of post-war transition, produced this difference. As with interrogating 'legal' land appropriations in the archival record to reveal their 'illegal nature', understanding this progenitive pressure point encourages us to identify new or review other possible behaviours which appear as corruption or traditional localism in the archival record, but may actually represent local authorities 'correcting' post-war central policy by continuing its previous wartime iterations. In this way, the story in Kyiv Oblast may have a broader relevance beyond Ukraine, across the Soviet Union and the emerging Soviet empire in Europe.

Similarly, thinking about this disjuncture in understanding where war ends and 'peace' begins can bring this Ukrainian and Soviet story into a thoroughly Europe-wide context. Much of the wider literature on the difficulties of post-war transitions across Europe after the world wars of the twentieth century sees war's end as a process rather than a moment in

On Stalin's Team: The Years of Living Dangerously in Soviet Politics (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 171. Others are more sceptical about the possibilities of pursuing anything other than a return to pre-war economic norms among the leadership, largely due to the leadership's own power bases being rooted in heavy industry, which required cutting back on civilian consumption.

[81] RGASPI f. 17, op. 121, d. 460, l. 121.

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time. French historians of World War I have developed a useful term, 'exiting war', to describe this process, which was experienced differently by everyone in the multiple centres and peripheries of any country.[82] For millions of Europeans, 'the war did not end with the end of the war'.[83] There are obvious parallels between the shared experiences of Europeans and Soviet citizens, which prevented their 'societies from settling down' beyond the physical devastation of war: continued population dislocation wrought by deportations and flight, forced repatriations of citizens to their 'home countries', and soldiers becoming civilians again after the brutalities of war.[84] Rural and urban experiences of the severity of these problems could be different within Europe as they were within the Soviet Union, especially evident in the case studies presented here in Kyiv Oblast. As the Soviet Union expanded its empire towards central Europe after the war as well, the similarities in these shared experiences became more prevalent among old Soviet citizens, new ones and those who had recently come under Soviet rule via their own governments being installed or controlled by Moscow.[85]

However, the differences between their experiences and especially those outside the Soviet sphere of influence are stark. The experience of many Soviet citizens and especially Ukrainians, at least until the end of the 1940s, was marked by vacillations in the severity of enduring wartime conditions not seen in the rest of Europe, mostly mass violence from the insurgency in western Ukraine and death from mass famine. In Kyiv Oblast, these wartime conditions continued to unravel not only at a disjuncture of understanding of where war ended and peace began, but where different levels of government contested it. The

[82] Recent years have seen a transformation in the literature of post-war 'transitions': Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann, eds., *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Frank Biess and Robert G. Moeller, eds., *Histories of the Aftermath: The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010). On French historians, see Henry Rousso, 'A New Perspective on the War', in Jorg Echternkamp and Stefan Martens, eds., *Experience and Memory: The Second World War in Europe* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007), 5. Recent works on post-World War II Germany and eastern Europe share elements of this approach, though they are coloured by a unique continuation of mass violence in these countries that is absent in the western part of the continent. See Snyder, *Bloodlands*; Prusin, *The Lands Between*; and Kulczycki, *Belonging to the Nation*.

[83] Jorg Echternkamp and Stefan Martens, 'The Meanings of the Second World War in Contemporary European History', in Echternkamp and Martens, eds., *Experience and Memory*, 246.

[84] Ibid.

[85] On the post-war transition in Soviet-occupied Germany, see Filip Slaveski, *The Soviet Occupation of Germany: Hunger, Mass Violence and the Struggle for Peace, 1945–1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

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historical asymmetry in Ukrainian and European experiences is key to understanding how Ukraine's experience of a longer, more severe war continues to cast the longest and darkest shadows over its contemporary experience.

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This book comprises five chapters that look at the clash of local and central Soviet authorities in Kyiv Oblast from 1944 to 1950, but also the consequences of this clash and broader ramifications of the war for years afterward to the present day. The first chapter, 'A Brief Survey of Illegal Appropriations of Collective Farmland by Local State and Party Officials', provides a historical background to the enduring devastation of the post-war agricultural sector that encouraged appropriations to persist in Ukraine after the war and 1946 campaign. Chapter 2, 'Taking Land: Officials' Illegal Appropriations and Starving People in Raska, Bila Tserkva and Elsewhere', analyses the various methods used by authorities to appropriate land illegally from the collective farm sector and to hide these attempts from superior authorities; it begins to trace the scale of this activity across Kyiv Oblast and Ukraine. Chapter 3, 'Taking Land Back: The People and Central Authorities' Recovery of Land and Prosecution of Local Party and State Officials', examines how *kolkhozniki* and their supporters in the state and party structure went about recovering land and resources taken from them and punishing the local officials responsible. Similarly, examining how local authorities avoided punishments handed down to them for illegal appropriations offers insight into broader difficulties faced by central authorities in re-establishing control over the post-war agricultural sector.

Chapters 4 and 5 address the short- and long-term consequences of illegal appropriations, respectively. Although independent initiatives like appropriations by local authorities were pursued to deal with food crises, instead, they may have exacerbated them. Chapter 4, 'The Cost of Taking Land: The Damages Caused by Illegal Appropriations of Collective Farmland to *Kolkhozniki*, Communities and the State', demonstrates that this problem was caused mainly by officials in Kyiv Oblast continuing with this policy when they did not need to. From 1948 central pressure eased on food collections across the Ukrainian countryside, and this reduced the need for continuing self-supply at the local level. Continuing to keep appropriated land, and refusing to assist farms in this period where their successful reconstruction was more feasible than before, imperilled the farms and the broader localities of which

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108879293.001 Published online by Cambridge University Press

they were part long after the crisis in workers' food allocations had passed.[86] Chapter 5, 'Then and Now: The Shaping of Contemporary Ukraine in the Post-War Crises', reflects on the long-term impacts in contemporary Ukraine of the post-war developments described throughout the book. It traverses between contemporary accounts of the areas discussed in this book and their post-war developments, which look very different in Raska and Bila Tserkva. All of the farms reconstructed in 1948 began folding from 1950 onwards. They were swallowed up as part of Khrushchev's 1950 campaign to amalgamate small farms into larger ones, abandoning them to the fate from which he and the Council on Collective Farm Affairs had saved them two years earlier. In Raska at least, the *kolkhozniki* kept their homes, land and graves, while many in Bila Tserkva were not so lucky. This set these areas on divergent historical paths that this chapter follows into the present.

[86] The general end of rationing in 1948 affected urban dwellers more than it did rural areas as in 1946. Central authorities expanded *ogorodnichestvo*; see Hessler, 'A Postwar Perestroika?'

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