

40 PEASANTS SHOT SWIMMING RIVER TO FLEE FAMINE

Soviet Guardsmen Kill Ukrainians Whose Goods They Confiscated for Army

20 OTHERS ESCAPE

Bucharest, Feb. 24.—Soviet frontier guardsmen were reported today to have shot 40 Ukrainian peasants attempting to swim across the Dniester River into Roumania to flee an impending famine caused by the Soviet government's recent grain seizures.

Twenty other peasants survived the rifle fire of the soldiers and made their escape. Several of those shot were saved from drowning and taken to a hospital at Xishineiv [i.e, Kishinev/Chişinău].

It is said the Soviet government is confiscating canned goods and all forms of foodstuffs for its troops massed on the Siberian-Manchurian border.

Toronto Daily Star, 24 February 1932, p. 19.

RUSSIAN PEASANTS FACING STARVATION

Grain Crops Fails, Seed Shipments Held Up

Riga, Latvia, March 10—Famine is facing 40,000,000 Russian peasants following crop failure in various parts of the Soviet Union, and the inability of railroads to ship immediately 1,000,000 tons of grain ordered by Josef Stalin for the distressed regions, official reports from Moscow state.

Districts affected by the harvest failure are the Urals, West Siberia, the middle of the lower Volga basins, Bashkyria, and the northern parts of the Caucasus.

In the Ukraine in particular, the backwardness of preparations for the sowing is causing Moscow anxiety. According to the official reports, not more than half the grain required for the sowing is ready.

Toronto Star, 10 March 1932, p. 25.

SOVIET'S MILLIONS NEAR STARVATION, 5 YEAR PLAN FAILS, SAYS TORONTONIAN

Charles Trumper Home from Russia Foresees Famine in Short Time

DAY BY DAY RATIONS

Soviet Russia's five-year plan is collapsing, and most of the foreign engineers have returned to their homes, the wheat crop was a failure and the future of Russia looks very black, Charles Trumper, Canadian engineer who arrived home yesterday from Russia, told *The Star* today.

"There will be millions of starving Russians if the next wheat crop is not a success," Mr. Trumper said. "The people are now living on one day's food rations at a time and they do not know where to-morrow's food is coming from. There is a widespread feeling of discontent everywhere, although no one is allowed to express it. The G.P.U. is the strongest secret service organization in the world and they keep an observant eye on everyone's movements.

"During the whole year and a half I was in Russia, I was continually under the surveillance of the G.P.U. If anyone makes any move which is contrary to the regulations, they suddenly disappear. No one knows where they have gone and no one asks any questions."

He was of the opinion that the books of Maurice Hindus, and Sherwood Eddy, did not portray the truth. "Anyone writing a book about Russia dares not print the truth. They would never ever get out of Russia alive," he said.

The only people in Russia who are well provided for are the children, the soldiers, the G.P.U., the members of the Communist party and the Soviet government. "The children of Russia are extremely well cared for," Mr. Trumper declared. "The soldiers are well fed and well clothed. Every evidence points towards preparation for war. I don't believe any other country possesses such an efficient air force."

The home life of the Russian people compares favorably with that of Canadians, Mr. Trumper said. "To imagine that married life has been abolished is ridiculous," he said. "It is true that divorce is easy to obtain, but where there are children involved provision must be made for their care."

"The reason most of the foreign engineers have left Russia is the inability of Russia to fulfill their contracts to pay us in gold," the engineer stated. "They are also unable to order any further machinery."

"I know many people who left America to go back to Russia and found them living six in a room sleeping on the bare floors and unable to earn anything but roubles."

"Why did the Russian delegate in the League of Nations advocate complete disbarment? That is only a pose. The Russians are armed to the teeth."

Mr. Trumper was in Berlin two weeks ago, and he said conditions there were "very serious."

Toronto Star, 15 March 1932, p. 17.

PEASANTS MASSACRED BY SOVIET SOLDIERS

Hundreds Including Women and Children Shot Down

Bucharest, Roumania [*sic*], March 15—Soviet guards along the Russo-Roumanian border have killed 1,000 peasants who attempted to flee the famine-stricken Ukraine without permits, it was officially announced to-day by the joint Hungarian and Roumanian investigating committee.

These peasants, of whom 212 were women and 41 children, were shot down by Soviet order as they tried to cross the frozen Dniester river, which is the border line here, during the past few months.

Newspaper correspondents who returned from the border recently reported that bodies were piled high in old barns, and also in many places lay cut down on the ground untouched. One correspondent counted more than 250 bodies in one barn.

All the victims were shot down by Soviet police and troops stationed in machine-gun nests stuck on the ice.

Russia's Wheat Supply

Will Russia continue to buy Canadian wheat? This question is being asked a thousand times in the west today. For that reason, the following excerpts from an article, showing how the lack of food supplies is intensifying the difficulties of the Soviet economy, is of particular interest. It was published in a recent issue of the *London Times* and is by its Riga correspondent.

When light industry was separated from heavy industry a few months ago and given a commissariat all to itself, industrial commodities were expected gradually to become procurable by the general public. No improvement can be observed, however; on the contrary, the general scarcity has become more pronounced both in the towns and in the country. The difficulty of obtaining food and the products of industry was, indeed, described by Molotoff in a speech on April 20 as 'perhaps the chief problem confronting us today.' He appealed to the Congress of Trade Unions assembled in the Grand theatre at Moscow to come to the assistance of the government by grappling with the problem. The living conditions of the masses, he said, had not improved as had been expected, and there could be no real progress in this direction while the question of supplies remained unsolved. Shvernik, general secretary of the Central Trade Union council, and other speakers pointed out that this was the greatest obstacle in the way of increasing industrial production, as without a regular supply of commodities the worker could not be content and could not put his best efforts into the industrial machine. The dilemma appears to have been correctly diagnosed at the congress, but no practical remedy was evolved. The congress showed, however, that the payment of wages had also become irregular in many branches of industry since the new year, and that here was an additional cause of discontent among the workers, particularly in the heavy and timber industries, and on some railways and state farms.

A plan is under discussion by the Soviet government to reorganize supplies by abandoning the card system and selling to all comers through the co-operative stores and the various kinds of state shops which have been opened since last year. From what has been made public, it appears that bread flour, meat, and some other foodstuffs will continue for a time to be rationed, but other commodities will be sold freely as they become available. The proposals are quite new, and as yet appear to be greeted with mixed feelings by the proletarian masses. Unofficial reports from different centres indicate that the masses are inclined to the view that the government intends to leave them to their own resources, as the food reserves are becoming exhausted. There are, however, no symptoms of such a return to private trade as this would entail: [?? –unclear in original, appears a phrase is missing] the government will retain control of supplies and citizens will be free only to purchase from the stocks supplied to the state shops.

Grain Areas

The present stringency of food supplies differs from that of the early years of the revolution in that it extends beyond the towns to the country. Professional "bagmen" and private individuals then went to the villages and brought back food, either openly or clandestinely, according to the official attitude for the time being to that kind of traffic: now peasants not infrequently come to the towns for bread in response to false rumours that it can be purchased there without difficulty. The visit of peasants on such an errand could not fail to agitate the urban masses, accustomed to regard the country as an inexhaustible source of food,

which reached the towns irregularly only because of faults of organization and transport. The anxiety thus aroused cannot be easily allayed, as its cause is now confirmed every day in the official press of the government and the Communist party.

The question which everybody is asking is: Will the grain fields of Russia yield enough food in the autumn to feed the people in the coming winter? There is no satisfactory answer. The spring sowing is behind the program, and nearly all the grain areas are still short of seed. The Crimea has got its full quota of seed into the ground, and sowing is in progress throughout the Ukraine, the North Caucasus, the Lower Volga, and some other regions, but even if the prescribed areas be sown eventually, which is a matter of doubt, and even if the crops be favoured this year with the best weather, there is little hope of reaping an average harvest.

Besides being late, the peasants are doing their work, on the whole, very negligently, and often with seed of doubtful quality. It has now become known that a part of the harvest last year was not gathered at all. The commissariat of agriculture mentions the Armavir district in the North Caucasus, where thousands of hectares of maize were left on the ground all winter. The peasants received orders to sow this area within a certain number of days. They turned out in their "brigades" and got rid of their seeds somehow on the prescribed area without cleaning away the stalks of last year. When questioned, the gangers, or "brigadiers," said they knew what they were doing was foolishness, but no time was given them for cleaning the land, and the sowing orders from the workmen and peasants' inspectorate had to be obeyed without question.

Vagrant Peasants

There is now a general scarcity of food in the countryside, not only in the famine areas but also in fertile districts of the Ukraine, where the harvest was above average last year. In the Volga basin, Kazakstan, the Ural Territory, and other regions which suffered from drought, conditions of famine prevail and although part of the grain sent to relieve the distress has reached its destination, it is insufficient and the mortality caused by disease and epidemics due to malnutrition appears to be high, but not trustworthy figures have been allowed to pass the official censorship. Spotted typhus, or "famine fever," has been raging in the Middle Volga territory for some months, and cases have recently been reported also from the adjacent regions. A great number of vagrant peasants roam about the country singly and in groups, living to a great extent by plundering stores and trains. The acts of violence thus committed are described officially as the work of kulaki and kulak-minded peasants. These elastic terms are used also in explaining why cattle are being slaughtered in unusually great numbers this year, but in several reports issued recently by the commissariat of education statements are casually made that horses, horned cattle, sheep, and pigs are being slaughtered as meat for local consumption and as a consequence of the scarcity of fodder.

To what extent the industrial masses blame the government for the present plight is difficult to judge. Cases are recorded on the basis of trustworthy information of complaints openly launched against the government in the Dontez basin and other industrial centres for exporting the people's food. Complaints of this nature are certainly widespread among the peasants, and it is doubtful whether the efforts of the government to lay them at the door of kulaki and anti-Soviet "wreckers" are having much success in face the fact that the Soviet union has run short of food and the government forcibly removed grain in the famine regions to unknown destinations.

The conviction that war is impending in the far east is general among the masses, and is fostered by the government. But members of the government at Moscow do not themselves appear to know whether war is to be expected or not.

MILLIONS OF PEASANTS HUNGRY AND IN RAGS ROAM RUSSIAN STEPPES

Sacks Over Shoulders, They Seek in Vain to Fight Off Starvation

EAT SHOE LEATHER

Ukrainian Villages Deserted and Vermin and Disease Stalk the Land

Kharkov, Ukraine, May 26—Hunger and the seizure of property have reached a point in the Ukraine where mass emigration has set in.

One who has not witnessed this appalling phenomenon cannot comprehend the awe it inspires. Millions of poor, ragged peasants, their worldly goods stuffed into sacks hung over their shoulders, are on the move.

They do not know where they are going. They flew ceaselessly in all directions over the vast, rolling steppes of southern Russia, wherever a path, a road, or a railroad can be found.

They present a problem with which authorities are powerless to cope. There are too many of them.

They want food, because despite increased acreage, the 1931 grain crop was far from sufficient.

Trains are jammed as no New York subway was ever jammed. Stations are even more crowded. Folk wait three days and more before they are able to board a train for somewhere—it matters not where. They sit huddled on their sacks, patiently waiting.

Stench Terrible

The stench of unwashed bodies in the stations is unbelievable, but the peasants stick it out for days and nights on end, waiting for a train in which there may be room to squeeze.

This vain, aimless wandering in search of food, shelter and work is changing the appearance of the countryside. Many villages are deserted while others, where it has been rumoured that life has a chance to exist, are horribly overcrowded.

The little village of Kigenfeld, one of a number of German villages in southern Ukraine, is deserted. It is where a few months ago a reasonably thriving little group of industrious peasants of German descent lived and worked and gossiped in Russianized German, to-day only a couple of lean, hungry cats slink through alleys, seeking food they cannot find.

This spontaneous, purposeless wandering is a sure sign something is wrong with the system, or at least with the way it is being carried out.

Nomadic by Nature

The Russian, to be sure, is nomadic by nature, and much given to making long and indefinite trips. He does not have the “home” feeling about any particular spot of ground. To him the “Little Mother Russia” is “home” and as long as he is within her borders he is at peace. But even when wanderlust calls [check – hard to make out] most relentlessly, except in bad years, the Russian does not move in the mass way that Ukrainian peasants are moving now.

The winter of 1931-32 was not as bad or as terrible famine of 1921-22, just a decade ago. There have been no signs and no reports that people have been forced to eat shoe leather in great numbers. At the same time this year may be compared with greater accuracy to the frightful winter and spring ten years ago than to any of the years that intervened.

Toronto Daily Star, 26 May 1932, p. 1, cont'd p. 3 under the heading "**MILLIONS OF PEASANTS ARE ROAMING RUSSIA**". Unattributed, but most likely written by Kendall Foss.

FAMINE IS RAMPANT, PEASANTS MURMUR AGAINST REDS' RULE

Seed Wheat Eaten, and Much of New Crop Winter-Killed

SOVIET MISMANAGEMENT

Inefficiency Increases Sufferings, Ottawa Is Informed

(By WILLIAM MARCHINGTON)

(Staff Correspondent of *The Globe*)

Ottawa, May 26. — Conditions in Soviet Russia, particularly in the rural sections, are anything but promising, according to information received by the Department of Trade and Commerce here from a reliable observer who has just made a comprehensive survey of conditions in the agricultural districts.

He tells a vivid story of his travels, of hungry people, gross mismanagement, cattle farms far removed from supplies of fodder, wholesale acceptance by Russians of a lot of advice from incompetent engineers and so-called specialists, and of inevitable and bitter disillusionment.

Winter-killing of wheat has been very severe in some sections, but moderate in others, according to this informant, and the average abandonment due to winter kill is placed at 15 per cent. He says the peasants are murmuring against the Government that they are hungry and will not work for promises, that horses are dying faster than tractor horsepower is being built, and that acreage figures are misleading, as much of the land is not sown with sufficient seed. Moreover, the peasants are said to be eating the seed wheat on account of the almost unbelievable shortage of food, and are refusing to be pushed at work.

Reports from the Ukraine and Volga are "simply appalling," the department is advised, and people in the towns and cities are said to be sending even bread to their relatives in the country, while horses and cattle are dying rapidly. The peasants are described as "furious against the Government," but "too poor in physical and mental vigor to offer really effective direct resistance, but there is plenty of passive resistance."

The Globe, 27 May 1932, p. 1.

UKRAINE PEASANTS DIE OF HUNGER AS HORSES GO TO FEED THE CITIES

Grain Taken From Them, Too, and So They Soldier on the Job

SYSTEM BLAMED

By Kendall Foss

Kharkov, Ukraine, May 27—Starvation played havoc last winter with the cattle herds of the Ukraine.

Throughout the length and breadth of his territory I have seen single bags of bones vainly nibbling here and there at dead winter stalks which still cover many of the fields.

Carcases of cattle and of horses, too, are not infrequent.

Russian cities have never been fat. The beef raised here has always been lean, prairie fed and largely uncared for. Fattening for market by careful dieting on prepared fodder is almost unknown in Russia.

But except in the terrible years right after the revolution, cattle have never been so scraggly and scarce as they are this spring in Ukrainia.

There has been an acute shortage of food for the peasantry this year. This has resulted in the available fodder material, which normally goes to the stock, being used by the ragged population.

Hunger was as sharp during the winter among Ukrainia's peasants that death by starvation has occurred. Doctors with whom I talked in the Ukraine all reported having seen instances of dreadfully swollen bodies—the last stage in death by starvation. Many of the cattle that can still walk have been seized by authorities for city consumption. Horses, too, have met the same fate in large numbers, leaving the peasants without the necessary power for plowing. Only a limited number of tractors are in the Ukraine. Lack of horse-power will play its part in making the 1932 harvest unusually meagre.

The Ukraine to-day is incapable of producing anything like its normal harvests. Hunger, shortage of seeded grain, lack of live stock especially horses, and enervating effect of heavy state collections upon the peasants' will to work have taken a heavy toll.

Collectivization has gone too fast, wrecking herds, peasants and productivity of the land. Grain can be collected from the colhozes (collective farms) and from individual peasants in unprecedented amounts only once.

After that the peasants are wise to the game and simply soldier on the job, raising and harvesting as little as they can. Even piece-work, recently introduced into the collectives as it has been introduced into Soviet industry, does not help. It just results in desertions.

The Russian peasant is stubborn, yet patient. He will not be driven, and he can outwait anybody. He is the immovable mountain to which Mohammed must go.

Collectivization can probably be worked successfully and to the satisfaction of all. But it is safe to say it cannot be carried out at all until the whole manner of execution has been altered, and until local officials comprehend the problem better than they do today.

Toronto Daily Star, 27 May 1932, p. 1 and continued under the heading "UKRAINE PEASANTS DROP OF STARVATION".

News of Russia

To the Editor of *The Globe*: Mr. Van Paassen's report from Russia, dated June 4, at Leningrad, and published in your paper on June 17, offers an excellent opportunity to analyze some of the pitfalls which beset a journalist in Soviet Russia, however honest he may be in seeking the truth, and to understand how it is that some much information from Russia is contradictory.

Two facts stand out in Mr. Van Paassen's account: the great construction activity that impresses one so favourably after the atmosphere of depression which pervades Europe, and, on the other hand, the thousands of beggarly looking peasants arriving daily at the railway stations and sleeping everywhere for lack of shelter.

Mr. Van Paassen explains this influx of peasantry by saying that the mechanization of agriculture has displaced peasant labor, and is forcing thousands of them into the cities to be employed in industry. This is a very feasible explanation, and would reflect a healthy progress in the Soviet Union. The report leaves the reader with the impression that all is well in the U.S.S.R.—at least far healthier than conditions abroad.

How did Mr. Van Paassen arrive at this explanation of the influx of peasants into the city? Obviously, by talking and asking questions and forming his own conclusions.

But there is another possible explanation of this peasant exodus. Not more than a couple of weeks ago a Toronto paper published a series of reports from the Ukraine—the wheat centre of Russia—in which the writer describes the famine which is ravaging that country, with virtually millions of peasants on the move, thousands en-training [*sic*] for cities in search of food and work. They had eaten their seed, and even their stock feed. This is a totally different explanation of the migration of peasants into the cities which does not reflect health, but rather catastrophe.

Now where does the truth lie? How can the bewildered reader tell what is true about Russia? Is he not inclined to believe, and justified in believing, whatever he wishes?

Personally, I find considerable light in the official statistics of the Soviet Government, however optimistic they may be. The Communist organ Pravda of June 14, after stating that industrial products had increased by 20 percent, goes on to deplore the fact that in agriculture the sown area is far behind the Plan and less than it was last year.

How is it that alleged mechanization of agriculture, instead of producing the prescribed increase in cultivated area, has resulted in a decrease? How is that thousands of peasants who are flowing into the cities where there is no accommodation provided for them, were not used to work the soil at least to the extent of the previous year, when the food question, undoubtedly, is the most acute one in Soviet Russia, not only in relation to the population, which been on short rations for three years, but also with regard to exports in payment for the Five Year Plan? Surely this superabundance of peasantry plus machinery should have resulted in a great expansion of agriculture instead of the contraction which is officially admitted. What is wrong?

Just this: The Soviet Government overestimated the crops last fall and collected and exported too much grain, leaving the peasants not enough for the own use, with the results that the peasants consumed their seed grain and feed, and in many areas suffered famine, which resulted in a diminished seeded area and a general exodus from the land to the cities in search of food and work, which is the phenomenon which always accompanies famines in Russia.

Naturally a journalist is unable to pick up these facts unless he travels over a wide area and can talk good Russian and can mix with the peasants without arousing their suspicions of being a Communist informer. No wonder it is hard to get the truth about Russia.

Russian.*

Toronto

The Globe, 25 June 1932, p. 4.

* Actually Nicholas Ignatieff. See his letter to *The Globe*, 11 August 1932, p. 4, claiming authorship.

RUSSIA'S WHEAT CROP

Moscow reports that wheat seeding in Russia wound up on July 1st; a million acres short of the acreage sown last year, and fifteen million acres short of the acreage planned for this year.

It does not follow that Russia will be stricken by famine next winter, nor that it will have no wheat for export. The yield per acre is as important as the acreage sown, and the yield per acre is not under control of the Soviet nor bound to run in accord with the five year plan.

The failure to seed the acreage intended is explained as due to the short crop in the Ukraine last year, which left a shortage of seed. The supposedly wonderful efficiency of the Soviet is not apparent if this explanation is correct.

Russia exported seventy-one million bushels during the winter. Moscow apparently did not know that the crops in the Ukraine had failed and that seed wheat would be scarce there

this spring; or its transportation system was useless; or it exported the wheat to pay for foreign purchases regardless of what might happen to the Ukrainians.

So far as the world supply is concerned, and the price prospect, the report means nothing. A drop of one-half of one per cent from last year in the acreage sown is neither here nor there in the calculation of the crop that will be reaped in the fall.

Edmonton Bulletin, 18 July 1932, p. 4. Editorial.

Ukraine Starves for Five-Year Plan

Moscow's 'Error' Causes Condition Termed Frightful

Soviet Regime Reveals Indifference to Sufferings of Peasants

Farmers Leave Profitless Land and Flock Into Cities

The accompanying belated article from Mr. Pierre van Paassen reached The Globe yesterday. It was written in Soviet Russia more than five weeks ago. It was delivered at a Holland seaport on July 24 and was forwarded thence by mail to The Globe. The communication had been opened before it left Russia, presumably by Soviet censorship.

Mr. van Paassen went to Russia for The Globe to record conditions as he found them—to “tell the truth without fear or favour.” Heretofore he has spoken by no means unfavorably of what he saw and heard. But he was not content with the George Bernard Shaw sightseeing tour which satisfied other correspondents. He determined to carry out an independent investigation and to visit some of the rural districts, particularly in the Ukraine. And there, he tells Globe readers, he found conditions to be “frightful.” Mr. van Paassen’s series of articles—the first of which appears herewith—sheds remarkable light on the situation. As already stated, the missives were opened, delayed in transit, and probably had been subject to Soviet censorship. They are given to readers exactly as they reached The Globe.

(By PIERRE VAN PAASSEN.)

(European Correspondent of the Globe. Copyright 1932.)

Berditsheff, Ukraine Soviet Republic, June 29.—We are back in the Ukraine today. In spite of the fact that my proposed itinerary calls me urgently to points further east, I have retraced my steps back into the wheatfields of Ukraine. For the situation in this part of the country is so complicated that, although I made a study of it previously, and intended calmly to write down my gathered impressions in Odessa or Jalta, or some other breezy seaside resort on the marvellous Crimean Riviera, I was not satisfied. I cannot, in fairness, dismiss the Ukrainian agricultural phase of the Russia situation with a hasty, superficial article. It is far too serious a matter for that. For this reason I will, at the risk of being somewhat tedious, attempt to describe conditions here in the next four articles.

I hope, in all sincerity, that my articles which have appeared in The Globe so far have convinced the thoughtful reader that I have not merely come here to find fault, but that, above all, I am anxious to establish the truth.

Rural Conditions “Frightful.”

The truth is that conditions in rural regions of Ukraine are frightful. There is want here, bitter want. I would not say there is actual famine; nevertheless this much is certain and undeniable: people here are hungry. Foodstuffs are obtainable only at exorbitant prices, prices which are actually prohibitive to the poorer peasants. And, let this be said also: This want in the richest wheat country in the world is not due to any act of God or the public enemy. No, for Moscow itself acknowledges that a stupendous blunder has been made. Explanations are offered to show that the course events have taken in the Ukraine was inevitable. The fact remains that there is misery here today, and no amount of explanations can wipe out that fact.

What has happened? Farms are being modernized, excellent machinery is being introduced, endless streams of tractors, reapers, binders are pouring in from the new factories. And yet people are clamouring for bread this summer. Should the situation not, by natural development, be the very opposite? It should. But it isn't!

“The People Be Damned.”

What has happened is this: “Comrade” Stalin has gone too fast. Everything in the vast Union, from Vladivostok to Minsk, has for the last few years been subjected to the execution of the Five-Year Plan of heavy industry. In this connection the clever theoreticians in the Kremlin gave too little thought to the interests of the peasant population. There were plenty of warnings, for every new plan devised is thoroughly discussed in Moscow before it is carried into execution. But warnings were disregarded. The moujik is patient. He is long-suffering. He and his fathers before him were content with a hunk of black bread. Why should they not be patient one or two years longer? It was hoped that the peasants would pull through somehow. Just one or two more years of hardship and sacrifice for the rural population didn't matter so much. This is the way a dictatorship argues: Never be deflected from the final goal; by nothing in the world, neither by peasants nor by any other obstacles!

Collect Wheat for Taxes.

In order to be able to export wheat to obtain the necessary money to buy machinery in foreign countries—this is the explanation—the Government collected the wheat in the Ukraine by way of taxes. There might be no objection to this. But it so happens that the harvest was not particularly good in 1930 and 1931. But this shortage on the other hand was not accepted as an excuse in official quarters. The wheat tax had to be produced. The Five-Year Plan could not suffer or be delayed. The world was watching the Soviets. Moscow had to make good. Factories were waiting for expensive dynamos, intricate machinery, obtainable only in Germany or America, in exchange for wheat. So the wheat had to be brought in. The peasants objected that they had not enough; they complained, they even talked defiance. The collections went on. Methods of collection did not gain in urbanity, you may readily imagine, when it was seen that the peasants were increasingly hostile.

And so it came to this, to the matter succinctly: Too much wheat was taken away; even the grain that ought to have been retained for sowing purposes was collected. Farmers were left without any stock at all. They faced hunger and poverty. No matter! Go through with it. The Five-Year Plan must succeed though the heavens fall!

Barns and Silos Stripped Bare

It may be that Moscow did not realize in the least what going on until the harm had been done; that it was not fully known of what excessive zeal the collectors were capable of in the Ukraine. Belated attempts were made, it is true, to check collections, to put on the brakes, so to speak. But that was after the barns and silos had been stripped bare.

A colossal tactical blunder, a flagrant psychological error had been committed. Today the people of the Ukraine pay the penalty and experience the dreadful results. Nobody has a right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union, any more than anyone has the right to interfere in Canada's private business. But when Stalin says to foreign delegations of workers:

“This is your fatherland, you are liberty to criticize what we have done so far,” it ought to be said in reply that iron-cast economic theories, however perfectly constructed in the stillness of the Kremlin’s red chambers, too often disregard the human element. Here in the Ukraine it is obvious with glaring and pathetic effect.

Conditions Are Desperate

For the time being things are desperate with the Ukrainian peasantry. The fine idealism of many “gentle souls” one encounters in Moscow and in other countries is positively sterile when it is contrasted with the reality. Communists are in the habit of decrying liberal observers who touch upon these subjects by calling them hypocrites who mask their hospitality against the Soviets with a show of humanitarianism. Wherever an injustice is being committed, it is the duty of the liberal to denounce it, no matter whether it occurs in Poltava, Ukraine, or in San Francisco. And no power on earth will cause me to swerve from this course. The above words about the present-day status of the Ukrainian peasantry are not lightly written. There is a dictatorship here! Nevertheless, they will not be retracted, no matter whether the doors of an OGPU prison close behind my back forever. We cannot surrender our allegiance to our fellow human beings, whether they be Ukrainian peasants, or oppressed Syrian Bedouins, or downtrodden Jews in Poland’s ghettos, or Serbian intellectuals rotting in the prisons of Belgrade. They are our brothers, all of them! It is for those heights of the spirit where man feels the joys and sorrows of others as he feels his own that we strive.

Peasants Bitter Against Soviets

No doubt the situation in the Ukraine will ease up with the next harvest—which promises to be plentiful—on the conditions, of course, that the Government acts in future with a greater measure of wisdom. The Soviets cannot continue forever with the mass of peasants arraigned against them.

At present tens of thousands of peasant have left the land, have abandoned the farms which, in so far as they were concerned, had been rendered useless and profitless. They are moving into the cities, where they become industrial workers in the thousands of new factories that are going up.

It is quite true that with the mechanization of the farms and their collectivization, no such vast numbers of peasants will be required on the soil in future years. In all likelihood they would have moved away in considerable numbers to cities anyway. But such a process would unquestionably have taken time. “Comrade” Stalin thought to speed up that process. He succeeded in bringing woe and misery to millions of peasants. It is said the end of trouble is in sight. I fervently hope so. For in the meantime the regime has veered around sharply and has introduced an entirely new agrarian policy.

To those who feel inclined to say that I have turned around and come back from my first impressions, I say this criticism is unwarranted. Even Pravda and Izvestia, the official newspapers in this country, reported the above facts, and not only reported them, but criticized them to the extent of demanding the death penalty of hundreds of men who blundered with those grain collections, thereby setting whole peasant districts against the Government, which it must be obvious, cannot afford internal opposition much longer without endangering its own life.

The Globe, 6 August 1932, p. 1, continued on p. 2 under the heading “**MOSCOW’S ‘ERROR’ TERMED FRIGHTFUL.**”

Continued Sacrifices / Urged on Delegation / from Hungry Ukraine

**Globe Writer is Witness of Meeting Between Kalinin and Peasants' Representatives —
Moscow Leader Promises Relief Eventually, Meanwhile Recommends Work**

“RUSSIA NOT LAND OF MILK AND HONEY”

In connection with this survey of conditions in rural districts of Ukraine, which are not part of the display prepared by the Communist Party of Russia for the benefit of susceptible foreign writers, Mr. van Paassen recalls a meeting, at which he was an auditor, between Michael Kalinin and a number of harassed Ukrainian peasants. His account illustrates the Soviet's policy of fair speech and harsh action when dealing with poor and discounted "comrades." This is the third of a series of four special despatches by Mr. van Paassen, which were opened by Russian authorities and greatly delayed in delivery.

(By **PIERRE VAN PAASSEN**)

(European Correspondent of **The Globe**. Copyright, 1932.)

Poltawa, Ukraine Soviet Republic, July 3. — Joseph Stalin grants no interviews, and never has granted any. This was the disappointing verdict announced with finality by the polite authorities at the Foreign Office in Moscow.

“If Comrade Stalin has anything of importance to say,” it was ___ for my information, “he will utilize the medium of the party press, or else call a conference of all foreign correspondents in Moscow to make whatever statement the situation requires.”

“How about Rykov, then, or Michael Kalinin or Lunatcharsky?” [*sic*] I persisted.

You will have to make enquiries elsewhere,” I was informed

Michael Kalinin I happened to see and hear in a setting and in an atmosphere which was definitely preferable to a personal interview.

It was one of those sizzling-hot mornings when the sun glows like a merciless, red-hot metal disc above Red Square. The sentries in the doorway of Lenin's mausoleum, who have the unenviable job of standing motionless for an hour at a stretch, where shifting their weight uneasily from one foot to the other, as the perspiration streamed from under their khaki-cloth service caps. In that moment your correspondent remembered his snub-nosed Lee-Enfield—aye [*sic*], and the weight of it.

As a modest connoisseur of carillon music I had promised myself the delight that morning of listening, at leisure and at close range, to the silvery voice of the colossal, green-spined “Tower of the Redeemer,” which lifts, to this day, the barbaric emblem of Russian autocracy high into the violet sky of Muscovy. For this purpose I had sought myself a nook in the shade at the foot of some Tatar Khan's massive statue. I had scarcely found a comfortable corner, when a policeman, spying my movements from afar, took the trouble to cross the enormous square in that blistering heat to order me unceremoniously to begone.

Delegation Enters Kremlin.

Unwittingly he rendered me a distinct favor, for as I slunk away, not too deeply humiliated, my attention was drawn to a crowd of several hundred peasants who were marching, and gesticulating as they marched, into another Kremlin entrance. By their embroidered blouses I knew them to be Ukrainians. Just another one of those Communist

delegations, I thought. There are several of them arriving every day of the year in Moscow. Russia is a big country.

Now, I have on my passport a bumaga. What is a bumaga? A bumaga is a magic scrawl made by the G.P.U., which operates somewhat on the principle of Aladdin's wonder-lamp in that it opens many doors. When they stamped that bumaga I was still in good standing with the G.P.U. I was to have all the freedom I wanted, to roam wherever I wanted, without anybody controlling my movements. That's what the bumaga was for.

Invited to Join.

So I showed the bumaga to the Red guard at the gate, and—in I marched—with the peasants. What were the peasants going to do in the Kremlin? I asked a straggler with a ruddy, but good-natured mien, who suffering from the heat. It took some time before we understood each other. Ukrainian is a difficult tongue. But as he repeated the name Kalinin several times, I finally grasped the object of the delegation. By motions the peasant invited me to swell the ranks. I liked nothing better.

Kalinin has a shrewd face. From time to time there appears a merry twinkle in his blue eyes, behind the small, old-fashioned "specs." He wore the usual white blouse, roubashka, top boots and—unwonted sight in the party—a straw hat. The peasants called him by his first name. One after the other talked to him. We were in a spacious white marble hall, "the coolest place in town," as the nickelodeons used to advertise. The only dread I had was that I too would be called on to speak, when my turn came, for it seemed that the peasants all had to have their say.

The speakers exposed in harrowing detail the situation in the Ukraine. They did not mince matters. They used harsh words, as befits the situation which I have already described. I liked them for their frankness. Kalinin listened patiently. He is a peasant himself. He told them other delegations had been to complain. He answered that the Government would see to it that no repetition of the evil would occur. He explained the Government's new agrarian policy. The peasant spokesman insisted that they wanted immediate relief. He promised them he was at their service to speed up measures.

Not Land of Plenty.

"But don't think," he said, "Russia has suddenly become a land of milk and honey! We had four years of war, five years of civil war and famine, and foreign armies here on top of that. We inherited disorder, and dirt and ignorance from Nicholas Romanoff. The Czars oppressed you with inhuman cruelty, yet when I was a boy I heard a peasant say that they were better off when they were slaves.

"We must stand together," he went on. "Sacrifice and work! Socialism cannot be built in a day, nor in a year, either; not in ten years. But we are on the way. We have taken the first steps. We strive with all our power to found here a happy, contented, classless society. Do you think we like chaos? We want order. We will have order and peace and prosperity. But you must help us. You must help, little brother, you hear!"

The Globe, 9 August 1932, p. 1, continued on p. 2 under the heading, "**CONTINUED SACRIFICE URGED ON DELEGATION**".

Collective Farming in / Russia Suffers Setback

(From the London Times)

Whatever changes in Russia, the peasant now as ever remains the keystone of the arch. Politically he is inarticulate, and governments consequently are tempted to ignore his importance and to override his interests. Whenever they do so they are, sooner or later brought up against the passive obstruction of a great amorphous mass, and are compelled to change their tactics. The Soviet government, not for the first time, are now going through a bitter experience of this kind. During the past three months a number of decrees have been issued with the object of inducing the peasants to grow and supply the food needed for the urban population, which fevered industrialization has caused to increase at the rate of over 5,000,000 a year. After they had recovered from the shock of the withholding supplies by the peasants ten years ago the Soviets speedily forgot the lesson. Concentrating on his grandiose schemes to turn Russia into a great manufacturing country, Stalin attempted to regiment and collectivize the countryside; to turn a population of smallholders attached to their own strips of land, to their own small possessions in stock and equipment and to their own ways of doing things, into mere "hands" in a gigantic food factory run by state bureaucrats, whose main concern was the export trade and with the rationing of the cities.

Resistance was punished with ruthless severity. Millions of peasants were branded as kulaks, turned out of their holdings, deprived of all they possessed, and either left to starve or be deported to be worked to death in the timber forests of the north. These abominations, being perpetrated by an "advanced" government, passed without any protest from any of the professed humanitarians who are so loudly vocal over any comparatively trivial misdeeds perpetrated by the governments they deem "reactionary." And for a time they appeared to serve their purpose. The majority of the peasants were dragooned into joining collective farms and all the machinery of propaganda, paid and voluntary was enlisted to give the world the most glowing accounts of the smoothness and efficiency with which the vast plan was working and of the enthusiasm of the peasants for the new system. Now, however, it is becoming plain that this picture was overdrawn. Nothing but fear of an absolute breakdown of the food supply can explain the wholesale abandonment of Bolshevik principles in recent decrees.

Dearth of food supplies is no new thing under the Soviet government, who have consistently starved their own people in order to export as much grain, butter, and other produce as possible, thus obtaining the foreign credits needed to buy industrial machinery and to finance subversive agitation in the capitalist countries. Latterly, however, the dearth has become acute, and it is now causing actual alarm. Feverish efforts are being made to conciliate the peasants and to overcome what looks like widespread though unorganized passive resistance by them to the system imposed upon them.

In this emergency Communist principles have had to go by the board, and the new agricultural decrees constitute an even greater acknowledgement of defeat than the jettisoning a year ago of all the orthodox Bolshevik principles of wages and factory management. A pretence was made on that occasion that personal responsibility, on-man management, piecework, and payment by results were not opposed to Communist theory when properly understood, but mere a new interpretation of it to ensure its success. That was accepted, not without some grumbling, by Stalin's obedient followers. They recognized that the system had to be made to work better than it was doing, and there seemed no way to achieve this result except by falling back upon the devices and practices of capitalist society. It will be hard to make any face-saving pretences about the new decrees, which re-introduce and encourage private trading at prices based on the "personal disinterestedness" of buyers and sellers, or, to use capitalist instead of Bolshevik jargon, on supply and demand.

The decree of May 6, was admittedly intended to induce the apathetic peasants to sow as much grain as possible in the spring to make up for the serious deficiencies expected in the next harvest. A definite promise was given in it that next year the peasants, after they had contributed their fixed quota to the government, would be allowed to sell the rest of their crops in the open market at unrestricted prices. This was swiftly followed by a decree even more extraordinary in view of its source. The total amount of cattle and meat required to be delivered to the government was reduced by half, and all restrictions on slaughtering and selling were abolished. Later similar freedom was granted for the selling of vegetables, fruit, butter, cheese, eggs and other produce. Markets were set up in the towns and at railway stations, and every effort was made to induce the peasants to use them. Finally the original

restriction that the government quota had first to be delivered was set aside, and urgent orders have been issued to bring the new system into effect without delay.

Winnipeg Free Press, 20 August 1932, p. 6.

CROPS ARE ABANDONED BY RUSSIAN PEASANTS ON IMPORTANT AREAS

Wholesale Exodus of Collective Farmers to Cities Marks Rebellion

PASSIVE RESISTANCE

Moscow, Sept. 4—Riled by the rapidity with which armed concentration has been pushed and by the almost impossible living conditions which followed the rigorous grain requisitions of last winter, the Russian mujik is again up on his hind legs in several of Russia's most important grain-growing sections. Again he has taken to his old weapon—abandonment of crops—in order to show indignation.

An outbreak of serious disorders resulting from shortage of food in the towns of Ivanovo and Voznesensk in the Soviet textile district was revealed in reports received here to-day. Hungry workers looted and burned storehouses, carrying away all movable supplies under a hail of fire from G.P.U. troops.

The present rebellion of the peasant is not like the vigorous campaign of 1921-22 when the peasant succeeded in half-starving the Russian cities and forced Lenin to substitute taxation for confiscation. Neither is it so vigorous a campaign as that which greeted the first attempt at collectivization, when the peasant's answer was to slaughter a large percentage of Russia's live stock.

This time the peasant has adopted a campaign of passive resistance, reflected in the wholesale exodus of collective farmers in the cities and the slowness with which the present wheat crop is being harvested.

By August 26, at which date the harvest should have been completed, the districts of the Ukraine, North Caucasus, the Crimea and Kazakstan had all failed to reap two-fifths of their wheat quotas for this year. Only 28.6 per cent of the quota was achieved in the Ukraine, 26.6 per cent in the Caucasus, 24.3 in the Crimea and 23.7 in Kazakstan.

Preparations for the wheat crop reflects even greater the extent of the apathy of the farm workers. On August 25 only 2,780,000 hectares (a hectare is about two and a half acres) had been planted, while twice that area, 5,751,000 hectares, had been planted by the corresponding time last year. Only 528,000 hectares have been plowed for the winter, while five that amount had been plowed at the same time last year.

Toronto Daily Star, 8 September 1932, p. 23

Soviet Russia

SOVIET SCENE. By Frederick Griffin. (Macmillan Co. of Canada.)

This book contains the best of Mr. Griffin's newspaper reports from Soviet Russia. It does not present to be, and certainly is not, a complete pen picture of life in Russia in the year 1932. The author himself states in the preface that "there is nothing in it about terrorism or the G.P.U. I did not go looking for bugaboos or horrors, since

so many people have sought and written about them. I have only touched on the fringe of the peasant problem, for it is essentially politics and economics”

One cannot imagine Mr. Griffin ignoring such angles of a big newspaper story in Canada for such reasons. Describing Russia without dealing with the dictatorship’s philosophy and policy is like describing Hamlet without Hamlet.

What Mr. Griffins has done is to sketch for the reader the highlights of the mechanical story of the new Russia. There can no longer be any doubt about the stupendous nature of much that has taken place in Russia in the past few years. Certain of these things are set forth with rare craftsmanship by the author.

Criticism of the book is more likely to centre about what is omitted than what is included. There is no adequate mention of the famine conditions in the Ukraine, resulting from the Soviet’s forced seizure of grain to be dumped on world markets. There is no full description of the treatment of the Kulaks, or independent farmers, who were victimized by the most brutally terroristic policy in modern history. There is no space devoted to the displaced section of society, whose only crime was disbelief in Karl Marx’s gospel. There is little if any mention of the ruthlessness with which the Soviet prohibits religious teaching to the young. There is no hint that Russia is literally a nation in arms, and that the first article of the Communist doctrine is the inevitability of a great life-and-death struggle between Bolshevism and Capitalism.

The Russian revolution as completed to date constitutes one of the greatest changes in the history of the world. The economic transformation, for the standpoint of afar, is without parallel. But the real story in Russian today is not about the mechanization of the Frankenstein monster, but about the devilish nature of the spirit that animates the creature.

“Life and Letters,” *The Globe*, 29 October 1932, p. 12.

Food Scarcity in Russia

News despatches from Russia for the past few months have stressed the mounting food shortage. The correspondent for the New York Times now declares that two-thirds of the Russian people will not have sufficient food this winter and the food they have will mostly consist of bread, potatoes and cabbage. This means a scarcity affecting at least 100,000,000 people. This shortage is in town and country alike, although it is more acute in the latter, and it is so serious that it forces itself into any discussion of the industrial, political and economic situations within the Soviet domain.

The five-year plan is now meeting its most rigorous test. In some ways it has been highly successful. Up to 75 per cent of the industrial programme has been accomplished, the figure being higher than that for the oil industry. New mines and factories have sprung up all over the country. What has not kept up, indeed has fallen woefully behind what it was five years ago, is the food supply.

It should be noted that when the whole system is appraised, this food supply business cannot stand off to one side, for it was part of the plan. It was entered up as collectivized farming. The Plan announced that one-third of the peasant holdings would be socialized by the year 1933. As a matter of fact, twice that number have been, and four fifths of the cultivated area, but the difficult has been that although the machine has been set up it hasn’t worked. In other words, the peasants themselves were not socialized. As the authorities drove full steam ahead the peasant resistance took the form of killing off the livestock and abandoning the production of surplus food stuffs. The private traders and producers were thrown on the scrap heap, but the management of the new collectives could not, at one stroke, take over the complicated business and maintain its balance. At this time, the national livestock supply is only one-half of what it was five years ago. The Plan is said to have produced or imported 1,800,000 tractors, while the collectivization campaign has led to the slaughter of 10,000,000

horses. The Government Press acknowledges that the cattle now number about 60 per cent of what they did five years ago; that half the milk animals have gone dry and that death rate among young cattle is excessive; also that stabling and fodder for the winter is not yet half provided.

Peasants by the millions, forced by food shortages, have migrated to the towns and construction camps and it is this food shortage which is at least partially accountable for the immense labour turnover quota by the newspaper Pravda as between 100 per cent and 200 per cent annually.

The stories of well nigh empty markets and shops bear out the same tale as does the announcement that wholesale food pilfering is now denounced as a public danger.

Reliable correspondents do not claim that the Soviet is faced with famine, but rather by a woeful scarcity of food. If political faith is strong enough it may surmount that, for Russia is not untrained in short rations. But it is plain that if the Soviet is to continue to function as such, it must take care to shift its emphasis from industrialization to agriculture, and especially to the claims and opinions of those who are workers in agriculture. There is no talk in Moscow now of a bigger and better Five Year Plan of the future. The keynote is "consolidation and adjustment." This has not the dramatic popular appeal of other years. It will win through if the Soviet doctrine faith is deeply enough implanted. Of that, there is some doubt, since even in industrialization, where admittedly it has had successes, there have had to be concessions made to individual differences of talents. Individualism is more deeply imbedded in rural people. It is against that rock that the Soviet ship has come. There may be sufficient seamanship to negotiate the passage. At any rate, the port is beyond the obstacle.

Winnipeg Free Press, 1 December 1932, p. 13. Editorial.

Soviet Yields To Demands Of Peasants

Will Abolish Grain Collections in Favor of Free Sale Impelled by Dread of Famine

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Berlin, Dec. 24.—Opposition of Russian peasants to the Soviet Government's agrarian policy will force early abolition of grain collections, in an effort to help relieve the food shortage, the writer was advised to-day by a Russian source generally considered reliable.

The Russian Government has decided to make this most important change since the new economic policy was laid down in 1921 by Lenin as a result of the highly accentuated peasant opposition. This has thrown grain collections behind schedule despite a vigorous press campaign and various "cleansings" mad by the government in important grain-producing regions.

The change is considered so important that Josef Stalin, virtual Soviet dictator, will break an 18-months silence to enunciate the project personally at an extraordinary session of the Communist Central Committee, the most important official body in Russia. A special session of the Central Committee is without precedent and the fact that Stalin will speak out indicates the importance of the situation.

HAD TO FACE ISSUE

Bolshevik leaders were convinced of the necessity of an abrupt about-face by events of the last three months, in which peasants obstructed the government collections of grain, sometimes by passive resistance and sometimes by sabotage. Counter-revolutionary and bandit elements made it apparent that, unless there was a

change in policy, the peasants might not plant enough next spring to feed the nation during 1933 and 1934.

The government attempted to eliminate the peasant resistance by executing several score Communists in north Caucasian villages during November, and occasionally resorted to the requisitioning of grain. Then it decided on a system of taxation in place of the collection method. The tax will be a tax in kind, based on acreage, the size of farms, and, the number of cattle kept. The new system will follow Lenin's new economic policy on general lines.

The central committee will meet January 5 and continue through January 8 to draft the decree which will put the plan in effect. Obviously it will be the most important Soviet development in recent years.

VICTORY FOR PEASANTS

The new acreage tax means victory for the peasants. Although it entails no departure from the collectivization policy itself, the tax will represent a government concession to the peasants, who opposed the arbitrary manner of carrying out the grain collections.

Peasants were dissatisfied because collections were made from standing crops, thus penalizing the growers. Moreover, the methods of collection kept the peasant in a continual state of suspense because the government's agents, after making one collection, might return for more.

Under the new acreage tax, peasants will be told before their planting the exact amount of tax to be demanded of them. The government thus hopes to stimulate production and build up a surplus which may be sold on the open market at uncontrolled prices.

Toronto Telegram, 24 December 1932, p. 13.