

**Letter from Hryhorii Petrovsky to Molotov and Stalin
on the grave food situation and famine in the Ukrainian SSR**

In Holodomor of 1932–33 in Ukraine (2008). Excerpts, pp. 33–36.

10 June 1932

During the sowing campaign in Pryluky, Lokhvytsia, Varva, Chernukhy, Pyriatyn, and Mala Divytsia raions, I came face to face, so to speak, with the village....

We knew beforehand that fulfilling state grain procurements in Ukraine would be difficult, but what I have seen in the countryside indicates that we have greatly overdone it.... I was in many raion villages and saw a considerable part of the countryside engulfed in famine. There are not many, but there are people swollen from starvation, mainly poor peasants and even middle farmers.... At large meetings in villages, I am cursed furiously; old women cry, and men sometimes do so as well. At times, criticism of the situation created goes very deep: "Why did they create an artificial famine? After all, we had a harvest. Why did they take away the seed grain? That did not happen even under the old regime. Why should Ukrainians make difficult journeys for grain to non-grain-producing areas? Why is grain not being brought here?" And so on....

...In response to the desperate cry for relief [in the form of] seed grain and grain for food, I promised something with regard to seed grain but told the farmers to find seed in their own regions.... Mass thefts are occurring in the villages because of the famine, mainly of poultry: they steal chickens, ducks, take potato scraps, and butcher calves and cows during the night and eat them.

Right now, the men are sowing millet and buckwheat. The days for sowing millet are ending, but not for buckwheat, and the villagers are expecting it from us.... There will be insufficient sowing in these raions compared to last year's area. There is still a month or a month and a half before the new crop. This means that famine will intensify. Therefore, I am asking you directly: Would it not be possible to send relief to the Ukrainian countryside in the amount of two, or, if worse comes to worst, one and a half million poods of grain?....

Because of the general famine, as you know, villagers have started flocking to the Dno station, the Central Black Earth Oblast, Belarus, and the North Caucasus. In some cases, two-thirds of all men have left their villages in search of grain.... Naturally, there is mayhem at the stations and in transports.... Tickets are not being issued to villagers, or are being issued in very limited numbers. Peasants have asked me: Why are trips for grain prohibited?....

...In closing, I once again request that you consider all methods and resources available to provide urgent food relief in the form of grain to the Ukrainian countryside and to supply buckwheat for sowing as quickly as possible in order to make up for what has not been sown.

H[ryhorii] Petrovsky